

DOWN TO EARTH

Agonies in City Life

By A S M Nurunnabi

Lately the Bangladesh Bank has introduced extended banking hours up to 3 pm on all week days except Thursdays when the banking hours extend up to 12 noon. This schedule is operative beyond the month of Ramadan.

In a recent article in this paper under the feature Dhaka Day by Day, there was some satirical musing perhaps with some touches of imagination how a client comes face to face with odd situations in a government bank during the extended period of business. The satirical and possible fictional aspects apart, the core reality is that a client does not get fair treatment if he happens to arrive at a government bank for business after 1 pm. In most cases, there is no element of fiction in the developments that follow.

The extended period of banking hours was welcomed on all hands, as it provided longer business hours to the clients. In most cases, however, there is a shut-down of all business from 1 pm to 2 pm for purposes of prayers and lunch. This is understandable. And many clients schedule their business accordingly. But it has been observed that in some banks the normal work does not resume on the expiry of the 2 pm deadline. Many of the employees of such banks take their own time, leaving their seats vacant, while their clients impatiently wait for their return. As a result of such employees taking things easy after 2 pm, the actual time available for business is curtailed and the clients are put to a trial of patience with un-

necessary waste of time. It is, therefore, felt that in the interest of the clients for whose facilities the extended banking hours have been introduced, due discipline is enforced in such government banks where any such laxity is observed.

Load Shedding

For a few weeks now prolonged power cuts have become a regular feature bedeviling domestic as well as industrial consumers all over the country including the capital. The overall requirement of electricity in the country is reported to be 1700 megawatt whereas, the production is less than 1200 megawatt. The reason given for the shortfall in production is closure of several power generating stations at the same time for repair and overhauling and disruption of gas supply due to extension work.

What is felt to be galling to the affected public about the power situation is the fact that the Power Development Board (PDB) or for that matter the Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) does not feel the necessity of informing the public of the frequent suspension of power. This callous mentality of the electricity authorities cannot be said to be above reproach. Another deplorable aspect is that the authorities are not inclined to share with the public any information with hint of shortcomings or inefficiency of the system. The current trend of cut in power supply poses a serious menace to productivity at a time when the industrial sector is already overwhelmed

with problems. According to one report, the existing situation is so bad that in the industrial belts of Khulna supply has fallen by 50 per cent of 300 megawatt required, thereby adversely affecting production in 2200 big, medium and small industrial enterprises.

The power shortage is viewed with alarm from another angle. If the position is like this in winter when consumption of electricity is low, the prospect does not seem to be hopeful in the coming peak season of summer. There is no denying that the power generating plants are old and need urgent repair. But it is not understood why there is so much footdragging when authorities should have made serious attempts to bring their houses in order. There has been persistent demand for doing away with inherent weaknesses and irregularities responsible for system loss in power supply. But the results so far appear to be far from reassuring. It may be noted that the World Bank and other international donor agencies have refused to fund the 'needed overhaul of the plants and machines because of the unremedied extent of system loss.

The authorities have assured us that the situation will improve within a short time. The people expect that the improvement will be effected and maintained not only in the short run but also over longer term by making the production of electricity more cost-efficient with the much needed reforms in the whole system.

India allows ICRC to visit Kashmir

GENEVA, Feb 18: India has allowed the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to visit the strife-torn northern state of Kashmir for humanitarian purposes, a spokesman said today, reports AFP.

The Indian authorities have invited the ICRC to carry out a mission in the near future to Jammu and Kashmir to assess the humanitarian situation, according to the Geneva based organisation.

The visit was arranged on February 9 during a meeting in New Delhi between the Indian Home Secretary N N Vohra and ICRC delegate general for Asia Jean-Michel Monod. It was agreed that the ICRC would propose dates for the mission, which will first deal with the protection of civilian populations.

The New Delhi meeting immediately followed an ICRC seminar on international humanitarian law for senior officers of Indian police and paramilitary forces in Hyderabad.

Plane hijack

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to remain in Taiwan because they were found to be involved in the hijackings, he said.

There was no explanation of whether Lin wore the People's Liberation Army uniform as a disguise to evade airport security to board the plane.

The hijacking was the first from China to Taiwan this year and the 11th since last April. All the previous hijackings also ended peacefully, with the alleged hijackers remaining in Taiwan for trial and the planes, crew and passengers being returned to China within hours.

Taiwan officials quoted Lin as saying he hijacked the Boeing 737 belonging to China's Southwest Airlines because he was irritated over bureaucratic problems over his application to establish a company in Changsha in China's southeastern Hunan province.

