

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day

BTC's Generous Venture

by Raffat Binte Rashid

Have you ever seen a nursery, run out of supply and that too within the first 24 hours of its opening? The demand was so pressing that it couldn't be met with a stock of one lakh saplings.

Now come on, don't think Dhaka people are sane again and planting trees all around. It was just a free sapling distribution centre, a noble effort by BTC (Bangladesh Tobacco Company) that made possible the apparently unthinkable feat to materialise. Saplings of ipil-ipil, mahogany, jack fruit, neem, guava etc vanished from the centre like hot dogs.

It was as if a sudden realisation struck the city's citizens and they had to do something about the unused spaces in their courtyard. Thus they all went crazy about all those potential trees giving fruits or not.

"BTC is committed to society to maintain and restore the environmental balance and for the last 16 years it has been distributing and planting two crore 20 lakh trees all over Bangladesh," says Ekram Moin of Corporate Affairs, BTC, at its Bonsai Nursery, a free sapling distribution centre.

This is the third consecutive year that the Bonsai Nursery, the only one of its kind has been set up in the city to encourage tree plantation among the city dwellers. "We are distributing about one hundred thousand saplings and already within a day around 80 per cent of it are gone," says Moin.

The green Dhaka where our grandparents lived is definitely no more. Along with its past glories and beauties our once famous metropolitan is now almost denuded of trees and plants, that besides providing shade made the roads and avenues worth a glance.

We are certainly a strange race; we commit relentless mayhem to big trees and love to display our craze for small ones, in pots and tubs. Decorating our verandahs and roof tops is now the hobby in vogue.

Demands for pot plants are so much on the rise that the city has approximately 200 nurseries scattered in and around its maze of high rise buildings, apartments and factories.



Saplings for free distribution

Bangladesh envoy to UN presents credentials

NEW YORK, Sept 21: New permanent representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, Ambassador Anwarul Karim Chowdhury presented his credentials to United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali on Thursday.

In his remarks, the permanent representative conveyed the greetings of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh to the secretary-general and mentioned about her coming visit to the United Nations.

The secretary-general said that he was looking forward to meeting her next month and asked him to convey his greetings and regards to the Prime Minister.

The Permanent Representative also conveyed to the Secretary-General the appreciation of the government and people of Bangladesh for the support of the United Nations system in our development efforts as well as for the efforts being made by the Secretary-General for the reform of the United Nations in all areas of its activities.

The Secretary-General mentioned that Bangladesh have been an important member of the United Nations and playing a positive role in its affairs.

Senior officials of the UN Secretary-General's office were present on the occasion. Deputy permanent representative of Bangladesh Mohammad Ziauddin and counsellor Humayun Kabir were also present.

Dhanmondi Lake preservation project taken up

Housing and Public Works Ministry has taken up a development project with a view to preserving water and natural environment at Dhanmondi Lake in the city, reports BSS.

This was disclosed at a inter-ministerial meeting on preservation of environment of Dhanmondi Lake, enhancing its natural beauty as well as building the lake area as a recreation spot.

State Minister for LGRD and Cooperative Syed Abul Hossain presided over the meeting held at the conference room of the ministry.

The state minister directed the officials of the concerned organisations to take immediate measures in preserving natural beauty maintaining decency of the Bangabandhu Memorial Museum Complex adjacent to the lake.

Habiganj-2 by-polls
Candidates asked to submit statement of fund sources

The Election Commission (EC) Saturday advised the candidates contesting the October 15 by-election in Habiganj-2 to submit to the returning officer a statement of the probable sources of fund for election expenses in the prescribed form within seven days after the withdrawal date, reports BSS.

An EC press release said a copy of the statement should also be sent to the commission through registered post. If the candidate is an income tax payee, a copy of the income tax return, last submitted by him, should also be sent with the statement.

The statement shall be accompanied with a statement of the candidate's assets and liabilities and his annual income and expenditure, the press release said.

If the candidate receives any sum from any source other than the sources mentioned in his statement, he should, within three days after receipt of such sum, submit a supplementary statement to the returning officer and a copy of it to the commission by registered post, the press release said.

Violation of the rules is punishable offence under Section 73 and 74 of the Representation of People Order of 1972, the press release added.

