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Down to Earth

Growing Interest in Potted Garden

By A S M Nurunnabi

A close touch with greenery which was available four or five decades ago is now a lost dream for most of the dwellers of Dhaka City. The seasonal changes in nature which mark a display of nature's colour, beauty and appeal still continue in their usual patterns, but the hectic pace of life of the citizens leaves them little scope to tarry a little and appreciate those beauties in this bustling city.

In the ever swelling crowd of humans and a stiflingly congested milieu, it seems that there is no place for greenery in the city. Even the feel of a verdant patch of grass under the feet seems to be a rare experience. Thus the city wearing an external veneer of polish and brightness over the composing units of steel, mortar and bricks is generally regarded as having a prosaic and matter-of-fact entity.

From another perspective, it may be said that a flower garden, reared on earth, however small it may be, is a source of joy. But it is not easy to find such joy in a city. In this dreary image of city life, we may sometimes come across some pleasant exceptions. Such exceptions lie in the practice of potted garden culture. Potted gardens have immense possibilities, and a genuine enthusiast in this line will stop at nothing in building up such a garden within the confines of the available space. It is a sort of craze which no one outside the ambit of its influence will appreciate.

The usually available spaces for such purposes are provided by verandas, window sills and staircase landings. If you have

the good fortune to have the run of a roof, the scope is greatly widened for a properly planned potted garden. Sometimes matching in beauty and variety with any garden on solid earth.

A roof garden on flower pots has many advantages; mainly it is safe from pilferage, thereby allowing its owners to enjoy the beauty of the flowers till the last moment of their life. Of course, a roof garden requires more attention and care and comparatively more expenses for proper maintenance.

With the advent of the winter season, the craze for potted garden acquires added flip with its enthusiasts becoming engrossed in the raising of various flowers.

The culture of growing various vegetables on pots has also developed in the city for some time. Side by side, some citizens have reportedly achieved success in growing fruit trees on pots. In the tree plantation exhibitions which are held from time to time in the city, many visitors might have seen the culture in pots of such fruits as mango, guava, grape, orange, sugarcane, etc. Potted garden enthusiasts may, no doubt, be interested in knowing the techniques of growing such fruit trees in pots.

Lately we find flower pots of various shapes and designs in the city markets which can be adapted for culture of vegetables and fruit trees. The new category of pots is an improvement on the old versions which are mostly drab in appearance. Nowadays, besides the city markets, the new versions of flower pots brilliantly painted in many colours are available

at makeshift shops on roadsides, particularly in the vicinity of Sishu Academy and some stretches of Mirpur Road near the Dhanmondi Maidan. Some of these flower pots are of such a colourful variety that if properly arranged, they can contribute substantially to the enhancement of beauty even in the interior of a house.

While passing along the pavements on the Mirpur Road near the Dhaka College, you may observe a row of nurseries. Here ready-made flower plants, even with flowers in bloom, are available. That stretch of pavements with its wealth of various plants and flowers forms a spot of beauty and you may feel like tarrying a few moments to enjoy the beauty of the place. There is another such beautiful nursery on Road No. 7, adjacent to the mosque in the Dhanmondi Residential Area.

Lovers of flowers constitute a peculiar breed. The new dimensions of flower culture adding up with the culture of vegetables and fruit trees in pots may create added incentive for many to imbibe appropriate knowledge to help build up multidimensional potted gardens on verandahs and roof tops in the city.

Flowers always cast their spell on many. If there is not enough space for a potted garden, an enthusiast in this line may make a humble beginning. But the irresistible impulse always will be to expand when circumstances and space permit. Although such a hobby tends to be expensive, one's passion for it makes one forget the cost.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was accorded a reception jointly by the Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and the Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday on her winning the UNESCO peace award.

Two arrested for raising funds for Shikdar's release

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Nov 5: An alleged notorious criminal, Jahangir Mahmud and his wife Khodja Parveen Nishi were arrested on Wednesday on charge of extortion and raising funds for the release of Ershad Shikdar, police said today.

