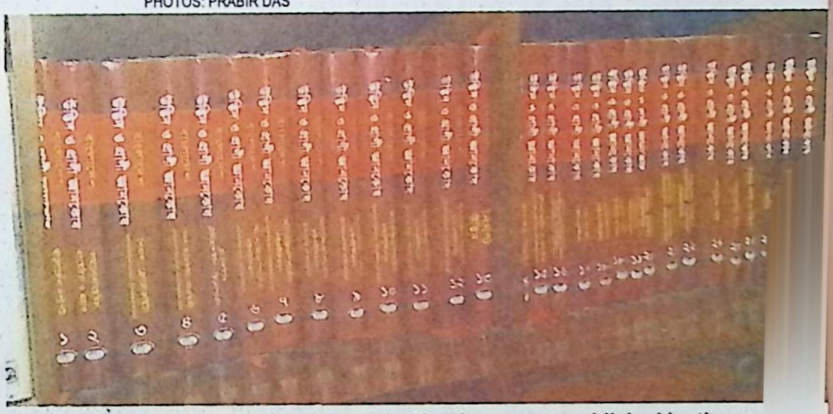


A recipient of numerous awards, he has been writing for forty years.

PHOTOS: PRABIR DAS

microbiologist lives in London. He loves to spend time with his grandchildren when they visit him.

At Notre Dame College, where he taught till 1974, he designed a landscape garden that still beautifies its campus. That's one thing about Dwijen Sharma— wherever he worked, he built gardens. Renowned folklorist Shamsuzzaman Khan says, "When I was the DG of the national museum, we made a botanical garden under his supervision in the back of the museum. Again when I joined Bangla academy, we sought his guidance in planting trees on the premises of Bangla Academy."



An encyclopedia of the flora and fauna in 56 volumes was published by the Asiatic Society while he was the president of the publishing committee.

He went to Russia with a dream. "Bangladesh had just gained independence," reminisces Sharma. "I dreamt that Dhaka would be a garden city—there would be parks, a riverfront on the banks of *Buriganga*, open fields where children would play— the whole city would be like Ramna Park. I wanted to learn from the Russian experience of socialism and then come back and work to rebuild the country."

While in Russia he translated several books on political science, economics, sociology and science from English into Bangla. From Moscow he would visit Europe to see the birth place of Darwin and the Kew garden, the holy grail of botanists all over the world. He would walk around in the Regents Park and St. James Park and make plans about designing our botanical garden in the same fashion. He would carry a lunchbox and spend the whole day in bookstores. The libraries, museums, the parks, the herbariums of London had a great influence on him. "If I did not go to Europe, I would not have been able to have exposure to all this," adds Sharma.

There is another side of this story that a family friend, Jahanara Noushin, ex-professor of Eden College and author of the critically acclaimed *Pitamohir Pakhi* (My grandfather's bird) recalls, "One day he stopped by at our house at Azimpur at lunch hour. He ate with relish the *daal* and *chingri bhorta* (shrimp paste) we had that day. Then he lied down on the couch and told me to play Tagore's *Shapmochon* on my LP. He looked sad. I asked him what happened. He said, 'Didi, I am leaving for Russia in a few days.' I have never seen anyone look so sad for having to leave the country."

Dwijen Sharma's books are scientific and yet philosophical. Dr Dutta says via email, "Marxist ideas imbued with his life experience made him more of a philosopher than a scientist." In an article Sharma writes about Chief Seattle, chief of the Suquamish and other American-Indian tribes around Washington's Puget Sound who in 1851 delivered what is considered to be one of the most profound environmental statements ever made.