



IKIGAI DHAKA

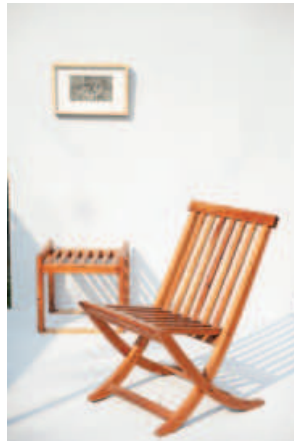
Redefining furniture craftsmanship

RBR

Nawajesh Salahin Sunny's trademark was sitting at his factory in a zen-like state of mind amidst scattered wooden planks and huge containers. His craftsmen noisily worked all over the place; while he supervised the work being done to give the factory a showroom-like facelift.

A graduate of BGMEA University of Fashion & Technology, Sunny worked many years as a designer in the RMG sector. When he got bored, he shifted his gear to making full-furnished container homes. However, the business idea backfired due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

He then wanted to restart slowly by just



PHOTOS: IKIGAI DHAKA



making aesthetically pleasing, small furniture and kitchen accessories. And thus, Ikigai Dhaka was born. For those of you who are not familiar with Ikigai Dhaka, let me clarify that it is just a four-year-old furniture and

lifestyle brand. When I met them at the recently-concluded Dhaka Night Market, the name stuck with me for their aesthetically designed handcrafted kitchen wares and that thin, tanned, brown leather tag.

Everything about them spelt artistic appeal and like a hound, I followed their visiting card and found them at the chaotic Bosila Garden City. Sunny said, "When we make a box, we don't just nail the four wood slabs with the base and leave it at that. Well, yes that is how an untrained carpenter with no design concept would do it, but I want to make the box look tasteful. So, I add tiny wooden hinges and hidden nails and retain the wood colour to appreciate its natural beauty."

"I lack the skills of a carpenter, so I work with my craft makers and teach

them to think about design and visual appeal. I'm instilling the idea of detailing in them."

Ikigai Dhaka is still taking baby steps and according to Sunny they still have no identity in the tough furniture business. Their few ventures include making furniture for Ajo restaurant, Mermaid Beach Resort, and renovating a few family heirloom pieces for people who just walked in on their factory. Besides conventional teak and mahogany, they work with wood that is not usually used for furniture-making - babla, neem, shishu, gamari, shal, kanthal, and taal. The marble effect of different wood grains and the texture one can get are the fascinating aspects of Ikigai's small items like chopping boards, boxes, trays, spatulas, cheese and charcuterie boards, and food bowls. "In today's market culture, which is mostly online, you sit on your armchair and you asked 'price please' for the first

thing that pops up on your screen. You are not concerned with the feel of the product, the durability of the colour, and most importantly - whether you actually need it or not!

"These random purchases are making your homes cluttered like a junkyard. You have no attachment to these mindless purchases. You cannot build a story with your chair, sofa, or bed unless you appreciate their worth and comfort," Sunny said. The Ikigai philosophy originates in Japan and is the concept of discovering your purpose through exploring the intersection of what you love, what you're good at, what the world needs, and what you can be paid for. When aligned properly it gives you a purposeful life. Through his furniture designs, Nawajesh Salahin Sunny is teaching us that we need to keep life simple and cherish each object in it.

Road crashes

FROM PAGE 1
least 5,024 people were killed in 5,425 crashes.

UNENFORCED MEASURES

A significant rise in motorcycles over the last few years is considered one of the major reasons behind the rising number of road crashes. Despite that, the government in 2021 halved the registration fees of bikes, leading to a further increase in bike numbers.

On November 15, 2022, the National Road Safety Council directed the authorities concerned to prepare a guideline for bikes. Despite a draft already prepared last year, no such guideline has been approved yet.

The number of three wheelers, especially easy-bikes and locally-made Nosimon and Korimon, started to swell over the last decade. The authorities concerned had to ban them on 22 major highways in August 2015 as they were involved in a large number of crashes.

These vehicles, however, continue to ply the highways and their numbers have increased to such a point that even some bus routes had to be cancelled.

