

## DOWN TO EARTH

### Central Public Library Offers Limited Facilities

By A S M Nurunnabi

So much is the importance of the role of a public library in promoting and enriching the intellectual life of a people that it is called a people's university.

In all developed countries, public libraries occupy a high place in the educational system. Public libraries under government auspices in our country had their origin more than 30 years ago. But the progress since then has been rather tardy. There was a time when public libraries in some form or other functioned under unofficial patronage. Most of them have since become extinct owing to lack of patronage from philanthropists and also due to gradual decline in reading habit of the people.

The Central Public Library in Dhaka is the biggest public library of the country. Its present collection numbers one lakh eleven thousand volumes. It functions under the administrative control of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. It has two branches in the city: one at Armanitola and the other at Mohammadpur. The students mainly form its clientele. The number of general readers is not considerable.

The library is said to be suffering from severe financial constraints. On this account, the library is yet to go a long way to fulfil the expectations of the reading public. According to library sources, the total annual allocation for the purchase of books for the library and its branches in the districts is fifty lakhs. The allocation is said to be grossly inadequate in the light of the requirements of the library.

The selection of books, periodicals, magazines, etc. is made by a committee consisting of teachers, intellectuals, representatives of publishers, concerned ministry and the library.

The library has three reading rooms: one for general reading, the second for science subjects and the third for the children. It operates on open self system. Though the library has as its objective the introduction of lending system, at the moment they are not ready for it. The main reason is that they are not yet equipped with multiple copies of books and other supporting facilities. The library mainly caters to the needs of graduate and post-graduate level students. It also plays a part in the promotion of mass/adult education by way of providing sustained back-up service to those engaged in that field.

In all developed countries, public libraries maintain mobile units to bridge gaps in readership needs of any community. It is understood that though the library has such a scheme, at the moment want of facilities in logistics stands in the way of its implementation.

The library is headed by a Director who is an officer of the administrative service cadre. Library sources point out an anomaly in this respect. Though the relevant rules say that the Director should be a professional librarian, government has now though it fit to appoint an officer from the administrative cadre to this post.

It is felt by observers that on account of the specialised nature of the job, optimum results in the management and development of the library can be expected from professionals. Yet in the whole set-up, it is said, only 50 per cent of the posts are held by persons with degrees, diplomas and certificates in Library Science. It is understood that there is some grievance among the professionals on this score.

According to a section of professional librarians, there is at present no dearth of senior and experienced librarians. In their opinion, allowing these professionals a greater share in the country's library administration would have a positive impact in improving the library services.

The all important factor prejudicing the progress of this library is its financial constraints, as indicated by library sources. An allocation of only 50 lakh Taka annually is said to be a mere drop in the ocean of needs. Because of financial stringency, the range of books, periodicals and newspapers, etc. acquired for the library is limited. Unless the allocation is substantially augmented, the pace of progress in this sector will continue to be slow and unsatisfactory, as opined by these sources.

In these days of rising trend of prices of books, a large number of readers turn to public libraries to satisfy their reading needs. From this aspect, a properly equipped library is a blessing for a community.



Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina addressing a political training course of Bangladesh Chhatra League (M-I) at the party office yesterday. — Star photo

## 2 more DU boys killed

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hall is a stronghold of rival Saeed Sohrab faction of JCD.

The Ilias faction activists on entering the hall from behind, locked all entrances and began searching rooms for their rivals, residents of the hall said.

They said that the attackers knocked the Room 265 of the Surja Sen Hall, somebody opened the door from inside, the attackers got into the room and shot Mamun who was deep in sleep.

Another resident of the room Junayed jumped off from the second storey room for life

to their den in Ziaur Rahman Hall.

At about 7:30 am when Mahmud Hossain along with three other associates tried to seal the wall of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall, possibly to flee, was shot from inside a car parked nearby. The car sped away after the incident.

Police later raided the Jasmuddin and Sheikh Mujibur Halls and searched for unauthorised weapons, but found nothing.

The autopsy of the two victims were conducted at the Dhaka Medical College

their meeting with the BNP high command and jointly held rallies and processions on the Dhaka University campus from August 31 to September 3.

JCD's crisis erupted in June when Sayed group took over the control of Mohsin Hall by ousting the Ilias group men. It also captured the Surjaseen Hall on July 28.

