

Dhaka Day by Day

The streets or the slums

by Rashida Ahmad

Fuljan is in her fifties. She has three daughters and two sons. Her elder two daughters are married to good men. Her youngest daughter did not fare so well having a husband who gambles compulsively, although in other respects he is good to her. Fuljan's sons are fine boys, soft spoken, gentle, and polite. The eldest has a good job as a driver and the youngest is doing well in his studies.

Until recently, Fuljan and her husband along with their two sons, two of their daughters, sons-in-laws and grandchildren lived in one room above a garage belonging to a government officers' apartment block. For six years they have lived rent-free, in relatively good conditions with electricity and running water, at the discretion of the residents of the apartment block.

However, last year, Fuljan's husband became seriously ill with a liver complaint, and had to return to their village home for treatment and care which they could not afford in the city. Fuljan also took the decision to send her youngest boy back home to look after his father and carry on his studies away from the big city, where without the guiding influence of a father he might be led astray by the likes of his unemployed, gambling brother-in-law.

This turned out to be a fortuitous and timely decision on behalf of her youngest son. For a few days ago the residents of the apartment blocks were given a week's notice to 'clear out' the garages as they are to be demolished to make way for the erection of a new block of government flats.

Fuljan and her family, along with her neighbours — five other families who occupy the

rooms above the adjacent garages — have four days left to pack up and move their home and belongings of the past six years. But where they will go is uncertain. A few individuals may find work and shelters among the various government apartment residences. But for the majority of these people the sudden devastation of the security of their homes signals a bleak future.

This is an everyday tale of the misfortune of those unfortunate ones who dare to occupy the smallest piece of undeveloped land in Dhaka. For sooner or later it certain that they will be uprooted in the face of unceasing mass urban construction.

And then these families are helpless, with no recourse to the law, they have no rights. Even the basic right to shelter is denied them. Fuljan and her family are among the relatively lucky few who have a village home to return to though this means giving up jobs and little chance of finding replacement income to pay for her

husband's health care.

Or else, there is the option of seeking refuge in the slums where paying rent, upto Tk 600/- per month, for a decrepit shack, with no sanitation, water or electricity, will buy you the right (since the 1993 National Housing Policy) to appeal to the High Court against illegal eviction notices. (Those issued by improper authorities, or those giving less than the legal period of notice).

For almost a third of Dhaka's population, as in any other fast-growing megacity, the choice ends up being stark and limited — the streets or the slums.



Poet Shamsur Rahman addressing a rally of the intellectuals and artists demanding elections under a caretaker government in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday. — Star photo

Eye treatment unit at Satkhira Shishu Hospital inaugurated

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman yesterday called upon the people, particularly the affluent section of the society to extend their helping hands for rendering services to the distressed people side by side with the government's efforts, reports BSS. He was addressing the chief guest a function arranged in connection with the inauguration of eye treatment unit at Satkhira Shishu Hospital and its newly constructed bio-gas plant at the complex premises. Presided over by deputy commissioner Dr Mujibur Rahman, the function was addressed, among others, by Prof Farida Rahman, MP, chief patron of Satkhira Shishu Hospital and noted child specialist Prof M R Khan and associate director of World Vision, Bangladesh, James Biswas.

Kamrangirchar to get gas

Gas supply will be provided in Kamrangirchar of Dhaka city with the completion of Lalbagh-Kamrangirchar connecting baily bridge and the roads on both sides within next few months, reports BSS.

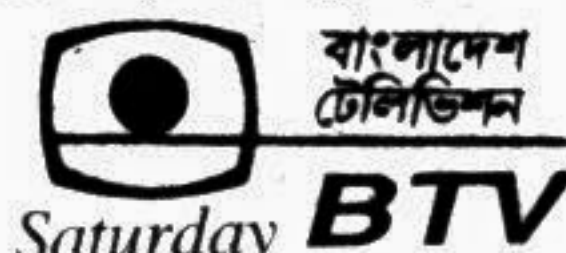
Food Minister Mir Shawkat Ali said this while addressing a public meeting at Saltanganj yesterday.

He said the BNP government did not believe in false commitment but in works that would bring good to the people. "Various uplift activities during the last three and a half years in the fields of country's communication, education, health and family welfare are the best testimonies to this fact," he asserted. "Lalbagh-Kamrangirchar baily bridge will facilitate many other development activities of the area for the overall improvement of the lot of the people," he added.

Responding to the request of the local people, Shawkat also opened the almost completed bridge.

Contraband seized

RAJSHAHI, Nov 18: An anti-smuggling squad of 20 rifle battalion seized contraband items worth over Taka 12 lakh from the areas of Babla Bagan, Chamar Para, Pakuria and Baneshwar under Rajshahi district yesterday, reports BSS.



