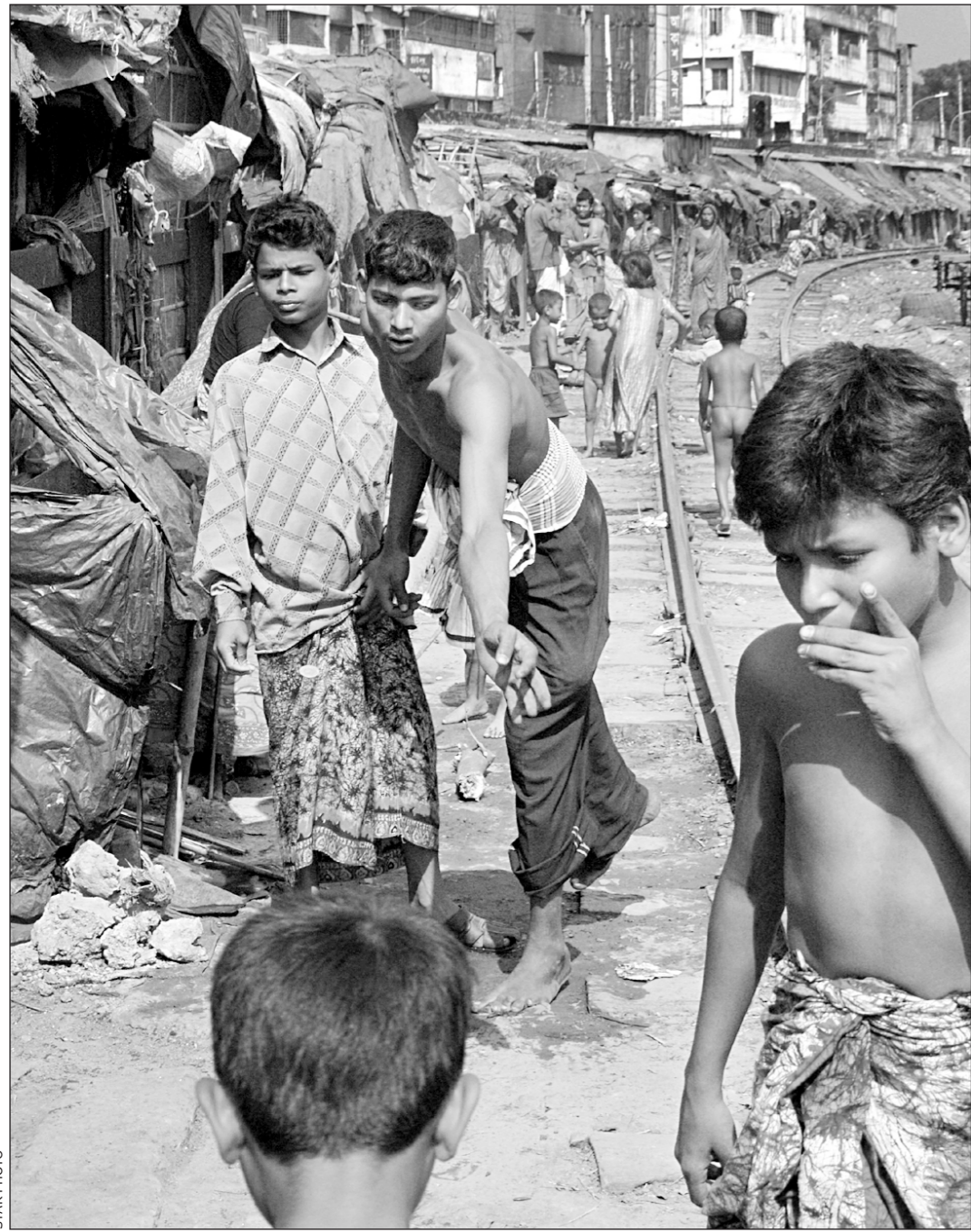


STREET CHILDREN OF DHAKA

Facing battles for survival



WAHIDA MITU

Unable to bear her stepmother's torture anymore, Lovely ran away from home in Comilla in 2003 at the age of 12.

On her way she met a village 'aunt' who took her to Population Service Training Centre's (PSTC) shelter home at Golapbagh, where she was transferred to the Malibagh shelter home for girls, the very next day.

The 15-year old now thanks her lucky stars for the home. "I cannot even imagine what I would have done at that time," she said. "I may have turned into another wandering street child," she added.