Sayed Sohrab, General Secretary of Mohsin Hall Students Union, once was a leader of Ilias faction. Sayed withdrew his support from Ilias and forged a separate group in cooperation with



Asraf Azam Mamun

and managed to escape with bullet in his thigh.

The gunmen carried the body out of the room and dumped it into the water reservoir behind the dormitory.

Police and Fire Service personnel recovered the body of Mamun at about 8 am.

Immediately after the killing, a fierce gunbattle flared between the Ilias faction activists positioned at the Surja Sen Hall and the Sohrab group holed in neighbouring Mohsin Hall, another stronghold of Sohrab group, campus sources said.

The battle continued from 5 am until 7 am.

According to residents of the two halls, more than 500 rounds of shots were fired and a large number of bombs were blasted.

Heavy contingent of police rushed to the spot at about 6:45 am and cordoned off the whole area. No sooner had the police arrived on the scene, the Ilias loyalists rolled back



Mahmud Hossain

Hospital Friday afternoon.

The body of Mamun eldest son of a businessman Abdus Shukur, was sent to his 37/18 Bisle Mohalla at Muhammadpur area of the capital and was later sent to his village home at Bancharampur thana in Comilla district.

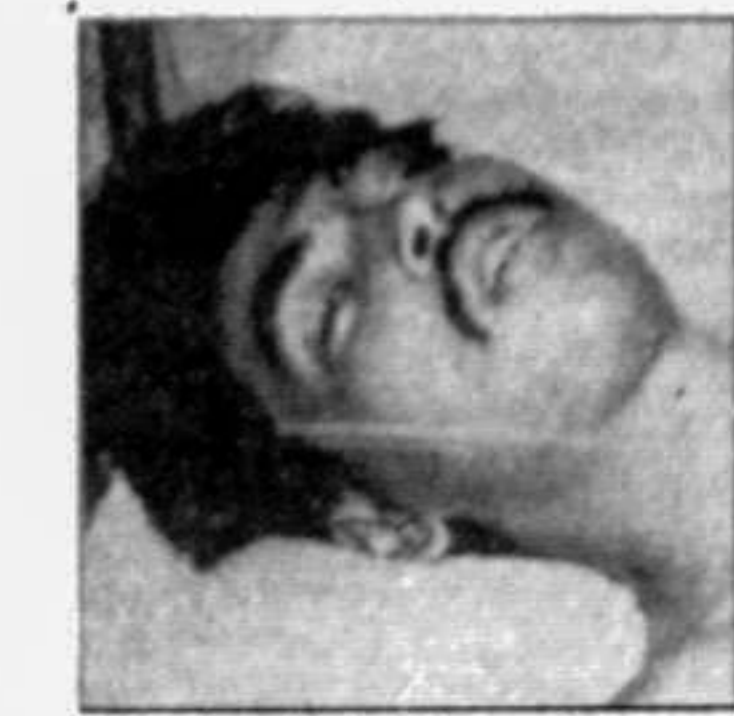
Mahmud, of Bonaripara in Barisal district, is the son of Muhammad Altaf Hossain, an employee of Khulna Newsprint Mills. Mahmud's body was sent to Khulna in the afternoon.

Earlier, a namaj-e-janaza was held at the university central mosque.

UNB adds: Earlier on August 30, a former DU student was killed and five others were injured during a gun-battle between two JCD factions.

After that incident, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and BNP Secretary General Barrister Salam Talukder called in both the group leaders and asked them to refrain from further confrontation.

Leaders and activists of both the groups shook hands after



Nasrullah Khan Junayed

some central leaders.

JCD fell into another crisis after its central council was held on July 16. The defeated leaders in the council then got united and formed a full-fledged committee and announced it on August 7.

Nazimuddin Alam, DUCSU AGS and a leader of JCD, commenting on the latest trouble said, "It is very sad and brutal incident". He held "outsiders and terrorist elements" responsible for Friday's shootout on the campus.

### OMS to down rice prices

Food Minister Shamsul Islam has ruled out the possibility of any immediate release of rice for open market sale despite glut in government food godowns in northern districts.

Any open market sale at this stage will further depress rice price which has already come down to an unwarranted level, he told UNB.

## Killing on DU campus condemned

By DU Correspondent

The Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) and a number of student organisations have strongly condemned yesterday's fierce gun-fight on the university campus in which two students were shot dead.

