

A pharmacy full of love

Couple create a safe haven for 48 animals

|| MD MIZANUR RAHMAN HIMADRI ||



DHAKA VIBE

Except for two cats, all the animals under Sabina's care were abandoned.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Rafiqul Islam and his wife Sabina Yeasmin have a different outlook on life. The couple care for pets and stray animals like very few do and spend a sizable portion of their limited income on feeding and grooming them. At present, the number of animals they care for exceeds 48.

The animals have found a home in their single-storey house, doubling as a drug store called Shreoshi Medicine Corner. It is located on Road 10 in the capital's Shekher area. Anyone dropping by the store or house may mistake the place for a play zone for pets or a small pet sanctuary, which in some aspect, it is.

A visitor may also see a few kittens curled up comfortably in the store's shelves, some others nestled under the chairs, and some playing hide and seek.

There are 39 cats and nine dogs now. Except for two cats, all were abandoned. Most of them were crippled following injuries inflicted by people or born with disabilities. The family fondly calls them by



names like Frieda, Pluto, Sam, Sammy, Simon, Auberin, John, Sansa, Catalon, Shadow, Sando, Margarita, Maria, David or Lancaster.

The couple's daughter Cynthia Tanzim and her friends named the pets. Cynthia studies medicine at Armed Forces Medical College in Dhaka.

Sabina's love for animals grew in childhood because pet-keeping runs in her family. Her parents used to rear animals, including monkeys and deer at

their residence in Jashore town. In 2001, when Sabina came to Dhaka for work, she brought along five cats. Over time, they multiplied. Besides, whenever her daughter Cynthia and her friends find any injured or hungry cat or dog on the street, they pick them up and bring them home. Sabina then treats the animals.

"After recovering from injuries, the animals start living with us like family members," said Sabina, adding that once

she went to rescue an injured kitten from the roof of a tin-shed house and got her backbone fractured after falling off the roof.

But the severe injury could not limit her love for animals, she said.

Sabina quit her job at a real estate company in Dhaka last year after working there for almost 17 years. Now she dedicates her entire time to caring for the animals and running the pharmacy. Cynthia helps her mother with the pets when she comes home from her college dormitory.

Sabina provides three servings of rice, fish, and chicken legs for the animals daily. She also feeds street dogs and cats in the neighbourhood on alternate days. Sabina said they have to spend around Tk 40,000 on animal food every month.

The family also takes the animals' health into consideration.

"Sabina herself vaccinated

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No mercy for child abusers: PM

Sheikh Russel's 56th birth anniversary observed

BSS, Dhaka

Issuing a strong warning against child repression, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said those involved in killing and torturing children must face "toughest" punishment.

"Repression of children will not be tolerated. People involved in killing and torturing children must have to face the toughest punishment," she said.

The prime minister said this while addressing a function marking the 56th birth anniversary of Sheikh Russel, youngest son of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

"Sheikh Russel National Shishu-Kishore Parishad" organised the programme at Bangabandhu International Conference Center.

The premier said people have been involved in killing and torturing children since August 15, 1975 when not only the president, but also children and women were killed. But they were not given any punishment at that time.

"Instead of punishing them, a law was enacted to stop tracking the killers. They [killers] were even rewarded. They didn't allow us to file any case in this regard," she said.

Describing the recent killing of a child reportedly by his father as an outcome of a perverted mentality, she said, "Such a killing might not have taken place, if the trials [of killing women and children] were held at that time."

Hasina said her government has been working to ensure a beautiful life for each child so that they do not have to face the same fate as Sheikh Russel.

Nothing that Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had enacted the Children Rights Act in 1974 to protect the rights of children, she said, "We have formulated the National Children Policy in 2011 and taken measures to protect children's rights."

"We have also given special attention

in this regard so that children can get the scopes for education, sports, physical and cultural exercises," she added.

Founding president of the organisation Md Raquibur Rahman presided over the event while its secretary general Mahmudus Samad Chowdhury, MP; adviser Tarafder Ruhul Amin; and central organising secretary KM Shahidullah, also spoke on the occasion.

Meanwhile, the birth anniversary of Sheikh Russel was observed in a befitting manner across the country yesterday.

To mark the day, milad and doa mahfils, discussions, cultural events, processions, drawing competitions and distribution of food among the destitute were held.

In the morning, Awami League placed floral wreaths on the graves of all martyrs, including Russel, of the August 15 carnage in the capital's Banani graveyard.

