

# More space to rest in peace

Four new graveyards are being planned to accommodate the burial of an ever-increasing number of corpses in this city of ten million people. The proposal promises a solution to the space constraints in graveyards for the next hundred years.

**SOHEL ISLAM**  
The city of Dhaka is now a bustling hub of ten million people. With every passing minute, the population increases. At the same, the law of nature ensures that many others are taken to their final resting place having completed their lifespan. For residents of this overpopulated city, burying the dead can be a daunting and hazardous experience, which compounds the grief of losing near and dear ones. The problem stems from an acute shortage of spaces at the graveyards around the city. There are five main burial grounds in Dhaka located at Azimpur, Mirpur, Jurain, Uttara and Banani. But these facilities have run out of space and the situation is getting worse by the day. According to the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), about 100 corpses on an average are buried at

the five cemeteries every day. Around 35 burials take place daily at the city's largest graveyard in Azimpur. Most of its approximately 17-acre area is supposed to be ploughed and readied for re-use every two years. But the demand for burial space is so high that the authorities are forced to dig up graves more frequently. In other smaller graveyards, the space constraint is more severe. Taking this serious inadequacy into consideration, the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) is planning to construct four new graveyards at different corners of Dhaka. According to highly placed sources in the Corporation, the proposed spots are Hazaribagh, behind the Mirpur Zoo, Afabnagar in Badda and Demra's Matuail. The proposal for the graveyards is likely to be sent to the local government ministry for final approval soon. "Initially Mayor of Dhaka

Sadeque Hossain Khoka has ordered the authorities concerned to build a graveyard at Hazaribagh. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia however wanted three more burial facilities. So the DCC is now going for four graveyards. The estimated cost of the burial ground project has been fixed at Tk 225 crore and the expected revenue earnings will be around Tk 600. The DCC will bear the cost of construction," informed a top official of the DCC. The money will be spent on buying acquisition of land, land development, erecting boundary walls, tree plantation, construction and maintenance of pavements, mosques, offices etc. The size of each proposed graveyard is 37.07 acre, which is almost the double of the Azimpur Graveyard. "Two-thirds of the space from each of the four graveyards will be

sold to individuals at Tk 70,000 per grave. The rest will be kept for general burials. "We are confident that if this plan sees light, then Dhaka won't have to face shortage of burial space for the next 100 years," said an official associated with the project. The proposed new graveyards will also go a long way in solving the long-standing demand of city-dwellers to preserve the graves of their loved ones permanently. "My mother died a year ago and was laid to rest at the Uttara Graveyard. Despite repeated appeals to the DCC, I failed to get the permission to preserve my mother's grave permanently. "However it is heartening to know that others might get the opportunity to do so in the near future," said Asif Ahmed of Banani.



SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

## Polythene sneaks back!

Most users and producers of polythene products make superficial claims to justify their actions.



**SULTANA RAHMAN**  
A ban on bags made of polythene came into effect in 2002. A year on some factories are still producing and marketing this prohibited items almost all over Dhaka. A large number of these clandestine factories are manufacturing the bags at Mohammadpur, Lalbagh and Islam Bagh areas on the basis of their contract with middlemen in advance. In some cases these small factories are paying the police to operate and market the products. To avoid legal action most of these factories are producing polythene bags without the cutout space for the grip which environmentalist say is nothing but

an eyewash. Years of indiscriminate use of cheap polythene bags ultimately became a serious environmental threat and nuisance. Discarded bags clogged sewerage lines, surface drains and damaged fertility of the soil. Tons of such bags also polluted the canals and rivers of the country. To the relief of the general public, the Ministry of Environment and Forest formulated the law banning polythene last year. But the relief that the citizens are feeling looks likely to become a short-lived one. A polythene factory was found at 3/17 Madrasah road in Block-F of Mohammadpur which sometimes

operates day and night behind closed gates on the ground floor of a five-storied building, local residents alleged. Nazmul Ahsan, a local, said the factory is already upsetting peace and tranquility of the area. "We can't sleep because of the noise that comes from the factory." When confronted, an evasive factory manager Raju claimed that they were making white polythene bags which "weren't banned." In Chalk Bazar and Begum Bazar of Old Dhaka, almost all the shops sell or offer polythene bags openly. A 100-bag bundle costs Tk 80. Most users and producers of polythene products make superficial claims to justify their actions. Farid, a shopkeeper of New Market, denied keeping polythene bags saying the ones he uses were 'plastic bags.' Haqim Maowla of Mohammadia Enterprise at Chalk Bazar informed that use of polythene is restricted mostly among businessmen and shopkeepers. He claimed that limited use of polythene was not harmful! While visiting New Market, Karwan Bazar, Baitul Mokarram, Tanti Bazar, Islampur and Showarighat, it was evident that use of polythene have continued unabated violating the existing law. As a camouflage measure, only the shape and colour of bags have changed since the imposition of the ban.

