

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day

Ashes for a living

by Chapal Bishar

Ashes are not the end of everything, not at least for a woman like Surjabanu. She earns a living from ashes for herself and her three children.

Surjabanu, 35, has been selling ash to city housewives for more than three years. Her customers use it as substitute for detergent for cleaning utensils.

Twenty years ago, a trade in ash was unthinkable because firewood was plentiful. As natural gas was introduced for domestic use, ash eventually became harder to find.

The main source of supply are the rice mills outside the metropolitan area where ash is available as waste of wood or rice husks used as fuel.

Small traders collect the ash and sell it to retailers, like Surjabanu, who has about 50 other women in Dendra, on the outskirts of Dhaka city.



Surjabanu with her commodity, at the doorstep of a customer. "We buy a sack-load of ash weighing about 20 kg for 20 taka from the traders and earn a profit of 15 to 20 taka by selling it", says Surjabanu. She travels 10 kms every morning to her customers in the east of the city.

She sells five small tin pots of ash for one taka. "I used to get one taka for pots, but the price has come down because the number of ash sellers has gone up and the supply has increased", she explains.

It is a struggle living on so little. But she prefers work to begging: "As I am able to work, why should I beg charity from others?"

Her husband, Arshad, who she married in childhood, was crippled in the Liberation War and left his family three years ago to live with his brothers in their village. He often visits his family in Dhaka. "I don't blame my husband. He was really helpless to do anything for us," says Surjabanu. "It is my destiny and I am living with it."

Mizan hails Shahabuddin's efforts

The acting chairman of the Jatiya Party, Mr. Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, Sunday said that the people of the country had not forgotten the contribution of the Jatiya Party government in providing the base of socio-economic progress of the nation, a party press release said, reports BSS.

Addressing the leaders and workers of the Jatiya Sechasevak party at Gulshan, he said it was the impression of the party leaders after meeting the Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed Saturday that there was no dearth of sincerity of the Acting President in organising free and fair polls.

He expressed the belief that the people would vote for peace and discipline, and politics of development in the coming elections.

As part of the special security measure, additional contingents of law enforcing agencies have been posted around all foreign missions. Armed police battalions were seen patrolling the areas.

Gulshan Thana did not report any untoward incident on Monday although angry protesters against American attack on Iraq continued in the capital as all over the country. Diplomatic quarters expressed satisfaction over the measures taken to ensure their security and safety.

Unrest in the areas started after demonstrators pelted stones at Saudi Embassy, US diplomatic mission, American club and the residence of Egyptian Ambassador on Friday, the second day of the Gulf war.

No case was lodged in connection with the incidents, police said. Witnesses said no transport other than diplomatic cars were allowed in Gulshan, Baridhara and Banani areas.

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Diplomats' cars damaged in city

Authorities Monday closed entry of all public transports to the diplomatic enclaves in Gulshan Thana as a special security measure after anti-war demonstrators damaged four cars on Sunday, reports UNB.

The damaged cars belonged to the embassies of South Korea, Norway, Indonesia and Japan, Foreign Office sources said Monday.

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A handwritten copy of the Holy Quran claimed to be the largest volume available. This volume of the Quran copied by Md. Hamiduzzaman took eight years to complete the copying.

Police Sunday recovered 7 illegal arms along with huge quantity of ammunitions and chargers from Dr. Milan hall in Jagannath University College, reports UNB.

Acting on a tip police raided the hall and recovered two revolvers, one pistol, one 303 sawed off rifle, one single barrel sawed off gun and two country made guns.

They also recovered 121 rounds of ammunitions, 14 chargers, one dagger and number of bamboo and hockey sticks.

According to Police, several unauthorised arms were thrown out of the windows just as the police personnel stepped in.

Two suspected persons were taken into custody for interrogation, police sources said.

2 top physicians join AL

Professor Dr. M. A. Quadri, a former President of Bangladesh Medical Association and a member of the Executive Committee of Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons Sunday joined the Bangladesh Awami League being imbued with the ideals of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, reports BSS.

Besides Dr. Quadri, renowned paediatrician and rotarian Dr. Moniruzzaman Bhuyian also joined Awami League after they called on Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina, a press release said.

Sheikh Hasina welcoming the two renowned physicians for joining Awami League said her party wanted to use all talents in a planned way for the welfare of the society.

Dr. S. A. Khaleque and Dr. Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin were among others present on the occasion.

Country's future depends on Feb 27 polls: Paltu

The chief of the city Awami League, Mozaffar Hossain Paltu Sunday said the coming elections was not meant merely for electing MPs but it would also decide whether or not the country would have parliamentary form of government, reports BSS.

Addressing a public meeting held at Abhoy Das Lane under Sutrapur constituency of the city, Mr Paltu said the country's future depended much on the February 27 elections. Presided over by the ward president of Awami League Mr Shahabuddin, the meeting was addressed, among others, by Md Hanif.

The city Awami League chief called upon the people to remain on guard so that the peaceful atmosphere, vital for holding free and fair elections, could not be marred by the vested quarters with the help of hoodlums and hirelings.