In another press release, the EC said the election expenses of a candidate must not exceed Taka three lakh.

The Commission further said the amount of money mentioned in Clause(3) or any portion thereof shall not be utilised for (a) printing of a multi-colour poster or (b) use of any imported paper, or (c) erection of any gate or arch, or (d) setting up a pandal covering an area of more than four hundred square feet, or (e) making any banner by using any cloth, or (f) employing or using more than three microphones or loudspeakers at a time in a constituency, or (g) commencing election publicity three weeks prior to the polling day, or (h) setting up more than 20 election camps or offices in a constituency, or (i) using any vehicle or vessel for procession, or (j) illumination by use of electricity in any form, or (k) displaying of a symbol or portrait of a candidate with more than one colour, or (l) display of a symbol prescribed by the Commission.

The violation of the rules is punishable offence under Section 73 and 74 of the Representation of People Order of 1972, the press release added.

All concerned including thana and district administrations and police department have been instructed to take legal action including filing of cases against the violators of the Election Commission People's Representative Order 1972, the press release added.

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Countrywide rat killing drive begins

A month-long countrywide hunt for rats that destroy crops and property worth crores of Taka every year began yesterday, reports BSS.

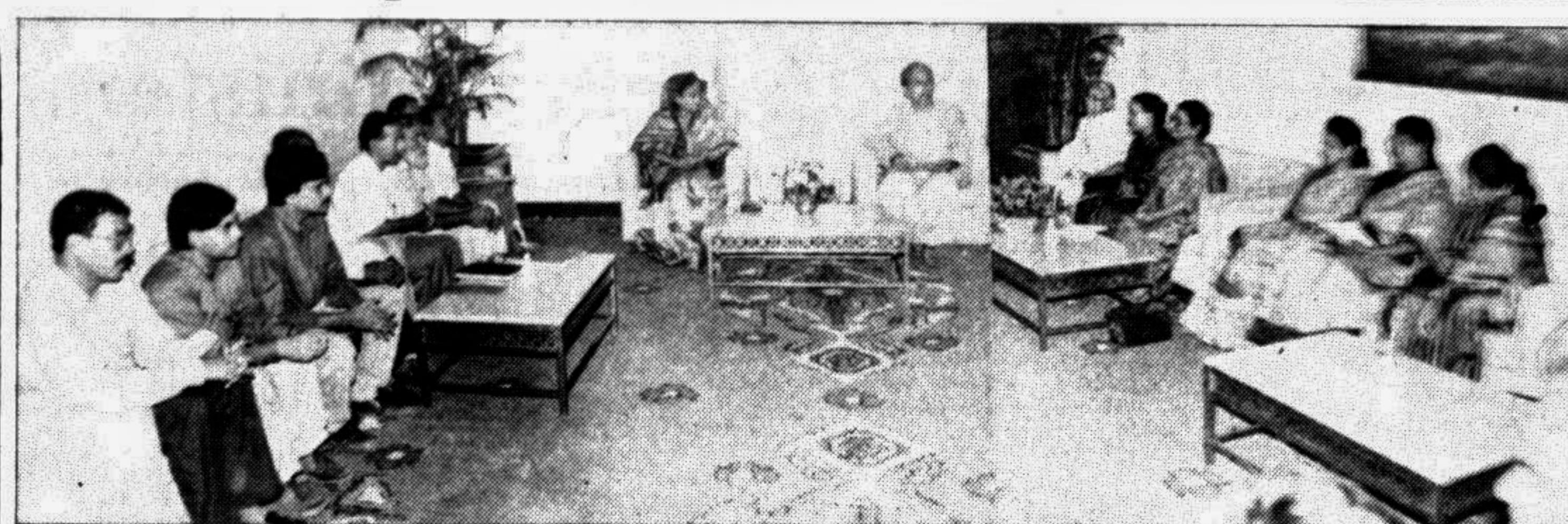
Agriculture, Food, Relief and Disaster Management Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury formally inaugurated the Rat Killing Drive 1996, organised by Bangladesh Agriculture Extension Department, at a function at the BAED office at Khambaria in the city.

Rats waste 1.5 to 4.5 lakh metric tons of Aman paddy in the field annually, which could lead to 12 to 30 lakh people.

Main objective of the nationwide campaign is to make it into a social movement by motivating farmers, students and volunteers in participating in the drive.