The DUTA at an emergency meeting of its executive committee termed the gun battle as a result of intra-party conflict of a student organisation, as suicidal and demanded punishment of the killers.

In a statement issued after elaborate discussion on the nearly five-hour-long armed incident, the meeting viewed the DU administration and the government must share the responsibility of providing protection to thousands of teachers-students-employees of the institution and demanded realistic and coordinated steps in this regard immediately.

Chaired by the DUTA president SMA Fayed, the meeting observed that a 'hellish' atmosphere had been prevailing on the university campus over the past days due to frequent movement of the armed outsiders and their stay at the residential halls turning DU halls into armories, inaction of the police and the consequent helplessness of the university authorities. Such a situation had endangered the lives of all the campus residents, it added.

The DUTA alleged the members of law enforcing agencies were not at all interested in recovering the illegal arms and accused the same forces of supporting and collaborating with the terrorists in some cases.

Narrating the armed battle

that started in the early hours of yesterday, the DUTA statement said several gunshots were fired at the residences of the house tutors of Mohsin Hall and the Surjaseen Hall which, it opined, could cause serious accident.

The left-leaning eight-party Ganatantrik Chhatra Oikya (GCO) at a hurriedly called press conference at the Jatiya Press Club alleged that yesterday's incidents occurred as the ruling party was sheltering the terrorists inside the party's student wing Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD).

Addressing the press conference, the GCO leaders said neither the Home Minister nor the Prime Minister could avoid the responsibilities of the killings on the DU campus.

They accused the government of contemplating to control student politics through passing the anti-terrorism bill in the parliament keeping the JCD terrorists immune to legal action and for not expelling them from the organisation.

The speakers called upon all democratic student organisations to resist, what they called, terrorism of the JCD activists.

Noor Ahmed Bakul, Razekuzzaman Ratan, Saidur Rahim Bitul, Uday Pal and Sajjad Zahir Chandra addressed the press conference.

During the press conference, a student rally has been called at the foot of Aparajeyo Bangla of the Dhaka University today (Saturday) at 10am to protest 'terrorism of JCD activists' and the killing of two students of the university.

Samajtantrik Chhatra Front in its statement issued by Belal Choudhury and Razekuzzaman

Ratan held the PM responsible for failing to curb terrorism.

Besides, similar statements were issued by the JSD (Inu)-backed Chhatra League, Mukti-jodha Chhatra Command and Ganatantrik Chhatra Kendra.

Meanwhile, statements condemning the DU violence were also issued by JSD(Inu) and BSD (Khaleq).

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Inu) in a statement Friday demanded explanation from the Prime Minister on the incident of gun-battle between two groups of her party's student front.

The statement issued by Quazi Aref Ahmed and Hasanul Huq Inu, Member of Presidium and General Secretary respectively of the party expressed condolence at the death of two students in the incident and said people wanted to know on whose direction the armed hoodlums were being involved in such incidents repeatedly.

The people would no more tolerate such heinous acts, they said, adding that the government must say clearly what measures it had taken to curb terrorism to restore peace in the country.

No daily daily in this regard would be acceptable to the people any more, they added.

BSD convenor Khalequzzaman in his statement said yesterday's gun-fight at the DU proved it once again that illegal arms and the terrorist groups exist within the ruling BNP.

The government could never stop terrorism unless the ruling party succeeded in recovering illegal arms from the party activists, he commented.

## The Midnight File

### Sharif invites Rao to visit Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, Sept 4: Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has invited his Indian counterpart PV Narasimha Rao to visit Pakistan to discuss the Kashmir issue, the official AFP news agency said today. 'He did not say no', AFP quoted Sharif as saying, reports Reuter.

### Nabiyev's impeachment postponed till today

DUSHANBE, Sept 4: Tajikistan's parliament, under pressure from opposition democrats and Islamic groups, met here today to impeach communist president Rakhmon Nabiyev but fell short of a quorum and postponed action until Saturday, reports AFP.

### 41 killed, 100 hurt in Indian train mishap

BHOPAL, Sept 4: A passenger train smashed into a freighter parked at a railway station in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh early today, killing at least 41 people and injuring more than 100, reports AFP.

### Hekmatyar's forces down Afghan govt jet

ISLAMABAD, Sept 4: Radical Mujahideen leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's forces shot down today an Afghan government jet pounding his Shindand Air Base, the Afghan News Agency (ANA) said, reports AFP.

