

BADR AL-DIN THE MYSTIC SAINT

ANANTA YUSUF

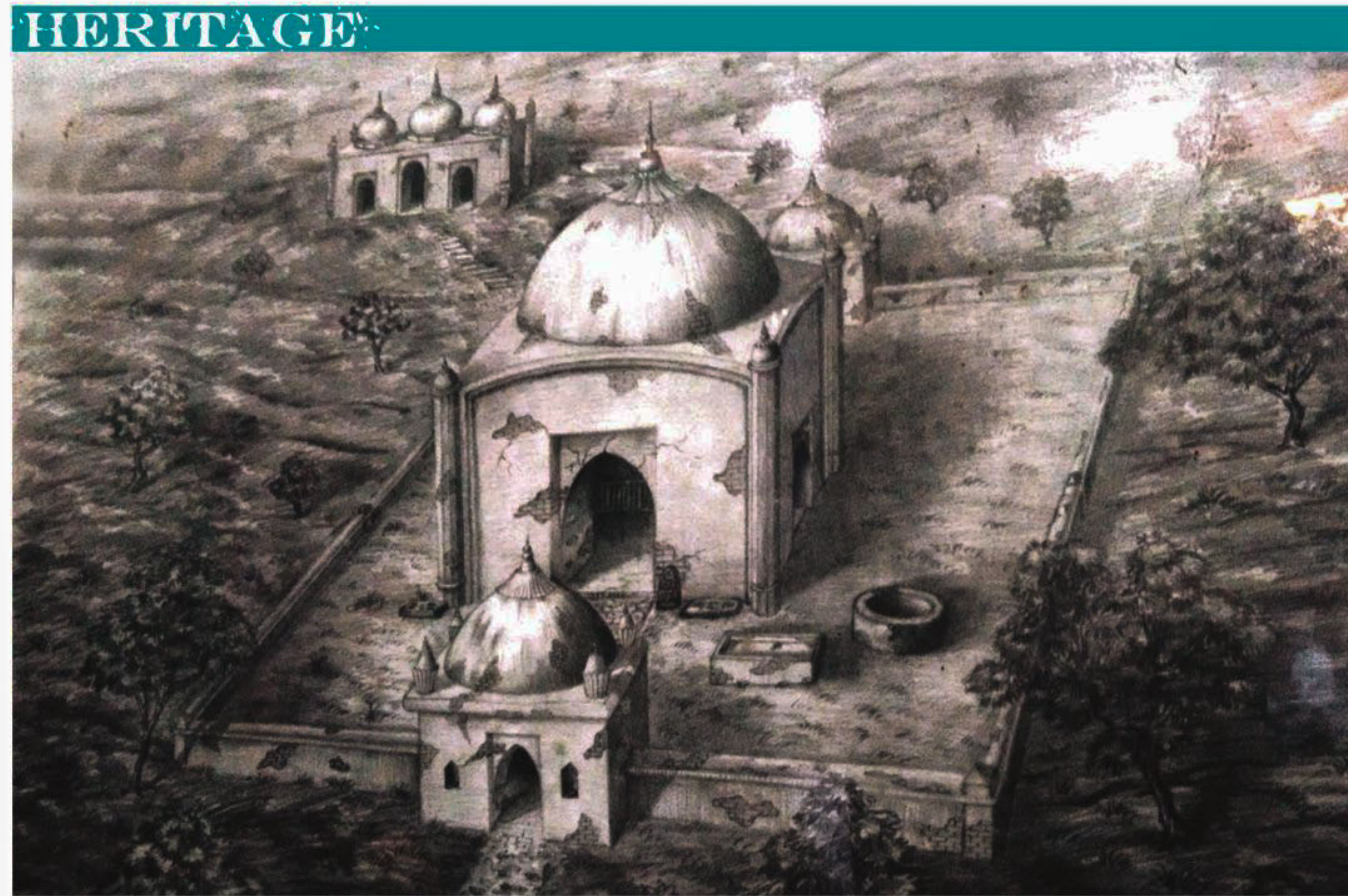
*Amra achi polapan, Gazi ache nigahman
Shire Ganga dariya Panch Pir, Badr Badr Badr*
(We are the young, Gazi is our protector
the sea of Ganga over us, the five saints, Badr Badr Badr)

Interestingly, in different parts of the Bay of Bengal, especially on the coastal belt, people from all religions make small boats carrying lamps, flowers and coconut oil to observe a festival celebrating Badr al-Din as the Pir or, in other words, the 'Sultan of Water'. In Chittagong the festival takes place at the end of the Bengali month of Srabon. The festival is celebrated mostly by fishermen. Devotees believe that Badr al-Din is the ruler of the waters. His miraculous power over the water saves many lives.