The plane, carrying 122 passengers and eight crew members, was hijacked shortly after it took off from Chengdu in southwestern China on a regular flight to Fuzhou in Fujian across the Taiwan Strait from Taiwan, the military said.

Lin and his family surrendered peacefully to Taiwanese authorities immediately after the plane landed at 10:42 am (0242 GMT). Police said Lin requested political asylum for himself and his family.

The epidemic of air piracy has bedeviled attempts by China and Taiwan in their efforts toward détente. The two do not recognise each other and China regards Taiwan as a renegade province.

They have tried to broach their differences, encouraged by their booming trade and travel links, with what has been billed as unofficial talks involving officials selected by the Communist and Nationalist governments.

bad", according to the Red Cross.

India has launched a campaign of open doors designed to counter Pakistani and US charges of massive human rights violations by the Indian army against Muslim separatist rebellion.

On Monday, Foreign Minister Dinesh Singh said that the human rights organisation Amnesty International would be allowed to visit Kashmir on a "case-by-case" basis.

Party asks Koirala to quit as PM

KATHMANDU, Feb 18: Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala has been asked by the head of his party to step down as Nepal's Prime Minister, a highly placed source in his Nepali Congress (NC) party said today, reports AFP.

The NC party president Krishna Prasad Bhattarai had advised Koirala to resign from office following days of protests against the Prime Minister over his handling of recent by-elections, the source said.

If Koirala does not resign by Sunday, a party committee will take disciplinary action against him which would automatically lead to his expulsion from the party, it added.

Lady jogger mugged, stabbed

By DMCH Correspondent

A lady jogger was mugged and stabbed in the city's Mohammadpur area early in the morning yesterday.

The victim, Shailla Alam, 35, was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Muggers snatched her gold bangles, chain and rings.

They waylaid Shailla when she was jogging along with her son, Zakir Hossain, at around 7:00 am.

Mohammadpur police said they were aware of the incident, but no case was lodged until last night.

AL programme in Tungipara

By Staff Correspondent

A three-day programme will be held at Tungipara, Gopalganj, in observance of the 74th birth anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, on March 17 next.

This was decided at a meeting between Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina and the Bangla 1400 shaal Uddapan Parishad yesterday. The parishad also decided to celebrate the Bangla fifteenth century and the Independence Day on March 26. The meeting was attended by Poet Shamsur Rahman, Shamsul Haq, Gazul Haq, Dr Abdul Malek, MR Akhter Mukul, Panna Kaisar and Belal Chowdhury.

Makhan's qul held: Mourning Day on February 26

By Staff Correspondent

The qulhwani of Abdul Quddus Makhan was held yesterday with a call for observing a 'mourning day' on February 26 throughout the country.

Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina, Ministers, leaders and workers of different political parties, social and cultural organisations, university teachers and student leaders attended the qulhwani held at Makhan's residence at Elephant Road.

Thousands of people offered munajat for the peace of the departed soul in the qul organised by the national committee for mourning the death of Abdul Quddus Makhan.

President and secretary of the committee Noor-e-Alam Siddiqui and Shahjahan Siraj respectively in a press release called for observing February 26 as the 'mourning day', as a mark of respect to Makhan.

The committee will hold a condolence meeting at Bangabandhu Avenue at 2 pm on that day.

Jamaat

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tially proved that Jamaat's support is not guaranteed for BNP to win any election, the leader said "We never thought of ourselves as a supporting force of the BNP."

People had started thinking that there was an alliance between the BNP and the Jamaat since the party unconditionally supported BNP to form the government following the 1991 parliamentary election.

"This is not true. We tried our best to dispel the misgivings and played our role as an opposition party," he said "We did not go for any alliance during the last city corporation polls."

Jamaat feels that some anti-people actions of the ruling party resulted in the BNP's debacle in Dhaka.

The Jamaat leader admitted that their candidate selection in Rajshahi was wrong. On the other hand, the northern city witnessed a massive development during the past three years which motivated the voters to vote for the ruling party candidate.

Similar results came from Khulna but in Chittagong, the Jamaat candidate bagged a considerable number of votes against the strong Awami League candidate ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury.

"Chowdhury has been grooming himself for the last 20 years to become the Mayor of the city. He succeeded because of less factionalism within his party from which BNP suffered considerably," he said.

Moreover, the Jamaat working council held the opinion that without strong commissioner candidates, it was difficult to expect good results in any mayoral election.

