

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day

Vending Beauty on the Wayside

by Sabah Chowdhury

A thing of beauty is a joy forever, goes the saying. The sight of fresh flowers on the footpath, can be a most delightful surprise together with being redolent of the best memories of life and a palette of glorious hues radiating joy all around.

The pavement florists of present-day Dhaka, are providing relief from the nagging drudgery of urban life. They gift us a breath of fresh air.

These flower vendors mostly sit on corners of a busy point of the city hoping to snare the passerby. The flowers they sell are limited in variety — only ranjanigandhas, roses, and marigolds — but together they make a lovely combination of red, white and gold.

Ranjanigandhas are usually kept in a bucket to keep them fresh. The roses are kept in discarded milk powder cans with the marigolds, to make a typical two-colour bouquet. The marigolds are woven into garlands, and hung in rows so that they are visible from afar.

The wayside florist does not have a posh shop in any of the expensive areas of the city but he is doing the same thing as his fancier counterpart, only at a much cheaper price.

Abu Miah, who has entered this trade rather recently after an unhappy stint at waiting on rickety tables in a shanty eatery, provided some interesting insights, sitting on the Dhanmondi roadside. He said most of the ranjanigandhas and roses are cultivated at Savar and Manikganj. Some of the "better" varieties

arrive from across the border through the Jessore route making them one of the few examples of "blackmarket flowers" in the world.

Flower trade is itself only a few years old in Bangladesh. Once it used to be entirely imported but the local growers have caught up recently. The Jessore suppliers are, however, carrying on undampened. With the flowers have come the florist shops, brightly lit and air-conditioned even, but the footpath florists are still holding their own.

Abu Miah's ranjanigandhas are sold at Taka 3 a stick. A bouquet of ranjanigandhas and roses, neatly wrapped up to make an ideal gift for someone very special, costs something between Taka 20 and 25. His weekend sale is around 500 to 600 Taka. But the average day brings in between Taka 200 and 250.

Flowers are now part of the wedding ceremony, the birthday party, milads and official ceremonies. Bridal suites are sweetened up with flowers too.

Abu Miah decided to take to this profession as the work is not very taxing compared to his last job and the returns are good too. People prefer to buy flowers from him rather than the smart shops for obvious reasons.

"Besides earning money I am serving society in another way also. I decorate this city of dust and concrete with beauty," said Abu Miah proudly. And who can disagree with a florist of the footpath holding forth on the aesthetics of the flower trade?



A flower vendor arranging his merchandise.

25.66 trillion cft. gas reserve in Bangladesh

The country was an estimated gas reserve of 25.66 trillion cubic feet in 17 gas fields. Nine of the gas fields have been discovered between 1972-1990, reports BSS.

This was disclosed at a workshop on 'oil potential of eastern part of Bengal basin' held Wednesday. Mr I U Malik, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources inaugurated the workshop jointly organised by the Bangladesh Petroleum Institute (BPI) and NORAD. Mr Lutful Matin, Chairman, Petro-Bangla and Mr Giasuddin Ahmed, Director BPI also spoke at the inaugural session, according to a PID handout.

The speakers opined that the eastern fold belt was not only a gas province but also a prospective area for oil and liquid hydrocarbons.

The speakers disclosed that the country had been producing on an average 500 million cubic feet of gas, 900 barrels of condensate and 300 barrels of crude oil per day meeting upto 70 per cent of our total commercial energy requirements. This saves annually Taka 1600 crore in foreign exchange, they further said.

Dr K Narayan, Petroleum Adviser of Norwegian Petroleum Directorate, Mr Atle Austegard, Associate Professor of Norway Bergen University, Dr Sayyedul Arafin and D K Guha, Chief Scientific Officer of the Bangladesh Petroleum Institute, took part in the discussion and highlighted the geological structures and regional analysis of oil potential of the eastern folded belt of the Bengal basin.

Over 3,500 Bangladeshis still in Kuwait

More than 3,500 Bangladeshi nationals still living in Kuwait have formed a voluntary organisation to render emergency service to the community, reports UNB.

The organisation named "Bangladeshi Community Kuwait" has also set up a medical team with members from the community, residents told a visiting Correspondent

T & T officials asked to check overbilling

GAZIPUR, Feb 6: Presidential Adviser in-charge of the Ministries of Communication, Post and Telecommunication ABM G Kibria stressed the need for modernisation of telecommunication management for the socio-economic development of the country, reports UNB.

