

Dhaka Day by Day

Life after Drug

by Iftikhar A Chowdhury

With four pethidine injections a day, he was fast getting prepared to meet the inevitable — death. His fine physique and sound mind gradually became a slave to a deadly obsession named pethidine. In a state of unconsciousness caused by an over-dose of drug he was taken to a city hospital in March, 1993. Having experienced a comatose for about 48 hours, with the relentless efforts of his doctors and his undiminished will to live, he survived that time.

It is precisely from such a hopeless situation, confesses Saifullah Kabir, that he made a remarkable come-back from the deadly world of narcotics.

It started quite the same way it starts with any other youths of his age, admits Kabir. "At first it is always with a knack for adventure or from a sense of frustration that a person ventures into the dark world of drugs. And, of course, there is the mistaken idea of manhood in exploring a world of taboo", he adds.

As for Kabir, he too started taking drugs believing that it would be an exhilarating adventure, and that, it would open his eyes to a horizon never seen before through his naked eyes. Some extra force was definitely required to experience such an adventure. And he deeply believed that drugs will give him that extra force and extra vision. So he was convinced that drugs would take him to that dream land which is so close to us yet so far away, so real yet so deceiving.

In his second year as a student of BA (Hons), Dhaka University, Kabir was first introduced to drugs by some of his 'good friends'. He started with phensylid and hashish and gradually matured his habits through taking hardcore stuffs like heroine and pethidine. Before he had known the eventual cost of this adventure, he became a slave to these lethal drugs. "Then I knew only one master and one god — drugs", recalls Kabir.

Kabir took pethidines for about 18 months, beginning with half an ampoule and ending in four ampoules a day. By that time it was almost common knowledge that he was on drugs. As he didn't have any income of his own, he borrowed money from friends, relatives and even from distant acquaintances. At one time when people refused to lend him anymore money, he

even stole money and valuables from their houses and sold it to buy drugs.

A bright student throughout, Kabir began to skip classes and tutorials. He avoided the company of anyone who would try to make him understand the harmful effects of drugs. Ultimately, Kabir almost became socially excommunicated or rather, he chose the life of an outcaste. At one point, he was left alone with no one to care for him except his own family members. Actually, it was through their help and the patience with which they motivated him, which finally made him realise that life was rather too precious to be wasted on drugs.

Eldermost among three brothers and sisters, Kabir was his father's favourite. The family for

long tried to hide the fact that he was an addict from his father who is a senior corporate official and had little time to notice his son's gradual destruction. Kabir too, from his childhood days, respected, feared and loved his father. His father, when heard about his son's serious addiction problems, suffered a massive heart attack and was hospitalised for about a month. This incident shook Kabir to the very core. For once he realised that he was not killing himself only, but was also taking along with him his most loved ones to the grave by exposing them to severe anxieties and sufferings.

The realisation brought back Kabir from the sure grip of death. On his return home from hospital, narrowly surviving a drug over-dose, he would often tell his family members to tie him down to his bed or lock him in so that he cannot go out to fetch a pathedine when he badly felt like taking one. He would often cry out loud with pain inside the locked room and his family members also cried with him and bore the pain equally, explains Kabir.

"Without someone caring for you, you simply cannot come out of such a death-trap. Going for drugs is easy, but very few people can come out of it unharmed", claims a triumphant Kabir.

With the professional help of his doctor and a renowned psychiatrist, by the end of November 1993 he became completely cured. Kabir's one-time belief that drug was his destiny was proven wrong.



The Canadian High Commission and the Bangladesh Cancer Society jointly organised the first ever Terry Fox Run in the capital yesterday to raise funds for innovative cancer research and to create cancer awareness in the country. — Star photo

Biswas stresses role of cooperatives

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday underscored the role of cooperatives for economic emancipation of the poor and the working class in Bangladesh's perspective, reports UNB.

"This is why we have to continue our efforts to properly organise the cooperative societies as economic institutions," the President said in a message on occasion of National Cooperative Day.

In a separate message Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia has called upon the country's cooperators to come forward with greater zeal and commitment to contribute their mite in the current development efforts.

"Cooperatives can be a major vehicle for the socio-economic empowerment of the neglected people and in alleviating poverty from our society," Begum Zia said.

The Prime Minister, however, emphasised on well-organised and dynamic management to make the cooperatives movement a complete success.

Power station commissioned

Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources Dr Khondaker Mosharraf Hossain yesterday commissioned the Gingira power sub-station at a simple ceremony, reports BSS.

The Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) has constructed the sub-station with the financial and technical assistance of the British government at a cost of Tk 4,01,55,000, including a foreign exchange component of Tk 2,54,55,000.

The sub-station, located on 2.10 acres of land, will facilitate to provide electricity to over 15,000 domestic, industrial, agricultural and commercial consumers in Gingira and its surrounding areas. The present number of consumers in the area is about 10,203, including 9,996 domestic and 120 industrial ones.

Inaugurating the sub-station, the energy minister said the government had materialised another long-felt demand of the people of Gingira and its surrounding area. As a result, a revolutionary development, particularly in industrial sector in the area will take place, he added.

Garments workers' rally

Workers of several garments factories in the city yesterday staged a demonstration to press home their 8-point demands, including the implementation of minimum wages announced by the government, reports UNB.

The National Garments Workers' Federation organised a rally at Mukhtang near GPO which was followed by a procession.