Mr Paltu said the coming elections would also be a basis for the country's transition to democracy for which innumerable lives have been lost over the years.

France takes part in short film festival

France is participating in the second Gold Leaf International short film festival begins in Dhaka today.

Six short films made by well-known film makers of France including Eric Rohmer will be shown, says a Press release.

The films are: Aurelia Steiner by Marguerite Duras, The Lady Baker of Monceau by Eric Rohmer, Camille or The Catastrophic Comedy by Claude Miller, Homicide by Night by Gerard Krawczyk, No Rest For Billy Brakko by J. P. Jeunet and The Fabulous Adventure of Josette by B. Decharme.

Concern over price hike

Smitri, a socio-cultural organisation, Sunday expressed concern over price spiral of essential commodities, reports UNB.

In a statement, Moimuddin Chowdhury and Zakir Hossain, President and General Secretary respectively of the organisation, said some dishonest traders were taking advantage of the Gulf war and raising prices of oil, baby foods and other essententials.

They called upon the people not to buy essentials at exorbitant prices and to resist profiteers. They also urged the government to take proper steps in arresting price-hike and other adversities arising out of the Gulf war.

7 arms recovered

PROGRAMME

Mahila Parishad Conference

The National Conference of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad will be held on January 24 at the Institution of Engineers and Technology, says a press release.

Rotary Club meet

The regular weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka will be held today (Tuesday) at 5 p.m at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel, says a press release.

Usekul majlis

The annual usekul majlis of the respected Muslim saint of the Sub-continent Hazrat Maulana Shah Sufi Azangachhi (R.A) ended in Dhaka on Sunday with special prayer for peace, welfare, solidarity and integrity of Muslim ummah, says a press release.

Rose Society

The annual general meeting of the Rose Society will be held on January 24 at Khady Eshan, 16, Abdul Gani Road in the city, says a press release.

Reception cancelled

The scheduled reception for January 26 at the residence of Indian High Commissioner to celebrate the Indian Republic Day, has been cancelled due to Gulf crisis, reports BSS.

An Indian High Commission press release on Monday said similar receptions organised by the Indian Assistant High Commissioners in Chittagong and Rajshahi had also been cancelled.

NVP poll campaign

Asadul Kabir, a nominee of the Nationalist Village Party (NVP) for contesting the February 27 parliamentary election from Dhaka-6 (Motijheel-Sabujbagh area) will start his election campaign on January 24 by placing wreaths at the mazar of President Ziaur Rahman.

Urs sharif

The annual Urs of Qutub-e-Zaman alhaj Syed Akhtarul Hussainy (RA) will be held on January 26 at Khandura (Hussainy Darbar Sharif in the district, says a press release.

A milad mahfil and zikr will also be held on the occasion. A special munajat will also be held on the following morning seeking blessings of Allah for the Muslim Ummah.

All the disciples and devotees have been requested to attend.

Dewanganj Samity

The annual general meeting of the Dewanganj Samity will be held on February 15 at 4-30 pm at the Institute of Cost Management Accountants of Bangladesh at Nikhet. The meeting will be followed by election cultural show and dinner, says a press release.

Modalities for troop deployment during polls to be finalised

The caretaker government will soon finalise the modalities for deployment of troops to maintain peace during next month's general elections, an officials source said Monday. "We are working out the details how the military units will be deployed for the elections", the source told UNB.

In his address to the nation last week Acting President Shahabuddin Ahmed said he will deploy military units in each upazila and, if necessary deeper into the interior, during the Feb. 27 elections. The military units will assist BDR and law enforcing agencies to maintain peace and order.

The source said the troops will be under the authority of a magistrate in the area of their deployment. According to initial idea the military units will be present at upazila headquarters instead of polling centres. They, the source said will rush to the scene if any trouble erupts.

Moscow keen to beef up cooperation

by a Staff Correspondent

The Soviet Union is seeking new vistas for expanding cooperation with Bangladesh and its hope that the democratic processes, started in this country, will give a powerful impetus for this cooperation, said Soviet Ambassador to Bangladesh Vitaly S. Smirnov in the Soviet Cultural Center in Dhaka on Sunday inaugurating a ten-day long solo display of works by young talented artist A. Matin Talukder Manju.

Smirnov stressed that the cooperation between the USSR and Bangladesh has not yet exhausted all its reserves and there is still much work ahead to make the bilateral ties really all-embracing. As an example the Ambassador mentioned the construction of the Ghorasal electric power station, being created with the close assistance of Soviet engineers and technicians. While the four blocks of the station are already completed and producing around 25 percent of the total amount of electric power in Bangladesh, the construction of the fifth block has not yet started although all machinery and equipment had long ago arrived in Bangladesh and now is lying on the open waiting for being utilized.

Smirnov called on all the sides interested to take all necessary steps for immediate beginning of the works at the Ghorasal station.



Soviet Ambassador speaking on the occasion of a solo painting exhibition in Dhaka on Sunday.

Pointing out the international sphere, the USSR Ambassador said he was satisfied with the fact, that his country and Bangladesh had common approaches to major international issues. The matter of vital importance for the whole world without a single exception is to stop the current war in the Persian Gulf, he told the audience. Iraq must unconditionally withdraw from the occupied Kuwait, Mr. Smirnov said.