## Row over raw deal

**SABRINA KARIM MURSHED**  
Tarique Rahman was flabbergasted; he gave a blank look to the mechanic. "But you only opened the set and cleaned it," he barely could utter the words. The mechanic just charged him Tk 600 for 'fixing' his mobile phone set. Many like Tarique get ripped off when they get their sets serviced. The lack of back-up mobile phone service since last few years has put users into trouble. The sight of a dispute between a mechanic and customer is familiar at the city service centres. "We are helpless since we do not understand the technology," said Asma Ahmed, an NGO worker. "They know this and take advantage," she added. "Not only service charge, the spare parts also seem to be exorbitantly expensive," said Nure Alam, a Government Science College student, at Hatirpool. "They are charging Tk 1,200 for a new casing, I'm not sure if it really costs so much." But those in the business refute allegations of overcharging. "We

always charge our customer a decent amount," said Akram Hossain of Ocean Telecom at Eastern Plaza. "Even we do not charge for easy and small repair works," he added. The minimum charge to mend a mobile phone is Tk 200, which can be stretched up to Tk 2,500, noted most of the repairmen. "To clean a set would have cost Tk 300 when mobile phone was first introduced. Now it is done for Tk 100 only," said Mohamed Shami Ahmed of Sameer Electronics. "Mobile phone is like a mini computer. It is hard to mend since it is very vulnerable," noted Abdul Kader of Universal. Many expressed their doubt about professional competence of the repairers. They added adverts are seen offering two-day courses on mobile repairing. It clearly shows how they lack the skill, they explained. However, most of the repairmen said they learned the skill from their 'Ustad'.



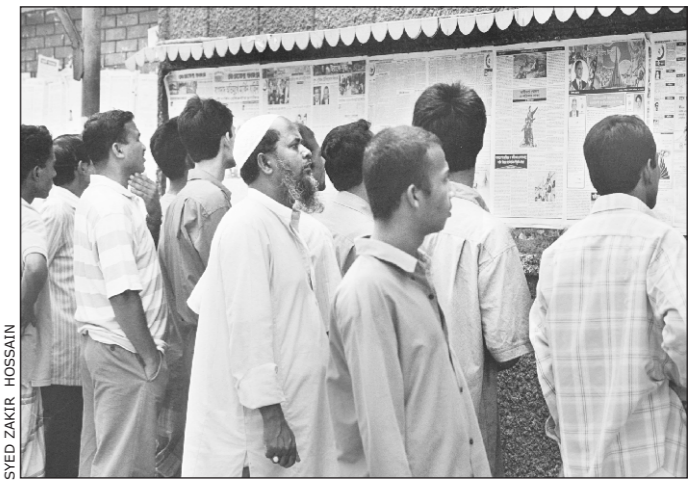
SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

## Walls tell the story

**BISHAWJIT DAS**  
If walls could talk, they would surely have spilled many secrets. Well, they do speak to people like you and me, not necessarily sharing secrets but information. "It's one of my daily routine skimming through the newspapers pasted on the wall," says Akbar, a wall-newspaper reader.

skimming through the newspapers pasted on the wall," says Akbar, a wall-newspaper reader. Like Akbar, there are thousands of wall-newspaper readers in the city. Almost all the newspaper houses hang their regular issues on their boundary walls and that gesture is well appreciated by those who can't afford to buy them. Some voluntary organisations like the Rotary Club, Lions and Leo Clubs also hang newspapers at certain spots for the convenience of the citizens. These organisations usually get complimentary copies of the newspapers for this purpose. The interests vary from reader to reader. "I read wall-newspaper everyday before classes," says Ershad, a

student of Notre Dame College. "I live in a nearby mess, and no newspaper is available there. It's nice to have free newspaper reading facility," adds Ershad. "My office is right beside a bus



SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

stand and the daily newspaper is available on a nearby wall. I glance through the pages while returning home everyday. Politics is my favourite topic" says Sikandar, an electrician. "I search for jobs," Babu of Gopibagh said while rolling his eyes eagerly over the special section of a newspaper in front of the Ittefaq building at Tikatuli. "I only read sports news," says Sandwip a college student. "Some of my more serious friends read editorials and other topics to prepare class materials." Right after the US-led invasion of

Iraq, wall-newspapers over-night became the centre of increased attraction. It has now become a regular habit of some people to rush to the nearest readable site and then chat over what they have learnt for the rest of the day. "I frantically search news about destruction of American ammunition, fighters and troops," says a reader not hesitant to express his views. As a matter of fact wall-newspapers have unconsciously become a strong base to control public-sentiment. "People in Iraq are dying for no fault of their own. This man, who has no regard for humanity, is waging a war for nothing," blurted out a middle-aged office bearer pointing at the photograph of US president George W Bush.