In June 2019, the Road Transport and Highways Division had formed a 12-member committee to make recommendations on how to control these vehicles. The committee submitted a draft guideline in 2021, which is yet to see the light of day.

In May last year, the government set the economic life limit of buses at 20 years, and trucks and lorries at 25, with an aim to reduce accidents and pollution.

However, the implementation of the limits was halted in August last year following demands from the transport associations.

EXPERTS AND AUTHORITIES SAY

Transport expert Prof Hadiuzzaman said although the country's road infrastructure saw much progress over the last decade, the quality of the public transports and drivers has not improved. "As a result, the number of road crashes and deaths has increased."

He said the government, in some cases, has taken up contradictory policies, intensifying safety risks.

Hadiuzzaman, also former director of Buet's Accident Research Institute, said small, illegal and unfit vehicles are major reasons for recurring accidents but the government has at times encouraged use of those vehicles, further increasing the numbers of crashes and casualties.

"When such vehicles could've been controlled, the government didn't take necessary initiatives. Now, it's very difficult to bring those under control. Very strong political will and commitment are required to make roads safer now."

Contacted, ABM Amin Ullah Nuri, secretary of the Road Transport and Highways Division, said, "I can't make a comment as I have not seen the data yet."

"However, we're collecting authentic data now. The previous one was not authentic."

About the measures that were not implemented, he said the enactment of guidelines for three wheelers, scrapping of outdated vehicles and setting speed limits were all at their final stages.

Army leading joint operation against KNF

FROM PAGE 1
The army chief arrived in Bandarban yesterday morning and coordinated the activities related to the operation against KNF.

He said the army last year took control of the KNF bases and drove its members away.

But they took advantage of the peace talks and engaged in criminal



Cheusim Bawm

activities, he said. "We will deal with the situation as per the government's strategies," he said.

Whatever is required for the country's sovereignty and people's peace must be done, he said, adding that the operation will be conducted with utmost caution so that common people do not suffer.

AL in for bitter infighting

FROM PAGE 1
Former Muksudpur upazila simply to insult him, according to meeting sources.

"I never wanted to be an MP. I never opposed anyone... Then why shall I be insulted by a young boy?" the sources quoted the three-time chairman as telling the meeting.

On Saturday, Tangail's Madhupur thana unit AL president and general secretary wrote to party President Sheikh Hasina for her action against party Presidium Member Abdur Razzaque for declaring the AL candidate there without consulting the top leaders of the upazila.

Razzaque, the immediate past agriculture minister, named upazila AL Vice-president Yakub Ali, ignoring the upazila unit general secretary and incumbent Madhupur upazila Chairman Sarwar Alam Khan Abu.

Besides, 12 AL lawmakers and one state minister already announced the "AL candidates" loyal to them or their close relatives, grassroots and central AL leaders said.

Ahead of the January 7 polls, around 50 upazila chairmen had resigned to join the parliament election. Of the 40 that eventually joined the race, seven won with AL's electoral symbol and nine as the so-called independent contenders.

Many of the rest upazila chairmen who lost the battle are also seeking to take part in the upazila polls, to be started in phases from May 8.

Like Kabir, former upazila chairmen Mokshedul Momin, Gazi Mainuddin, Tarikul Islam and Sheikh Akram Hossain had vied for Nilphamari-4, Chandpur-5, Dinajpur-4 and Khulna-5 respectively. They have now started making preparations to join the local election, according to the sources.

Meanwhile, some incumbent MPs are working to ensure easy win for the candidates loyal to them and further tighten their grip on the local politics. AL sources said this may deepen the already existing rivalry that started centring on the January 7 polls.

On the other hand, some AL-nominated MP candidates who lost to the so-called independent candidates are trying to regain ground by backing their own candidates against the MP-sponsored candidates. A total of 62 independent candidates won the 12th national election. Of them, 57 are leaders of AL and its associate and front organisations. AL men who hold party portfolios in grassroots ran against party-nominated candidates in 181 constituencies out of the total 300.

Hundreds rescued after flooding in Australia

AFP, Sydney

Widespread flooding in Australia left hundreds needing to be rescued after a natural disaster was declared in regions across New South Wales yesterday.