In the three years she has been there, Lovely completed a three-month beauty therapy course at Dhaka Ahsania Mission, with support from Appropriate Resources for

Improving Street Children's Environment (PSTC-ARISE), and is presently employed in a beauty parlour.

"I am grateful to PSTC. I earn a handsome sum, enough for me to support my own mother," she said.

"I wish to be a famous beautician and have my own beauty parlour," she added.

She is also working as a peer educator (making street children aware of the facilities provided by PSTC) and thus contributing towards rehabilitating other street children.

Like Lovely around 10,000 street children enrolled at PSTC's Drop-in-Centre (DIC) from May 2000 through February 2006. This project is called ARISE and is implemented by PSTC in the Dhaka City Zone (Demra, Sayedabad, Khilgaon, Badda, Gulshan, and Uttara) with financial assistance from

UNDP through the Ministry of Social Welfare and Department of Social Services. PSTC-ARISE operates two DICs at Malibagh and Golapbagh.

"ARISE's main objective is to support the development of street children by strengthening survival skills and providing opportunities for a productive future through the government, NGOs and community based interventions," said Md Momenul Haq, the project coordinator.

"Our strategy is to develop a comprehensive support system and help street children by improving and strengthening existing services focussing on shelters/half-way homes to provide basic needs of nutrition, medical care, psychological counselling, education and vocational training," he added.

The project provides three

According to Bangladesh International Development Studies, 2004 "Street Children In Bangladesh- A Socio-Economic Analysis," there are over 670,000 such Bangladeshi children without birth registration or adequate national census

six-month long non-formal educations for the street children. Later interested children are sent to primary school and Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs (UCEP).

The ARISE project is assisted by the Ahsania Mission and the UCEP.

The other activities of the project are non-formal education, job placement, night shelter, recreational activities, health services and advocacy, and market surveys.

Lovely got the opportunity to participate in a photo exhibition by street children held from January 21 to February 5.

Melissa Hurd and Ara Jerejian, project co-ordinators of Visible Photo Project (VPP), supported by PSTC, gave the children a three-month course in photography, and the program took 10 months. With Lovely exhibiting 45 photographs, five other street children Saddam, Polly, Raju, Tariqul and Milon exhibited their pictures, too.

According to Bangladesh International Development Studies, 2004 "Street Children In Bangladesh- A Socio-Economic Analysis," there are over 670,000 such Bangladeshi children without birth registration or adequate national census. This is an arbitrary figure as some non-governmental organisations (NGO) estimate a figure close to 20,00,000.

EDUCATION AT UNIVERSITIES

Influential lobby blocks UGC recommendations

TAWFIQUE ALI

Due to pressure from influential quarters the government has not been able to implement any of the University Grants Commission (UGC) recommendations for ensuring quality education both in private and public sectors.

Over the past three to four years the UGC made several recommendations including closure of six errant private universities and amendment to the Private University Act of 1992. But the government has not implemented these two major recommendations.

A high-powered evaluation committee headed by the UGC chairman in its report on October 17, 2004 made a number of recommendations on each of the private universities specifically on what measures have to be taken to ensure quality education at the private universities.

On the basis of the performances of the private universities, it recommended closure of eight universities for violation of guidelines and rules under the private university law. Two of those universities were later excluded from the closure list.

The committee also made recommendations on physical infrastructures, financial matters, teachers' quality and recruitment, lab and library facilities, status of courses and facilitates, internal feud of the private universities. All these were submitted to the prime minister.

Of the total 54 private

universities, 47 are situated in and around the capital city.

The UGC recommendations also include formation of accreditation council, uniform recruitment rules for teachers and employees of public universities and uniform financial rules and accounts

sources

The recommendations also included empowering the UGC with executive authority and formulation of statutes in line with a standard guideline for universities, spelling out clearly in the law that private universities must be non-profit

against them."

Responding to a query on May 9, Education Minister Dr Osman Farruk said those who found the recommendations going against them and fear that the amended act would go against them, hinder implementation of recommendations.

"I don't know much about the passage of the amendment except that we forwarded our recommendations to the PM office 18 months ago," he said replying to a question.

The education ministry has sent the proposed act to the Cabinet Division and I don't know what its latest status is, he said. "Like anyone else, I too have frustrations with the fact that the recommendations are not implemented."

A top official of the ministry said the matter of formation of the accreditation council is presently with the education ministry. "We will soon forward it to the law ministry."