Jahangir, arrested from Shahpur under Dumuria thana, was a suspected activist of an outlawed organisation, police said.

Both are on six day's remand for questioning. Parveen, 20, has given "many startling information", they said.

According to KMP sources, 55 cases have so far been recorded with different police stations against Shikdar. Of these, 22 are murder cases including the Khaleel murder case.

Charge sheets in all murder cases will be submitted to courts within this month, as desired by the government, the sources said. Local Juba League leader Khalid Hossain was murdered by Shikdar on May 16 this year.

Raham Ali, a Railway employee, was the first murder victim.

Police said, so far 12 persons including Shikdar have been interrogated and statements of eight witnesses recorded under Section 164.

"A lot of evidences are already in our hands which are enough for starting charge-framing", said a top official of KMP.

Meanwhile, hectic preparations are on for equipping the Special Court in Khulna with documents of all the cases.

Verdict in the Jahangir murder case will be pronounced next month and trial of Panna murder case is also at the final stage, the sources said.

Meanwhile, Shova has vowed to file a case for recovering gold ornaments weighing over 30 totals which she got as dowry from her husband Shikdar.

The gold ornaments are reportedly missing from Shikdar's residence Swarnakamal since she was taken to the district jail as one of the suspects in Khalid's murder.

"I am now a pauper. Shikdar has deceived me and ruined my life", she told this correspondent on the court corridor on Thursday.

Shova claimed that Shikdar forced her to marry him on April 23 this year.

"I will make your life miserable if you do not put your signature on this paper. If required, I will kill your children and brothers. Shikdar had threatened me" she said.

Shova claimed that one 'Rhido' used to telephone her often at her former husband's residence. "I fell in love with Rhido. But when I was taken to Skid Ghat, I found that Ershad Shikdar was that Rhido. I was stunned, but helpless", Shova said.

Prime Minister

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Hasina said her Awami League, the ruling party believes in tolerance and had invited the opposition to join her government to run the country on understanding for political stability and democracy.

Citing her efforts for running the administration on opposition's suggestion after the formation of government in 1996, she said: "To ventilate our intentions, we offered that the Deputy Speaker could be from the opposition. But the opposition (BNP) launched non-cooperation from the very first day of the present parliament and staged walkout."

The PM said she accommodated a maximum number of opposition MPs in parliamentary standing committees and their speeches in Parliament were widely covered by radio and television, which was not the case with the BNP in power.

About the UNESCO peace prize she received for restoring peace in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Hasina said the past regimes had made attempts to find a solution to the CHT problems by military means or imposing economic embargo, but that did not deliver.

Hasina said while in opposition Awami League studied the CHT problem and sought a political solution to this political problem. "And we did a political solution through discussion after coming to power."

Referring to demonstrations by some journalists at the press club, the prime minister said those who do not want peace are against the peace accord and may have done it to draw her attention.

"Since I do politics, I don't mind it... I know it is not all roses on my way. Because my father who wrest independence of Bangladesh was assassinated on this soil," she said.

About the role of media, the prime minister said newspaper as the mirror of society should present fair, objective and constructive news for the interest of people and society.

Deploping the "false" and "fabricated" news carried out by some newspapers with ulterior intentions, she said there is no government interference in newspaper industry, which enjoys full freedom, but newspapers should stop "falseness".

The PM said a leading English and a Bengali daily distorted her speech about the city corporation elections and deliberately put the Home Minister's words in her mouth.

"There should be a remedy. Here comes the question of accountability of newspapers," she said, adding that mindset of newspapers for publishing negative news needs to be changed for the benefit of society.

About terrorism, Hasina said the government took tough stand against terrorists. She said anti-terrorist move hits snags when the opposition gives statements in favour of their party terrorists after they are arrested.

She thanked newspapers for publishing stories and photographs on crimes inside slums in the city. The government, she said, has taken up welfare programmes for the evicted slum-dwellers and prostitutes.