## essential numbers, cabs & train timing

### COURIER SERVICES

<b>International</b> Air Borne Express- 9561371, 9561372, 9550724 Air Couriers Int'l (BD) Ltd.- 8815970 Aramex International Courier- 9558003, 9559582, 9565075 Airspeed Express- 9563494 Asian Courier Services Ltd.- 8313543 Baishakhi Courier Service- 9558606 Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114 Bangladesh Courier Service- 9563989 Bengal Express- 9560642, 9552666 Bangladesh Int'l Courier- 953636 Continental Service Ltd.- 9552948, 9558425 DHL Worldwide Express- 9881703-7, 9886305-9, 9882057 Enem Express- 9330699 Fedex Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114	Modhuban Courier Service- 9550884 Overseas Courier Service- 9352431, 8321169 Pacific Courier- 9568446 Reliance Express Service- 9558515, 7110249 Sky International service- 9660442 Skynet world Wide Express- 9558062, 9560258, 7114787, 7113184 TNT Express- 9566662, 9558239, 8618155 Union Courier Service- 9341722 United Parcel Service Air alliance Ltd.- 8826429, 8810223	7100842-4 Cosmopol Services- 9552793, 9557975 Dhaka Courier Services- 7236222 Solphin Courier- 9558802 Dreamland Courier Service- 9550326, 9566975 Pioneer Courier Services- 9561727, 9569759 Probashi Courier Services- 9346359 Rainbow Express Parcel Services Ltd.- 8322773, 8315703 Reliance Express Services- 9558515, 7110249 Sundarban Courier Services- 9551984, 9556189, 9551656 Sunrise Courier Services- 9568751
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### UTILITY

**Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers**  
**Central Public Library-** 8626001-4, Shishu Academy- 9564128  
**Shilpakala Academy-** 8614673  
**Bangla Academy-** 8619550  
**Islamic Foundation-** 9550280, 9556407  
**Nazrul Institute-** 9114602  
**Ford Foundation-** 8116133  
**Alliance Francaise-** 8611557  
**British Council-** 8618867-8, 8618905-7  
**Community Development Library-** 8113769, 8113604  
**Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka-** 9126525-6  
**Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library-** 8615096  
**The Russian Cultural Centre-** 9116314, 9118531, 9118314  
**Drik Photo Gallery-** 9120125, 8112954, 8123412

**Museum and Zoo**  
National Museum- 8619396-9  
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday 3 pm- 8 pm, Thursday closed  
Muktijuddha Jadughar- 9559091  
Open: 10:30 am 6:30 pm, Sunday Closed  
Bangabandhu Smiti Jadughar- 8110046  
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Wednesday closed  
Ahsan Manzil  
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday: 3 pm - 7 pm, Thursday Closed  
Shishu Jadughar- 9666466  
Open: 10 am- 6 pm, Sunday Closed  
Sonargoan Jadughar  
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Wednesday Closed  
Dhaka Zoo- 9002954, 9002020  
Open: 9am 5 pm, Sunday Closed

### TAXI CAB

<b>Yellow Cab</b> Comfort 881710-4 Navana 9558065 Salida 9344477, 0171620881 Cosmo 9112959 and 8127191 Cab One 7113282-3 Nihon 8624741-2 Orion 9347277 Anudip 8125285 and 8127611	<b>Capital</b> 9352847 <b>Union</b> 8130485 <b>Kool</b> 0171826731 <b>Black Cab</b> Cab Ex 9358401 Cabline 8321162 JBS Cab 019364575 Sajan 018126036 Anudip -- 8125285 and 8127611	<b>Cab One</b> 7113282-3 <b>Palki</b> 0171052500 <b>Cab I</b> 7113282 <b>Jatri</b> 0171540074 <b>Nipun</b> 9572277 <b>R-Cab</b> 8914782 <b>Star Cab</b> 9571919 <b>Shihab</b> 018202477 & 018228675 <b>KGN</b> 8620011
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### TRAIN TIMING

<b>Subarna Express</b> <b>Mahanagar Prabhati</b> <b>Mahanagar Godhuli</b> <b>Turna</b> <b>Parabat Express</b> <b>Joyantika Express</b> <b>Upaban Express</b> <b>Tista Express</b> <b>Ekata Express</b> <b>Upakul Express</b> <b>Padma Express</b>	Leaves Dhaka at 4:00 pm Leaves Dhaka at 7:30 am Leaves Dhaka at 3:05 pm Leaves Dhaka at 11:00 pm Leaves Dhaka at 6:30 am Leaves Dhaka at 12:30 pm Leaves Dhaka at 9:30 pm Leaves Dhaka at 7:00 am Leaves Dhaka at 5:00 pm Leaves Dhaka at 6:00 am Leaves Dhaka at 9:20 pm	Reaches Chittagong at 10:15 pm Reaches Chittagong at 2:55 pm Reaches Chittagong at 9-11 pm Reaches Chittagong at 7-05 am Reaches Sylhet at 2-30 pm Reaches Sylhet at 9-20 pm Reaches Sylhet at 6-40 am Reaches Bahadurabad at 1-15 pm Reaches Bahadurabad at 1-35 pm Reaches Jagannath at 2-30 pm
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