

DOWN TO EARTH

Hope for the Disabled in City

By A S M Nurunnabi



Mentally retarded children being taught at a private school Kalyani in the city - Star photo

Disability in a person may take various forms. Some may be blind, others may be deaf or dumb. There may also be others who are physically handicapped. In our current thinking, all such disabled persons are not looked upon as useless. There are many examples which show them to be more active and able than normal human beings. We find a new concept of their potentialities which is designated as ability in a different way. In the light of the new definition, such disabled persons are no longer treated as a burden on society; they are rather regarded as equal partners in social development.

The new generation of the disabled of our country are proving this in various ways. What they need to stand on their own feet are opportunities for work, necessary training and some measures of cooperation from their fellow beings.

No reliable statistics are available about the total number of disabled persons in our country. According to an estimate of the World Health Organisation (WHO), the total number of the disabled in our country is about one crore 20 lakh. Another estimate fixes the total number of disabled children at 30 lakh, out of which the blind account for 10 lakh. There are reportedly 50 NGOs in our country working for the welfare of the disabled.

The largest centre for training and rehabilitation is known as Employment Rehabilitation for the Physically Handicapped located at Tongi Station Road. The centre was set up in 1987 and it functions with the financial assistance of the Swedish Development Agency. It has at present 85 inmates. It imparts training to them in seven trades, such as mechanical trade, livestock care, tailoring, carpentry, nursery, bamboo and cane handicrafts and mobility course for the blind. The duration of the training course is six months to one year.

Boarding and lodging are free for the inmates. At the end of the training, each inmate is given a grant of Tk 4000. Besides, there is a placement officer at the centre who helps them in securing employment in various organisations.

During the last seven years, 897 disabled persons were given training at this centre. Of this number, 310 individuals work in various organisations and the remaining 520 are engaged in self-employment projects.

The only Braille press of the country is located at this centre. It is understood that very soon a computerised Braille press and an artificial limb manufacturing plant will be set up at the centre at a cost of Tk 2 crore. The centre also runs a modern plastic manufacturing unit which is entirely manned by the disabled. It is not small wonder that this plastic unit can manufacture 5000 plastic cups a day with a work force consisting entirely of the disabled.

There are also other industrial units outside where many disabled persons work. In the cosmetics division of the Aromatic industry, most of those who work in the container section are reportedly deaf or dumb. In other industries of the Jamuna Group at Joydebpur, there are reportedly about 85 disabled workers.

The performance of the disabled employees in such industries is reportedly very satisfactory, even in some respects better than that of other normal employees. Other positive aspects of their performance are that, since they are deaf or dumb, they do not waste time in gossiping or engage in trade union activities. So far no accident is reported to have occurred in course of their work.

A laudable role for the welfare of the disabled is also played by another organisation known as Social Assistance and Rehabilitation of the Physically Vulnerable located at Lalmitia. Operating since 1991, its Executive Director is a disabled person who walks on crutches. About 90 per cent people of his organisation are physically handicapped.

There is another institution named Helen Keller Foundation set up on the ideals of world famous Helen Keller who devoted her entire life to the work of rehabilitation of the disabled. The three main projects of the Foundation are said to be (a) nutritional surveillance, (b) home gardening and (c) rehabilitation of the blind with technical and vocational education. Since vitamin A deficiency is

considered to be the main reason of blindness in our country, the Foundation is also engaged in activities designed to bring down the incidence of blindness on this account.

There is still another private institution known as Bangladesh Probiobondhi Foundation situated at Maghbar. Set up in 1977, the Foundation offers a number of core programmes and some supportive services to help disabled children in the functioning and development of their limited faculties. The more important aims and objectives of the Foundation include, among others, the promotion, coordination and sponsoring of activities for the well-being of the mentally and developmentally disabled of our country. The Foundation runs a diagnostic clinic for screening all types of childhood disabilities.

Children diagnosed as intellectually disabled and living in Dhaka city are enrolled in a special school known as Kalyani. According to the needs of students in each class as per age group, the curricula are specially designed with emphasis on developing appropriate behaviour and social skills and basic survival skills such as eating, toileting, dressing and community living skill. In the classes for higher age group, the handicapped children are trained in functional academic skills, such as reading, writing, counting which are related to everyday living skills. In addition, the students in the age group 13 to 17 are given training in some vocational and pre-vocational skills.

An important aspect of the Foundation's programmes is a sheltered workshop known as Karukor. Here the physically disabled adults are employed in the sheltered workshop under trained supervisors who teach woodwork, craft work and ceramics.

