

Misereries of primary school teachers

They hope the government will keep its promise

IMRUL HASAN

It has been now twenty years since Khairunnesa started teaching as the headmistress of Binna Danghi Government Primary School in Shingair, Manikganj. "I always dreamt to be a respected, honourable teacher, but over the years my perception and passion towards teaching have changed," Khairunnesa said. The job that she felt gave her so much prestige is now a job that causes only distress.

The reason is poor salary. "I struggle to meet my daily expenses and pay house rents regularly. I'm a teacher, but my children's education is faced with uncertainty. I don't know how to survive," Khairunnesa said.

"I couldn't yet arrange marriage for my eldest daughter. And how can I manage it? It's already difficult for me to manage the daily expenses of my wife, three daughters, and my parents," said Md Kamal Uddin, an assistant teacher of Dohaibari Community School, Sirpur.

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working for various government organisations get four times the salary we get. What kind of respect and honour is this for us the teachers?" asked an angry Foyez Ahmed, the headmaster of Bagdahigh Government Primary School, Agailjhara, Barisal. "We teach children on how to become good citizens and how to work hard for a bright future, but our contribution is never recognised," he lamented.

These are the comments of some of the thousands of primary school teachers who had

been on hunger strike till death in the city since June 17. Following discussions with Prime Minister's Political Secretary Harris Chowdhury Monday evening, the agitating teachers called off their strike with an assurance from the government that their demands would be discussed at a meeting in July.

Primary teachers' cry for better salary has been left unheard for years. They have often taken to the streets, twice in last three months, suspending

classes in over 30,000 primary schools that has become a matter of grave concern.

On June 26, some teachers observing hunger strike at Muktagong and Central Shaheed Minar fell sick and around 20 of them were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

They allege that they are not paid anywhere close to the amount paid to other government officials be it high school teachers, workers or even a clerk.

"In spite of having the same qualifications, a government

high school teacher gets Tk 5,100 per month while a government primary school teacher receives Tk 2,600 only," said Kazi AK Fazlul Haque, general secretary of the Bangladesh Primary Teachers Association (BPTA).

"Salary discrimination is so acute even in the higher posts. A primary school headmaster gets only Tk 2,850 per month while a government high school headmaster receives Tk 9,000," he added.

During the strike most of the schools were kept under lock and key. Only a few primary schools at Tejgaon, Moghbazar, Mohammadpur, Sutrapur and Demra in the capital were seen open with classes in progress.

"We did not want to hamper the students' academic life," said a senior teacher of Mirpur Government Primary School.

"We knew that the closure of schools would affect children's education. We had no option but to go on strike and keep the schools closed," said Sahidur Rahman, an assistant teacher of the BG Press Government Primary School at Tejgaon.



Hundreds of primary school teachers were adamant to realising their demand of pay hike.

DCC'S EVICTION DRIVE AT KAFRUL

Thousands living in the open

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The demolition of around 3,500 shanties at Bhasantek in the city by Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) on June 15 to widen a road, without any prior notice has made over 15,000 people homeless.

Thousands of women, children and elderly, evicted from a slum at Bhasantek under the Kafrul police station are now living under the open sky with no hope.

Legal experts from various non-governmental organisations (NGO), have said that no prior warning is given to the slum dwellers by the concerned authorities in almost all cases of eviction.

Section 5 of the Government and Local Authority Lands and Building (Recovery Of Possession) Ordinance of 1970

clearly states that, "prior notice must be given to any kind of occupant in government land before eviction."

But in this case, DCC officials said they had earmarked the area more than two months ago and had served notice to the dwellers warning about the eviction. The notice said that the slum was erected on the corporation's land illegally.

When asked why they did not notify the slum dwellers, who had been living there for 32 years, about the recent eviction drive, a high official of DCC's Slum Development Department said that it did not matter how long they had been living there, as none of the shanties were legally set up.

"Ninety percent of the dwellers left the place complying with our announcement when the construction of a new road was

about to start," he added.

But slum dwellers claimed they did not receive any notice from the DCC before the eviction, and could not remove their belongings as many of them were out at work at that time.

"I was working in a garment factory in Ibrahimpur, when the eviction drive took place. All my belongings and clothes were looted before I could reach the spot," sobbed Mahmuda Begum, who had been living there for 28 years.

"If I had received such a notice, I would have at least removed my belongings and shifted to another place," she added.

Shahnur Ara, who had been living in the slum for 16 years said: "My rickshaw puller husband was killed in a road accident in May this year and after his death I was living in a shanty

with my three little children. I work as a domestic maid, and now with the roof over our heads gone, life has become unbearable."

"We are left with no choice but be at the mercy of the God and live under the sky till my two sons find another shanty that could be rented. But as it is the middle of the month, I doubt there would be any place available," said Abdul Mia, a butcher who had been living on the demolished site, living for 30 years.

When asked whether this kind of eviction drive would be taken against all illegal slums in the city, the DCC official did not say anything clearly but added, "We have cleared this specific slum for the sake of greater public interest."