The Jamaat has now decided to work out a different strategy to enrich its vote bank, the Jamaat leader added.



Munajat is being offered after the namaz-e-janaza of Anwarul Islam Bobby at the National Press Club yesterday. — Star photo

Japan trying to appease US

TOKYO, Feb 18: Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa outlined measures to appease the United States today as it prepared a list of possible trade sanctions against Japan for allegedly violating a telecommunications accord, reports AFP.

American Ambassador Walter Mondale meanwhile said it was too early to comment on

Phoolan Devi

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politician who has promised to help his people, announced he was dropping charges against Phoolan Devi.

He told a rally of lower-caste Hindus that she had 'suffered enough,' since being accused of murder, robbery, extortion and kidnapping in 70 cases, 55 of them filed in Uttar Pradesh.

She also faces charges in Madhya Pradesh state in central India, but they are likely to be dropped once she is freed.

Since Phoolan Devi surrendered in 1983, after running from the law for 10 years, she has not been put on trial in India, where the court system often holds thousands of suspects in jail for years awaiting trial, or even formal charges.

Now that Uttar Pradesh has decided to drop the charges, she must be freed on parole until that happens, the court ruled.

She gained fame after allegedly gunning down 18 high-caste Hindus in the state in 1981 to avenge the killing of her lover.

Phoolan Devi, born to a poor, low-caste farmer whose land was stolen, has denied responsibility for the massacre.

the plan, and questioned Hosokawa's commitment to deregulation despite his reputation for supporting reforms and opposing the bureaucracy.

Hosokawa told parliament that the measures would include steps to make the local insurance market more transparent, cooperation between the car industries of the two countries and increased powers for Japan's fair trade commission.

"Our country must act on its own will to take the measures it can," he said. Hosokawa also said he "understands that there is frustration in the United States over the trade imbalance," urging Washington to act "sensibly."

Hosokawa agreed Thursday to consider a package to promote deregulation, imports and investment from abroad, competition and government procurement following the collapse of summit talks with President Bill Clinton last week.

Pak FM leaves for Kabul

ISLAMABAD, Feb 18: Pakistani Foreign Minister Asf Ali Zardari left for Afghanistan today for talks with Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar on the dire food situation in Kabul, the Foreign Office here said, reports AFP.

It said the purpose of his visit to the eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad was mainly humanitarian, as he would take up the question of food supplies to Kabul following reports that the six-week-long military siege had resulted in a food shortage there.

200 food poisoned

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oped acute dysentery and were found vomiting. Some of the affected students were seen writhing with pain on their beds with severe stomachache.

"I suffered stomach ache immediately after taking my lunch," said Mukul Kumar Sarker, a first year student of Applied Physics.

"I thought I was the lone victim... however, I later found out that most of the students were flat on their beds," he said.

Subhash Kumar Ghosh, a Mathematics sophomore, complained that there was little attention from the hall authorities regarding their treatment.

"Some of the affected students had to buy drugs from outside the campus," he said.

University doctors who visited the students prescribed Oral rehydration solution and some other drugs including anti-biotics.

One of the managers of the canteen, Munir Hussain said that they had purchased sixty pieces of cauliflower from Kauran Bazar on Thursday, thirty of which were cooked the same day while the rest were cooked on the day of the incident. He could not identify the reason for the food poisoning but said he suspected the cauliflowers were responsible

Businessman

From Page 1 Col 8

tion and shot him from a close range while he was returning home after Juma prayers at about 3 pm yesterday.

The police thought it to be a sequel to enmity between two groups in the area.

However, relatives suspected some local youngmen for the killing.

The victim's mother, Alhaj Reziya Begum, lodged a case with the Kotwali police last night. But none of the suspects for the killing was arrested till the filing of this report at 10.30 last night.

Bobby buried

From Page 1 Col 6

The body of the editor who died of blood cancer at a Dubai hospital on February 15 while on his way to London for treatment was taken to the office of The Morning Sun and from there to the National Press Club where the first namaz-e-janaza was held. Journalists, intellectuals and a large number of people attended the janaza.

The second janaza was held at the Baitul Mukarram national mosque after Asr prayers. It was attended by a number of ministers, MPs, political leaders and others.

Bobby Islam was also the founder editor of The Daily Life published from Chittagong and editor of the medical journal The Pulse.

The qulhwani of Anwarul Islam Bobby will be held at his Gulshan residence no. 21, Road No. 32 after Asr prayers on Sunday.

