

Curiosity doesn't quite capture one's imagination as it does during childhood. It is the time when children make candid observations, give honest opinions and ask questions, especially when they see something that seems unfamiliar. They master different concepts. Teaching them pluralism and the value of tolerance is thus important so that they don't judge people from the very beginning of their life.

Through introducing a set of eleven Bangla Language storybooks for readers aged 3 to 8, the issue of pluralism and

The project aims to encourage children to develop a pluralistic worldview through developing original children's storybooks in Bangla. It also intends to give proper training to relevant stakeholders on their use.

The books were developed in collaboration with Aga Khan Education Service, Bangladesh and Friends in Village Development Bangladesh, a Sylhet based NGO, and piloted in the Aga Khan School, Dhaka, as well as NGO and government schools in Dhaka and Sylhet. The initiative is financially supported by

Educational stakeholders, civil society organisations (CSOs), and government are engaged in order to strengthen their capacity to develop, and utilise, children's storybooks as a platform for building their understanding of concepts of pluralism. A local expert group has been formed comprised of relevant Government of Bangladesh departments, civil society organisations, and Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) agencies to provide technical inputs for the purposes of contextualisation and to ensure wider dissemination.

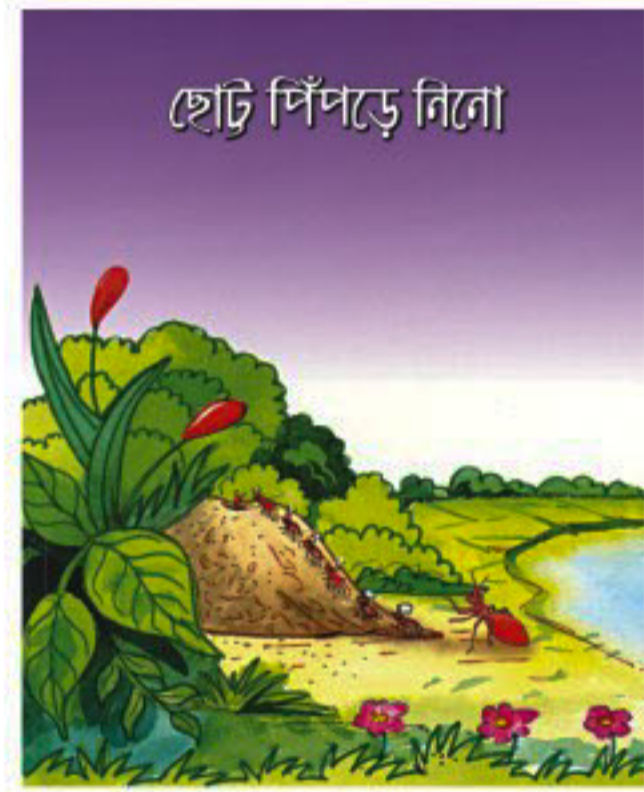
These books are for parents as well, on being able to understand, appreciate and work with people coming from varied backgrounds. Because if they want their kids to be generous, compassionate and to value wisdom in a pluralistic culture, they must do the same and do so willingly and openly.

Teaching tolerance and diversity can take many directions, and storytelling is surely the best one, believes the project coordinator. A discussion on the significance of multiculturalism might prove too heavy for a child to digest; however, a child will surely be interested in a book where an ant attends religious festivals of different religions in search of sugar. Likewise, the other books too attempt to teach more about people of different ability, age, culture and religion.

They pledge to teach children that no life is more rewarding and fulfilling than a life that respects harmony in individuality. We cannot but appreciate such an endeavour.