When contacted Haji Md. Salek Mollah, commissioner,

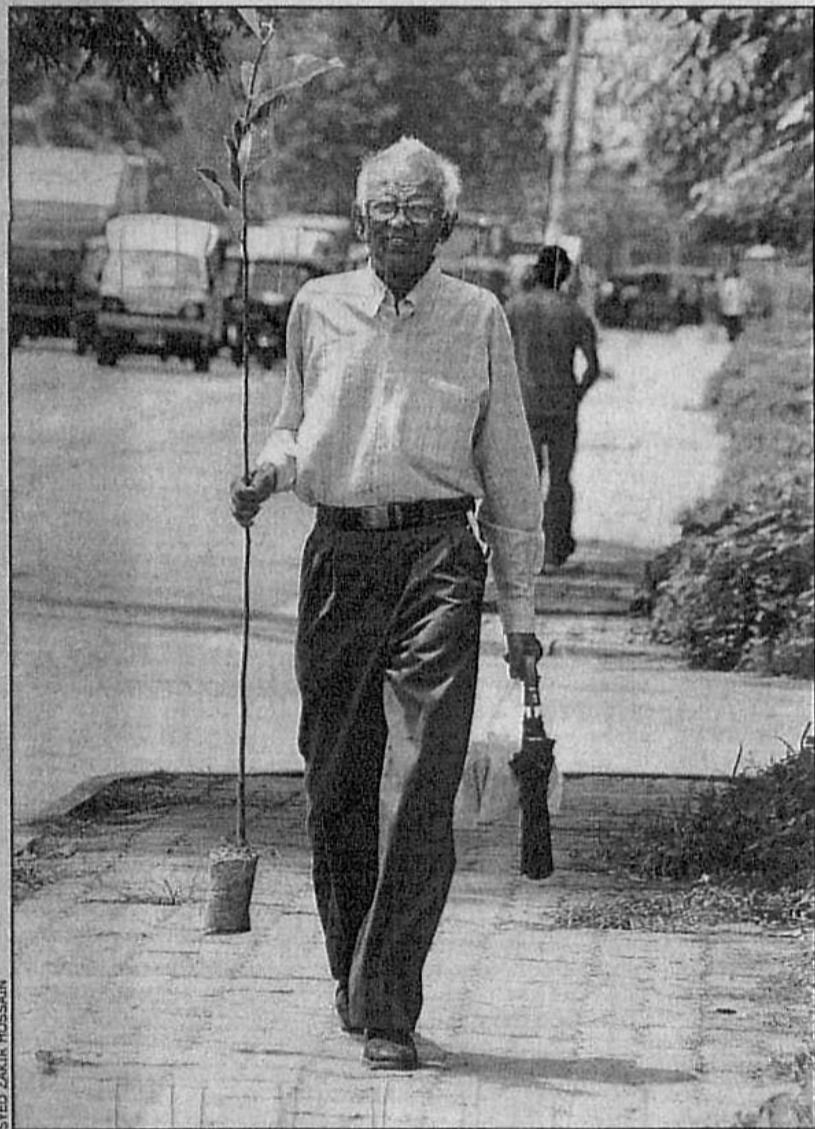
Ward 15, DCC said: "This ward comprising of three police stations is the largest of all wards of Dhaka, but has only one semi-pাকা road for communication."

"We are driving out 15,000 slum dwellers, for the betterment of five lakh residents," he added.

According to the Slum Development Department, the area has been cleared to widen a three-kilometre road to 120 feet connecting Mirpur with the New Airport Road.

Besides, Mirpur dwellers at present have to travel more than 10 kilometres to reach the airport, facing severe traffic congestions in the process.

DCC officials, led by two magistrates and a large contingent of police, went to the spot and razed the shanties leaving the dwellers stupefied.



While the authorities are felling trees in the name of road extension, an elderly man has not forgotten his responsibility towards the environment. He was on his way home with a sapling bought from a fair held in the city.

healthouting, taxicab & train timing

HEALTH	MARKET CLOSED	TAXI CAB	LIBRARY & INFO
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 Akand Clinic 8015855, 8022581 Aroggaya Niketan 9333730 BAV.S 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-Markajui Islam 9127867,	Gulshan 1, 2 markets-Friday Elephant Road-Friday Bishal Center-Friday Baitual 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-Thursaday Ahsan Manzil-Thursaday. 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 Passenger's Complain 01711-000990, 01711-000991, 01711-000992, DMP-999, 2627. Cab Salida Ltd. 9344477, 01711-820888, 01711-610405 Cosmo Cab Ltd. 9112959, 8127191, Nitol Cab Co. Ltd. 8125285, 01711-621953 JBS Cab Ltd.0191-364575 Alif Cab Co. Ltd. 8130485, 01711-826731 Limujin Cab Ltd. 9318351, 9337204 Multi-Cab Ltd. 9666502, 9570740 Nihon Taxi Cab Ltd. 8624742,	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 Compot Cab Ltd. 8817610-4 Cab Express Ltd. 9341369, 9339337, 9348401 Ext.-111 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