It is felt that the prime need at present is to create awareness that the professional development in the area of disability is a must without which no rehabilitation of the handicapped can adequately take place. In this context, a national policy for the disabled is called for which will cover all relevant aspects of care, education and rehabilitation in the light of their special needs.

Fresh vow to fight fundamentalists

A national convention of the Sammitia Sangskritik Jote here yesterday urged all democratic organisations and individuals to forge unity at all levels against the communal and fundamentalist forces, reports UNB.

This is a must to resist the fundamentalist forces who are undermining the image of Bangladesh before the world, hindering development and progress and vitiating the democratic atmosphere," said a declaration of the convention.

The Anti-communalism and Anti-fundamentalism National Convention was held at the Shilpakala Academy auditorium in the morning.

The inaugural session was addressed by poet Shamsur Rahman, Barrister Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed, Prof. Kabir Chowdhury, Dr. Anisuzzaman, Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, Ramendu Majumdar, Golam Quddus, Nasiruddin Yusuf, Asaduzzaman Noor, Bekha Chowdhury, Kamal Pasha Chowdhury, Belal Chowdhury and Hasan Arif.

Mofidul Haq read out the declaration at the session, chaired by Jote president Fayez Ahmed.

In the declaration, the Jote blamed the government for patronising the anti-liberation communal forces.

It also criticised the pro-liberation political parties for their silence and inaction against the evil activities of the fundamentalist forces.

The Jote said the conscious people would have to launch a massive agitation against the reactionary forces.

The Jote demanded of the political parties to pledge in their election manifesto to put the 'criminals of 1971 war of liberation' on trial. It also demanded scrapping of voting rights of the war criminals.

The Jote also urged all to work unitedly for electing the Jamaat-Islami candidates in the parliamentary elections.

Addressing the convention, poet Shamsur Rahman congratulated the people of Rangpur, for their courageous role during a reception given to him. "This was a victory of the spirit of liberation," he said.

"Personally, I am against hatred. But if we fail to resist the communal forces, some day they will eliminate us," the poet warned.

Barrister Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed wondered "what sort of a society we live in that the anti-liberation forces could carry out violent activities in front of the law enforcing agencies."

In the second session, the district representatives vowed to intensify the fight against the communal forces.

The session was followed by a cultural function participated by members organisations of the Jote.

Bid to ransack jewellery shop in city: 6 held

Police yesterday arrested six persons when they tried to ransack a jewellery shop at Shahidnagar in Lalbagh, reports UNB.

Police sources said the arrested persons stormed in Rinnu Jewellers and demanded subscription from the shopowner at gun point.

Being refused, the terrorists threatened shopowner Mohammad Zillur Rahman, tried to ransack his shop and fled away by exploding bombs. Police with the help of local people arrested them.

The arrested people were: Farook, 20, Sajal, 20, Sentu, 16, Delwar, 20, Fajan, 22, and Kamal, 22.

Meanwhile, the Speed Enforcement Force arrested a man with a revolver and bullet from Lalmitia area yesterday.

During the patrol, the special force suspected a motor-cycle rider and asked him to halt. But the man tried to escape avoiding the police.

Sergeant Kamruzzaman chased the rider who allegedly tried to open fire on the policeman. At that time, Sergeant Benazir Ahmed, colleague of Sergeant Kamruzzaman, jumped on the motor-cycle rider and catch the suspected snatcher.

They recovered a German-made revolver with six rounds of bullet from his possession. The arrested was identified as Mohammad Suman.

Indian Tamils protest attack on LTTE

NEW DELHI, July 14: Hundreds of Indian Tamils staged a noisy demonstration in the southern city of Madras today to denounce Sri Lanka's military offensive against Tamil separatist guerrillas, reports AFP.

The demonstrators, members of an opposition party in the state of Tamil Nadu, shouted slogans, against the government of President Chandrika Kumaratunga outside the Sri Lankan Deputy High Commission.

Leader V Goopalaswamy alleged that Colombo launched its offensive against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in the island's north after getting a go-ahead from the Indian government.

"I accuse the Narasimha Rao regime of betraying the Sri Lankan Tamils," the Press Trust of India (PTI) quoted the outspoken Goopalaswamy, an MP as saying in a speech.

The meeting, presided over by thana Awami League president Mir Moazzem Hossain Dula, was addressed, among others, by central AL leaders Abdul Mannan, Zillur Rahman, Abdul Qader Siddiqui, Shamsur Rahman Khan Shahjahan, Prof. Abu Sayeed and Dr. Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin.

