

Broom sticks bring them out of poverty

KAFIL MAHMUD, Khagrachhari

Naturally grown 'Uluphul', the sticks of which are largely being used for commercial production of brooms, has swept away poverty from the lives of a good number of people in Khagrachhari hill district.

Uluphul grows in abundance on the hilly slopes of the region due to favourable weather conditions between December and March. Locals earn extra cash by collecting and trading its sticks throughout the year.

Around 15 broom-making factories, which were set up in different areas of the district to collect sticks and make brooms, have also ensured job opportunities for many unemployed youths.

Sagorika Chakma, of Dharmagar area in Khagrachhari Sadar upazila, said she made a good fortune last season from the sale of Uluphul sticks that she had collected from the hill slopes near her residence.

Selling the sticks has become an alternative source of income for her without any financial investment, said Sagorika, a Jhum cultivator by profession.

Mohan Tripura, of Panchmail in the upazila, said he earned around Tk 7,000 by selling Uluphul sticks this year. Around 30 to 40 people of the village were engaged in the Uluphul business, he added.

Md Monju, owner of a broom-making factory in the district's Shantinagar area, told this correspondent that each broom was being sold at Tk 30 in the local markets and had huge demand across the country.

"Last year, I invested around Tk 6 lakh in the business and earned a profit of around Tk 1 lakh," Monju added.

Jahurul Alam, divisional forest officer of Khagrachhari, told this correspondent the government earned around Tk 6,20,620 in revenue last year from the trading of Uluphul sticks.



Traders display Uluphul sticks, used for making brooms, and wait for customers in a bazaar of Khagrachhari hill district. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

Moon may harbour alien minerals

AFP, Paris

Minerals found in craters on the Moon may be remnants of asteroids that slammed into it and not, as long believed, the satellite's innards exposed by such impacts, a study said Sunday.

The findings, published in the journal Nature Geoscience, cast doubt on the little we knew of what the Moon is actually composed of.

It had long been thought that meteoroids vaporise on impact with large celestial bodies.

Unusual minerals like spinel and olivine found in many lunar craters, but rarely on the Moon's surface, were therefore attributed to the excavation of sub-surface lunar layers by asteroid hits.

Olivine and spinel are common components of asteroids and meteorites, and have been found on the floors and around the central peaks of lunar craters.

It's time

FROM PAGE 16 were maintained.

Also, workers should be allowed to be free to form trade unions, Mozena added.

"Decisions need to be made now," said Mozena at a business meeting organised by the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) at its office.

Representatives from Bangladesh and US businesses attended the meet.

The US envoy said the death of workers at Tazreen and Smart fashions at Rana Plaza are not accidents. "These are man-made events."

The deaths have created huge reactions around the world and Bangladesh became headlines in the US and global media regularly, he added. Such reactions on this scale, he noted, he had not seen since 9/11.

Mozena said there was a tendency in Bangladesh to do a lot of things initially and later the issue was forgotten. But the tragedies at the two factories were not going to be forgotten. "This is not one of those moments."

Darryl Knudsen, a representative from GAP, said all needed to work together and the retailer giant would do all it could to help.

He said the world was watching to see what Bangladesh's industry and government would do.

He said he had heard a lot of encouraging words and commitments about continuing on this trajectory. "Right now we are listening to the words. But in time we will want to see the results."

MCCI President Rokia Afzal Rahman said all parties should come together and develop a pragmatic solution so that tragic incidents like Tazreen or Rana Plaza did not take place in future.

She said the country's steady economic growth drew domestic and foreign investments.

"It is also creating a new Bangladesh entrepreneurial class." She said this new generation of entrepreneurs deserved full support in order to create avenues for a widening of trade.

No trace

FROM PAGE 1

Nepalese government permitted the Sherpas to search for Sajal's body till June 5.

"Weather in the mountain was extremely bad with snow falling thickly for the last three days. Sajal's body might have been covered under the snow," said Shamima.

Three officials of Bangladesh embassy are stationed at a base camp of the mountain, she added, and said, "We are continuously contacting various summit groups. Nepal's tourism ministry is also doing the same for us. If it is not possible for the Sherpas to locate Sajal's body within June 5, they would make attempts in the next climbing season, which starts in February-March next year."

Bangladesh government decided to bear the cost of bringing Sajal's body back home.

Marooned inside DND

FROM PAGE 16

Authority) Colony, the lowest of the low-lying areas there, are suffering the most. The ground floors of the buildings there have been flooded, ruining the belongings of the residents.

"It's water, water everywhere," said Faizur Ali Sheikh, a resident of the colony.

Kaniz Fathema told The Daily Star, "Our ground floor has gone under. Several days have gone by but there has been no change."

