

T A N G E N T S

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Salam and his creations.



PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Tiny Sandals

I saw them for the first time near Dhaka's Suhrawardy Udyan on Victory Day, 2011 as I was walking from Art Institute towards the TSC. Arranged for sale on the sidewalk, they shimmered like exotic jewels in winter's amber afternoon sunlight: tiny but realistic sandals, full of colour and style. The largest sandals were about an inch long; smaller ones fit on my fingernail. I wanted to speak with the seller, but there were several customers waiting for their turn. Reluctant to interfere with his sales, I took some quick photographs and kept walking. When I returned after half an hour, the vendor and his offerings were gone.

Exactly a year later - on Victory Day last week - I saw those sandals again at the same place. This time I waited and talked with the seller between customers.

Abdus Salam has been making toy sandals for ten years. He sells them during the winter fairs and festivals. A pair costs around 30 Taka. The sandals are made of foam and assembled from ten different parts.

While we were chatting, a customer stopped by, looked at the shoes and pondered. "But... but what practical use are they?" he asked, confused. "You buy them because they are fun," replied Salam. A few minutes later, a group of college girls stopped by and picked up a few pair.

Salam says he does good business

on Bangla New Year's Day (Pohela Boishakh), as well as other fairs and festivities. On New Year's he sets up shop near the Art Institute and sells up to 20,000 Taka worth of tiny shoes.

Who buys them? Mostly young people, says Salam. Sometimes a couple stops by and the shoes bring a smile to the girl's face. The boy then buys a pair for her. It certainly makes for an unusual gift.

Salam learned the craft from his master. He used to work in a shoe factory in Bongshah where his *Ustad* taught him how to make real shoes and sandals. But after a few years, he learned how to make these toy shoes, which have become his source of earning.

This year, Salam has added several new items. They are colourful sandal-shoes which can be worn by children. Sized for one- to five-year-olds, they sit next to his toy shoes. On Victory Day, expecting bumper business, he has brought along his son-in-law, Zohirul Islam, to help with the selling.

This brought up the matter of his family. Salam has two sons, two daughters and three grandchildren and lives with his family in Bikrampur.

The next time you are attending festivities in town, you might want to keep your eyes open for Salam's creative offerings.

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UNB, Dhaka

Dipu Moni
meets Thai
prime minister

UNB, Dhaka

CTG RAILWAY STATION
Operational capacity to double

SHAHADAT HOSSAIN, Ctg

Chittagong Railway Station's operational capacity is expected to nearly double after its remodelling project is completed in October 2013, said the manager of the project's implementing firm yesterday.

Every day over 20 more trains will be able to arrive and depart from the station. At present 44 trains go through the station every day, said Md Ibrahim Khalilulla, project manager of the firm, Max Automobile Products Limited (MAPL), Bangladesh.

Moreover, three new railway tracks will be laid and one will be renovated, taking the total number of

operational tracks to 10, he told The Daily Star.

Under the Chittagong Railway Station Yard Remodelling Project, the station will also have a new platform and adjoining shed and a 250-car parking space while its crossings and signalling system will be replaced, said officials engaged with the project.

Bangladesh Railway (BR) is implementing the three-year project while the government and Japan International Co-operation Agency are providing the finance, Tk 226.46 crore.

The renovation will create ample space for accommodating the increased flow of trains during a post-derailment scenario, said the

station's Manager AA Shamsul Alam recently.

Every day around 30,000 passengers and 16 intercity trains, 10 mail and express trains and 18 local trains go through the station, said BR sources.

On a visit to the station on December 13, Railways Minister Mujibul Hoque said, "I requested the officials concerned to complete the project as soon as possible."

Around 25 percent of the project has been completed till date, said BR General Manager (eastern zone) Md Tafazzal Hossain yesterday, adding that the renovation is one of the five components of Dhaka-Chittagong Railway Development Project.

Founder chair
visits JBFH

METRO DESK

The founder chairman of Japan Bangladesh Friendship Hospital (JBFH), Dr Sigeru Suganami, visited the hospital in the capital yesterday.

Renowned physicians of the country, staff of JBFH, and reputed pharmaceutical company representatives received him on the hospital premises in Dhanmondi.

Incumbent JBFH Chairman Prof Jonaid Shafiq and Managing Director Prof Sarder A Nayeem handed over a crest to Dr Suganami. It was these three

Bangladeshi and Japanese physicians with whom JBFH came into existence, says a press release.

In 1987, Dr Sarder A

Nayeem went to Japan to attend Tokyo University. It was when he dreamt of JBFH. He shared his dream with Dr Jonaid Shafiq, a young

Bangladeshi physician, also living in Tokyo, but they needed someone to bring their dream to reality. It was Dr

Suganami who stepped forward.