Hasina will visit the flood affected areas of Pabna, Sirajganj and Madaripur districts tomorrow and on Sunday.

Security was tighter than usual for the parade down the Champs-Élysées, with elite troops posted in jeeps or joining police posted on side-street intersections. The parade came three days after Greenpeace activists disturbed a Chirac visit to Strasbourg.

The sunny and breezy weather brought out tens of thousands of parade-watchers who cheered the military bands and the horsebound Republican Guard with their red-feathered shiny helmets. The parade also featured French military hardware on the avenue or flying overhead.

France's multinational Foreign Legion included ex-Yugoslav troops among the ranks in the parade.

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The Midnight File

Stoltenberg replaces Akashi

ZAGREB, July 14: The Japanese diplomat in charge of negotiating peace in Bosnia, Yasushi Akashi, was shunted aside Friday following the fall of Srebrenica, the UN's biggest humiliation in three years of war. UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali named Thorvald Stoltenberg, a Norwegian diplomat, as his personal envoy in Bosnia. Akashi retains his title as Boutros-Ghali's special representative in the former Yugoslavia, reports AP.

ICMA for new exam system from Jan '96

By DU Correspondent

The Institute of Cost and Management Accountants (ICMA) will introduce a new examination system from January 1996 despite protests from the students, the ICMA sources said.

This decision was taken to achieve international standard as regards training of accountants and to make them professionally more efficient, the sources pointed out.

Under the new system, the students have to appear at the examinations for four subjects at a time and have to pass at least in two subjects in the first attempt.

They have to pass the rest one or two subjects in two compartmental examinations held subsequently. But if they fail to pass they have to sit for fresh examinations for the whole course.

Students of the institution are agitating against the new system.

But the ICMA authorities told The Daily Star no major change has been brought about.

The authorities said students are admitted in two sessions a year through admission test. Any person having a bachelor degree with six points can apply for admission. Students have to study 20 subjects in

five levels — four subjects in each. The duration of each level is six months.

A student, if he wants, can have two levels at a time — level one and two, level two and three, level three and four and level four and five at the same time.

Since the establishment of the institute in 1961 till 1993, students had to appear at two examinations a year, in which they could take as many subjects as they wanted to and they had to complete their course in 10 years. Any student who could not do so had to renew his registration for another 10 years.

But in 1993, according to the suggestions of the UNDP and because of the increasing pressure from international accountants' organisations to improve the standard of training, the ICMA authorities introduced a new syllabus, sources concerned said.

For the convenience of the students they introduced three examinations a year for a short period, which ended in May 1995, the source added.

The students of the institution have formed a committee to resist introduction of the new system. They would go for a movement, if needed, committee leaders said.

6 Saudis beheaded for murder, theft

RIYADH, July 14: Six Saudis were beheaded today in the Riyadh area for murder and theft, the interior ministry said, reports AFP.

Three of them had killed a fruit-seller and kidnapped and robbed a petrol station worker. The other three had murdered a Saudi.

Some 114 people have been executed in Saudi Arabia since the start of the year compared with 58 in 1994, according to a toll based on official figures.

The human rights group Amnesty international registered alarm at the number of executions in a report published on July 4. It said the death sentence had been carried out against 90 people between January 20 and April 19 "the highest number ever seen by Amnesty in such a short period."

Death of dy manager: Statement from Titas Gas today

By Staff Correspondent

Authorities of the Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Limited said yesterday an official statement will be released today on the alleged killing of one of its officials in the city Thursday.

Golam Mohiuddin, a deputy manager of the Titas Gas, was allegedly murdered at a garments factory in the city's Malibagh area on Thursday when he went there to realise 'dues'.

When contacted over phone last night, Maj (ret'd) Mukhtadir, Managing Director of the Titas Gas refused to give details about the incident but assured that they would send an official statement today.

Motijheel police said a case was filed in this connection by the Managing Director of Titas Gas. However, no arrest was made till late night.

One killed

From Page 1

thana in Jamalpur district. They said the clash ensued as the two groups, one supported by the office-bearers of the district BCL and another backed by the leaders outside the committee, wanted to hold meetings at the AL office at Kalibari road violating a party decision.

The district AL had earlier decided not to allow any of the two factions to hold meeting at its office.

The clash continued till police intervened at about 6.30 pm. Police were posted at the AL office, MMCH and main crossings of the tension gripped town to avert further incident.

