

ABDUS SALAM'S TREASURE TROVE IN KARWAN BAZAR

|| MD FOISAL AHMED ||



DHAKA VIBE

Abdus Salam, right, and Shahanaaj at their makeshift shop of secondhand electronics.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Remember when loud music blaring from store-side speakers used to be a staple in the city? Almost none does it anymore. One can't help but miss it, even if it was a great nuisance to the public.

This is why when coming across this rarity, one is bound to take notice. So did Jahan Islam, a photographer, who came to Karwan Bazar to visit his relative and decided to have a cup of tea. He stopped at the sound of classic Bollywood songs booming from old speakers.

Curious, he looked across at the source of the music -- on the opposite side of Janata Tower. It looked like a makeshift shop, with a small crowd gathered in front of it. The promise of eccentricities made him cross the road.

He was not disappointed. Jahan's eyes dazzled as he saw an old man sitting in a sea of old/broken/outdated electronic products. Table-clocks, wristwatches, sound boxes, CD players, laptops, land-phone sets, calculators -- the store is stacked with electronic gadgets straight out

of early 2000s and 1990s.

His interest piqued when he found a rare camera flash that went out of market years ago. He started bargaining with the old man -- his bid of Tk 100 vs the man's asking price Tk 400. They eventually settled at Tk 200.

It's not exactly antique. Jahan was glad that it still worked, but he would not have been upset if it did not. Collecting rare camera accessories is something of a passion for him. He has a showcase full of precious old gadgets. The flash would be a prized addition to that.

Such an unusual store is bound to attract people with unusual tastes and needs. Jibon, a clown by profession, is a regular customer of this "Bhangari Dokan" (scrap store). On this particular day, he was there to buy a headphone.

"I frequently come here to buy stuff I need. You can find a lot of necessary things at the cheapest of prices," a smiling Jibon said.

But more importantly, "The products we buy from here serve us quite well. If there's any issue,

chacha (uncle) repairs it free of charge," he added.

The uncle being referred to is vendor Abdus Salam, a jolly 65-year-old. "For 45 years, I've been selling scrap. I started this business when I was only 20 years of age," Salam said. He could not remember the year.

Every day, he adds about Tk 500 worth of goods to his collection. "We collect things going door to door and from scrap warehouses in Old Dhaka."

All of it sells too, and then some more. "We make a sale of around Tk 3,500 per day on average," he said. Almost all the buyers come from lower-income households.

Before he started this business, Salam used to be a peon at the then Dhaka City Corporation office. One of his duties was to take damaged electronic items for repair. "I sat beside the repair-man as he fixed them," he reminisced fondly.

Observing the technician's methods keenly, Salam started trying to replicate his learnings. Over time, he got there.

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PUBLIC INTEREST LITIGATIONS

Ensure credibility: CJ to judges

UNB, Dhaka

Mentioning that public interest litigations (PILs) are playing a helpful role in protecting human rights of the underprivileged, Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain yesterday urged judges to ensure sanctity and credibility in the judicial process while dealing with such cases.

While addressing a seminar in this regard at the Supreme Court auditorium, the chief justice also called for using the judiciary's capability for people's welfare.

Supreme Court Online Bulletin (SCOB) organised the programme.

The CJ said the PIL system is an effective tool to amend errors, heal wounds and resolve constitutional debates. SCOB Editor Justice Md Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury presented the keynote paper at the seminar.

AL heading towards 'dynastic' politics

Alleges Mirza Fakhrul

STAR REPORT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday alleged that Awami League is heading towards establishing "dynastic politics with an aim to materialise a one-party state".

"Who are being nominated? Who are being made chiefs of different wings of the party? You will figure that out if you pay attention. Only one party and one family are controlling everything," he said.

Fakhrul was speaking at a condolence meeting arranged by Zia Parishad at Jatiya Press Club in memory of its founding chairman Kabir Murad, who passed away recently.

He called upon people to join the movement against the ruling party for a fresh election under a "neutral" Election Commission.

Fakhrul said the ruling party has completed all arrangements to turn Bangladesh into a one-party state, ignoring achievements of the Liberation War and by destroying all state organs.

The BNP leader alleged that the government is appointing teachers at different public universities, including Dhaka University, based on their political affiliation instead of merit and competence.

Apart from this, he alleged that teachers "with poor educational background and qualification" are now being made vice chancellors to serve political interests.

"The same situation prevails in appointing and recruiting judges, with a motive to establish absolute supremacy in all sectors," the BNP leader further alleged. The government is "hatching conspiracy to make the state dysfunctional", he added.

Manju, Shahid remain JP chair, general secretary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anwar Hossain Manju and Sheikh Shahidul Islam have been re-elected chairman and general secretary of Jatiya Party (Manju) for next three years at the party's triennial council.

The event was held at the Institution of Diploma Engineers in the capital yesterday.

Awami League General Secretary and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader attended the council as the chief guest.

AL presidium member and the 14-party alliance spokesperson Mohammed Nasim, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haq Inu, among others, were present at the programme.

Earlier in the day, JP chief Manju and its general secretary Sheikh Shahidul inaugurated the council by hoisting national and party flags respectively.

FRESH OFF THE PRESS



A man pours oil in a bottle after extracting it from mustard seeds. The vendor from Thakurgaon has been running this small business in the city for over a year. With questions being raised about the standard of bottled oil sold in stores, he said, people are opting for alternatives nowadays. He presses the seed right in front of buyers and lets them test its quality as well. Every day, he sells 80 to 100 litres of oil at Tk 200 a litre. This photo was taken from Chhapra Masjid Road in Azimpur recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

DHAKA TODAY

DISCUSSION

Birth Anniversary of Palli Kabi Jasimuddin

Venue: Baatighar, Bishwo Shahitto Kendro

Time: 3pm

WORKSHOP

Artificial Intelligence in Management

Organiser: Human Resource Development Institute

Venue: Daffodil International University

Time: 10am

PET EXHIBITION

Cat Show

Organiser: Bangladesh Cat Fanciers Society

Venue: Jamuna Future Park

Time: 11am

FAIR

Dhaka International Trade Fair

Organiser: Ministry of Commerce and Export Promotion Bureau of Bangladesh

Venue: Agargaon

Time: 10am

WORKSHOP

Dissecting Data in Qualitative Research

Organiser: Center for Language Studies, ULAB

Venue: Campus-A, ULAB, Dhanmondi

Time: 2pm

Alternative funding needed for climate action: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has to find alternative sources of funding to increase its capacity of combating climate change, as member countries of the United Nations failed to reach any consensus on ways to implement the Paris Agreement in the latest COP-25 conference, speakers at a press conference said yesterday.

Coast Trust in association with several other organisations held the press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) in the capital.

Syed Aminul Haque, deputy director of Coast Trust, presented a keynote in the event where he spoke of COP25 in Madrid, which ended "with no solid outcome".

"Major carbon emitters failed to show their action plan to decrease emission, and broke their promise of long term finance, which was necessary for vulnerable countries that will be deeply affected by climate change," Syed Aminul Haque said.

On December 2-13 last year, the longest 25th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP25) was held in Madrid.

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