A chawki or security outpost during the Moghul period in Karwan Bazar was set up where people were security checked before entering the city. There was a caravanserai near the chawki. The word Caravanserai was later distorted to Karwan Bazar.





Bags of mail lie unaccounted for, left, in front of the Foreign Post Office in Dhaka, while mail delivery vans rust in disrepair behind the building.

Notoriety, thy name is Foreign **Post Office**

Parcels from abroad may never reach you because of a 'black hole' created by a set of dishonest employees at Dhaka Foreign Post

The employees are blamed for stealing,

selling or tampering with the parcels. Heaps of packages are waiting in the storeroom of the post-office to be delivered, but many of them -- it is alleged -- are never delivered to

Worse happens when some post-office employees sell the undelivered packages in

"One and a half months back, my friend

sent me a parcel from Canada, but I did not get it. I tried to retrieve it, but to no avail," said Shamim Khan, a businessman.

"I have heard many cases of such misappropriation. It has long been happening, but I don't understand why the authorities don't take stringent action against the guilty, Shamim said.

A postal official, requesting anonymity, said: "The other day, a man from Tangail lodged a complaint about missing blankets and towels. Interestingly, when the customs officials opened his parcel in his presence in Dhaka, the contents were in the package. But he found one blanket and two towels missing, when the package was delivered in Tangail."

According to the normal postal procedure, if parcels come from abroad, the customs officials call the addressees to the foreign post-office in Dhaka to open the packages in front of them to check whether or not the contents are taxable.

But the packages are not delivered straight from the Dhaka post-office and are sent to the addressees' local post-offices for

Although the complaints about missing parcels are lodged with the post office regularly, the authorities would not disclose the figure of such cases, terming it a departmen-

"We know the misappropriation of con-

tents but cannot give information to journalists as the service rule prohibits us from doing so," said Mujibar Rahman, director-general of Bangladesh Post Office.

"We always take action against the employees for dishonesty in line with the Universal Postal Union. Many have lost their jobs. In most cases, we realise compensations from the dishonest employees," Rahman claimed

Missing parcels apart, unscrupulous officials are delivering money orders late to the addressees after using the money for their

"I regularly send money to my parents who live in a district town. I preferred GEP (Granted Express Post) to normal mailing, as the postal officials assured me that it would be delivered in 24 hours. The post-office charged me more fees for that. But it reached in no less than five days," said computer engineer Liton Ahmed.

Rahman refuted the allegations, saying this happens in village post-offices, saying: "The delay cannot happen in district towns. Even if it happened it may be that the postmen didn't find the proper addresses easily.'

"A few months ago, I received such complaints from Mymensingh. After investigations, we found an employee guilty and he was immediately terminated," Rahman

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.



"How can the price of the essentials be reduced if a truck carrying goods from Jessore to Dhaka has to pay toll to extortionists at 16 points?"

> -- Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury

Commenting on the failure to control the price hike in Ramadan at a parliamentary committee meeting on November 5. Source: Ajker Kagoj

"Universities spend government funds and the government cannot have a say, that can-

-- Dr. Osman Farruk **Education Minister** Justifying to the BBC the provision of prime minister's approval before the appointment of university teachers

"We will have to form another inquiry committee to look into the *performance of inquiry* committees formed in Bangladesh in the past."

-- Dr Kamal Hossain President, Gano Forum Speaking at a discussion meeting on the occasion of the Constitution Day organised by the Supreme Court Lawyers Association on November 4. Source: Prothom Alo



on November 6. Source: Bhorer Kagoj.

"The train had to be stopped 200 yards away from the station because of a brake failure"

Driver of Balaka Express Told a mobile court his reasons for not stopping at Joyderpur Railway Station on November 6. Source: Prothom Alo

"It is hard to say whom the land belongs to unless it is surveyed properly. However, there is no doubt the land belongs to the govern-

Deputy Commissioner, Manikgan On the land beside the residence of Superintendent of Police, Manikganj on November 8. Source: Prothom Alo

"Because of the failure of the four-party alliance, the people are looking for an alternate government. And, as they are asking for changes, people like Mannan Bhuiyans cannot tolerate the (proposed) National Government (Jatiyo Sharkar) of JSD."