## Gas project

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The project components are 1) 12 to 15 gas wells at Kailastila, Rashidpur and other gas fields; 2) surface facilities; 3) Ashuganj-Bakhrabad (A-B) gas pipeline; 4) compressor station at Ashuganj; 5) Ashuganj metering station; 6) telecommunications system and control centre; 7) Petrobangla-wide computerisation; 8) environment and safety equipment; 9) technical assistance and training.

An 18-member IDA mission that visited Dhaka late last month to pre-appraise the proposed GIDP "confirmed" IDA financing of the transmission related components costing more than a third of the total costs. The mission also indicated that it would woo the IDA management into agreeing to fund the 173-million dollar surface facilities.

However, the IDA team did not commit or indicate financing for the new wells that would cost an estimated \$2 million dollars.

The mission strongly recommended that GOB (Government of Bangladesh) and Petrobangla should seek and confirm a financing pack-

age for the critically needed 12 to 15 new wells or the equivalent production from existing wells in the private sector". Energy Ministry officials quoting an IDA report said.

Fears continue to haunt policy planners that possible gas supply shortages as early as mid-1990s would reverse the gas sector's dynamic contribution to the country's economic growth during the past decade.

According to a World Bank report released last April, the costs of the shortage against the projected demand are "a combination of load-shedding... a renewed claim by oil imports on scarce foreign exchange after a decade of impressive petroleum import substitution," a view shared by Bangladesh officials.

An estimated 15.2 trillion cubic feet of remaining, recoverable gas reserves, the country's only commercial energy resource, could meet demands of new consumers until 2010 and permit sufficient supplies to meet total requirements for about 60 years.

### Crimes increase

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The first murder of the month was committed when a mini-bus helper pushed down a passenger from the running bus following an altercation between the two. The unidentified passenger was instantly smashed under the wheels near the Jatiya Press Club on August 8.

Of the others, Farhad Hossain, a student of Dhaka College, was murdered reportedly by a group of shopkeepers of Bakushah Market at Nilkhet on August 25.

Shahabuddin, a student of Dhaka Polytechnic Institute, was shot dead at a hostel of the institute on August 29. He was a victim of an internal conflict of two factions of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD). The assailants of Shahabuddin also severely beat Abdur Rauf on the same day. Rauf succumbed to his injuries on September 1 at the Mohakhali Chest Disease Hospital.

Bloody gun-battle between two factions of JCD at the Dhaka University campus on August 30 also left one person killed and another four wounded.

China, 17, wife of Milon, an autorickshaw driver, was stabbed to death by her husband at her Ibrahimpur residence. A hawker, Shaheed Mia was stabbed to death at Mohammadpur by a group of extortionists, and a rickshaw-puller Ayat Ali was murdered at Demra in a sequel to a quarrel of two groups of the area. Nearly 70 robberies and muggings were committed in the city during the last months. At least 30 persons were also stabbed by the mug-gers during the incidents.

Of those who were found dead, six were young girls and three of them worked as house maids. Police recorded the cases as unnatural deaths but they are yet to unearth the mystery.

Of the girls, Sheli Begum, 18, worked at the house of a parliament member, Abdur Rob Chowdhury at Gulshan. She was found dead at the house on August 28. Mina Begum, 16, another maid was found dead at her master's house at Central Road on August 3, while Ruma, 16, who worked at a doctor's house at Lalmitia was found at her master's house on August 5.

Of the others killed, Sultan Ahmed, a businessman, committed suicide by jumping from the top of the 18-storied Eastern Tower at Eskaton on August 30.

In road accidents, at least 29 people were killed and nearly 120 injured in the city during the last month.

## PM: Palestine

From Page 1 Col 3

gether travelled throughout the world to contribute to the peace process," Arafat said emotionally.

Begum Zia also had talks with President of Cambodia Prince Norodom Sihanouk, North Korean Prime Minister Young Hyong Muk, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Idris Jazairi, and Kuala Lumpur based UNHCR representative Shamsul Bari.

During the meetings held at the Assembly Hall of the Luxurious Jakarta Convention Centre Begum Zia discussed bilateral, regional and international issues with them.