Intense rainfall at the start of the weekend saw around 300 homes evacuated in north-east Sydney, emergency services said.

Floodwaters had caused widespread damage across the state in a very short

amount of time, federal minister for emergency management Catherine King said.

"The New South Wales government is continuing to assess the damage and understand the impact of this disaster," King added.

Emergency crews had performed about 200 flood rescues since Friday, said state minister for emergency services Jihad Dib, as some regions were left cut off by damaged or flooded roads.

Meanwhile, the peace committee yesterday issued a statement urging KNF members to lay their weapons down and return to normal life.

The bank robberies in Ramu and Thanchi and attacks on security personnel by KNF members shocked the entire country, it said.

Fear and apprehension were still prevailing among locals in Ruma, Thanchi, and Rowangchhari upazilas yesterday.

Like the national election, the upazila polls may ultimately turn out to be a battle between AL candidates, as mostly the AL contenders, and in some cases Jamaat leaders, are preparing to run.

To minimise the already existing rift, AL top brass have recently started division-wise meetings with grassroots leaders, MPs and the so-called independent MPs. In some of those meetings, party leaders engaged in altercations in a further display of their differences over local politics, sources said.

AL Joint General Secretary Mahbul Alam Hanif said responsible people should act responsibly.

"It is unfortunate if any MP picks his son or wife or relatives as party candidates for the upazila election," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Asked about possible confrontations, he said the party's district units have a role in this regard.

Man, his son

FROM PAGE 1

Inspector Sajib Dey of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station said, "Moshiur lost his job around eight years ago. He later invested in the stock market and lost a lot of money. Moshiur suffered from depression for several years."

Police will investigate the matter, he added.

Elderly woman dies in stampede during zakat distribution

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

An elderly woman died in a stampede during a zakat distribution programme in Rajbari Sadar upazila last morning.

The deceased was identified as Banu Bibi, 65, wife of the late Abdul Gofur Sardar of Gangaprosadpur village.

Locals say every year, Haji Delwar Hossain, a resident of Bhavanipur village, organises a Zakat distribution programme for those in need.

He started donating clothes and money around 7:00am at a pandal (bamboo shed) built next to his house for the programme.

People started arriving there early in the morning and formed queues for the zakat. At one point when people began pushing and shoving the woman fell on the ground and was seriously injured after being trampled on.

She was rescued and sent to Rajbari Sadar Hospital, where an on-duty doctor declared her dead.

Haji Delwar Hossain said he had asked for some police personnel from the Sadar thana to keep order but to no avail.

Assistant Superintendent of Police (Sadar Circle) Iftekharuzzaman, said, "A mobile police team was sent to the spot but the accident happened before they arrived."

Young woman stabbed to death by neighbour

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jamalpur

A woman died after being stabbed by her neighbour over a trivial matter in Jamalpur's Madarganj upazila yesterday.

The incident took place in Ramchandrapur village of Jorkhali union.

The victim Jiban Akhtar, 26, daughter of Karimozzaman, was a resident of the Jangaliya area.

Madarganj Police Station Officer-in-Charge Mahamudul Hasan said the victim's husband Shafiqul Islam had an altercation with their neighbour Fazlul Haque three days ago blocking the road to the latter's home.

There was another fight between them over the same matter last morning. At one stage of the altercation, Fazlul stabbed Shafiqul's wife Jiban with a knife.

Later, locals rescued her and took her to Jamalpur General Hospital, where the on-duty doctor declared her dead.

Police recovered the body and sent it to Jamalpur morgue for post-mortem.

No case was yet immediately filed over the incident but the police are trying to arrest the attacker.

Matarbari's rejoinder, our reply

FROM PAGE 1

2x600 MW Ultra Super Critical Coal Fired Power Plant' is one of the first track projects of the Government of Bangladesh and has been implemented by Coal Power Generation Company Bangladesh Limited (CPGCBL), a 100% government-owned company.