Repeal of Enemy Property Act demanded

By Staff Correspondent

The Bangladesh Hindu Bouddah Christian Oikya Parishad yesterday observed a dawn-to-dusk hunger strike demanding repeal of the Enemy Property (Vested) Act, according to a press release of the Parishad.

The parishad protested the attachment of property under the Act saying, "The Law enacted in 1965, during the Indo-Pakistan war, forced many people of the minority communities to leave their homes."

The Parishad alleged that the Act was yet to be repealed "despite the commitment of three alliances" during the anti-autocracy movement.

The hunger strike programme in front of the National Press Club, was attended by Justice K M Sobhan, Mohammad Afzal, Mahbubur Rahman Babu, Tipu Biswas, A F M Mahbul Haq, Mujahidul Islam Salim, Pankaj Battacharya, Fakir Alamgir and others, the press release of Bangladesh Hindu, Bouddah, Christian Oikya Parishad mentioned.

Some students talking to The Daily Star complained that sub standard food was being served by the canteen authorities.

Provost of the Hall Jagadish Chandra Shukla Das said the authorities were trying to identify the reason of the food poisoning. The particular canteen will remain closed, he said, till the matter of food poisoning was settled. The Provost, however, said, arrangements will be made for students to have their meals in three other canteens located in the same hall.

According to authorities, there are nearly 2000 students living in the Jagannath Hall although the actual residential capacity is for 1111 students.

AJM worker shot at

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Feb 18: A worker of the Adamjee Jute Mills (AJM) was shot at on his head by a group of assailants at his residence near the Sonadia Market this morning.

According to witnesses, Ibrahim, 25, a supporter of Rehan group of the AJM was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

A group of three armed attackers, reportedly belonging to the 'golakata' Kashem group, came to Ibrahim's house at about 7:30 am, shot at him with a revolver and quickly disappeared. CBA leaders alleged adding that the attempt on Ibrahim's life was made in connection with his being a witness in the Selim murder case.

Selim was killed during an armed clash between the supporters of Rehan and Kashem two years ago.

The Midnight File

Russian troops headed for Sarajevo

UNITED NATIONS, Feb 18: Russian UN troops have started to move from Croatia towards Sarajevo, a UN spokesman said today. A third of a Russian battalion, more than 400 men, which had been deployed in eastern Slavonia, was headed for Sarajevo, said Alvaro de Soto, one of UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's key advisors, reports AFP.

Israel, PLO may launch self-rule in Gaza, Jericho

JERUSALEM, Feb 18: Israel and the PLO may soon clinch a deal to launch self-rule in Gaza and Jericho, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said Friday, after the latest round of negotiations in Egypt. "We have moved forward this week in a very promising way, and if this continues there is a good chance the negotiations will end soon," Peres told Israeli state radio, reports AFP.

Attack on drama artistes on DU campus: 4 hurt

A group of youths swooped on the performers of an anti-terrorism drama on the Dhaka University campus yesterday leaving four artistes injured, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the unruly youths attacked the artistes when they were performing a street drama "Ekey Dhartiya Din" (Let him be caught) yesterday afternoon as part of the month-long Amar Ekushey programmes.

Panic-stricken people ran helter-skelter for safety as the miscreants damaged the dais at the TSC road island towards the end of the drama and chased the artistes of the Janapad Natyadal.

Of the injured, Gaus Ahmed Lalon was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

CAMPE

From Page 1 Col 5

"Education for All" programme by the year 2000.

"This figure is very poor as regards the country's remaining illiterate adults," he pointed out saying a coordinated movement must start immediately with support from the teachers, students, intellectuals, professionals, women's groups, media, labour and political organisations.

Executive Director of the Association for Development Agencies in Bangladesh (ADAB) Rasheda K Chowdhury, Dr Mahmud Hasan of the Gana Sahajya Sangstha and Ataur Rahman of the Gana Unnayan Prochesitha were present at the press conference.

Dr. Sharafuddin said many mass literacy programmes initiated by the previous governments had bogged down due to lack of adequate public support and participation.

There are four crore boys and girls above the age of 15 years and another seven crore above four years who should be brought under the non-formal primary education programme on an urgent basis, he said.

He said, around 15 lakh people a year are to be brought under the mass literacy programme for another 14 years to achieve total success in the literacy movement.

The CAMPE Coordinator said, the people's participation must be ensured and accountability guaranteed for achieving success in mass literacy.