Some residents are staying with their neighbours on the upper floors of the buildings, some have moved in with their relatives while others have taken shelter at the schools inside the colony.

Rahima Akter, who has

kidney issues, was seen waddling in knee-deep water on the street trying to get home from a pharmacy.

Sheikh Nusrat Jahan, a class IX student said, "I always carry an extra set of clothes when I leave my house for coaching as my dress gets wet."

Alauddin Bhuiyan, president of South Matuail Shamimbagh Development Samity, said, "Look at what has happened to the Paglar Khal, the main canal for discharging rainwater into the Shitalakkhya river... the canal has died due to the negligence of the authorities."

Locals blame the Bangladesh Water Development Board's (BWDB) negligence in keeping the area flood free.

A BWDB source said four high-capacity pumps and 22 shallow-water pumps at Shimrail area were pumping out water round the clock.

Mohammad Ruhul Amin, executive engineer of Dhaka Operation and Maintenance Division-1 of BWDB, told The Daily Star that the public sufferings would end in two to three days.

Blaming the inadequate number of pumps and garbage dumping for the waterlogging, he said, "In 2010, a project worth Tk 239 crore to survey the area, cleanup of the canals and installing more pumps was submitted to the Ecneec [Executive Committee of National Economic Council] but it was rejected."

BB to create fund

FROM PAGE 16

The government will decide the size of the fund, said a BB official.

The plan came in response to a letter sent by the finance ministry last month to the central bank, proposing the scheme. BB, however, was not interested in such a scheme, said an official.

The central bank gave in after Finance Minister AMA Muhiht and Bangladesh Securities Exchange Commission Chairman Prof M Khairul Hossain urged it to take the step to boost the ailing market, said officials in the ministry and BB.

Earlier in November 2011, the government announced a stimulus package for retail investors to restore stability in the market.

The scheme provides for waiving 50 percent interest on margin loans for a year. The rest interest and the principal amount of loans have to be paid in three years in 12 equal instalments at a maximum of 10 percent interest rate.

But the private merchant banks and brokerage houses have not implemented the scheme yet as, they said, they would not survive if they followed the scheme without any financial incentives.

They urged the government to make a refinancing fund to have the scheme implemented.

Beardvertising

FROM PAGE 16

That's good news for lumberjacks and hipsters, with Kentucky-based advertising agency Cornett-IMS offering men \$5 per day to wear the clip-on adverts.

"Do people stare at its awesomeness? Of course they do," reads the official beardvertising website.

"Do you wanna get paid for having an epic beard? Join the world's first Beardvertising network."

"It's simple - turn your beard into a business. Hang a BeardBoard (Patent Pending) in your beard. Sit back and get paid up to \$5 per day."

Company executive Whit Hiler said the firm have been inundated with requests from beard growers across the world interested in the 'native advertising'.

"I think it's the next big thing," he told Business Insider. "Everybody loves beards."

"We're getting a ton of emails from guys with epic beards that want to host beardboards and we're actually in talks with some brands that want to be Beardvertisers."

"I think we'll probably be seeing some 'beardboards' in the wild before too long."

Tribunal irked

FROM PAGE 16

misinformation provided by his defence colleagues about the reason behind his absence.

"If it were the High Court instead of the tribunal, we would take action for providing misinformation. There are instances of punishment at the High Court in such cases," said tribunal member Justice Jahangir Hossain Selim.

Earlier on Sunday, following the deposition of the ninth prosecution witness in Nizami's case, the defence sought an adjournment saying the conducting lawyer of the case Mizanul Islam could not be present as he and his daughter were suffering from chicken pox.

The defence lawyers -- Tariqul Islam and Asad Uddin -- then appealed to the tribunal to adjourn proceedings until June 2.

The tribunal however asked the defence to complete cross-examination of witness Ainul Haque by that day as he had not said much about the accused.

As the defence persistently called for an adjournment, the tribunal adjourned the proceedings until yesterday.

While cross-examining the septuagenarian witness yesterday, Mizanul Islam of his own accord told the tribunal that hot water had accidentally spilled on his body, scalding him. That was why he could not come on Sunday.

"My daughter is suffering

from chicken pox. But when I told my junior about it, he presumed both of us were suffering from the pox," he added.

Following completion of the cross-examination Mizanul prayed to the tribunal to adjourn proceedings until June 3 instead of June 2.

At this, Chairman of the tribunal-1 Justice ATM Fazle Kabir said, "Don't embarrass us. We are feeling embarrassed because of the information given by your juniors yesterday [Sunday]."

Mizanul reiterated the 'scalding' story and said he was ready to show the tribunal the injury if it wanted to.