On June 16, 2014 Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh concluded a loan agreement with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the financier of the project, to secure the power supply and to realize the policy of power source diversification in our country. On July 27, 2017, for the implementation of the Matarbari 2x600 MW Ultra Super Critical Coal Based Power Plant, CPGCBL signed a contract with the Consortium of Sumitomo Corporation, Japan; Toshiba Energy System & Solutions Corporation, Japan; and IHI Corporation, Japan (STIC) who are jointly the EPC contractor of the project. Before, signing the contract, the EPC contractor was selected by an International Competitive Bidding process which was approved by the competent authority and as well as JICA. In order to monitor the EPC contractor's work and support CPGCBL to achieve the efficient and proper preparation and implementation of the project, CPGCBL appointed the company Matarbari JV Consultant [consist of Tokyo Electric Power Services Co., Ltd (TEPSCO), Japan; Fichtner GmbH & Co. KG (FICHTNER), Germany; Nippon Koei Co., Ltd. (NK), Japan; and SMEC International Pty Ltd (SMEC), Australia, on January 07, 2015, as owner's engineer which is also approved by JICA.

4. The project is being implemented by STIC under the provision of the EPC contract, and in that contract's price schedule, there is item no. 6.6 'Plant, Water and Cooling system' which includes many items, including item no. 6.6.11: 'Piping System of Entire Plant Water and Cooling System'. The news published on your esteemed daily is mainly on scheduled item named 6.6.11: 'Piping System of Entire Plant Water and Cooling System' of the said contract, which is on a lump sum basis. CPGCBL can only monitor the scheduled items, whether they are properly implemented within the quoted scheduled value. CPGCBL in this case only authorized to check whether the total item value is exceeded or not. Therefore, CPGCBL has no scope to verify the small item wise invoices as it is not Bill of Quantity (BOQ) item rather, this is a lump sum contract price. And for further convenience, the definition of lump sum contract is 'it is the form of contract in commercial transactions in which contractual obligations are undertaken for a fixed amount agreed upon as the contract amount. In principle, the amount can not be changed without agreement between the parties to the contract.'

5. Despite the price variation among the smaller items, the total price of item no. 6.6.11: Piping System of Entire Plant Water and Cooling System remains unchanged. Moreover, before every shipment of materials of the power plant, CPGCBL's owner's engineer 'Matarbari JV Consultant' verifies the credibility of the materials on behalf of CPGCBL.

6. The lump sum contract price for schedule 6.6.11 is payable in foreign currency JPY and USD. Furthermore, the mode of payment in foreign currency under is - Any amount payable to EPC contractor is disbursed directly from JICA to EPC contractor's (STIC) bank account in Japan.

7. When asked, the Japanese EPC Contractor (STIC), informed us that the invoice value for the concerned shipping is appropriately priced based on lump sum contract value. Besides, each invoice value is priced within the Price Schedule amount and it will never be exceeded, which means STIC follows the EPC contract.

8. As described above, it is clearly noticeable that CPGCBL can only monitor the scheduled item whether they are within the quoted scheduled value on the basis of consultant certification and scheduled price of the item mentioned in the contract. Needless to say, it does no good to the reputation of your own publication to publish such misleading news. I hope you will publish this rejoinder to set the record straight and restore the image of CPGCBL and the Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh as well.

OUR RESPONSE

The rejoinder almost entirely deals with technicality of the project, its components and the stakeholders involved for its funding and implementation - none of which was the subject of our report.

The rejoinder does not address the issue raised in our story, i.e., the abnormally high prices of some hand tools imported for Matarbari project with public money. It appears that the rejoinder rather seeks to avoid the issue of public spending and divert readers' attention with unrelated technical details.

To be clear, the very first claim in the rejoinder that The Daily Star published the story without checking the facts with the authorities is outright false. Project Director Abul Kamal Azad, who signed the rejoinder, has himself been quoted in our story. We quote him again:

"We think the prices are normal even though the customs said the prices are abnormal. The price may seem higher than the market price as the items were tailor-made upon a special order."

We also quoted the PD in our original story as saying that "the price is high as the two pipe cutters were made using special metal for use in the power plant."

Other than this untruthful claim that The Daily Star did not check the facts with the authorities, the rejoinder does not challenge any facts of our story. We stand by our report.