The federation leaders said that the owners were exploiting the garments workers for a long time by denying them the minimum wages and forcing them to work extra hours without giving any financial benefits.

Presided over by Shamsunahar, the rally was addressed, among others, by Mohammad Qayyum, Alamgir Khandaker, Mizanur Rahman, Mohammad Jahangir and Afsar Uddin.

Executive member of the federation Mohammad Qayyum said they would continue the agitation until their demands were met.

He said the federation was struggling to realise the minimum rights of the workers, including implementation of the ILO Convention, disbursement of salary within 7th day of the month, and maternity leave for women.

Trust fund for research works

The inaugural ceremony of the Jahanara Majid and Mahbub Alam Trust Fund was held in the city yesterday morning at the auditorium of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh with Dr Sharif Uddin in the chair, reports BSS.

With an objective to finance research activities on urban life of Bangladesh, especially on Dhaka city: its past, present and future, the trust fund was established this year by Mahbub Alam, Torikul Alam, Reazul Hassan Khan and Bilquis Jahan and Qamar Jahan Banu.



A week-long photography and art exhibition began at the Gallery Tone in the city yesterday on the occasion of its first anniversary.

New school bldg opens

Home Minister Abdur Matin Chowdhury yesterday said the government had created a new trend of development in the country in a very short time, reports BSS.

He was speaking as the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony of the new building of Purbia Para High School at Rugganj.

Deaths of Haralal, Ashish Kumar Loho condoled

State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahanara Begum expressed her profound shock at the death of noted folk-singer Haralal Roy and noted actor Ashish Kumar Loha, reports BSS.

In a condolence message Prof Jahanara Begum said in the death of Haralal Roy and Ashish Kumar Loha, the country has lost its two noted persons of the cultural arena.

She recalled their contributions for enrichment of national culture.

She conveyed her deep sympathy to the members of the bereaved families and prayed for the salvation of the departed souls.

The members of the Bangladesh Television Natyashilpi O Natyakar Sangsad (Tenashinas) have expressed their deep shock at the death of eminent film, television, radio and stage artiste Ashish Kumar Loho. He died of cancer on Friday night, reports BSS.

In a message to condoled the death, the Tenashinas members expressed their deep sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.



4:30 Opening announcement
4:45 Sports programme
5:10 News in Bangla
5:25 Kids songs
6:00 Programme on education: Shikhdhangan
6:30 Samachar
7:00 Banishari
7:25 Comedy series: Major Dad/Mr Ben
8:00 News in Bangla
8:25 Jannabhumti
8:30 Matri O Manush
9:00 Biswa Natak
10:00 News in English
10:30 Drama series: Dynasty
11:30 Khabar/The News
11:45 Closing

'Ruling party pushing country towards state of confrontation'

Awami League General Secretary Zillur Rahman yesterday said the ruling party is pushing the country towards a state of confrontation by refusing to accept the Opposition demand for a caretaker government, reports UNB.

He called upon the government to concede to the demand for a caretaker government to ensure free and fair elections.

Otherwise, he warned, the ruling party will be held responsible for the failure of the on-going government-Opposition dialogue.

The Awami League leader was speaking at a discussion at Bhairab on the occasion of the Jail Killing Day. Chatushtka, an organisation formed in memory of the four national leaders, killed inside the Dhaka Central jail on November 3, 1975, organised the meeting.

Zillur said the Awami League and other opposition parties are determined to realise the demand for a caretaker government through agitation.

The Opposition agitation, he said, is of course aimed at ousting the BNP Government because of its corruption, terrorism and other misdeeds, including vote rigging.

"The BNP will bring disaster for the country if it remains in power," he said urging the people to intensify the present anti-government agitation under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina.

Discussion on UNESCO Day

Education Minister Jamiuddin Sircar yesterday urged all to uphold the objectives of UNESCO to ensure world peace through the promotion of education, science and culture, reports BSS.

He said this at a discussion on "UNESCO in Today's World" arranged here to mark the 48th founding day of the UN body, UNESCO.

The Bangladesh National Commission for UNESCO and The National Association of UNESCO Clubs in Bangladesh jointly organised the discussion, which was chaired by Vice Chancellor of the Bangladesh Engineering University, Prof Mohammad Shahjahan.

Assistant Resident Representative of UNESCO Richard Dietus, secretary of the National UNESCO Commission Prof M Saifuddin, professor of the International Relations at the Dhaka University Nurul Momen, and secretary general of the association of UNESCO Clubs Mahbubuddin Chowdhury also spoke on the occasion.

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Weather

Temperature may fall

Weather is likely to remain dry with partly cloudy sky across the country during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

The Met office says slight fall in night temperature is expected over the country.

In its outlook for tomorrow the Met office forecast deteriorated weather, giving extended outlook for another four days, weathermen predicted little change.

Country's highest temperature 32.8 degree Celsius was recorded at Madaripur and the lowest 16.8 degrees at Dinajpur.

The sun sets today at 5:17 pm and rises tomorrow (Sunday) at 6:08 am.

The maximum and minimum temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	6 am	6 pm
Dhaka	32.2	21.8	80	80
Chittagong	32.0	22.6	77	73
Rajshahi	31.2	21.2	78	69
Khulna	31.4	22.3	82	78
Barisal	31.6	22.8	88	92
Sylhet	32.0	19.0	72	77
Cox's Bazar	32.7	24.0	80	78

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Speaker : Mr. John Warren "Representative of Leicester University, UK".

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