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down sections. Includes an answer key for the previous puzzle and the crossword puzzle itself.

Tuesday

5:00: Opening announcement. Verses from the Holy Quran. News in Bangla. Programme summary. Verses from the holy Geeta. Cartoon film: Dragon's Layer. Education programme for primary school students. Nutundin. Nazrul Sangeet: Songs of Nazrul Islam. Today's programmes. News at Eight in Bangla. Shampratik: Programme on current affairs. Mittu Khuda: Epit written by Kazi Nazrul Islam depicting atrocities committed under British rule in India. Tomorrow's programme. News at Ten in English. Drama Serial: Return to Eden; a mini-series based on an intriguing love triangle. Starring Rebecca Gilling and James Smille. Filmed on location in Australia. News in Bangla. Wednesday's programme summary, verses from the Holy Quran. National flag & anthem. Close down.

Professor Tajuddin Ahmed, presidential adviser for Culture and Food, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, was the Chief Guest on the inauguration ceremony. In his address to the audience he also gave a high estimation of the works of A. Matin Talukder and praised the activities of the Soviet Cultural Center in Dhaka.

A. Matin Talukder Manju is a celebrated artist of Bangladesh. Exhibition of his works, which included ceramics and water color pictures, was held in the Soviet Cultural Center on the occasion of the 19th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between the USSR and Bangladesh.

Talukder, born in 1958 in Madaripur, Bangladesh, has a Diploma-in-Ceramic from Institute of Fine Arts, Dhaka University. He has also B.F.A from the Central Academy of Arts and Design, Beijing, China. In his water color works, which are much influenced by a traditional Chinese water painting, he offers an acute sense of nature and life. The exhibition will last till January 30.

MBBS, BDS admission tests begin Jan 25

Written tests for admission into first year M.B.B.S. and B.D.S. courses will be held on January 25 at 9 a.m., reports BSS.

Admission tests for the male students will take place at the Arts Building of Dhaka University while female student admission tests will be held at the Dhaka Medical College (DMC) and Begum Badrunnessa Government Women College, an official handout said in Dhaka on Sunday.

The applicants will have to take their seats one hour before the start of the tests.

Applicants have been advised to see their respective seating arrangements at the notice boards of DMC and examination centres on January 24, the handout added.

Case filed against Iqbal Hossain

The Anti-Corruption Bureau Sunday filed a case against former Food Minister Major (Rtd) Iqbal Hossain Chowdhury and three government officials on charge of causing a loss to the government for misappropriating Tk 32 crore 42 lakh 50 thousands 200 in the deal for the purchase of two lakh metric tons of rice from Thailand, in the middle of 1989, reports BSS.

According to an official handout, the former Food Minister, in collusion with then Bangladesh Ambassador in Thailand Kazi Anwarul Masud, then Economic Counsellor of Bangladesh in Bangkok, Khondokar Abul Hossain, the then Joint Secretary of Food A.M. Khan Chowdhury and other officials signed an agreement with the two rice trading establishments of Thailand for the supply of two lakh metric tons of rice. They purchased this quantity of rice at a price higher than the prevailing market rate, flouting the government purchase policy and decision with an ulterior motive of benefitting themselves financially or giving financial benefit to others.

They either caused a loss to the government or misappropriated Tk 12 crore 93 lakh 10 thousand 200 by purchasing rice at a price higher than market rate. They caused a further loss of Tk19 crore 49 lakh 40 thousand by hiring foreign ships instead of national ships of Bangladesh Shipping Corporation agreed to carry rice at a rate of 30 US dollar per ton they hired foreign ships giving double freight charge, it added.

Monday lay over Nepal, Bihar, Sub-Himalayan, northern Bangladesh and neighbourhood. Seasonal low lay over South Bay. Sun sets today (Tuesday) at 5:38 pm and rises on Wednesday at 6:43 am. Temperature and humidity recorded in major cities and towns of Bangladesh were:

Table showing temperature and humidity in major cities of Bangladesh. Columns include City/Town, Temperature (max/min), Humidity (9 am/6 pm).

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Weather

Rajshahi still the coldest Temperature in city falls further

By Staff Correspondent

Rajshahi remained coldest zone of the country for the fourth consecutive day and a moderate cold wave may continue for the next few days. Met Office said on Monday.

Monday's temperature in Dhaka fell by 2.7 degree Celsius. The night temperature over the country except Kutubdia, Hatla, Rangpur, Bogra, Rajshahi, Ishwardi and Khulna may fall further by one to three degree Celsius. Met Office has forecast dry weather for 36 hours ending Wednesday morning.

Outlook for subsequent two days: little change. Extended outlook for another five days: no marked change. The westerly low now on

Table showing temperature in Celsius and humidity in percentage for various cities/towns. Columns include City/Town, Temperature (max/min), Humidity (9 am/6 pm).

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Vice-Chancellor of Dhaka University Prof. Muniruzzaman Miah awarding prizes to talented students of Rokeya Hall on Monday