

| BOOKS |

PROFESSOR RAZZAQ'S TREASURE TROVE

APURBA JAHANGIR

PHOTOS: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

Professor Abdur Razzaq - a gold mine of resources - is considered to be one of the most influential and knowledgeable persons born in our country. Though he was never promoted from assistant professor to a professor, Abdur Razzaq was always considered one of the greatest oral historians. In 1995, he was declared a National Professor.

It is said that after the death of his PhD advisor Harold J Lusky, Razzaq returned home without his degree. According to his students, Professor Abdur Razzaq thought nobody would understand the depth of his thesis than his advisor. He came back with 500 books, which now sit as the foundation of the 'Gayantapas Abdur Razzaq Bidyapeeth'.

On November 9, 2015 'Gayantapas Abdur Razzaq Bidyapeeth' began its journey as a resource centre to the public. The centre includes 4,544 of Abdur Razzaq's book collection. The centre



PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO "Spring shows what God can do with a drab and dirty world."
-Victor Kraft, Philosopher

SNAPSHOT

MAILBOX

thestarmagazine@gmail.com



New Perspective on the Star Weekend

The reason I am writing this is a sub topic by the name "Quirky Science" (published in pg.12 of the 26th February, 2016 edition of the Star Weekend) that grabbed my attention. While reading that section what interested me was that, it was a very rare incident where any Bangladeshi newspaper magazine offered an 'open', or occasion-free explanation of the complex science of the cosmos. I have clearly observed that such writings attract a lot of people from a vast plethora of subjects, since strange science, appeals to all as a means of entertainment. Quirky Science section of the Star Weekend hit me this week, and made me realize that this trail is not a dead end, and in fact, if presented on a regular basis and in a clear easy-to-understand manner, it yields great potential and a very large target audience! But unfortunately, newspapers (or additional magazines that come with them) seldom pose any 'free will' scientific elucidation by writers. It would be nice to see contemporary science blending with the contemporary literature that these magazines and newspapers offer.

Banin Abrar
Uttara, Dhaka

Gibberish: Trains of Thoughts

The articles titled "Gibberish: Trains of Thoughts" attracted me a lot. Every day when I come on the road for office, I wish when we can see an organised traffic management in our beloved country. According to "IBM Traffic Management for a Smarter Planet", the number of vehicles on the world's roads is expected to double to around 2.5 billion by 2050. How could there be more vehicles but less traffic in the future? The main reason is mismanagement of traffic in our country and commuters are mainly responsible for the crisis. If Government can impose penalty in every corner of traffic and fine collection can be done properly, I hope things will change in a year. We have wider & long roads than Singapore and Japan but traffic congestion makes our life hell. Thanks to Elita Karim for her nice article. If Government desire, they can change the total traffic in a year and open the doors for foreign investment as communication obstacle in our country is the burning question for all foreign investors/buyers. Besides, awareness among mass people should also be done through electronic media/newspapers and satellite channels.

Sharfuddin
Agrabad, Chittagong

Bangladesh's Forgotten Languages

The spotlight article from last week was an imperative issue which has been written and discussed prudently. All things related to mother tongues have always been a matter of attention for us as we, the Bengalis in 1952, set an example by giving supreme sacrifice for our mother tongue by protesting against the decision of Urdu being the national language. Now we, the young generation, didn't see the incident of 1952 but surely we can understand the intensity of the spirit of the students who had defied the section 144 and protested in the procession with great surge of people coming out on the street. But after all these years the spirit of the language movement seemed to have started losing its glory as indigenous communities in our country are unable to preserve their own mother tongues. The omnipresence of Bengali is kind of wiping out their mother tongues as Bengali is being used in their schools. I would like to thank the writer for writing on this important unheard issue. Special credits go out to Rubayet who went through such ordeal and turbulence to dig out information. Finally I hope the government and respective authority will take time-befitting steps to preserve the indigenous communities' languages by having them written in the scriptures and to safeguard their cultures.

Samiul Rajul
London, UK



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



represents a comfortable place for scholars and readers.

After Abdur Razzaq's death in 1999, his collection of books was resting in the hands of his nephew Abul Khair, chairman of the Bengal Foundation. Since then there were plans on making a resource centre in Abdur Razzaq's name. In this time period, some of the books were damaged and what remained became the resource centre.

The resource centre is filled with books on various subjects. As Abdur Razzaq was

a man of political science, a huge number of books on this subject were owned by him. Most of the books are otherwise unavailable in Bangladesh. Literature on religion, culture, history and a lot of eminent biographies are also in the centre's collection.

One of the interesting aspects of the resource centre is that it works under the ethics of Abdur Razzaq. "We first thought of adding a membership to the resource centre, but we cancelled it," says Abu Ilahi, an executive at the centre. "Abdur



Razzaq welcomed everyone who would come to him seeking help and we want to do the same. Just a few formalities will give any scholar or reader access to this treasure trove of sources." Students from various universities come to the library to indulge in the world of knowledge. "The collection is phenomenal. I come almost every day between my classes to read here. Though I never had the opportunity to meet Professor Razzaq, I at least can go through the elements which he is made of," says Nasib Ahsan, student at

University of Liberal Arts. Though the centre is acting as a library, the authorities have plans to include other activities such as seminars on Abdur Razzaq himself. "This man was one of a kind. He had in-depth knowledge on every subject including gastronomy. He is no doubt a man to study in detail," says Abu Ilahi.

The Gayantapas Abdur Razzaq Bidyapeeth is situated in Dhanmondi, road 7A. It opens at 11:00am and closes at 7:00pm and is open to everyone. ■

PROUD CONSTRUCTION PARTNER OF PADMA BRIDGE

BSRM
innovating safety