He was addressing the trainees, trainers and other concerned officials of the T&T Board at the Telecommunication Staff College in Dhaka on Tuesday.

A training course for 31 Assistant Directors has begun in the college. A total of 939 officers have been provided training in the staff college since its opening in 1980.

In his address, Kibria urged the officials and employees for rendering proper services to the subscribers and to check over billing and other bottlenecks within the shortest possible time.

He sought cooperation of all to maintain law and order for fair holding of the Sangsad election.

Additional Secretary in-



Supporters of Kader Siddiqui went on a token hunger strike in front of the National Press Club on Wednesday. They demanded his immediate release from detention. — Star photo.

DU team calls on Shahabuddin

Plea to recover arms from varsity campus

A 17-member delegation of Dhaka University comprising teachers, syndicate members, provosts and student leaders called on Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed at the President's Secretariat in Dhaka on Tuesday, reports UNB.

The delegation led by Vice-Chancellor Prof M Muniruzzaman Mia demanded immediate recovery of illegal arms from the Dhaka University campus for restoration of congenial academic atmosphere.

Delegation members also urged the Acting President to take steps for recovery of illegal arms so that the Feb 27 polls can be free and fair.

The need for unearthing the sources of supply of illegal arms was stressed by the delegation which called for apprehending and putting on trial those involved in this regard.

The delegation included, among others, Pro-Vice-Chancellor Dr Wakil Ahmed, Proctor Kamrul Hasan Chowdhury, DUCSU General Secretary Khairul Kabir Khokon and other leaders of the APSU.

The student leaders, who demanded immediate trial of ousted President Ershad and his ministers, pledged their full co-operation with the authorities in making the campus free from illegal arms.

The Acting President told the delegation that his interim government already initiated a drive to mop up illegal arms and would welcome co-operation from all quarters for its success.

He said that this administration was totally committed to holding a free and fair election. Justice Shahabuddin said security forces, including armed police, ansars and BDR would be deployed in each of the country's 24,200 polling centres to ensure peace and order during the polls.

Besides, mobile units comprising the armed forces and BDR would be deployed at probable trouble spots in each upazila under a first class magistrate to intervene in the event of any breach of peace.

Justice Shahabuddin said this time the armed forces would come specifically to

help the civil administration to maintain peace and discipline during voting.

The Acting President said trial of the accused persons would follow completion of investigations and submission of charge sheets.

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JP in opposition stronger: Mizan

Acting Chairman of Jatiya Party Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury hailed his party's leaders and workers who made Tuesday's demonstration a success, reports UNB.

Jatiya Party and its front organisations today brought out a huge protest procession in the capital demanding release of their leader deposed President Hussain Muhammad Ershad.

"Those who thought Jatiya party will be finished with its removal from power and arrest of Ershad have been proved to be wrong", Mizan told a gathering of party activists at his Gulshan residence after the agitation.

Mizan said the "opposition Jatiya party" is stronger than the "ruling Jatiya party", and the leadership of "arrested Chairman Ershad" is more dynamic and powerful than the then "Party Chairman".

He regarded that Radio and Television didn't broadcast the news of JP procession, while it was giving coverage to such parties or leaders who have no or little popular support.

Release of Janadal Secy demanded

The President and the General Secretary of the city unit of Janadal, Mr Abdul Rahman and Mr Abdul Baten Tuesday demanded immediate release of the party Secretary General Mohammad Shams-had, reports BSS.

In a joint statement, the Janadal leaders said Mohammad Shams-had was arrested on charge of bringing out demonstration in favour of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Mohammad Shams-had has been given detention for one month, a Janadal press release said.

'Newspapers can hasten democratic transition'

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League president member Dr. Kamal Hossain said newspapers can play a vital role in transition to democracy by creating hatred for autocracy.

He was speaking at a seminar on "democracy and our newspapers" at the Dhaka University Teacher-Student Centre on Tuesday. The seminar was organised by Dhaka University Journalists Association.

In his key-note paper Prof. Emajuddin Ahmed, former pro-Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University, said consensus is a basic factor in democratic society. As an important social institution newspapers can play a great role to this effect, he said.

He said newspapers are not the mouthpiece of the dominant class only but also of the deprived people.