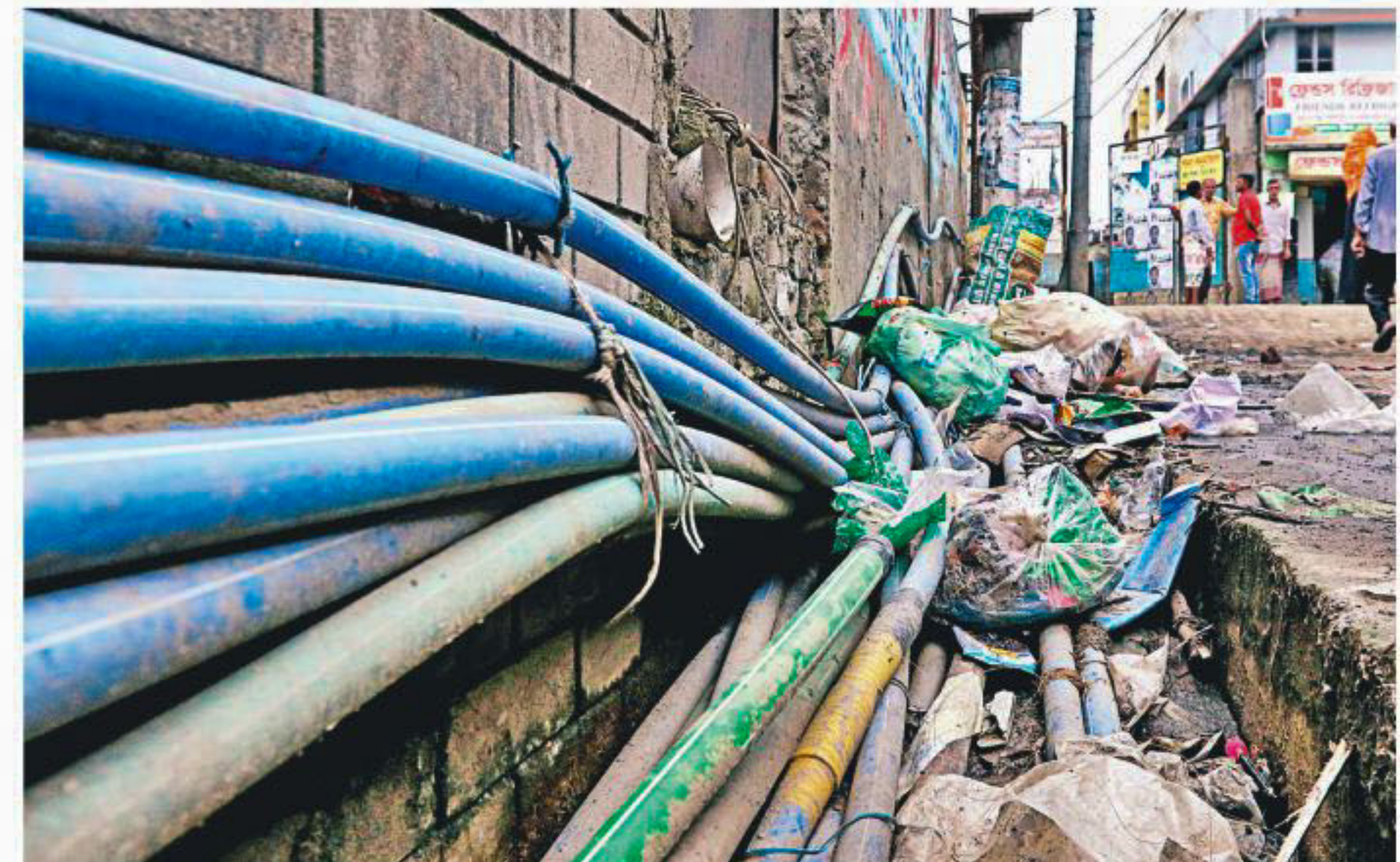
AL presidium member Matia Chowdhury; its general secretary and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader; joint general secretaries Mahbubul Alam Hanif and Jahangir Kabir Nanak; Information Minister and AL publicity and publication secretary Dr Hasan Mahmud; Housing and Public Works Minister SM Rezaul Karim; AL organising secretary Ahmad Hossain; office secretary Dr Abdus Sobhan Golap and central committee member SM Kamal Hossain were present on the occasion, among others.

Later, members of Dhaka city south and north units of AL, Jubo League, Awami Swechhasebak League, Tanti League, Sramik League, Chhatra League, Mahila Awami League, Mahila Sramik League, Krishak League and different socio-cultural organisations paid tributes.

Sheikh Russel National Shishu-Kishore Parishad arranged drawing, chess and cultural competitions and prize distribution ceremony at BICC, attended by the PM as chief guest.

Sampriti Bangladesh organised

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Wasa pipelines for supplying water to households have been set up through a sewage drain, with a possibility of raw sewage getting into the pipes, if leaked. Besides, the sewer is also blocked due to the pipes and garbage. The photo was taken from Muradpur area in Kadamtoli recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Society has become too exam-centric

Says Asaduzzaman Noor; BSK awards 580 readers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nurturing reading habit of students can help change the society and end the "unhealthy competition" for grades, which is robbing them of their childhood, said speakers yesterday.

They also urged guardians not to force students to run after better academic achievements, rather encourage them to love learning and develop the ability to learn new things.