About journalist unions' housing demand, she assured that steps were being taken to meet it. She said apartment houses were being constructed in the capital, divisional and district headquarters so that people from different professions could avail it.

Sangbad Editor Ahmedul Kabir praised Hasina for her success in restoring peace in a warlike situation. "It's a difficult job to sign agreement. You have fulfilled the nation's demand. The entire country is grateful to you."

He said political and military leaders in the past could neither give any solution to the CHT problem nor sign any agreement. "There is not many example of patience and courage you have shown."

The editor sought the government's steps against communal forces and terrorists.

Daily Jugantar Editor Gollam Sarwar said: "We feel pity for those who could not welcome the peace accord or who fail to smile after its signing."

He urged the government to initiate steps to create an atmosphere of understanding so that peace is not disrupted.

Pvt sector development

IDB to set up \$1b capital fund

From M Anwarul Haq

JEDDAH, Nov 5: The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) has decided to set up a one billion US dollar capital fund to spur development in the private sector in the OIC countries.

The decision came at the end of the two-day silver jubilee celebrations of the bank set up at the initiative of the OIC Bangladesh is one of the founding members of the Bank.

The fund is meant to stimulate private commerce in the OIC countries and is called 'The Islamic Corporation for Development of the Private Sector'. The IDB would be contributing 50 per cent of the Corporation's capital, while member countries another 30 per cent. The remaining 20 per cent will come from public financial institutions in OIC countries.

The Bank has already set up a 1.5 billion dollar fund to support infrastructure projects in the OIC states.

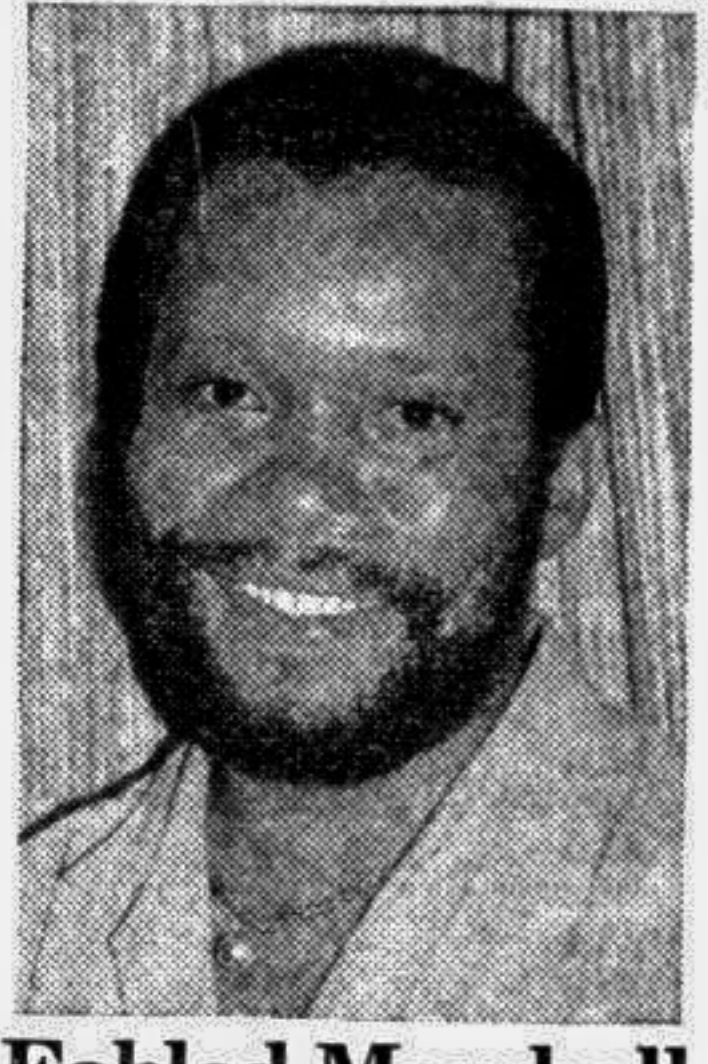
According to Moeen Quraishi, former vice president of the World Bank, the OIC countries would need more than 500 billion dollar to meet their infrastructure requirements over the next 10 years.