The presently 100-bed JBFH was inaugurated in 1993.

During his reception, Dr Suganami lauded JBFH as it is serving not only

people in Dhaka but also

people outside it.

NEWS IN brief

Two 'outlaws' arrested in Pabna

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Police arrested two alleged activists of an outlawed party from Failzana village in Chatmohar upazila of Pabna on Thursday night.

The arrested persons Md Shaheb Ali, 30, and Shahid Ali, 26, of the village, are the operatives of Nokshah Bahini, police said.

Acting on a tip off, police raided Failzana area at that night and arrested them from a residence of the village, said Md Habibul Islam, officer-in-charge of Chatmohar Police Station.

The two are listed criminals and accused in six cases, the OC said adding that they were sent to jail yesterday morning.

Man held with fake Indian notes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) arrested a man with counterfeit Indian notes worth Rs 16.93 lakh from Satoreshia village under Shibganj upazila in Chapainawabganj yesterday.

Lt Col Monzurul Alam, commanding officer of 9 BGB Battalion, said they arrested Mohammad Jewel, 27, with the currencies after raiding his house around 4:00pm.

Jewel was involved in the trading of counterfeit Indian notes, and kept those for smuggling to India, he said.

A case was filed with Shibganj Police Station in this connection.

Mob beats robber to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

A mob beat an alleged robber to death at Madhya-Charogram village in Singair upazila yesterday.

The dead is Harun, 45, son of Minhaj Uddin of Manta village of sadar upazila.

Quoting locals, police said 10 to 12 robbers entered the house of Monsher Ali around 2:00am.

Sensing their presence, locals rushed in and caught Harun while his cohorts managed to flee.

The villagers handed Harun over to police after a mass beating. He was first rushed to Singair Upazila Health Complex and later shifted to Dhaka Pongu Hospital where he died around

Muggers stab two brothers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Muggers stabbed two brothers and snatched Tk 35,000 from them early yesterday in the capital's Dhanmondi.

The injured -- Joynal Abedin, 35, and his younger brother Mohammad Mamun, 24, -- stays in a mess at Dhanmondi. The brothers, who work as drivers, were going to Chandpur when the incident occurred.

They said four muggers arrived on a private car and asked for money as they were waiting for transports around 5:30am. The muggers stabbed them, snatched the money and went away.

Dhanmondi police admitted the incident. No

DHAKA TODAY

National meeting

Natigrantha Probortona and Tamak Birodi Nari Jote will jointly organise a national meeting "Tobacco production and use: Dangers for women"; Venue: LGED Bhaban, Sher-e-Banglanagar, Agargaon; Time: 10:00am.

Enforcement of Human Rights will organise its 13th national convention; Venue: Supreme Court premises; Time: 10:00am.

Seminar

Centre for East Asia Foundation will hold a seminar "Bangladesh-China Cooperation and the Security Dimensions of the Bay of Bengal"; Venue: Cirdap Auditorium; Time: 9:45am.

Discussion

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Bangladesh Jubo Moitree will hold a discussion marking the month of victory; Venue: 31/F, Topokhana Road; Time: 4:30pm.

Centre for East Asia Foundation will hold a seminar "Bangladesh-China Cooperation and the Security Dimensions of the Bay of Bengal"; Venue: Cirdap Auditorium; Time: 9:45am.

Views exchange meeting

Bangladesh Nari Sangbadik Kendra will organise a views exchange meeting "Presentation of women in

WEATHER TODAY

Mild cold wave likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Thick fog may occur over the river basins and moderate to thick fog elsewhere over the country during night till noon, Met Office said.

Mild cold wave may sweep over Rajshahi, Rangpur divisions and the regions of Tangail, Mymensingh and Kushtia.

Night temperature may fall slightly and day temperature may rise slightly over the country.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:17pm and rises tomorrow at 6:38am.

Country's highest temperature 26.8 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Kutubdia and lowest 09.9 degrees at Dinajpur.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	23.6	13.5	94	58
Chittagong	24.8	14.2	98	53
Rajshahi	19.8	12.8	100	89
Rangpur	19.8	11.2	94	89
Khulna	24.4	13.0	100	90
Barisal	23.6	13.1	94	83



Foreign Minister Dipu Moni calls on visiting Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra at the capital's Sonargaon Hotel yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

Shinawatra, Thailand's first female prime minister, reached Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 5:30pm yesterday.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina received Shinawatra at the airport.

Today, Shinawatra will visit National Memorial in Savar to show respect to Bangladesh's war heroes.