thecitythatwas

Midford Hospital on the bank of Burgianga was inaugurated on May 1, 1858. Initially the hospital started with two wards for men and the one for women. Only 92 patients were treated at a time in the three wards. Ove the decades, the capacity has increased to 600 seats.

Bus company takes over open spaces in New Colony

At least 40 buses of ATCL are illegally parked at the New Colony everyday

SOHEL ISLAM

Some open spaces at Lalmatia's New Colony have been turned into a parking facility for buses of the ATCL Company.

At least 40 buses of ATCL are illegally parked at the New Colony everyday, making the residential area's atmosphere similar to any bus

stoppage of the city.

"After dusk, this place becomes a den for the bus drivers, conductors and helpers. Their lack of education, taste and decency is evident from their conversations and their foulmouth jibes are embarrassing enough for local residents and passersby.

'These people chat well into midnight as many of them sleep inside the buses. Their presence has had a seriously adverse impact on the environment of the place," said Sujon, who lives in New Colony.

"The ATCL could have kept their buses elsewhere. I don't understand why they had to spoil the environment of a residential area. Five months ago, the illegal parking was widely reported in different newspapers but nothing substantial has been done so far," said Kamal Uddin, president of

New Colony Housing Association.
"Incidentally, the number of buses have rather increased after the reports. Earlier, they used to keep 10-12 buses. Now, there are at least 40," added Kamal Uddin.

When contacted, manager of the ATCL Bus Company Liton claimed that they were not violating law.

"Our buses are parked on our own land. Besides, the allegation of spoil-

ing the environment is totally baseless."

The Department of Housing had allotted 1.4 bighas of land near New Colony to one Bachchu Mia, who is the main owner of the ATCL, and eleven others under the rehabilitation programme for stranded Pakistanis (Biharis) a few years ago. Later, in an investigation, the Department found that none of those twelve were Biharis. Based on the findings, the land allocation was cancelled in 2002.

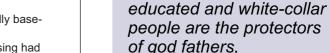
But Liton tried to justify the illegitimacy of the parking: "Our owner Bachchu Mia filed a lawsuit in the High Court (HC) against cancellation of the allotment of the plots. As the matter is in court, so we have every right to park the buses there."

Despite repeated attempts, the chairman of the Department of Housing could not be reached for his comments. However, one of the officials of the Department's Dhanmondi office, preferring anonymity, said that the parking of the ATCL buses was totally illegal.

"I don't want to comment on the case pending with the HC. But there's no way they can park their vehicles there. Our hands are tied as Bachchu Mia is a very influential person. Our lives could be threatened if we go for any action," said the official.

Meanwhile, the fate of New Colony's playground still lies with the court. The housing department of the Ministry of Housing and Public Works had planned to build flats on the western side of the ground for selling them to government officials and employees but their work stopped when environmentalists and concerned citizens contested the decision in court.

A big pile of earth is now lying in the middle of the playground. The western side of the ground was dug up and that has left just a small patch of land on the eastern side available for games and sports and recreation of the New Colony residents.



possessors of black money....and are responsible for the present state of insecurity".

"Eighty per cent illiterate

people of Bangladesh are not the problem. We, the

-- Dr. Kamal Hossain
Eminent Lawyer and constitutional expert
Speaking at a round table discussion on Human Security in Bangladesh:
Recent Trends and Responses organized by the Centre for Policy Dialogue
(CPD). Source: Prothom Alo.

city express

The latest crop of quotes from the city's press -- words worth repeating, we feel, for their humour, insight or sheer outrageousness. Star City does not necessarily support the opinions expressed in this column.

"The intensity of eve teasing is increasing owing to absence of exemplary punishment for the police who patronise the eve-teasers."

-- Khushi Kabir NGO Activist Speaking at a roundtable titled Eve Teasing: A Social Problem, organised by Ajker Kagoj on August 9. Source: Ajker Kagoj



"If Bangladesh decides to export gas it may suffer from more energy insecurity in the future."

-- Joshep Stiglitz
Nobel laureate economist, former vicepresident of the World Bank
Speaking to a group of journalists at a city hotel.

"If necessary we would dismantle our launches and convert them into floating hotels or make timber out of them or may be we would use them as the roof of our house".

-- M Kalimullah

Chairman, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Organization Answering to Prothom Alo on the launch owner's role if government stick to their decision



"After dusk, this place becomes a den for the bus drivers, conductors and helpers."