-- Hasanul Haque Inu President Jativo Shamaitantrik Dal (JSD) Commenting on a statement of BNP Secretary General Abdul Maman Bhuiyan at a discussion meeting marking the Solidarity Day on November 7. Source: The

Taraman living out a hard life

Although honoured with Birpratik for her role in the liberation war, she is still fighting neglect and poverty

BISHAWJIT DAS

Doctors till yesterday could not identify the disease 52-year-old Taraman Bibi, Birpratik, has been suffering from for years.

"I cannot breathe easily," said Taraman, admitted to the National Institute of Chest Diseases and Hospital at Mohakhali on November 2. A six-member medical team, led

by Professor Falauzzaman Khan, director of the hospital, is looking into her case.

Taraman has laboured breathing since 1995. "I cannot talk or move when I am in pain," she said. Her problem is still unidenti-

fied, Prof Khan told Star City, adding: "She is well now and under the respiratory care unit. But she was earlier suffering from tubercu-

He also said the medical board carried out a thorough check-up on her and found no problem. She still needs to undergo two diagnoses that cannot be done in the hospital, he said.

The hospital needs Tk 15,000 for the two tests to be done outside. Prof Khan said the doctors' welfare trust would chin in and he is also trying to collect funds from other

She is living out a hard time, although she was honoured with one of the highest awards in Bangladesh. She is the first woman in Bangladesh to achieve the Birpratik award for her valour, bravery and participation in the 1971 liberation war

She has been getting Tk 2,000 a month from January this year, which is not enough for her family "Most of that amount is spent on

medicine," said Abdul Majid, her husband.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, who was then in opposition, visited Taraman in the Circuit House in Kurigram, her home district, on May 15, 2000 and promised her a house and a job for her son-in-law

But none of the promises was kept, although the BNP-led coalition completed two years in office.

after going to power.

The government, however, gave her the land documents of 45 decimals for her house on September 26. But Taraman said, "It's lowland and not suitable for a house. I have not yet taken possession of the land.'

"I tried to contact the DC (deputy commissioner) several times but could not reach him even after making appointments," she complained.

State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Rezaul Karim visited her in hospital yesterday and gave her Tk 25,000 and bundles of tin for reconstruction of her house in Kurigram.

The land will be handed over to her in eight days, he said with an assurance that her case will be taken care of.

She submitted an application to the state minister, requesting him to make an arrangement to send her abroad for better treatment.

"I want to live like a normal human. I need to go abroad for better treatment.'

She still looks forward to the prime minister meeting the promises she made during her election campaign in 2000.



Taraman Bibi is in hospital, still awaiting correct diagnosis of a breathing problem she is suffering from since 1995.

Over the years, the Guide House has catered for thousands of The Guide House at Bailey Road has drama lovers. The Guide House Auditorium and the Mohila Samity are supporting drama activists throughout the years.

now the Guide House follows suit

Guide House to wear a new look

AVIK SANWAR RAHMAN

finalised a plan to renovate its auditorium to provide better service for stage performers, organisers and

"We will invite tender for renovations in a month," said Rawshan Ara, general secretary of the Guide House. The Guide House was established

in 1964 to spearhead the movement of the Girl Guides and the auditorium was built in 1982 as a means of raising funds for the organisation.

Over the years, the Guide House has catered for thousands of drama lovers. The Guide House Auditorium and the Mohila Samity are supporting drama activists throughout the years. The Mohila Samity has already renovated its auditorium and now the Guide House follows suit

"We are renovating the auditorium to provide better service for people," Rawshan Ara said.

ties like central air-conditioning and modern acoustic system. The renovation work includes increasing the number of seats from 340 to 500 and

Better service needs better facili-

installing a modern lighting system. "We have consulted with Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation and the architecture department of BUET," the general secretary said.

Bangladesh Group Theatre selected M Hamid, Jamaluddin and Nasiruddin Yusuf Bacchu as technical committee members of the reno-"The renovation work should be

The Mohila Samity has already renovated its auditorium and

done with no delay, as our performances are being affected for lack of proper stages," Nasiruddin Yusuf Bacchu said.

under the ministry.

Although a group unofficially works for the Guide House for its maintenance, the education ministry authorised a committee of volunteers

The Guide House was a loss-

to take care of the auditorium, as it is

authorities are hopeful of turning it into an income-generating venture. "The rent of the auditorium was

Tk 1, 000 a show and we

making auditorium, but now the

about Tk 35,000 in electricity bills a month," Rawshan Ara said. The auditorium was closed on November 1, 2002 for the renovation

work to be funded by the Guide

House. "It will take another year to complete the work," said a source in the

The Guide House auditorium at Bailey Road is closed for renovations.