Not only the private universities, the whole education system is plagued with various problems including a serious lack of quality education, shortage of quality teachers and required infrastructures. According to official statistics, there are more than 1.5 lakh educational institutions in the country including schools and madrasas.

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manual for public universities.

The amendment to the private university law 1992, initiated in 2004, has been caught in the procrastination in the face of pressure from the influential quarters, UGC sources said.

After receiving the UGC recommendations for closing down eight private universities, the government formed a one-member judicial committee headed by Justice M Fazlul Huq for further investigation. The committee suggested closure of six out of the eight universities.

The anarchy in the private universities that has surfaced recently, would have been averted if these recommendations were translated into reality, said UGC

organisations.

The evaluation committee recommended that 10 private universities must settle down all the irregularities within two years, seven within one year and six within six months. But the government has not monitored them to see what progress they have made.

According to a UGC source, a powerful political and trade lobby has been active to any move that may go against the interest of private universities. "There is no possibility of implementing any of the recommendations in the election year," he said.

"Above all, the lobby has managed a powerful section at the Prime Minister's Office to foil any administrative actions

Poison in the air!

FROM PAGE 21

healthy body and on them who are smokers or who have been suffering from other diseases," said Dr Siddique. Inhaling these particles also reduce life expectancy and working capability. Among the particles -- SPM, PM 10 and 2.5 are the most dangerous as they hit blood directly and can cause cancer.

Mainly children and aged people suffer from cough, asthma, bronchitis and other diseases for other particles in the air, said doctors.

Koji Shimada, professor of economics at Ritsumeikan University in Japan, and Murshid Akter, lecturer of economics at Edward Collage in Pabna, jointly conducted a study on the health and economic effects of air pollution in Dhaka between 2002 and 2004.

The study found if annual concentration of particulate matter 10 could be reduced to the permissible limit, approximately 1,210 premature deaths

in the city could be avoided.

The researchers converted the benefit to monetary terms as \$97 million, which amounts to about 4.1 per cent of gross national income of the city a year, said Murshid.

Several governments took initiatives including enacting legislation for keeping the air fresh in different time but all those initiatives had collapsed for different reasons.

For example, in 1996 government initiated to set up five computerised Vehicle Inspection Centres to check faulty vehicles but unfortunately the centres are yet to operate. It has been alleged that Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), a foreign consultant organisation and the constructor company left the vehicle inspection centres in a faulty condition.

The government has again sought money from the Asian Development Bank, the initial financiers, to repair the faulty

equipment of the centres, an official at BRTA told Star City.

The government also ordered to increase height of the Brick kilns' chimney to reduce air pollution but failed to ensure the quality of fuel used in these kilns making the initiative ineffective.

The government chalked out Bangladesh-1 and Bangladesh-2, a road map in line with the Euro Emission Norms, in July 2005 and formulated a co-ordinated body to implement the road map.

Smoke Opacity Value -- 80 Hartridge Smoke Unit (HSU) is the permissible limit for the diesel-run vehicles in Bangladesh-1. Bangladesh-1 reveals that it will allow smoke opacity 80 HSU till December 31, 2006 for the diesel-run buses registered before September 1, 2004. The permissible limit will be reduced to 70 HSU by December 31, 2008 and to 65 HSU by December 31, 2009 for the diesel-run buses.

For the diesel-run trucks and other kinds of vehicles, the permissible limit was fixed at 90 HSU till December 31 this year while by 2008 it will be 80 HSU and 70 HSU by 2009.

A co-ordinated body, including the BRTA, Dhaka Metropolitan Police and the Department of Environment has been formulated to ensure that the vehicle owners abide by the road map. The co-ordinated body will sit on June 6 to work-out the ways to reduce vehicular smoke emission.

Abdul Hannan, a retired government official, while jogging in the morning at Zia Uddyan said after being told about the new projects: "God knows whether these projects will give us fresh air to breathe in the future, but who will save us from the poison we are inhaling now."

healthouting, taxicab & train timing

HEALTH

- Hospitals**
- Anjuman-e-Mofidul Islam 9336611, 7411660
 - BARDEM 8616641-50
 - Cholera Hospital (ICDDR) 8811751-60
 - CMH (Dhaka) 9870011
 - Dhaka Medical Collage Hospital 8628612-6
 - Holy Family Red Crescent 8311721-5
 - Islamia Eye Hospital 9119315, 8112156
 - Lion Eye Hospital 9129127
 - Medinova Medical Services 8620353-4
 - Mirpur General Hospital (Pvt) Ltd 9007873, 8015444
 - Mitford Hospital 7319002-6
 - National Heart Foundation Hospital 8014914, 8010491, 8021399
 - Orthopedic Hospital 9112150