From the 6th to the middle of 16th century, Muslim traders ruled over the oceans. During the Sultani period in Bengal, as the war-affairs became stable around 14th century, Muslim saints began immigrating to Bengal from different parts of India. Historians believe that Badr al-Din arrived in Chittagong around the same time.

Badr-Al-Din was a powerful figure. The community of fishermen needed a deity to worship whom they would call out to when they were in trouble at sea. Geographically, the coastal belt of the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Sea share similar attributes. Badr-Al-Din's power over the ocean addressed the core need of a large community who depended on the seas for their livelihood. They believed that the Badr could save people from storms, thunder, fiery wind and from all dangerous situations in the ocean.

For that reason, the shrine of Badr, which is commonly known as Badr Maqams, can be found along the coast of Burma to Thailand in the southeast and also from India to the Maldives in the southwest. Muhammad Siddiq Khan, the former librarian of Dhaka University, in one of his writings, says that the Badr Maqams are "universal shrines", i.e. they are accepted by the Buddhists, Hindus and Muhammadans, natives of India, Burmese and Chinese alike, which is a sure sign that they are symbols of the animistic faith which underlies all Indian regions.



PHOTOS: COURTESY



Badr-Al-Din was a powerful figure. The community of fishermen needed a deity to worship whom they would call out to when they were in trouble at sea.

Their chief votaries are sailors, fishermen and those who obtain a livelihood on the water.

Since Badr is known as the guardian of the sailors and the sea, the fishermen recite and sing songs in chorus before starting out on journey. Some say that the pir Badr al-Din flew on a stone to the shore of the Karnaphuli. Others claim that he reached Chittagong riding on the back of a fish. He arrived at the shore after the sun set on the horizon of the Bay of Bengal. Why would he choose to come to Chittagong? Legends state that at that time Chittagong was notorious for jinns and was a dangerous jungle. Human beings had more or less abandoned the place. Rivers and the sea had become home to wild beasts. To free the place from all evil, the Holy pir decided to stay in Chittagong.

According to legend, upon the pir's arrival in the port city, he requested the jinns for a small place where he could light a chati or lamp. The jinns accepted his request and granted him a small piece of land. The miraculous lamp propelled a huge blow of light over the whole region and drove the evil spirits away from the hills. Many researchers believe that the name Chittagong came from the 'chati' that Badr Al-Din had lit.

Even now, thousands of devotees pay tribute to Badr Al-Din at the top of the Cheraghi Pahar of Chittagong, where believers have faith that the pir still has his lamp lit for them. One hopes that the light of Badr keeps shining upon the world, illuminating the life of millions. ■

NUMBERS 5

Beef lovers in Maharashtra will now have to do without the red meat as President Pranab Mukherjee has given his assent to the Maharashtra Animal Preservation (Amendment) Bill, 1995, nearly 19 years after the Maharashtra Assembly passed the Bill during the BJP-Shiv Sena rule in 1995.

The slaughter of cows was previously prohibited in the state under the Maharashtra Animal Preservation Act of 1976. However, the passage of the new Act will ban the slaughter of bulls as well as bullocks, which was previously allowed, based on a fit-for-slaughter certificate.

The President had signed the Bill and sent it to the Ministry of Home Affairs, which then informed the Maharashtra Governor of the decision.

Now, anyone found to be selling beef or in possession of it can be jailed for five years and fined Rs 10,000.