Garments owners urged to reduce working hours

Leaders of the Jatiya Garments Sramik Federation yesterday urged the owners to reduce the working hours and suspend compulsory overtime work to enable the workers return home before dusk, reports UNB.

Most garment workers live in the low lying areas of the city, like Kamrangirchar, Maniknagar, Rasulbagh, Kutubkhali, Shanirakhra, Meradia, Adabar, Badda, Nandipara and Rajarbagh, which have been affected by the flood, said federation president Mojibur Rahman and general secretary Anirul Haq Amin.

In a statement, they said the workers are the most victims of the flood and it is difficult for them to return home after dusk.

STOL service

From Page 1

Dhaka-Barisal fare is Taka 950 and Dhaka-Shamshernagar Taka 1200. Replying to quarry of the service will be viable, he said it will reach a break-even point within a year if they can operate six flights a day with average 15 passengers per flight.

Haroon said, though Barisal was declared a division quite sometime ago, industries have not been set up in the southern region of the country just because of communication problem with the capital. "Now, with the launching of this air service, entrepreneurs will feel encouraged to invest in the southern region."

He added that Aero Bengal has arranged insurance for all its passengers. The government will get Taka 75 per passenger for the facilities it provides to the airlines, the MD said. He hoped that the government will supply them fuel at a subsidised rate like the Biman.

Aero Bengal's Chairman Dr H B M Iqbal Director Foyzur Rob Azad, Director of Flight Operations Captain Ahsanuzzaman and two other co-pilots were also present at the press conference.

City areas flooded

From Page 1

ghat went under water due to onrush of water from the river Dakatia. Some major roads of the pourasabha including Bara Station Road, Comilla Road, Stadium Road and College Road have gone under two-three feet water.

Also in the town, 210 families became homeless due to the flood. Some new areas of Matlab, Haim Char and Kachua thanas were also inundated yesterday.

Besides, the Matlab-Meghna-Donagoda irrigation project and the Chandpur irrigation project are now under threat as many cracks have developed in the embankment due to heavy current of the Meghna.

Our correspondent reports from Pabna: Fresh areas have been inundated in Pabna as the river Padma was flowing 30 cm above danger level. The Sadar, Ishwardi and Sujannagar thanas are the worst affected.

The Jamuna is still flowing 0.38 cm above the danger mark although it fell by 4 cm yesterday. The Boral river is swelling inundating vast areas of the district.

About three lakh people have taken shelter on different flood protection embankments. An acute shortage of safe drinking water is reported from the area.

Our Gaibandha correspondent reports: Waterborne diseases have broken out in many parts of the district.

Although water is receding from the district town it is stagnant at different places of the district due to

Mandela puts off Pak-Russian trip

JOHANNESBURG, July 14: President Nelson Mandela who turns 77 next week, today postponed an eight-day trip to Russia and Pakistan planned to begin July 22, reports AP.

His spokesman said Mandela postponed the trip to stay home and attend to unspecified domestic issues that required his attention.

Protest against French N-test

SYDNEY, July 14: Thousands of Australians marked Bastille Day Friday by protesting France's plans to resume nuclear testing in the South Pacific, reports AP.