- 4-30 Opening announcement
- 4-35 Programme summary
- 4-45 Sports programme: Khelar Jagat
- 5-10 News in Bangla
- 5-25 Kids songs
- 6-10 Educational programme: Shikhyangan, Samacher
- 6-30 Folk songs: Bansharee
- 7-00 Comedy series: Major Dad
- 7-25 News in Bangla
- 8-00 Janmabhumi
- 8-25 Mati o Manush
- 9-00 Amar Desh
- 10-00 News in English
- 10-30 Drama series: Dynasty
- 11-30 Khabar/The News
- 11-40 Tomorrow's programme
- 11-45 Close down

Islamic jalsa

Shipping Minister M K Anwar has called upon all to serve the cause of mankind by properly adhering to the teachings of Islam, reports UNB.

The principal message of Islam is to serve for the welfare of humanity and to lead life with justice, he said speaking at an Islamic 'jalsa' (discussion) in Homna, Comilla Thursday.

Anwar reminded that the holy Quran is the complete code of life and said Islam has ensured equal rights of women and justice for all in the society.

He urged all to beware of any misinterpretation of Islam.

BFUJ, DUJ concerned at attack on Ctg newspaper

Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) yesterday expressed deep concern over the bomb attack on Chittagong vernacular daily Bangladesh Swadhinata by some miscreants on Wednesday last, reports BSS.

In a joint statement, BFUJ acting president Kartick Chatterjee and secretary general M Shajahan Miah and DUJ president Abul Kalam Azad and general secretary Azzul Islam Bhuyian termed the incident as a naked attack on freedom of press and expression.



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Weather

No change in temperature

Dry weather is likely to prevail across the country during the next 12 hours till 6:00 pm today, reports UNB.

The met office says night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

In its outlook for tomorrow the met office forecast that fair weather is likely to continue and temperature may fall.

Country's highest temperature 31.6 degree Celsius was recorded at Teknaf and the lowest 13.7 degrees at Dinajpur.

The sun sets today at 5:12 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:17 am.

Attack slated

Eminent artistes and intellectuals of the country belonging to Bangabandhu Recitation and Cultural Council, in a statement to the press, vehemently condemned the dastardly attack on the participants in the sit-in programme of November 9 which left at least a hundred Awami League leaders and workers injured, including Amir Hossain Amu, Abdul Jalil and Salahuddin Badal.

SUN CITY HOSTS MISS WORLD BEAUTY PAGEANT

On November 19, the stars will be shining brightly at Sun City as international beauty queens and celebrities converge on the resort for the 1994 Miss World pageant.

The glamorous two-hour competition is being held at South Africa's premier resort for the third consecutive year.

Eighty-eight of the world's beauties will vie for the title which will be handed over by reigning Miss World, Lisa Hanna of Jamaica.

Watch "Miss Bangladesh" tonight, which will be directly telecast from Sun City on Star Plus 19th Nov '94 at 23:00 hrs (11pm Bangladesh time).



MITSUBISHI LANCER '95
IT TAKES MORE THAN JUST MONEY TO GET A SMILE



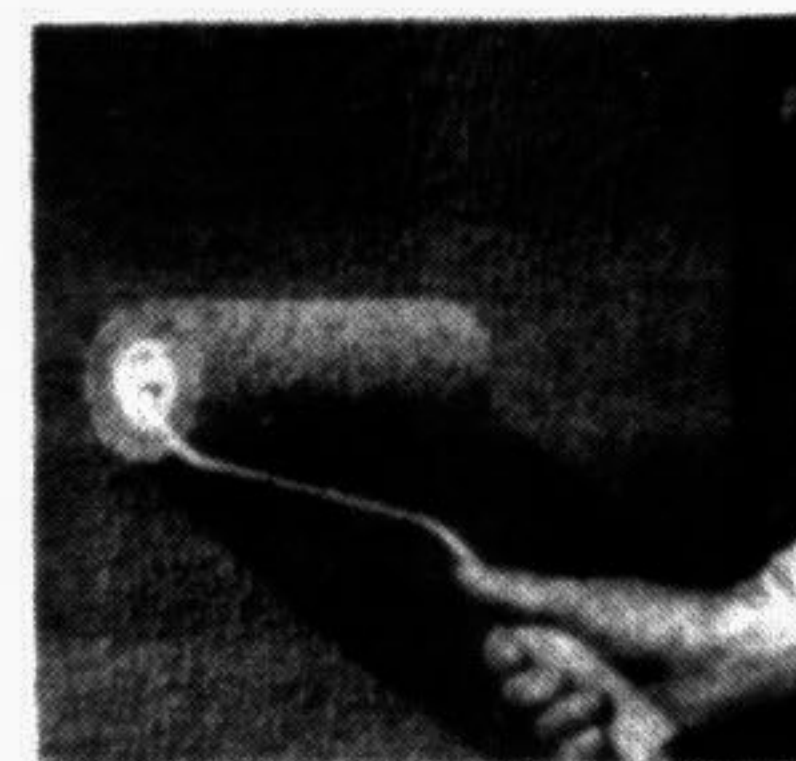
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