FINDING BEAUTY IN DIFFERENCE

FAYEKA ZABEEN SIDDIQUA



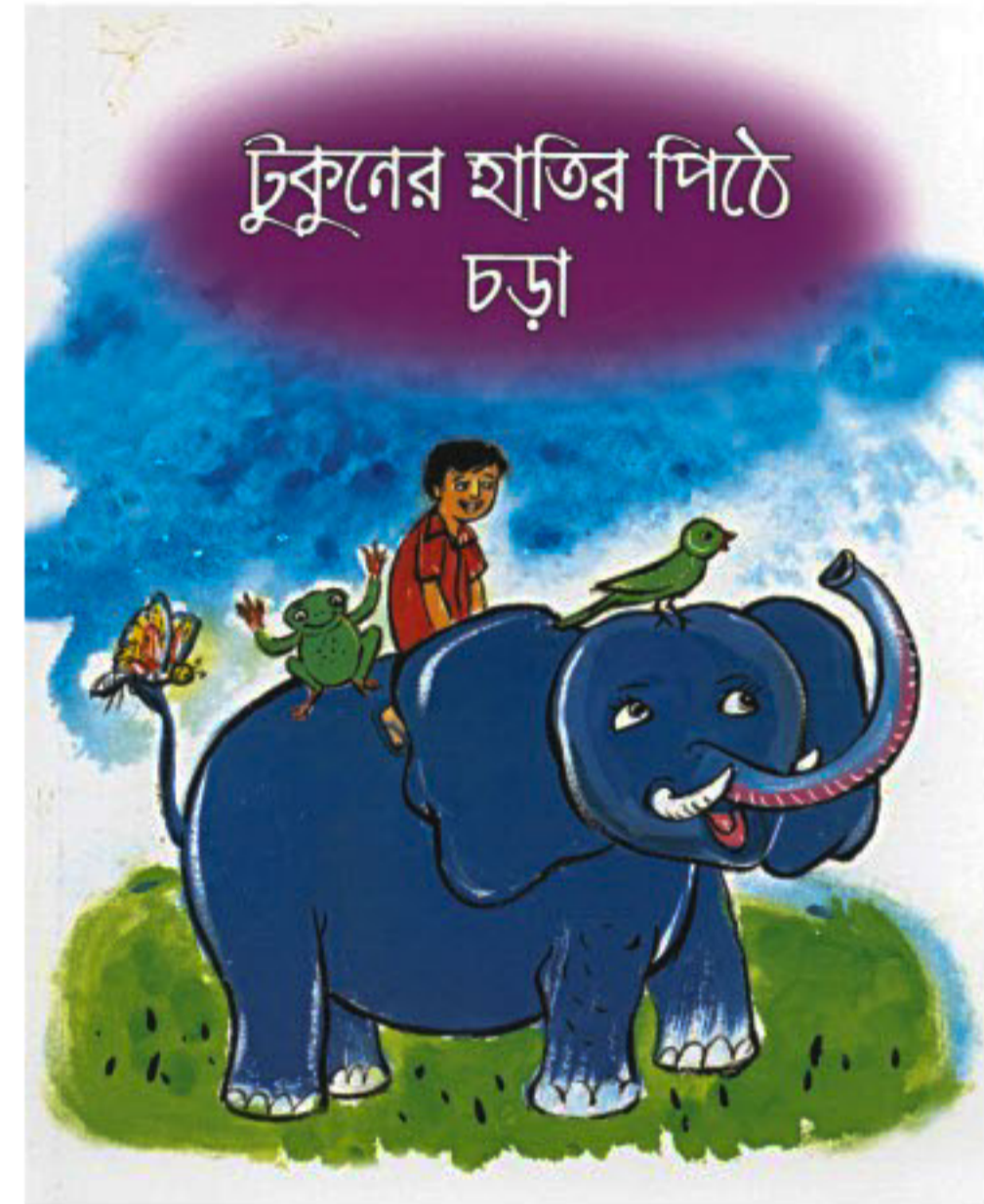
tolerance, in context of Bangladesh, has been brought into the forefront in classrooms by the Aga Khan Foundation (Bangladesh) as part of their commitment to work for early child development.

On one hand, children are being raised in an increasingly diverse cultural environment where pluralism has become a new norm. On the other hand, in an increasingly digitalized world children are consistently being exposed to intolerance. Therefore, promoting pluralistic values among young children has become a dire need, believes the mastermind behind this project. These values include identity, mutual respect, social inclusion and the benefits of diversity to individuals and their communities, among other.

the Government of Canada and Aga Khan Foundation Canada and has been in implementation since January 2015 and will continue till March 2016.