IDB president Dr. Ahmed Muhammad Ali said the bank had over the past 25 years lent more than 22 billion US dollar for development projects in member states. In addition, it contributed 200 million dollar for health and education programmes for Muslim minorities in non-member states. A scholarship programme has already benefited more than 4,800 students of whom 2,266 have already graduated as doctors and engineers.

Bangladesh has received IDB assistance of over one billion US dollars. Two more projects entailing assistance of 20 million US dollars have been approved for social and rural care schemes during the recent meeting of the IDB Board.

Dhaka would be represented in the Executive Board of Directors of the IDB for a three-year term.

The silver jubilee celebrations of the IDB that concluded here Wednesday in this Red Sea city brought in over 400 delegates from around the world.



Fabled Marshall passes away

Sports Reporter

Legendary West Indian fast bowler Malcolm Marshall is no more. The hero of many a West Indies battle died in Barbados on Thursday after a six-month battle with colon cancer.

Marshall (41), who came to Dhaka in October last year as coach of the West Indies team to the Wills International Cup, left the Caribbean coaching job immediately before the 1999 World Cup in England last May.

Marshall, who died at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Barbados on Thursday at 5:30 PM local time, underwent a surgery last year related to the cancer.

Marshall played 81 Tests for West Indies from 1976 to 1991 and held the record as leading West Indies bowler with 376 wickets until Courtney Walsh broke the record last year.

Marshall, one of the greatest fast bowlers the world has seen, left behind his wife Connie and a son.

Details in Sport section

Photo journalists' memo to PM

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Photo Journalists' Association (BPJA) has urged the Prime Minister to take steps for judicial investigations and punitive actions against those responsible for police harassment of the press photographers.

The call was made in a memorandum yesterday, says a press release. President of the Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) Abul Kalam Azad handed over the memorandum of the BPJA to the Prime Minister at a function at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

The BPJA congratulated the Prime Minister on her receiving UNESCO peace prize and recalled with gratitude that she had ordered stoppage of police harassment on photo journalists in 1996.

Giving a brief note on 15 recommendations in the memorandum, the BPJA also sought an audience with the Prime Minister.

UNB adds: A group of journalists yesterday staged protest after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina came to the National Press Club to attend a reception hosted by BFUJ and DUJ on her winning the UNESCO peace award.

About 20 journalists paraded the press club premises chanting slogans protesting recent police attack on press photographers. A faction of BFUJ led by its leader Amanullah Kabir organised the protest.

Addressing a brief rally, Amanullah Kabir requested the Prime Minister to punish the people responsible for the attack on press photographers.

BFUJ and DUJ faction leaders Ruhul Amin Gazi, Abu Saleh, Kamruzzaman and others were present at the rally.

Followers clash with rivals

Attack on Jinjira UP chairman: None arrested yet

By Staff Correspondent

Followers of UP chairman of Jinjira clashed with their rivals when the news of Thursday's shooting of their leader reached the area yesterday.

Anul Huq, Chairman of Jinjira UP and Mubarak Hossain, member of the UP, were shot by some unidentified gunmen at Kataban in the city at about 7:00 pm on Thursday.

The gunmen, numbering four, intercepted their car and fired at them when they reached Kataban on their way home.

Anul, hit by bullets in his head and chest, was shifted to the Chest Diseases Hospital while Mubarak was transferred to the Orthopaedic Hospital. They were earlier admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Dhanmondi police believe that the incident may have resulted from a previous rivalry in their locality. They, however, failed to arrest anybody in connection with the attack. No case in this regard was filed till writing of this report last night, police said.

Nov 8 hartal

From page 1

When contacted, a committee leader however said the hartal on November 8 may be reduced by six hours, ending at 6 pm instead of midnight.