- Salimullah Medical College Hospital 7319002-6
 - Samorita Hospital 9131901
 - Shahid Suhrawardi Hospital 9122560-78, 9112086, 8114856, 9130800
 - Shishu Hospital 8116061-2, 9119119
- Clinics**
- Akad Clinic 8015855, 8022581
 - Arogyaya Niketan 9333730
 - BAVS Maternity 8016413-4
 - Dhaka Monorog Clinic 9005050
 - Gulshan Mother & Child Clinic 8822738, 8812992
 - Ibn Sina Clinic 8119513
 - Jahanara Clinic (Pvt) Ltd 8912929
 - Judi Maternity 9113322
 - Paltan Poly Clinic 9557385
 - Retina Eye Center (Clinic) 9884588, 9884566
 - Shishu Bekash Clinic 9351625

- The Eye Clinic 9333238
- Blood Bank**
- Red Crescent Centre- 9116563
 - Sandhani (DMCH)- 8624040
 - Sandhani (SMCH)- 7310061, 7310061, 7319022
 - Dhaka Medical Collage Hospital- 8626812-9
- Eye Bank**
- Sandhani International Eye Bank- 8614040
- Ambulances For Dead Body**
- Anzuman Mafidul Islam (Kakrail) 9336611, Gandaria 7319808, 7318166,
 - Al-Markajul Islam 9127867,

MARKET CLOSED

- Gulshan 1, 2 markets-Friday
- Elephant Road-Friday
- Bishal Center-Friday
- Baitul Mukarram Market-Friday
- Polwell Market-Friday
- BCS Computer City-Friday
- Isha Khan Shopping Complex-Friday.
- Rajlaxmi Complex-Friday
- Stadium Market-Friday
- Bangabazar Market-Friday
- National Museum-Thurseday
- Ahsan Manzil-Thurseday.
- New Market-Tuesday
- Gausia Market-Tuesday
- Mouchak Market-Sunday
- Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesday
- Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesday
- Eastern Plaza-Sunday
- Farmview Super Market-Sunday
- Muktijuddha Jadughar-Sunday
- Dhaka Zoo-Sunday
- Shishu Jadughar-Sunday

TAXI CAB

- Passenger's Complain**
- 01711-000990, 01711-000991, 01711-000992, DMP-999, 2627.
 - Cab Salida Ltd. 9344477, 01711-620888, 01711-610405
 - Cosmo Cab Ltd. 9112959, 8127191, Nitol Cab Co. Ltd. 8125285, 01711-621953
 - JBS Cab Ltd.0191-364575
 - Coal Cab Ltd 8130485, 01711-826731
 - Limujin Cab Ltd. 9318351, 9337204
 - Multi-Cab Ltd. 9666502, 9570740
 - Nihon Taxi Cab Ltd. 8624742,
- 6262471
 - Orion Taxi Cab Ltd. 934727, 9347277, 01711-155144
 - Reliance Cab Ltd. 9339563-4
 - RMS Cab Ltd. 8118536
 - Shatarupa Taxi Cab Ltd. 731083, 01711-458740
 - Tinni Cab Ltd. 9662009, 01711-645257
 - Telex Cab Ltd. 7202201
 - Alif Cab Co. Ltd. 0191-357838, 83116948
 - Cab One Ltd. 9563054 Ext.-3077, 3178
 - United Cab Ltd. 7510166, 01711-

- 348474
- Ulka Express Ltd. 9359885, 01711-313554
- Cab Bangla Ltd. 9563077 Ext.-3054, 3178, 01711-622644
- Cab i Ltd. 9563054, 9563077, 01711-629585
- Cab line Ltd. 8321162
- Capital Cab Co. Ltd. 9352847-9
- Classic Cab Ltd. 200825, 01711-233851, 01711-812415
- Comport Cab Ltd. 8817610-4
- Cab Express Ltd. 9341369, 9339337, 9348401 Ext.-111

LIBRARY & INFO

- 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
 - Information Resource Center, The American Center - 8813440-4, 9886395-9
 - British Council- 8618867-8, 8618905-7
 - Community Development Library- 8113769, 8113604
 - Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka- 9126525-6
 - Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library- 8850141-2
 - The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314
 - Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412
 - Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) 9330081-4