Dr. Emajuddin said newspapers can help in upholding cultural and social values. Newspapers should create ha-

tred against those who work to destroy social values, he said.

The former pro-Vice Chancellor said rule of law is an imperative for the success of a democratic system. Loyalty to rule of law rather than to an individual has to be ensured and newspapers can raise consciousness of people in this regard.

He said accountability is the essence of democracy. In a democratic system newspapers as well as political parties work under some agreed norms, he said.

Dr. Kamal Hossain demanded immediate transfer of former president Ershad to the Central Jail. Referring to Article 27 of the Constitution he said all citizens are equal in the eye of law. He said special arrangement for Ershad is a violation of the Constitution.

Dr. Kamal said successful transition to democracy is not possible if the society cannot be cleaned of illegal arms and black money. He said process-

sions in support of Ershad do not demonstrate his popularity.

He said slightest deviation from the joint movement would be a betrayal to the martyrs.

Barrister Nazmul Huuda, a member of the BNP advisory council, said Jatiya Party dared to participate in the polls as there was disagreement among the main parties on the trial of Ershad. He said those who are responsible for killing democracy have no right to enjoy the fruits of democracy.

Zahirul Huq, President of Dhaka Union of Journalists, said newspapers could not fulfil people's expectations as there still exist Special Powers Act and Printing Presses and Publications Act. He said Special Powers Act is not necessary for detaining Ershad.

Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof. Muniruzzaman Miah was chief guest at the seminar

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down words. Includes a small diagram of a TV set.

Brazil-World XI soccer match on TV tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Television will telecast on Friday morning at 10 am the exhibition match between Brazil and World XI held on October 31, 1990 to celebrate the 50th birthday of soccer king Pele at the Milan city.

The match was sponsored by Pepsi Cola. Stars players like Rogo Milla, Careca took part in that match.

TV Thursday

- 5-00 Opening and recitation from Al-Quran
5-20 News in Bengali
5-30 Khelar Jagat : Sports lessons
5-55 Comedy film series : Mork And Mindy
6-20 Parichay : Discussion programme
7-20 Jibaner Alo : Islam in day to day life
7-50 Programme summary
8-00 News in Bengali
8-40 This Week's Drama : Chhoto Chhoto Dirghaswas written by Imdadul Hiaq Milon and produced by Fakhru Abedin.
10-00 News in English
10-30 Mini Series : 'Spearfield's Daughter'
11-30 News

Weather

Night temperature falls further

By Staff Correspondent

Dry weather will prevail over Bangladesh on Thursday. Night temperature fell by one to three degrees Celsius on Wednesday in most places. It is likely to fall further by one to two degrees Celsius tonight (Thursday). The country is under the grip of a mild cold wave. It is likely to continue for the next 24 hours commencing six in the evening, Wednesday.

Temperature rose by one to four degrees in Sylhet, Hatiya and Kutubdia. Temperature in Srimangol, Comilla, Chandpur, Feni and Satkhira remained nearly unchanged.

Outlook for subsequent two days : Bad weather likely. Extended outlook for another five days : little change. The lowest minimum temperature in Dhaka was 14.5 degrees Celsius while the country's lowest temperature 10.6 degrees Celsius was recorded at Rajshahi.

The temperature and humidity recorded in important cities and towns of the country on Wednesday were:

Table with columns: Cities/Towns, Maximum, Minimum, 9 am, 6 pm. Lists temperatures for Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Bogra, Rangpur, Dinajpur, Mymensingh, Cox's Bazar, and international cities like Calcutta, Bangkok, Delhi, Beijing.

Advertisement for Tripti Refined Soybean Oil. Includes text: 'This funnel is yours FREE* when you buy Tripti Refined Soybean Oil'. Features an image of a Tripti oil can.

Advertisement for Gaganprajata Bhabha Bangladesh. Includes text: 'গগনপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ উপজেলা পরিষদ কার্যালয় (প্রকৌশল বিভাগ) ডুমুরিয়া, খুলনা'. Contains a table with columns: ক্রমিক নং, কাজের নাম, প্রাকল্পন মূল্য, জামানতের পরিমাণ ২%, দরপত্র দলিলের মূল্য, সময়. Lists items like 'ঘোড়া-পেরা-তনি কোয়ার' and 'রান্নাই কোয়ার রাস্তার সুসংলগ্ন মোড়লের বাড়ীর পার্শ্ব'.