Begum Zia while meeting with Prince Norodom Sihanouk of Cambodia iterated her commitment to contribute to the peace process in Cambodia.

She said Bangladesh would also help in future in the reconstruction of the war-ravaged Cambodia in different fields including agriculture.

Sihanouk thanked the Bangladesh leader for her country's contribution in the peace process in Cambodia. There are now more than 1000 soldiers, police personnel and civil volunteers working in Cambodia.

He also apprised the Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia of the latest political situation in Cambodia.

Begum Zia said the problem now facing Cambodia is political and so it should be resolved politically. She also told Sihanouk that he could take initiatives to unite the warring factions of Cambodia for holding a free and fair election.

Begum Zia also said

Bangladesh would support Sihanouk's peace initiatives.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and North Korean Prime Minister Young Hyong Muk, during their meeting agreed to further strengthen the bilateral relations between the two countries.

Begum Zia said the setting up of Joint Economic Commission would pave the way for strengthening cooperation in the fields of trade and commerce between the two countries.

She also sought North Korean cooperation in properly utilising Bangladesh's domestic resources to attain the desired goal of development. Cooperation would be held in the Joint Economic Commission meeting to be held this month.

The North Korean Prime Minister also recalled the visit of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman to his country and invited Begum Zia to visit Korea.

During her meeting with IFAD President Idris Jazairi Begum Zia said she was aware of the programmes of IFAD in Bangladesh including poverty alleviation and women development. She said the main thrust of her government was poverty alleviation, mass education, women development and employment generation and IFAD's programmes are supplementing the government's development efforts, Begum Zia said.

UNHCR representative Shamsul Bari at his meeting with Bangladesh Prime Minister apprised her of his activities in Rohingya refugee camps. Begum Zia also attended today the plenary session of the ongoing NAM summit.

## Saifur : Delhi's assurance

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economies of both countries towards each other for mutual benefit.

In his talks with Singh in New Delhi, Rahman said, they also exchanged views on economic cooperation and the financial sector reforms and liberalisation programmes currently being pursued by both nations.

During the visit to India the Finance Minister also called on President Shankar Dayal Sharma and held talks with West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu, Indian State Minister for Commerce and Industry RJ Kurien and Deputy Chairman of the Indian Planning Commission Pranab Kumar Mukharjee.

He said he urged the Indian leaders to help develop a system of collective self-reliance

among the SAARC nations. He stressed the need for a more action-oriented, instead of a memorandum-oriented, cooperation between the SAARC members.

Rahman noted that he told a questioner at a Calcutta press briefing that Bangladesh was not in a position to supply natural gas to India as reserve is much less even to meet the internal demand.

Keen interest was shown in West Bengal for importing Hilsa fish from Bangladesh, he said.

The Finance Minister also addressed a group of Indian businessmen at a meeting organised by the Delhi, Punjab and Haryana Chambers of Commerce and Industry in New Delhi and held discussion with representatives of the confederation of Indian industry.

### Menon

From Page 1 Col 8

members said. Yesterday (Wednesday) the CT (Computed Topography) scan showed a large area of haematoma/neurosis covering a 1/4 of right lobe of the liver. This could be the source of septicemia is the formation of pus containing septicemia, "the faxed message said.

The note said Menon's general condition before the operation was unchanged, with fever, jaundice and anaemia. Asked to comment on Menon's condition stated in the London message, a former physician in the Army Medical Corp said, "You can be cautiously hopeful of a recovery".

"It all depends on how the liver is behaving. You can't say he is totally out to danger because there is jaundice," said Dr (Captain) Maswoodur Rahman explaining the condition after removal of the necrotic portion (dead part) of Menon's liver.

A message received through the Workers Party stated Menon's condition to be "good" after the operation and he was being kept in the post-operative care.

Dr TC Tan led the team of surgeons that included Col Zafarullah Siddiqui, a CMH Physician who accompanied Menon to London.

Editor : S. M. Ali  
Executive Editor : Mahfuz Anam

Published by the Editor on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd, 52 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 and printed by him at The Sangbad Ltd., 36 Purana Paltan, Dhaka. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: 28/1, Toynbee Circular Road, Dhaka-1000. Tel: PABX- 246023-4, 245061-2. Advertisement: 245063 & Ext. 20. Fax No. 88-02-863035. GPO Box. No. 3257. GRAM: DAILY STAR, DHAKA.