Selling Oddities

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PHOTOS: PRABIR DAS

Good old Dhaka is the bustling metropolis where people from all over Bangladesh come to better their living standard and sometimes merely to survive. They come and settle in Dhaka despite the tough struggle that it offers them. In this cruel city, eking out a livelihood is tough for the commoners but somehow people here find something to earn a living. Some of their jobs are tricky; others are so pastoral that they form incongruous contrasts in this rather cosmopolitan city.

Moneypenny

Do you want to buy taka with taka? Sounds fishy, doesn't it? But if a torn and damaged 500 TK note is passed onto you or if you want to cheer your 5-year-old daughter up with an Eid *salami* of new, freshly printed bank notes, what will you do?



Money vendors of Gulistan.

Going to the bank and standing in the long queue is one way but this is not feasible for everyone. The other way is to go to the 'money traders' in Gulistan, collect freshly printed bank notes from the central bank in exchange of damaged and mutilated bank notes. The fee is nominal, and it depends on the amount of money to be exchanged. Some of these people are also expert in detecting counterfeit bank notes and coins. If you are a numismatologist or if coin collection is your hobby, you should visit one of these roadside shops. Some of these vendors have a good collection of rare and ancient foreign and Bangladeshi currencies. Shumon, one of the vendors, says, "You see, we are out in the street, doing business, while we should be busy with our studies in college. I have searched for many jobs. Now that I have to earn a leaving trading in banknotes, I don't feel bad, but things could have been a lot better." Shumon, a young man from Noakhali, has been in this line for last eight years. Business is usually quite dull, but presently he and other vendors are doing a brisk business thanks to the coming Eid-ul-Adha.

The Soothsayer and his Parrot

While moving around Gulistan we met this charming man with a parrot in his hand and some myste-



Parrot picking the luck.