The meeting yesterday condemned and protested 'police raid' at the residences of Anwar Zahid and another BNP leader Maj (Retd) Manjur Bader.

Presided over by BNP leader M. Shamsul Islam MP, the meeting was attended by Jatiya Party leader maidul islam, Jamaat-e-Islami leaders Mohammad Kamaruzzaman and ATM Azharul Islam, and Islamic Oikya Jote leaders Fazlul Haq Amiri and ARM Abdul Matin.

Lead bought for ERL to be re-exported

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, Nov 5: A process is underway to re-export huge quantities of imported lead, left unused at the Eastern Refinery Ltd (ERL).

ERL sources said 60 tonnes of lead worth over Tk two crore were imported from Ocel company in London to mix those with motor spirit. But it was stopped following government's decision to market lead-free fuel for motorised vehicles to reduce air pollution.

Earlier, lead was mixed with petrol and octane after refining imported crude for supplying leaded fuel.

Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) started marketing unleaded fuel in the country

in September this year. The lead-free fuel is marketed after blending the imported unleaded fuel with those produced in ERL, the sources said.

Besides, sulphur content in diesel processed by the refinery has been reduced to 0.5 per cent from one per cent earlier to help reduce air pollution.

BPC earlier planned to import 90,000 tonnes of unleaded motor spirit to meet the requirement of July-December period. Of this 27,000 tonnes have been imported and the rest in the process, the sources said.

The unleaded fuel is being imported from Singapore.

Meanwhile, due to stoppage of use of lead at ERL, production of Naptha has gone up, which is being exported.

Earlier, Naptha was mixed with lead and other additives and converted into motor spirit for local consumption.

BPC exported 9,000 tonnes of Naptha in three months from July to September this year against about 5,000 tonnes in the same period last year.



Still the most beautiful

LONDON, Nov 5: Forget super models. Sixty-five-year-old Sophia Loren is going down in history as The Most Beautiful Woman In The World, says Reuters.

The Italian actress beat rivals half her age in a poll of 3,000 Britons, released today. Her photograph will be placed in a Millennium time capsule for future generations to marvel at. The 'mature woman' was well-represented in the poll's top 10. British actress Joanna Lumley, 53, came fifth and 59-year-old US movie star Raquel Welch was seventh.

Loren pipped Liz Hurley, 34, to the top spot with 33-year-old model Cindy Crawford third. Julia Roberts, 32, came fourth.

Conducted by beauty product makers Beautiko, the poll asked more than 3,000 people: "Which living female in the public eye deserves the title The Most Beautiful Woman in the World?"

Loren has always said she owes her voluptuous figure to nothing but "spaghetti and my love of life".

The list and photographs of the top 20 women will go in Europe's largest time capsule, the Millennium Vault in Surrey, as part of a broad spectrum of 20th century trends represented for the people of 3000.

3 by-polls: AL invites applications

Awami League has invited applications for party nominations for the December 8 by-polls in Rajshahi-5, Sirajganj-7 and Kishoreganj-1 constituencies, reports UNB.

The nomination papers will be distributed from Dhanmondi office of Awami Foundation from 10 am on November 7 to 6 pm on November 8. The nomination papers will be received from 9 am to noon on November 9 at the same place, said a party press release.

Interview of the nomination seekers will be held at a meeting of Awami League Parliamentary Board at Ganobhaban at 3 pm on November 9 with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Enron clarifies

By Staff Correspondent

Enron Corporation, which recently proposed a 3.5 billion-dollar integrated plan for development of power and fertilizer plants and gas pipeline, clarified to The Daily Star on Thursday that its proposal was completely different from exploration of blocks 3 and 6.

The Daily Star published a report on October 29 last on Enron's integrated plan and its renewed interest in blocks 3 and 6.

In a faxed message, Enron clarified that the company was no longer involved in the negotiations for blocks 3 and 6. Rather a different company called EOG Resources was pursuing these blocks.