The agriculture extension workers will convey the technology of killing rats to the farmers to reduce damage in households, roads, embankments and cropfields caused by rats.

Besides, prevention of spreading diseases like plague and jaundice transmitted by rats and keeping the environment free from pollution are



A team of the Association of BCS Education (General), led by its president, Prof ABM Ali, called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the International Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

JMD condemns case against Tareq, Iskandar

Jatiyatabadi Mukti Joddha Dal (JMD), yesterday condemned the filing of a "false case" against Tareq Rahman, Sayeed Iskandar and Giasuddin Mamun, reports BSS.

In a statement, JMD president Sadeq Hossain Khoka and general secretary Dr Aminur Rahman termed the case as "nothing but political harassment."

"They said the case was filed to tarnish the image of BNP chairperson and Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia and suppress the nationalist forces."

Move to attract foreign investors

Abul Hasan leaves for Malaysia, S'pore today

The State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury, is going to embark upon a two-nation economic diplomacy today (Monday) to attract foreign investments to Bangladesh, reports BSS.

This is going to be a follow-up of the massive economic diplomacy launched by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina some ten days ago during her trip to China and Hong Kong.

In the first leg of the important mission Abul Hasan Chowdhury will be visiting Malaysia where his main thrust will be to attract investors of that country to the energy sector of Bangladesh. Besides, he will persuade Malaysian entrepreneurs to invest in joint venture projects in this country.

The state minister of foreign affairs will take this opportunity to review bilateral trade between Bangladesh and Malaysia, which is far from favourable to this country. Chowdhury will insist on Malaysia in the course of discussion with the leadership of that country to step up its imports from Bangladesh to offset the existing imbalance in bilateral trade against this country.

He will also discuss with the Malaysian Minister for Manpower problems being faced by Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia. There are about

50,000 Bangladeshi workers in Malaysia.

In the second leg of his two-nation jaunt he will be visiting Singapore on the 26th and 27th of this month where he will under take a similar exercise.

In both the countries Abul Hasan Chowdhury will try to prevail upon investors to set up export processing zones in Bangladesh as South Korea and Japan have done.

Abul Hasan Chowdhury in the course of discussion with the investors of Malaysia and Singapore will explain the new government's liberal investment policy. Under the favourable climate for investment prevailing in Bangladesh, a foreign investor is allowed to repatriate his entire profit to his home country.

The new government has enacted a new law for withdrawal of lock-in from the share market. The foreign investors should take full advantage of facilities being offered by the new government of Bangladesh and invest in the country.

During his whirlwind ramble of the two countries of Southeast Asia the State Minister for Foreign Affairs will be accompanied by a nine-member delegation consisting of businessmen, officials representing the energy ministry and board of investments.

What's on today....

Cultural function: A cultural function and memorial meet on choreographer GM Mannan will be held. Venue Shilpkala Academy auditorium. Time: 7 pm.

Workshop on career guidance: Rotary Club of Dilkusha will hold a workshop on career guidance — studies abroad in observance of its youth activities months. Venue: Hotel Purbani. Time: 5 pm

Rotary Club of Dhaka Central: The weekly meeting will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club. Time: 1.30 pm

Rotary Club of Dhaka North: The weekly meeting will be held. Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 5.30 pm

King Fahd greeted

President Abdur Rahman Biswas has greeted King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the occasion of his country's National Day today, reports BSS.

In a message yesterday the President expressed his confidence that the friendly ties binding the two brotherly countries will be further strengthened in the years ahead.

In a separate message Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina felicitated King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud on the occasion of the country's National Day.

The Prime Minister, in her message, said that the close fraternal ties and excellent cooperation existing between the two countries will be further developed, expanded and consolidated to mutual benefit in the years to come.

Meanwhile BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia greeted King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud on the occasion of his country's National Day.

In a message of felicitation, the former Prime Minister said the fraternal ties between the two Muslim states will be further strengthened in years ahead.

Earlier, on arrival at Bangabhaban, the High Commissioner was given a guard of honour by the President's Guard Regiment. He took salute and inspected the guard.

Secretary to the President Muhammad Enamul Huq, Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan and Military Secretary to the President Maj Gen Ruhul Alam Chowdhury were present.

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