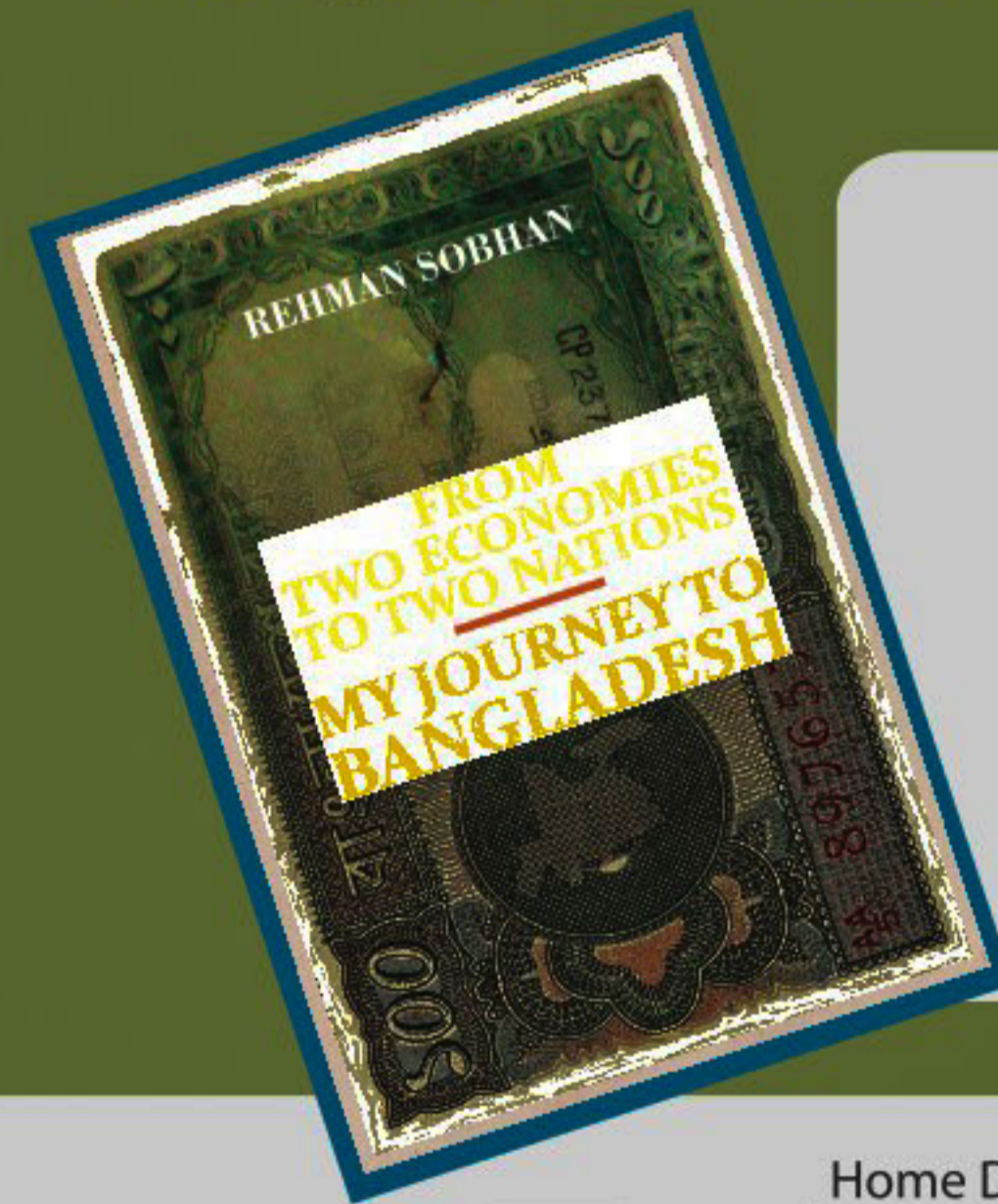
After months of research and hours spent designing and redesigning the model of the book, a number of children's writers and illustrators have come up with these storybooks. They too were oriented on pluralism and how to incorporate them into the books in an easy-to-understand manner. The last page of each book briefs you on how to connect with children by asking questions and getting engaged in a conversation around pluralism in various contexts, including school and home settings.