Mayor should be given status of minister: Hasnat

By Staff Correspondent

Former mayor of the Dhaka City Corporation Abul Hasnat yesterday said that the elected mayor should be given the rank and status of a minister to speed up development activities in the capital.

Hasnat, who was a mayor during Zia regime, told this in a statement while felicitating the newly elected mayor — Md Hanif.

Justifying the elevation of the mayoral status Hasnat said, "If given the rank and status of a minister and allowed to participate in cabinet meetings, the mayor could put forward the problems and proposals of the city dwellers directly and, thereby, take realistic steps."

Hasnat also informed that he, along with other former mayors, had enjoyed the rank and status of ministers.

Terming the victory of Hanif as citizens' mandate for a developed capital, Hasnat remarked, "This is not the victory of the Awami League alone."

"This victory reflected the people's protest against the large scale terrorism, nepotism and corruption of the government", Hasnat, also a former minister under Ershad, added.

Bosnian Serbs

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quoted Yeltsin as asking, if the Serbs retaliated against UN peacekeepers "what will NATO do? Will it go all the way, into war? And if war has been programmed, what options will I have?"

In the event of air strikes, Moscow "could no longer answer for United Nations forces and a new situation will arise in Europe and worldwide."

Prime Minister Carlo Ciampi's office confirmed he had received a copy of the letter.

Copies were also sent to US President Bill Clinton, British Prime Minister John Major, French President Francois Mitterrand and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, ANSA news agency said.

The letters reached them Thursday, before Russia announced that it had persuaded Bosnian Serb forces to comply with a ceasefire agreement and withdraw their heavy weapons from around Sarajevo.

ঢাকা ওয়াসা জরুরী বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বকেয়াসহ হালনাগাদ পানি ও পয়ঃ বিল পরিশোধের নিমিত্ত সম্প্রতি বিভিন্ন পত্র-পত্রিকা

এবং টেলিভিশন ও রেডিও-এর মাধ্যমে খেলাপি গ্রাহকদের অনুরোধ জানানো সত্ত্বেও

আশানুরূপ পরিমাণ বকেয়া আদায় না হওয়ায় ঢাকা ওয়াসার আওতাভুক্ত সকল এলাকার

সরকারী ও স্বায়ত্তশাসিত প্রতিষ্ঠানসহ সকল শ্রেণীর খেলাপি গ্রাহকের সংযোগ বিচ্ছিন্নকরণ ও

তাদের বিরুদ্ধে পিডিআর এ্যাক্টের অধীনে আইনানুগ ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণ কার্যক্রম আরো জোরদার

করা হয়েছে। বকেয়া পরিশোধের সুবিধার্থে যাদের কিস্তি মঞ্জুর করা হয়েছিল, সময়মত কিস্তির

ঢাকা পরিশোধ না হলে তাদের সংযোগও তৎক্ষণিকভাবে বিচ্ছিন্ন করা হবে এবং আর কিস্তির

সুবিধা দেয়া হবে না।

ইতিমধ্যে নভেম্বর-ডিসেম্বর '৯৩ বিলিং মাসের বিল জারী করা সম্পন্ন হয়েছে। যারা

হালনাগাদ বিল পাননি তাদেরকে সত্ত্বর নারায়ণগঞ্জ অফিসসহ ওয়াসার সংশ্লিষ্ট রাজস্ব আঞ্চলিক

অফিসে এবং ওয়াসা ভবনে কম্পিউটার বিলিং সেন্টারে (ফোনঃ ৩১৩০৯২) যোগাযোগ করে নির্দিষ্ট

ব্যাকের শাখায় অবিলম্বে বিল পরিশোধের জন্য অনুরোধ করা হচ্ছে। প্রয়োজনে ওয়াসা ভবনে

প্রধান রাজস্ব কর্মকর্তা (ফোনঃ ৩২৫২৪০) অথবা বাণিজ্যিক ব্যবস্থাপক (ফোনঃ ৩২৭২৪৫)-

এর সাথে যোগাযোগ করা যেতে পারে।

সংযোগ বিচ্ছিন্ন এড়ানোর জন্য আজই বকেয়াসহ হালনাগাদ ওয়াসার বিল পরিশোধ করুন

এবং সংযোগ বিচ্ছিন্নকারী দলকে কার্যস্থলে প্রয়োজনে বসিদ পূর্ণদর্শন করুন।

ওয়াসাঃ জঃঃঃ-৪২/৯৪

ডি-১২৯



ঢাকা ওয়াসা

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