The Daily Star report had said that in the past, Enron Oil and Gas Company, which used to be a subsidiary of Enron Corporation, was negotiating with the government over blocks 3 and 6.

But in July last, this subsidiary became bifurcated from Enron Corporation to form an independent company called EOG Resources, which was no longer controlled or owned by Enron.

Over the past few years, Enron has worked with the government and other interested parties on a number of innovative solutions to Bangladesh's electric power needs, the message said.

"Enron continues to have a strong interest in long-term investment opportunities in Bangladesh and looks forward to a fruitful relationship with Bangladesh," it added.

BNP programmes on 'Revolution & Solidarity Day'

By Staff Correspondent

Main opposition BNP has chalked out elaborate programmes to observe the 'National Revolution and Solidarity Day' on November 7.

The programmes includes offering of fete at the mazar of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman, hoisting of national and party flags at party office and discussion meeting.

As per the programmes, leaders and activists of BNP and its front organisations led by party Chairperson Khaleida Zia will place wreath at the mazar of Zia and offer fete at 10 am.

BNP will organise a discussion meeting on November 10, but the venue for the meeting is yet to be chosen.

A BNP release said the hartal on November 7 is to protest government conspiracy to undermine the spirit of the 'Revolution and Solidarity Day'.

Pope

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foreign missionaries from our soil," said general secretary Acharya Giriraj Kishore. "Indian missionaries are competent to do their job."

The visit has revived debate on conversions to Christianity in this overwhelmingly Hindu nation of nearly 1 billion people. Christians make up only 2.3 per cent of the population.

The pontiff, who leaves India for Georgia on Monday, is scheduled to make one major public appearance, at a Sunday Mass in New Delhi's Jawahar Nehru Stadium.

Sunday is also the occasion of Diwali, the festival of lights that is the biggest Hindu Holiday of the year.

Present govt causes more damage to nation than hartal does: Bhuiyan

NATORE, Nov 5: Definitely hartal causes loss to the national economy, but the present government causes more damage to the nation and its economy through misrule and corruption, said BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, reports UNB.

"This is why all patriotic people of the country should be ready to concede minor losses for saving the country from a major damage," he said exchanging views with local journalists at the residence of district BNP President Ruhul Qudus Talukder Dulu MP here Thursday night.

The BNP leader dashed to Natore for an hour's whirlwind politicking on way back to Dhaka after addressing the first ever joint public meeting of the four-party opposition alliance in Rajshahi, campaigning against city corporation elections they are boycotting.

He announced that hartal would be enforced whenever there would be any election under this government.

Bhuiyan told newsmen that the opposition would not have waged any movement against the government if it had served the interest of the country. "But it's a matter of life and death for the people... this anti-people government must be removed in order to save the nation," he said.

Among others, Fazlur Rahman Patal MP, Amanullah Aman MP, Nazimuddin Alam MP, Kazi Golam Morshed MP and Ruhul Qudus Talukder Dulu MP also spoke at the briefing on their current one-point, oust-government movement and resistance against what they call unilateral city corporation polls.

Hartal: City gives a deserted look

By Special Correspondent

The city streets gave a somewhat deserted look yesterday as a veritable 'four day holiday' got underway with the Opposition-called 42-hour hartal beginning on Sunday.

There was rush of home-bound people at the bus, launch terminals and railway stations. Many of them left the city on Thursday afternoon and in the evening.

The affluent people, however, went for a holiday in their favourite destinations Bangkok, Singapore, Dubai, Kathmandu and Calcutta.

Last month, there was a similar four-day 'windfall holiday' on October 20 (Wednesday), there was the annual holiday on the occasion of Durga Puja. The opposition-called hartal followed on Thursday, ahead of the two-day weekend.

SAARC

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between leaders of feuding countries.

Bangladesh agreed to 'go by the collective decision of the member states of SAARC', on deferring the meeting. Foreign Secretary Shah Sami, the top bureaucrat at the Foreign Ministry in Dhaka, told The Associated Press today.