EVUCATION |



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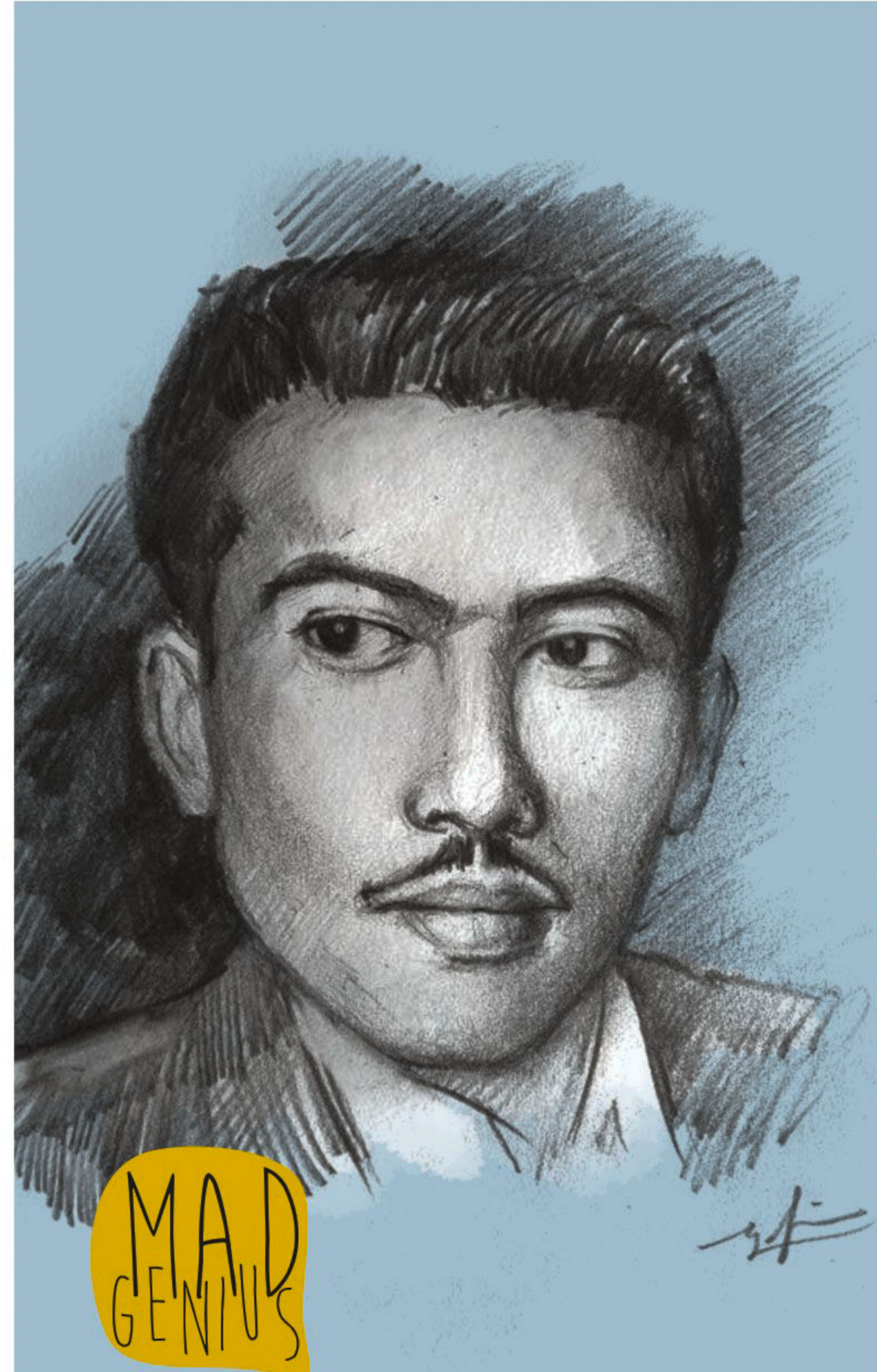
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ZAHIR RAIHAN