"We believe you," Justice Selim said, adding, the junior lawyers could come in the afternoon to clarify the matter to the tribunal for the sake of transparency.

He added, "We are three sitting judges of the Supreme Court. You [junior lawyers] informed us of the matter just like that!"

The proceedings of the case were finally adjourned until June 2.

MOBARAK'S CASE

The second prosecution witness in the war crimes case against Mobarak Hossain yesterday narrated how brutally her father had been killed by the accused on November 11, 1971.

Witness Khodeja Begum told the tribunal that her father Abdul Khaleque was a freedom fighter. He came home to visit his family on

November 10.

"On information that Razakars [auxiliary force to Pakistani occupational army] were coming to capture him the following day, my father tried to flee through the western side of the house," she said.

Khaleque was caught by Razakars. "His hands were tied and he was beaten brutally," she said.

The freedom fighter was taken to the Razakar camp of Suhilpur Union Parishad. Khodeja's mother and grandmother went to the camp to give him food but could not meet him.

At the camp, one of the Razakars, Abdur Rouf, told them that Mobarak was the chief of the camp and advised them to request him to free Khaleque.

As per Rouf's advice, they asked their neighbour Khaleq Moulana to help them. Khaleq promised to visit Mobarak the following day.

But on May 12, they found the freedom fighter dead on the bank of the Titas river. "Bullets had hit him on the forehead and in the right chest. I also saw marks of injuries above and below his belly button," she said in tears.

The witness added they were able to bury Khaleque after collecting a slip from the camp.

Khodeja had identified Mobarak at the dock before the tribunal adjourned the proceedings until today.

Padma to eat up ADP

FROM PAGE 1

The total cost for seven components of the bridge will be Tk 23,185 crore. Of the amount, foreign currency worth \$2.03 billion, equivalent to Tk 16,240 crore, will be required for various purchases from abroad, according to the Bridges Division's proposal.

Padma Bridge Project Director Shafiqul Islam told The Daily Star yesterday work would start from the point where it stopped in 2011. In June an offer will be made to the pre-qualified bidders for the main bridge construction and in July for river training.

Shafiqul said a letter had

SECTOR-WISE ALLOCATION GROWTH IN NEXT

ADP	
Transport sector:	89 %
Power sector:	14 %
Education sector:	18 %
Rural sector:	6 %
Health sector:	2 %
Agriculture sector:	26 %

been sent to Maunsell Ltd, the New Zealand-based consulting firm, asking it to start work on preparing tender documents and evaluation of the bids.

The Bridges Division letter to the Finance Division said work on the main construction would start in December.

However, a finance ministry official said if experienced and internationally reputed contractors did not take part in the bidding, the authorities might invite fresh bids.

The official said uncertainty still remained as to whether construction would begin by December.

Speaking anonymously, a government high official said if the present government came back to power, it might approach some development partners for funding.

Trial to be held in absentia

FROM PAGE 16

held in absentia and the court awarded him death penalty for committing crimes against humanity.

On April 25, the prosecution pressed 16 charges of war crimes against Mueen-Uddin and Ashrafuzzaman. The prosecution claimed that the two were involved in the abduction, torture and killing of 18 people between December 10 and 15, 1971.

Among the 18, nine were Dhaka University teachers, six were journalists and three were physicians.

According to the formal charges, Mueen-Uddin, who is in the UK, acted as the operation-in-charge of Al-Badr while Ashrafuzzaman Khan, now in the USA, as the chief executor.

Al-Badr was an "action section" and "armed wing" of Jamaat and was formed mainly with the workers of

Islami Chhatra Sangha, then Jamaat's student wing, the tribunal had said in a recent verdict.

The tribunal, in its order, yesterday said, despite publication of a notice in two newspapers, the accused did not appear before the court within 10 days from the publication of advertisement.

"Therefore, this tribunal has reason to believe that accused Ashrafuzzaman Khan alias Nayeab Ali and Chowdhury Mueen-Uddin have absconded or have concealed themselves so that they cannot be arrested and produced before the tribunal for trial," said the court.

"The tribunal does not see any immediate prospect of arresting them," it said, adding, "Under the circumstances, the trial of the accused persons shall com-

mence and be held in their absence under section 10 (A) of the International Crimes (Tribunals) Act-1973 (amended)...."

It also directed the chief prosecutor to supply the formal charges and other documents to the tribunal-appointed defence through tribunal's registrar office by June 4. It would pass further orders in this regard on that day.

HC clears

FROM PAGE 16

After a hearing on the rule yesterday, the bench of Justice Sheikh Hassan Arif and Justice Mustafa Zaman Islam rejected the petition.

Now, there is no legal bar to resuming the case proceedings at the trial court, ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star.

AJ Mohammad Ali appeared for Mahmudur.