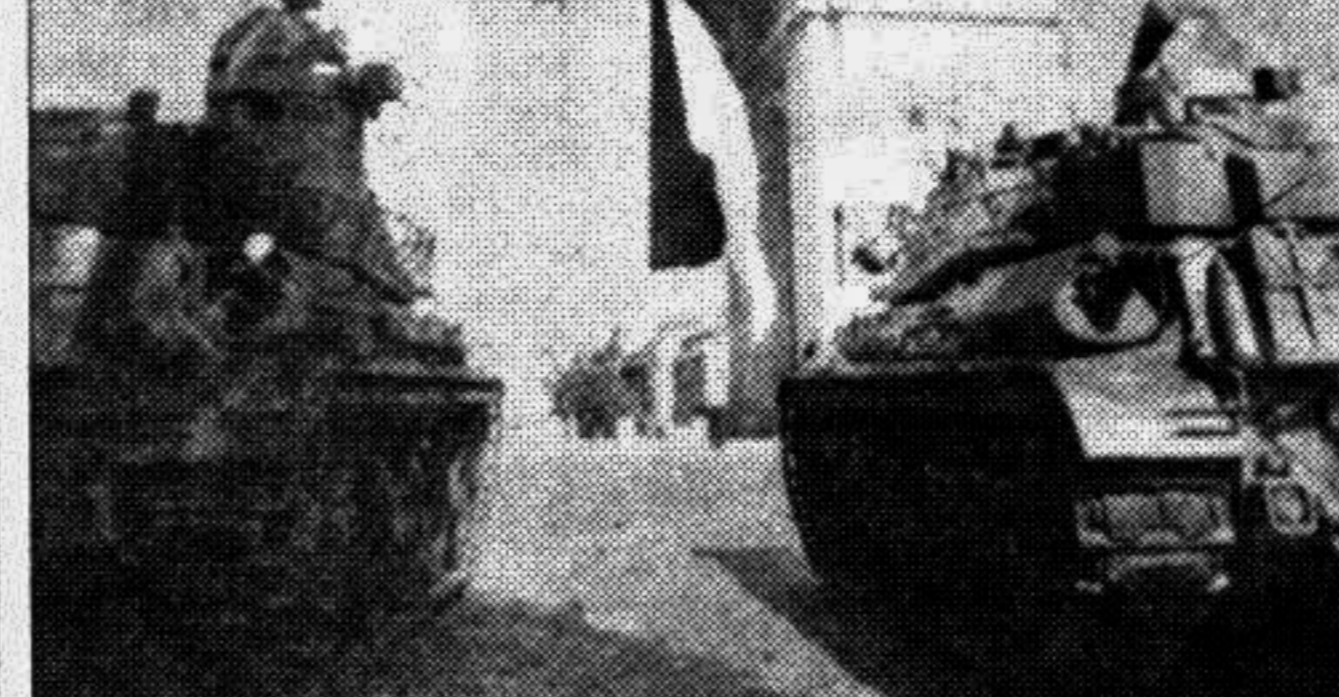
More than 2,000 people at Surfer's Paradise on Queensland's Gold Coast formed a conga line spelling out "No Nukes" on the beach.

Most Chinese say US least friendly state

BEIJING, July 14: The majority of Chinese people regard the United States as the most unfriendly country in the world towards China, according to a survey published today by the China Youth Daily, reports AFP.

Some 87.1 per cent of 100,000 people surveyed nationwide between April and June 20 described the United States as the least friendly country to China, while North Korea came top in the "most friendly" rankings, supported by 43.1 per cent of individuals, the newspaper said.

The United States also ranked first in the categories of countries about which Chinese people have the worst impression and of the most influential nations in the world, scoring 57.2 per cent and 74.1 per cent respectively, it said.



French soldiers watch on their AMX tanks the Alphajet planes of the 'Patrouille de France' flying over the Arc de Triomphe in Paris at the start of military parade, the traditional Bastille Day parade yesterday. — AFP photo

48-hour ultimatum to allies France alone may go for action against Serbs

PARIS, July 14: Defence Minister Charles Millon said on Friday France was giving its allies 48 hours to decide on whether or not they would engage in military action in Bosnia to halt Serb attacks on Muslim enclaves, reports Reuter.

"If there is no answer from the main western powers in 48 hours, then we will have to draw the consequences," this could mean regrouping French forces for an attempt at breaking the Serb stranglehold on Sarajevo, he said.

But the officers said they were unsure if Britain, which makes up half the same unit, would go along. Foreign Minister Herve de Charette said in a television interview: "I hope the British are still on the same starting line as we are."

Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind reacted cautiously to Chirac's call saying military action would have to be practical and realistic.

President Bill Clinton reaffirmed his commitment to a UN presence in Bosnia and spoke with Chirac by telephone but there was no indication Washington would change its stance nor commit troops to Bosnia

except to cover a UN pullout. French generals at the reception were gloomy at the prospects of changes in the US stance, saying that without US air support, there was no chance of defending enclaves other than Sarajevo.

Serbs seized the last observation post occupied by Dutch peacekeepers west of the captured enclave of Srebrenica, and took nine UN peacekeepers hostage, the Dutch Defence Ministry's Bosnia crisis centre said today.

Parliamentary polls in Russia Dec 17

MOSCOW, July 14: Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed a decree from his hospital room Friday setting parliamentary elections for December 17, reports AP.

The elections to the 450-seat State Duma, the powerful lower house of parliament, have long been planned for December, and Friday's decree merely makes the date official.

PUBLIC SHARE ISSUE

Delta Life Insurance Company Ltd. a reputed Life Insurance Company has published prospectus for issue of 1,50,000 Ordinary Shares on June 29, 1995 in the following dailies:

The Daily Star, Sangbad and The Financial Express.

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