Cashing in on unwanted pregnancy

SABRINA KARIM MURSHED

Twenty-day-old Shohag was fortunate enough to secure refuge at a non-governmental organisation (NGO) two hours after his birth. Or else, he would have met the same fate as inevitable for an unwanted child: smothered with a pillow or drowned in a water-filled bucket.

Just thinking about the corpse of a baby wrapped in polythene and dumped in the dustbin makes one shudder, but that is happening every other day in the city. Most of them are full-grown

babies killed in clinics and nursing homes that have mushroomed over the years and are continuing their business by cashing in on social stigma tagged with unwanted preg-

According to medical experts, abortion of a foetus should be done within eight to ten weeks of fertilisation, otherwise it may cause health hazards to the mother. But in most cases, it is done much later when the foetus is full-grown. Some babies are delivered normally but abandoned right after birth. According to the contract with the mother,

the abortionist is tasked with killing the baby.

"I got a number of phone calls from nurses or midwives asking if I will receive a baby that did not die even after an attempt to kill it," Dr Dilruba said of her gruesome experience. Dilruba is director of the Centre for Training and Rehabilitation of Destitute Women, an NGO offering shelter to abandoned carrying mothers and babies.

Dilruba said these babies hardly reach her organisation as clinic or nursing-home people do not want to disclose their identity. "We even ask them to leave the

babies at the door of our office but hardly get any response," she

The law prohibits abortion of a foetus, unless it is necessary under medical considerations, sources said. It can take place only when the mother's life is at risk. But a set of doctors and family welfare visitors (FWV) performs abortions illegally, of course — in exchange for a hefty amount of money.

Well-known clinics and hospitals do not perform it on their own premises but have other places to do it. Sources said abortion is being done even in government hospitals in the name of mentre leaveleties.

Chauvinists rule the DCC

SULTANA RAHMAN

Female ward commissioners in Dhaka feel discriminated against their male counterparts when it comes to development

The female commissioners allege the local government division is not aware of their problems, which hamper their participation in the development work.

As per the rules of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), a female commissioner, elected from three seats, should carry out 25 per cent of the development work in each ward. But it is alleged that the DCC is not following the rules.

hudaet

"After much discussion with the DCC and local government division, the women commissioners have got only Tk 3,000 taka a month in rent for each office," said Rabaya. "An office is hardly available at Tk 3,000. The minimum rent of an office is Tk 5,000 that we give on our own." she added.

"Women commissioners would lose credibility and popularity if they are not allowed to work for voters. It has been over one year and four months we have been elected. But we have not been able to do anything important. This is disappointing," said Commissioner

Shireen Rukhsana.

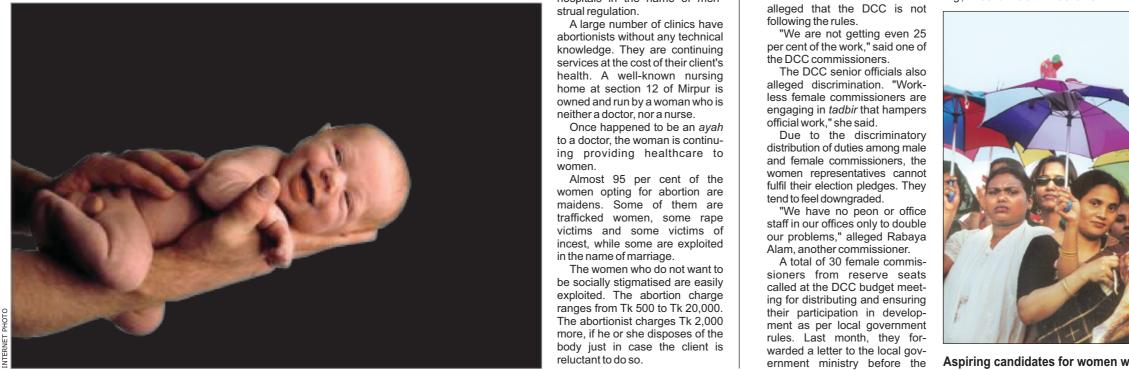
The direct election of women commissioners to the DCC was a major step toward women's empowerment to ensure their participation in nation-building on people's mandate.

"The word 'empowerment'

means nothing to women representatives because of being so called 'half-commissioner' -- the reality that left us out of development work as we promised to people," said Shireen.

AYBI Siddiqi, local government secretary, says, "If we receive any complaint of discrimination, we will monitor and solve the problem."

Female ward commissioner s feel discriminated, not getting 'due share' of development work





Aspiring candidates for women ward commissioners, campaigning in the last DCC election.