



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon staged a rally and later brought out a procession from in front of Dhaka Central Jail yesterday demanding immediate shifting of the jail and setting up a park there.

A S M NURUNNABI

By and large, love for flowers is ingrained in us. But in recent years, it seems that a revolution has taken place in Dhaka citizens' attitude towards flowers. A new outlook is evidenced in the widespread interest shown by them, so much so that such interest seems to have become institutionalised.

There are several areas which bear witness to our new interest in flowers. More conspicuous among them are Shahbagh and Katabon areas. They are regarded as a hub of the city's flower market where business worth thousands of taka is conducted every day.

It is understood that sales of flowers as per orders of customers are more profitable than retail sales. As such, sales on orders are said to be considerably high. For the paraphernalia of wedding arrangements, such as decoration of the bridegroom's car, flower arrange-

DOWN TO EARTH

Flower business is booming

ments for the bride and decoration of the nuptial chamber, flowers are indispensable. For such purposes, transactions in the flower market are greater in volume.

Previously, the space in front of the High Court Mazar was the venue of the flower trade. Now it has spread to other specific areas of the city. Only a ten-minute walk from the Shahbagh road corner towards the west lies the Katabon area, which, until recently, was the biggest concentration of flower shops in the city. At present, this place is taken over by the highest concentration of flower business on the northern fringe of the Suhrawardy Udyan at the crossroads opposite the diabetic Hospital. However, total number of flower shops that are operating across the city, besides

numerous roadside vendors, is not known.

Lately, this wide appreciation of flowers forms a new staple business in the hands of some non-descript youngsters. They can be seen just at the moments shoppers go to board their cars at the end of their shopping or when the rickshaws we travel in get stalled along with cars at road junctions in traffic jams or in the busy shopping areas. These youngsters offer a couple of roses or sticks of Rajanigandha or small garlands of flowers at a small price. This appears to be a sublimated form of begging resorted to by an increasing number of poor boys and girls. They present a poignant spectacle of a grim battle for subsistence in all weathers.

supplies mainly come from Gazipur, Konabari and Savar in the previous greater Dhaka district and also from several villages in Jessore district. In some villages in Jessore district, the cultivation of different kinds of flowers for commercial purposes has become a large-scale agricultural industry employing a large number of families. This is an encouraging development in improving the village economy.

Holland reportedly enjoys the for most position in the global market for flowers with a reported share of 67 per cent of the trade. Italy, Colombia, India, Kenya and Israel are also engaged in the foreign trade of this commodity. Bangladesh experts feel that there are immense possibilities in this

For the Dhaka flower markets, SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

World Bank report

Air pollution in Dhaka city kills over 5000 a year

BSS, Dhaka

Air pollution, mainly caused by uncontrolled emissions from motor vehicles, is responsible for over 5,000 deaths annually in Dhaka, said a World Bank (WB) report.

The bank's report published in its policy brief on Urban Pollution and submitted to the government recently said the main pollutants in Dhaka are fine particulate matter, especially those smaller than 10 microns diameter (PM10). It identified carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons as other pollutants.

The report said emissions from motor vehicles have been identified as the major cause of air pollution.

"Dhaka's poor air quality is estimated to cause more than 5,000 deaths per year with the health costs of PM10 pollution caused by vehicles," it said.

The report said the main polluters are auto-rickshaws, trucks and buses, and the transport-related fraction of PM10 is estimated at around 27 per cent of the average, which increases to as much as 41 per cent in dry months.

Of the transport-related fraction, some 35 per cent is related to PM10 and 48 per cent of hydrocarbon, the report said and added these are mainly generated by vehicles with two-stroke engines, particularly by baby-taxis, tempos and motor cycles.

According to the WB, though 35,000 baby-taxis are officially registered in Dhaka, the actual number in operation is believed to be much higher.

The report said the main thrust of air pollution control measures should therefore be directed towards

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JCD activist shot dead in Mirpur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified miscreants shot dead a young man near his under construction house at Kalyanpur under Mirpur thana in the city yesterday morning.

The dead was identified as Abdur Rahim, 24, a student of Apteck Computer Institute and an activist of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD).

Police and family sources said the gang equipped with firearms went to the under construction building at 12/12 Kalyanpur at about 6.30 am and woke up Rahim who was asleep at a makeshift house nearby.

The miscreants had an altercation with Rahim over the land dispute. At one stage, they took him to Banaphool Housing Project and

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FM's remarks on Hasina fabricated, says Zillur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) Secretary General Zillur Rahman has condemned Foreign Minister Morshed Khan's remark about AL chief Sheikh Hasina.