— ZEESHAN SHAIKH, Indian Express.
Source: <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/beef-banned-in-maharashtra-5-yrs-jail-rs10000-fine-for-possession-or-sale/>

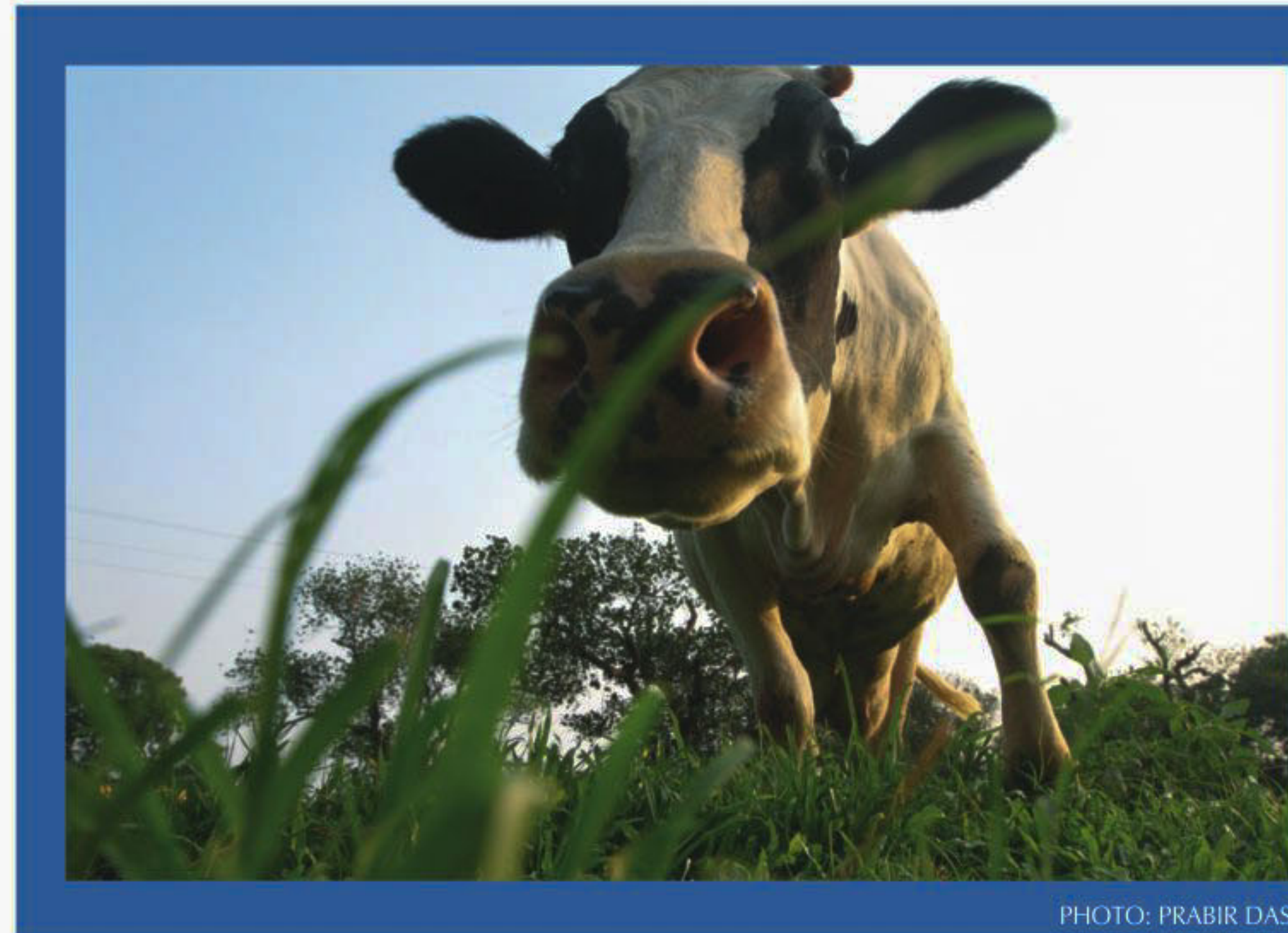


PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

CAMPUS

ATTENTION ALL STUDENTS!

APURBA JAHANGIR

The concept of social business was first established back in 2008 by the Nobel Laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus. The theory was to address social issues by combining business know-how with the desire to improve the quality of life. Since then, people all over the world, especially the youth, are implementing this ideology to improve social structures.

Social Business Youth Alliance (SBYA) is the first youth-based organisation that tries to bring the social business creed to young people all over the world, helping them with all kinds of resources they can provide. For the second time SBYA is launching their social business plan competition, 'Social Business Champ 2015'. This university level competition challenges students to use business principles to create sustainable positive solutions to some of the world's most challenging issues.

In 2010, Social Business Champ started off as a competition only for business plans that were organised by Yunus

Centre. "While launching SBYA, we asked the Yunus Centre to design a competition based on campus students, more specifically university students," says Shazzeb M Khairul Islam, CEO of SBYA. "In 2014 we collaborated with Yunus

- 1 Applicants from all over the country submit the draft of their business plan.
 - 2 100 teams are selected by a panel of social business specialists, who receive training on social business and are then asked to submit a detailed business plan.
 - 3 50 selected teams present their ideas in front of the judge panel.
 - 4 The remaining 15 teams submit a 30-page detailed business plan from which the winning team is selected. The final phase is judged by the leaders of the Grameen Family of Businesses.
- The winning team is then funded, thereby establishing their plan as an actual social business.



PHOTO: COURTESY

centre to launch the first Social Business Champ, which was quite successful. This year we plan to make it much bigger."

Last year, a student team from the Marketing Department at Dhaka University won the competition with their business plan titled Aprajita (Sanitary Napkin for Garment Workers).

Interested students can submit their plans to www.sbyaglobal.org/champ-2015 to participate. The last day to submit plans is March 20. ■

MUSINGS

LIGHTS, CAMERA AND A WHOLE LOT OF ACTION!

NAZIBA BASHER

A production like Rupchanda-The Daily Star Super Chef 2015 can surprise you, to say the least. With around 8 teams working in one production, things are to go out of control but then, it has chances of getting back in control very soon also. Every morning would start with a rush. The morning's would mean coffees in hands, breakfast table set, lights being set up before the crème de la crème of our show arrive. Once the judges and other big shots are there, everyone does their best to play their parts and be normal about it. But with broken bathroom flushes and an air conditioner that freezes your insides, it's a little difficult to think with a stable mind.

"Let's get straight to the format!" an assistant creative director would shout. Only to get "but the bathroom is unusable!" as a reply. Another would come and ask how much longer the emcee's make-up would take, only to find her gossiping with the make-up artistes, sipping what everyone on set would call 'bish coffee' (black coffee). While the upstairs is filled with confusing questions and even more confusing



PHOTO: SHAHRIAR KABIR HEEMEL

replies, to the naked eye it would seem everything downstairs is under control. But once in a while if you tour around, you will find someone from the marketing solutions team imitating insect repellent salesmen and making the participants laugh till they are out of breath. In another corner, the cast would be busy taking selfies with Emma Dean, Masterchef Australia 2013 Champion or French Chef Frederic Insisienmay. All the while our director would be sitting in the panel room watching all the mindless drama on the televisions connected to the cameras on set.

As the havoc increased, at some point in the afternoon, shooting would begin



PHOTO: ESHIKA ISRAT TUMPA

and then there was no stopping. One challenge after the other, welcomes, goodbyes, links and dialogues- this was what would go on for the next 7 to 8 hours. The hunger-ridden emcee would be caught sneaking food from the participants' stations at least 10 times a day. People would whisper obscenities, share secrets, gossip without knowing the microphones in their hands were switched on. There would be disagreements, arguments, scolding one another, accusations, but all of it with a humble sense of familiarity. Once the shoot would finish and everyone would wobble back to the hotel, the real fun would begin. In each room, there would be a separate 'adda' where intense discussions about the show would take place. After hours of more laughter, cracking jokes, roasting one another, it would be time for goodbye, with the comforting knowledge that tomorrow will have the same exciting routine.

Now, I sit here, fondly remembering every moment, not knowing if things will ever be the same again. But one thing is for sure- 12 days, 15 episodes and a whole lot of love and laughter with some of the most amazing people has left me with memories to cherish throughout a lifetime. This is your emcee, Naziba Basher, and welcome to Rupchanda-The Daily Star Super Chef, 2015! ■