The speakers said this at a prize distribution ceremony of Bishwo Shahitto Kendro's book reading initiative at Bangla Academy.

"Nowadays many parents do not allow children to do anything other than chasing high grades," said former cultural affairs minister Asaduzzaman Noor.

The noted cultural personality said the society has become too exam-centric. "But it [better grades] should not be the only target. Cultural activities like reading, singing, dancing, poetry recitation and debate will help you [students] become good persons," he said.

"Many schools do not engage in cultural practices. Some do not even practice singing the national anthem," said Noor, also a lawmaker.

BSK founder Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed said there should be more initiatives like reading programmes to motivate students, as one can discover life, freedom and light through reading.

He urged students to read books regularly to become enlightened.

"Grow

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Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed with winners of Bishwo Shahitto Kendro book reading contest at Bangla Academy yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

'Invest in infrastructure, renewable energy and manufacturing'

Foreign minister tells German businesses

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen has invited German businesses to invest in Bangladesh, highlighting the business-friendly policies and environment of the country.

While addressing the German Federal Association for Economic Development and Foreign Trade (BWA) in Berlin during his first official visit to Germany, he called upon them to invest in infrastructure, renewable energy and manufacturing sectors in Bangladesh.

Explaining the Special Economic Zones set up by Bangladesh in different areas, Momen also urged German car manufacturers like Mercedes, BMW and Volkswagen to set up their assembly plants in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Shilpanagar in Chattogram, according to a press release.

The minister informed the German companies of the skilled, young labour force available at competitive wages, and assured them of complete support to the German investments.

Referring to the National Skills Development Authority (NSDA), recently formed under PMO, Momen requested Germany to help Bangladesh build a strong workforce of skilled young population, explaining that it would create a win-win situation for Bangladesh and the potential German investors.

BGMEA President Rubana Huq, who attended the meeting yesterday, also invited German businesses to invest more in Bangladesh in a sustainable way that would ensure better wages, better prices and better consumer satisfaction.

The foreign minister also addressed the 7th International Conference on Bangladesh organised by the Bangladesh Forum in Germany, where he highlighted the successes achieved and challenges faced by the government in achieving Vision 2021 and Vision 2041.

He called upon the international community to help Bangladesh in its journey forward. He explained the Rohingya crisis to the international audience and called for a more active role of the friends of Bangladesh in solving the crisis urgently.

Momen also held a meeting with Tobias Pfluger, member of German Federal Parliament and chairman of the South-Asian Parliamentary Group at the German Parliament, yesterday.

He requested Tobias to take appropriate measures in the German Parliament to ensure fair prices for Bangladesh's textile products.

'GDP growth hasn't changed lives of the masses'

Gonoforum general secretary and economist

Reza Kibria says

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The current government has been identified as "the most tyrannical" in the history of Bangladesh because of widespread corruption and misrule, Gonoforum General Secretary Reza Kibria said yesterday.

"They did not only loot the country's assets, but also robbed banks, killed innocent people and snatched people's right to vote," Reza said, while speaking at a discussion in the capital.

"...It is an illegal, incapable and tyrannical government. The culture of violence which they have brought into the country's politics should be ended through forging a national unity," he added.

The noted economist also said there is no reason to be excited about GDP growth as the lives of general people are yet to change.

Bangladesh Sangskritik Muktirot, a political party, organised the discussion on the importance of national unity at Jatiya Press Club.

Speaking at the event, Jatiya Oikyafront Convener Dr Kamal Hossain said none of the autocrats have lasted forever anywhere in the world, regardless of the efforts they made using power and money.

The current "autocratic" government will suffer the same fate, he added.

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UNIVERSAL HEALTHCARE

IPU adopts Dhaka's proposal

BSS, Dhaka

The "Universal Health Coverage" proposal of Bangladesh was unanimously adopted at the closing session of the 141st Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) held at Serbia's capital Belgrade on Thursday.

Prof M Habibe Millat, MP and chairperson of the advisory committee on health affairs of IPU, presented the proposal at the Universal Health Coverage Forum of the

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DHAKA TODAY

LECTURE

Mental Health and Social Challenges by Prof Mehtab Khanam
Organiser: Women Support Initiative Forum

Venue: EMK Center
Time: 3:30pm

SESSION

Bandhuta: A Poetry Session
Venue: Jatra Biroti, Banani
Time: 8:30pm

CAMPAIGN

Dhanmondi Lake Area Clean-up
Organiser: One Action Foundation
Venue: Dhanmondi Lake
Time: 8am

WORKSHOP

Painting with Mustafa Monwar
Venue: Twinkle Tots, Sector-4, Uttara
Time: 4pm

TRAINING

On Inventory, Transportation, Warehousing, Packaging and Distribution
Organiser: Bangladesh-Japan Training Institute
Venue: Eastern Plaza, Hatirpool
Time: 9am

WORKSHOP

Gender Sensitivity at Workplace with Zarin Khan
Venue: EMK Center
Time: 10am