The foreign minister at a BISS seminar on Thursday said that no citizen of the country expected from the opposition leader such statements "against Bangladesh" given in the world forum.

Zillur Rahman in a statement yesterday termed the foreign minister's remark fabricated and an evil design for narrow political gain.

The BNP-led coalition government is "harmful" to the country, the statement continued.

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An elected govt can't unleash such repression: Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday sought justice from the people regarding the 'cruel and barbaric' torture and killing of her partymen and supporters by BNP-Jamaat activists.

"What has Awami League done? Has it committed any crime by running the country peacefully for five years? Was it an offence to ensure development and happiness for people?" she told a gathering after offering fataha and placing wreaths at the coffin of Barisal Chhatra League leader Saidur

Rahman Faruq outside the AL central office.

Since the October 1 election, the BNP-Jamaat coalition has tortured and killed her party workers, looted their houses and business establishments without any provocation, and has been filing false cases against them, Hasina alleged.

The ex-prime minister said that after coming to power in 1996 the Awami League did not take revenge on its opponents. Instead, it worked together for development.

"Had the BNP-Jamaat alliance come to power by the people's vote, it would not have unleashed such

repression on the common people." The opposition leader urged the people to resist terrorism, extortion and repression by the BNP-Jamaat alliance government.

Referring to the killing of Faruq, she said the BNP terrorists tied his hands and mouth and beat him up brutally with hammers and rods. The bones of his both legs were crushed. He died at a city clinic on Thursday.

Hasina said Faruq, who had

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WB termed AL budget totally false: Saifur

UNB, Dhaka

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman has charged the previous Awami League government with formulating a false budget and burdening the country with some Tk 10,000 crore in suppliers' credit.

"World Bank has termed the budget totally false as estimated expenditures do not match with expected incomes," he told a reception accorded to him by Bangladesh Banks Employees Federation, a platform of pro-BNP trade unions of nationalised commercial banks.

Saifur criticised the previous government for its "immature and futile" economic management that left the economy in a fragile state. "The whole nation will have to pay for it for the next 10 years," he said.

The reception at Paltan Maidan ultimately turned into a public meeting with a number of ministers,

BNP's labour front leaders and hundreds of employees of NCBs attending it.

The minister alleged that banks could not operate smoothly during the previous Awami League government for unwanted interference of AL-backed trade unions.

He hoped the pro-BNP trade unions would help restore order in banks, work for recovery of bad debts and refrain from undue interference in banking functions.

The Finance Minister admitted that the demand for separate pay scale for NCBs is justified. He advised the trade unions to help make the banks profitable and create a ground for pay increase.

Referring to mounting bad debts in NCBs, he bitterly criticised the bank executives and asked: "Aren't you also responsible for this?" If bank officials worked properly, it

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One burnt alive, 37 houses gutted at Khagrachhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

One person was burnt alive and property worth Tk 80 lakh gutted in two separate incidents of fire here within a span of 14 hours.

The first incident occurred at west Mahajanpara in Khagrachhari town in the early hours of yesterday that left one person dead and gutted 27 houses.

The victim was identified as Ratan Barua, 18, of Boalkhali under Dighinala thana.

Police and fire service sources said the fire originated from an electric short circuit at a house at 12.30 am and soon engulfed the houses nearby.

Fire Brigade personnel rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze at around 2 am.

Mujibur Rahman Hawlader, DC, Khagrachhari, Zila Parishad

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Light at tunnel's end

Project to reduce power sector system loss seems working

RAZIUR RAHMAN

Power sector system loss in some selected areas of the country is likely to decrease significantly with the implementation of a Tk 35 crore pilot scheme by December this year.

Execution of the 'System Loss Reduction Pilot Scheme,' financed by the Japan government, began last year.

Official sources said if the project succeeds in reducing system loss, more areas would be brought under such project.

System loss in power sector causes the government a loss of more than Tk 200 crore a year.

The Power Development Board (PDB) and the Dhaka Electric Supply Authorities (DESA) are implementing the pilot project to reduce both 'technical and non-technical' system loss in 'six distribution lines' in selected areas in

different parts of the country. At present, system loss of the PDB is around 20 per cent while that of the DESA is more than 25 per cent, according to official figures.

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Feb 9		5-49 pm
Feb 10	6-35 am	

Prayer Timings		
Feb 9		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-40	6-15
Zohr	12-45	1-20
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-53	5-58
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation