



Activists of Sammito Nari Samaj, a women's group, hold a rally at Mukhtangon in Dhaka yesterday demanding trial of the guilty who harried college student Umme Habiba Rumi to commit suicide in Chittagong recently.

## Architectural conservation

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selected and documented significant buildings of old Dhaka. The study was the first of its kind in Bangladesh. Conservation initiatives had begun with a listing of significant building forms and environments in need of conservation, to be followed by inventory analysis for priority selection. It was, however, felt that the present knowledge gap on existing buildings was a major constraining factor.

Among the important problems encountered in course of the study was that in many cases the original urban fabric, immediate surroundings of historical structures or monuments have either been destroyed, lost their original use and character or have been hidden by relatively new structures. As a consequence, there is a possibility of structures of greater value being left over unintentionally. Another unfortunate aspect highlighted was that our buildings are constant victims of various destructive processes.

Ruplal House in Farashganj has been vandalised by virtue of its present use for various purposes including markets and warehouses. Outrageous excesses of construction have totally engulfed the oldest mosque in Dhaka, the Mosque of Binat Bibi. Old buildings of Shakhari Bazar have been pulled down to make way for new constructions, destabilising its socioeconomic structures and the traditional milieu.

We have been told the destructive forces are so rampant and powerful in replacing and defacing old buildings and historical places that the future of our past is indeed seriously

at stake. The most serious issue faced today in the architectural conservation is the conflict of interest between the aims of conservation and the desire for modernisation. The problem is more acute in the urban areas of the country where there is increasing rejection of traditional values and architecture by many classes of society. Contemporary city administrators are said to be reluctant to become involved in architectural conservation because of problems and complexities of land ownership, housing and political wrangling.

It may be emphasised that architectural conservation is yet to be a wider public and professional concern, and the contemporary philosophy and concepts of architectural conservation is yet to gain currency. What is practised here is archaeological preservation based on the principles and legislation introduced a century ago. Due to the restrictive policy followed in archaeological preservations, for example, a building must be 100 years old to be designated as historic property, significant portion of the country's architectural heritage remains outside the scope of architectural conservation.

In view of the promise that the concept of conservation holds for the future of the urban environment, it is underscored that only greater awareness among the general public, politicians, administrators, researchers, historians, professionals and users and their combined efforts can resist the threat to our architectural heritage.

## Observatories

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felt increasingly in the wake of a number of earthquakes in Chittagong, Dhaka, Sylhet and some other areas recently.

A senior official of the PWD said Tk 14 lakh was allocated in 1999-2000 and Tk 21 lakh in 2000-2001 for construction of the Tk 1.8 crore observatory building in Sylhet. Repeated requests for the rest amount yielded no result while the constructors concerned were pressing for their dues.

Further delay in execution of the project will escalate the expenditure, he mentioned.

## Tap water

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As a result of the decision, city-dwellers having 1/2" supply line have to pay Tk 60 per month instead of Tk 40.

Many city-dwellers have expressed their dissatisfaction at the decision saying tap water supplied by the city corporation covers only 45 per cent of the total demand, and the decision to raise the price without increasing supply is rather unfortunate.

'Nagorik Parishad' leaders of Barisal town expressed their dismay saying they were neither consulted nor invited to the meeting where the invitees were only BNP leaders.

## Rumi's death Women's alliance demands arrest, trial of culprits

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sammito Nari Samaj yesterday demanded arrest and trial of those responsible for the premature death of Umme Habiba Rumi of Nazirhat College under Fatikhari Police Station in Chittagong.

Leaders and activists of the organisation gathered at Mukhtangon at 4:30pm, forming a human chain and holding an hour-long rally.

Speakers at the rally demanded of the government to properly investigate the matter and bring the accused to justice immediately. They also demanded concrete measures to stop all kinds of violence against women.

Among others, Shirin Akther, chairperson of Karmajibi Nari, attended the human chain programme and addressed the rally.

Rumi, 18, a second-year student of Nazirhat College committed suicide on August 1 after being subjected to harassment for a long time by two brothers Azam and Nazim, sons of Kabir Ahmed, who used to hurl abuses at Rumi on her way to college.

A few days before she hanged herself, Rumi had indicated in her written statement in a diary that she was going to end her life to free herself from the unbearable situation.

## Govt mulls proposal to set up ICDs under pvt initiatives

BSS, Dhaka

The government is considering a proposal to set up inland container depots (ICDs) under private initiatives.

Official sources said yesterday the ICDs will be set up on build, operate and transfer (BOT) basis as the existing ones are unable to cope with the volume of trade.

Two government-owned ICDs -- one in Dhaka and the other in Chittagong -- are now operating. Earlier, representatives of the private sector had sought permission to establish ICDs in different parts of the country, including the industrial areas, for the convenience of importers and exporters.

Under the BOT, investors will have to handover the ICDs to the government after a stipulated period, sources said.

The shipping and commerce ministries will work out details of the BOT shortly.

Meanwhile, importers and exporters alleged that in the absence of any approach road to the ICD at Kamalapur in Dhaka, they often faced difficulties in transporting goods.

Earlier, the shipping ministry had conducted a feasibility study on probable ICD sites at Khanpur and Pangaon in Narayanganj.

# Saudi Arabia frees Westerners jailed for bombings

REUTERS, London

Saudi Arabia has freed five Britons and a Canadian convicted of carrying out a wave of bombings in the Gulf state in 2000 and early 2001, their lawyer said yesterday.

"They have been granted clemency. They left Saudi Arabia today," Salah al-Hejailan told Reuters by telephone.

Two of the men had been sentenced to death and, if the sentences had been ratified by King Fahd, faced public beheading. The others had been given lengthy prison sentences.

They were accused of carrying out several bombings in Saudi Arabia, including a November 17, 2000 attack which killed Briton Christopher Rodway. Several other Western expatriates working in the oil-rich kingdom were wounded in separate attacks.

Saudi authorities blamed the bombings on a turf war over illegal but lucrative alcohol sales. Families of the jailed men have said local militants were responsible.

Two of the accused -- Briton Alexander "Sandy" Mitchell and

Canadian William Sampson -- were shown on Saudi television in February 2001, confessing to attacks in the capital Riyadh.

They later retracted their confessions and their families and friends have said they believed the men were tortured.

Mitchell and Sampson were sentenced to death while four others received sentences of up to 18 years, Hejailan said. Saudi Arabia's strict Islamic law dictates execution, usually by public beheading, of murderers, rapists and drug smugglers.

"The grant of clemency is even more remarkable considering the severity of the punishments all the accused were facing," the lawyer said.

The four Britons facing lengthy jail terms were James Patrick Lee, Les Walker, James Cottle and Peter Brandon.

A seventh man, Briton Glenn Ballard, was also released on Friday after being detained for 10 months but not charged. He had been a witness against the others and could have been held until the sentences against them were

ratified, Hejailan said. Hejailan dismissed the official explanation for the bombings, saying alcohol sales would have earned the men only a few thousand dollars a year and "could not possibly be a rationale for these crimes".

Analysts had linked the violence, which continued after the men were detained, to anti-Western militants in Saudi Arabia. In the biggest attack yet, suspected al Qaeda bombers killed 35 people when they struck Western compounds in Riyadh in May.

Saudi Arabia has since launched a crackdown against militants, and the release of the Westerners is likely to be seen as a tacit admission that Saudi authorities had fingered the wrong people.

"Five of the detainees have insisted all along on the retraction of their early televised confessions and have refused any plea bargain to admit guilt for the sake of early deportation," Hejailan said.

He said he was unaware of the fate of a Belgian man, Raf Schyvens, who was shown on television two years ago confessing alongside Sampson and Mitchell.

# BCS questions 'leaked' again: 4 arrested

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arrested four people while they were allegedly photocopying the question papers.

The arrestees are three brothers Monirul Islam, Shaiful Islam and Mahmudul Islam and employee of the shop Mahfizur Rahman.

They were later turned over to Dhanmandi police, who said they were examining the photocopied questions.

The four were produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court yesterday afternoon.

"We'll send the seized copy to the PSC for verifying it," Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, South Zone, Khan Sayeed Hasan said.

He said there are several sets of question paper and the PSC is the authority to examine it.

Three sets of questions were used for yesterday's test.

ZN Tahmidia Begum, chairman of the Public Service Commission (PSC) that runs the tests, could not be reached on telephone for her comments despite repeated attempts.

An examinee of the city's Mohammadpur area said he got 65 questions, of which 52 matched with the ones in the question paper distributed among the examinees. The rest were written hazily and could not be deciphered due to poor photocopy, he added.

A student of Jasimuddin Hall of Dhaka University said he got a set of 59 questions Thursday night and 56 of them were similar to the ones he answered in the exam centre.

In Rajshahi, some examinees complained of having sets of ques-

tions beforehand with 65 per cent resemblance.

A Dhaka University student, who also appeared for the test, claimed of getting 23 questions, just ahead of the exams over mobile phone.

In the city's Mirpur area, a candidate named Engineer Shah Mohammad Iqbal Hayat lodged a complaint on behalf of the candidates of Ideal Girls High School and College Center with the Mirpur Police Station regarding the leakage.

He also attached a copy of 'fake' question paper along with the complaint, in which he alleged that some examinees got a set of questions before the start of the examination.

He mentioned that the set he received earlier was similar to original set. He urged the officer-in-

charge of the police station to record the complaint as a general diary (GD). The duty officer of the Mirpur Police Station said they did not receive it and asked him to report to the PSC.

Our Staff Correspondent from Cig said that there were widespread reports of leakage of question paper of the BCS preliminary test in the city yesterday. Candidates of different exam centres made the complaints.

The examinees alleged that the question paper was leaked out in the capital Thursday night and examinees in Chittagong got the questions through mobile phones. Some aggrieved candidates quoting those who got the leaked questions said that some 56 leaked questions were found in the question paper yesterday.

Our RU Correspondent says allegations of question leakage were also widespread in Rajshahi. Sources said activists of ruling BNP's student front Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal received questions through mobile phone on Thursday night at Rajshahi University (RU) and Rajshahi College.

Those who got the questions found 65 of them correct.

Other sources said a few people reached Rajshahi on Thursday evening with handwritten questions which sold at Tk 2,000 to 10,000 among candidates.

While contacted, a PSC official in Rajshahi, Shahjahan Bhuiyan, refuted the allegation.

## Tongi industrial zone

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The picture visiting foreign buyers get is of damaged roads and culverts, discarded sludge and industrial waste, and rotting garbage, he told The Daily Star.

He says estate roads are incapable of bearing the weight of the 10-20 tonne vehicles that use the estate and that Tk 3 crore needs to be spent

immediately on repair of roads, culverts and drains. Despite meetings with senior government officials, no money has been allocated, he says.

Other business leaders complain about the emergence of illegal slums and hundreds of makeshift mud-and-thatched houses, and failure to stem the flow of liquid industrial waste into nearby lowlands. A large area near Meghna Textile Mills has been flooded by factory waste, causing a severe environmental hazard to people in surrounding areas.

They accuse the Rajdhani Unnayan Kotripaksha (Rajuk) of making no effort to develop the area and of ensuring that services such as telephones, gas and water were supplied on a priority basis.

Law and order is another cause

for complaint, with one entrepreneur claiming that the local police station rarely acts even when specific allegations have been filed.

One of the problems appears to be that no single government agency is responsible for looking after what should be a prime industrial zone, situated about 25 kilometres from the heart of Dhaka.

In response to this barrage of complaints, Ajmat Ullah Khan Tongi, chairman of Tongi Pourasabha, pointed out that the municipality had no legal power to punish law violators or environmental polluters, although all the industrial units had been asked to set up waste treatment plants.

"We are only responsible for collecting holding taxes from the owners

of the plots and can do nothing about solving their problems or improving conditions," he said.

Nor could the Pourasabha act against illegal occupants because the plots had

been allocated by Rajuk. "We could evict the slums inside the zone

if we had given the responsibility," he said.

## US troops

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tion," said a US military spokesman. US Central Command issued a statement saying the soldier from the 82nd Airborne Division had been on guard duty in the Mansur district of the capital on Thursday evening.

"The soldier was transported to a nearby medical facility for treatment and subsequently died from wounds received," the statement said.

Another report says, Saddam Hussein's onetime chief surrendered to US forces in the ousted president's hometown of Tikrit yesterday, a relative said.

US troops raided the home of Major Qais Rajab in Tikrit overnight and searched the place, but the former chief was not there at the time, Rajab's brother-in-law, Walid al-Tikriti, said.

Rajab returned to his home yesterday morning and decided to turn himself in, said Tikriti, himself a former lieutenant in Saddam's elite Republican Guard.

US forces have detained scores of people as they scour the area around Tikrit, 175 kilometers north of Baghdad, in search of Saddam, who continues to elude them four months after they ended his 24-year rule.

## Defence ministry

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aviation and tourism ministry drew 32 objections involving Tk 69.43 crore.

The CAG's office found 31 objections involving Tk 31.57 crore against the Directorate of Food under the food ministry.

The expenditures of health and family welfare, education, establishment, environment and forest, water resources, foreign, expatriates' welfare and overseas employment, shipping, agriculture, industry and fisheries and livestock ministries also raised a number of audit objections involving a huge amount of public fund.

To resolve the deadlock, the DC arranged a meeting on August 6, but his efforts went in vain due to the absence of the police super.

## Businessmen

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random to the deputy commissioner demanding immediate reopening of the shops.

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## Larma

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development, he added. Vice-president of the PCJSS Sri Rupayan Dewan said the situation in the CHT might deteriorate if the peace accord was not implemented properly.

Chaired by Prof Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir, the function was also addressed by 11-Party leader Pankaj Bhattacharya, Secretary General of the Communist Party of Bangladesh Mujahidul Islam Selim, Prof Mohammed Samad and Prof Mesba Kamal.

## Building Code

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and the rest multistoried buildings, most of which have been constructed in an unplanned way. Also, a yearlong survey conducted by the City Corporation showed most of the buildings and structures in the city have been constructed violating the building code.

An earthquake expert and teacher of Chittagong BIT Prof M Jahangir Alam told a seminar here Thursday that the foundations of 30 per cent of buildings in Chittagong suffered some sort of damage due to the recent earthquakes measuring 3 to 4 in the Richter scale.

Earthquake measuring 6 to 7 in the Richter scale might cause widespread devastation in the district, he said, adding that neither the government nor the owners of buildings are prepared to the face such a disaster.

The earthquake on July 27 threatened four buildings of Government Chemical Library in Baluchhara and seven of Polytechnic staff quarters in Nasirabad as well as the Chittagong Public Library building.

Meanwhile, the City Corporation in a circular recently called upon building owners to either demolish or reconstruct the dilapidated, abandoned, unplanned and faulty structures to avoid loss of life and property.

Punitive action would be taken against those who violate the order, the circular said.

## Bus collision

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Gedu Mia, tempo passengers Sonamuddi, Ratna Begum, Rahmat Ali, Kamala, Saifur Rahman, Motalab, Biplob, Ainuddin, Jainuddin and Basana were admitted to the sadar hospital.

Separate cases were filed with local police.



Candidates come out of Jagannath University College centre after the preliminary test of the 24th Bangladesh Civil Service examinations yesterday. Over one lakh examinees sat for the test across the country.



A giant pile of earth on the main road in front of Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board office hinders traffic movement during rush hours, causing sufferings to commuters. Transport operators and commuters on the scene demanded immediate removal of the mound.

PHOTO: STAR

PHOTO: STAR

## Missiles, rockets seized in Pakistan

AFP, Peshawar

Pakistani paramilitary forces yesterday seized, a cache of missiles, rockets and ammunition smuggled from Afghanistan into northern Pakistan, an official said.

"We have seized heavy arms including two surface-to-air missiles and 8,000 rounds of heavy ammunition," commander of Mehsud Scouts Colonel Hameed Iqbal Khattack told AFP.

The catch also features 170mm rockets, 82mm mortar shells, 80mm anti-tank rockets, anti-tank mines and rocket-propelled grenades.

The Russian-made arms were being smuggled from Afghanistan, Khattack said.

The arms were concealed under tea sacks aboard a goods truck in the Khyber tribal area, some 30 kilometres (18 miles) west of Peshawar, he said.

The driver and his helper escaped when scouts intercepted the truck, Khattack said.

## Joint forces

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drawal and how it will affect the ongoing operation could not be known.

Members of the joint forces, who came from Dhaka Metropolitan Police, Sirajganj and Bogra, have already started leaving.

Without giving a specific figure, Bagerhat Police Superintendent Mesbah Uddin said the size of the joint forces was being reduced but the operation would continue.

There have been allegations of harassment of ordinary citizens by members of the joint forces, the most recent incident being on August 5 when they allegedly harassed three female family members of UP chairman of Barabaria union under Chitalmari upazila, and listed criminal Wahiduzzaman Panna.

Additional DIG of Khulna Range Naba Bikram Tripura asked the police superintendent to look into the matter. The police superintendent, however, denied the allegation.

As part of the countrywide anticrime operation dubbed 'Operation Spider Web', about 800 law enforcers took part in an operation to arrest extremists and criminals in Mollarhat and Fakirhat from July 19, but could not recover any significant number of weapons or arrest any listed criminal.

They interrogated about 3,000 people and arrested 55, only three of whom were members of an outlawed party.