19 August 1935 – 30 January 1972

Zahir Raihan, having done some noteworthy amazing works and with the promise of further amazing work, died an untimely death before he had a chance to explore his full potential. Born on 19 August 1935, as Mohammad Zahirullah, in Majupur, (now Feni District, Bangladesh), Zahir Raihan's short stories, novels, movies and documentaries helped him earn critical acclaim and admiration in the Bengali Literary society. He was a novelist, journalist, writer and filmmaker, however he is chiefly remembered for his documentary Stop Genocide, made during the Bangladesh Liberation War. A graduate in Bengali Literature, his prolific career began with his first collection of short stories, titled *Suryagrahan*, which got published in 1955. After assisting several directors in their films, in 1960 revealed himself as the director of *Kokhono Asheni* which was released in 1961. He made Pakistan's first colour movie, *Sangam* in 1964 and completed his first CinemaScope movie, *Bahana*, the following year. An active supporter of the Language Movement of 1952, his film *Jibon Theke Neya* was critically acclaimed by Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, Tapan Sinha and Ritwik Ghatak. He also actively participated in the Gano Obhyuthyan in 1969 and joined in the Liberation War of Bangladesh. Raihan never came back when he went out on 30 January 1972 trying to find his brother, the famous writer Shahidullah Kaiser, who was captured and killed by the Pakistani Army during the final days of the liberation war. It is believed that Raihan along with many others was attacked when they went to Mirpur, one of the existing strongholds for Pakistani/Bihari collaborators at that time.

STARADARY

GONE, BUT NOT REALLY

Last year I went to India with two of my photographer friends. Our plan was to spend the entire vacation shooting different aspects of Indian culture. We shot for hours wandering around the streets of Delhi and Jaipur and had a great time. My camera was full of photos of architectural aspects as a part of my photo story that I was working on. We were quite happy with the pictures that we got. My memory card was full with pictures, and it was time for me to transfer the pictures to my laptop. However, as we were travelling a lot to different places, I forgot to put my memory card back in the camera. I did not transfer the pictures as well. So all my pictures were gone with that memory card, and they were nowhere to be found. My heart broke, but it's not easy to find something that you have no idea where it fell out. I started retracing my steps, I asked the room service people- but it was gone. Suddenly three days ago as I took out my jacket, I found the memory card in one of the pockets. I put the card inside the laptop and I discovered all the missing shots from Delhi. I could not believe my eyes that I could actually rescue each and every photograph. I think this is one of the best things that have happened to me this year.

Tamjid Hasan
North South University, Dhaka



PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

HUSH HUSH!

Last week I went to buy a packet of sanitary napkins from a local pharmacy. Like most of the girls, buying sanitary napkins has always been one of the most uncomfortable experiences. Of course I did not have the comfort of comparing different prices and brands, so I asked for my usual brand. The shopkeeper grabbed a pack and covered it up in a brown paper as if he is embarrassed that a woman came to buy a pack of pads. There was another man buying lots of medicines, who accidentally picked my brown paper wrapped pads. "Excuse me, that is my packet," I said very politely. The man looked at the packet and instead of apologising or replying to me, he put

down the pack on the counter right away. It seemed like he touched something that he was not supposed to. I felt so disgusted at his behaviour. It seemed to me that this purchase is strictly a female thing and they should feel embarrassed and self-conscious while buying it. Every time I go to buy sanitary napkins to a super mall, I need to pause once or more than once near the shelf because I find other people being curious and peeking into my trolley. The fact that women get period is a natural process and everyone knows it happens. Yet we tend to look at this matter as a taboo.
Tanusri Chowdhury
Tejgaon
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