

## Dhaka Day by Day

### Let Them Rest in Peace

by Aasha Mehreen Amin



— Star photo

It is perhaps not surprising that in a city most of whose living residents have very poor sleeping quarters, the dead are treated with such callousness. But even then, no matter how cynical or desensitized we have become, it is hard not to protest against the blatant disrespect shown to those of our loved ones who have left us with memories and slabs of concrete with their names inscribed.

Dhaka's graveyards are in a terrible state. With the living population making the city burst at the seams, the number of dead is also increasing. Consequently the problems of overcrowding are as acute as that of the living. Added to that is the total lack of maintenance of the grave sites that make a visit to the grave yard a traumatic experience.

A trip to the Mirpur graveyard illustrates just how bad it can get. With the monsoons at its peak, the narrow pathways are muddy and overflowing making visitors go through an unwelcome obstacle race. There are so many graves, some on top of others that at times one is forced to step over them. That in any religion quite sacrilegious. But what is most strange is the show of utter disrespect by people living around the graveyards. While the unfortunate ones are burying their loved ones, the last rites are drowned by blaring Hindi songs played in the nearby bastis. The graveyard itself is so crowded and treated with such slipshodness that sometimes the graves get undug. It was with horrified disbelief that a recent

visitor described how, while attending a relative's burial, he accidentally came across a skull sticking out of a grave!

Other grave yards, though less disorganised, are no better. At Azimpur Kabrastan, for example, one has hardly the time or mental state to meditate or pray for one's lost loved one with all the touts insisting that in exchange for a 'small fee' they will keep the grave clean. Banani Kabrastan where the relatively well off are buried, is also the place where armies of beggars mob you long before you can even get to the grave to be visited.

Graveyards in Dhaka are also subjected to the worst kind of degradation by people. The graveyard site in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar for states-people looks neat enough shaded with leafy trees blossoming flowers and well maintained gardens. Yet it is not unusual to see pedestrians unashamedly treat the surrounding hedges as public urinals. Not once do they realize the enormity of their act of desecration.

The same graveyard has also become a favourite hangout for all sorts of unsavoury visitors. Local mastaans and goons find this place ideal for their poker sessions and for pouncing on unwary visitors demanding money.

For those who visit these graveyards to show their respects, such incidents are very painful. With proper maintenance and an enforced code of conduct these graveyards such unnecessary trauma could be avoided. Let the dead rest in peace.



Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Tang Ziaxuan visited the Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge constructed over the Buriganga on Thursday. — PID photo

### 'Repeal Indemnity Ordinance'

Pro-Awami League Chhatra League (BCL) at discussion meeting Thursday urged the government to repeal the Indemnity Ordinance to bring the killers of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to trial, reports UNB.

Awami League leader Abdu Samad Azad attended the meeting as chief guest.

Prof Mostafa Nurul Islam, former DUCSU VP Akhteruzzaman and BCL general secretary Ishaq Ali Khan Panna took part in the discussion.

BCL president Enamul Haq Shamim presided over the meeting held at the TSC of Dhaka University in the evening.

### College foundation laid at Savar

Education Minister Jami-ruddin Sircar laid the foundation stone of Alhaj Abdul Mannan College in Savar yesterday morning, reports BSS.

The Education Minister said the government has made the highest budgetary allocation for education sector with a view to ensuring the overall development of the country, later in a public meeting.

Referring to the food for education programme for the poor, stipend and tuition free education upto class ten for the girl students and compulsory free primary education programme the minister said all these initiatives have been taken to increase the rate of literacy in the country.

The meeting was addressed by Niamatullah Sabu, MP, Savar Pourashava chairman Ashraf Uddin Khan Imu, Savar thana BNP secretary Kafil Uddin, local union parishad chairman Mohammad Joinul and BNP leader Haqibul Rahman.

### Govt provides 400 ambulances for hospitals

CHITTAGONG, Aug 18: The government has provided 400 ambulances for the country's hospitals under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, reports UNB.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf disclosed this while addressing a meeting at the Circuit House here on Thursday.

He said about Tk 100 crore had been allocated in the present budget for maintenance of the country's hospitals.

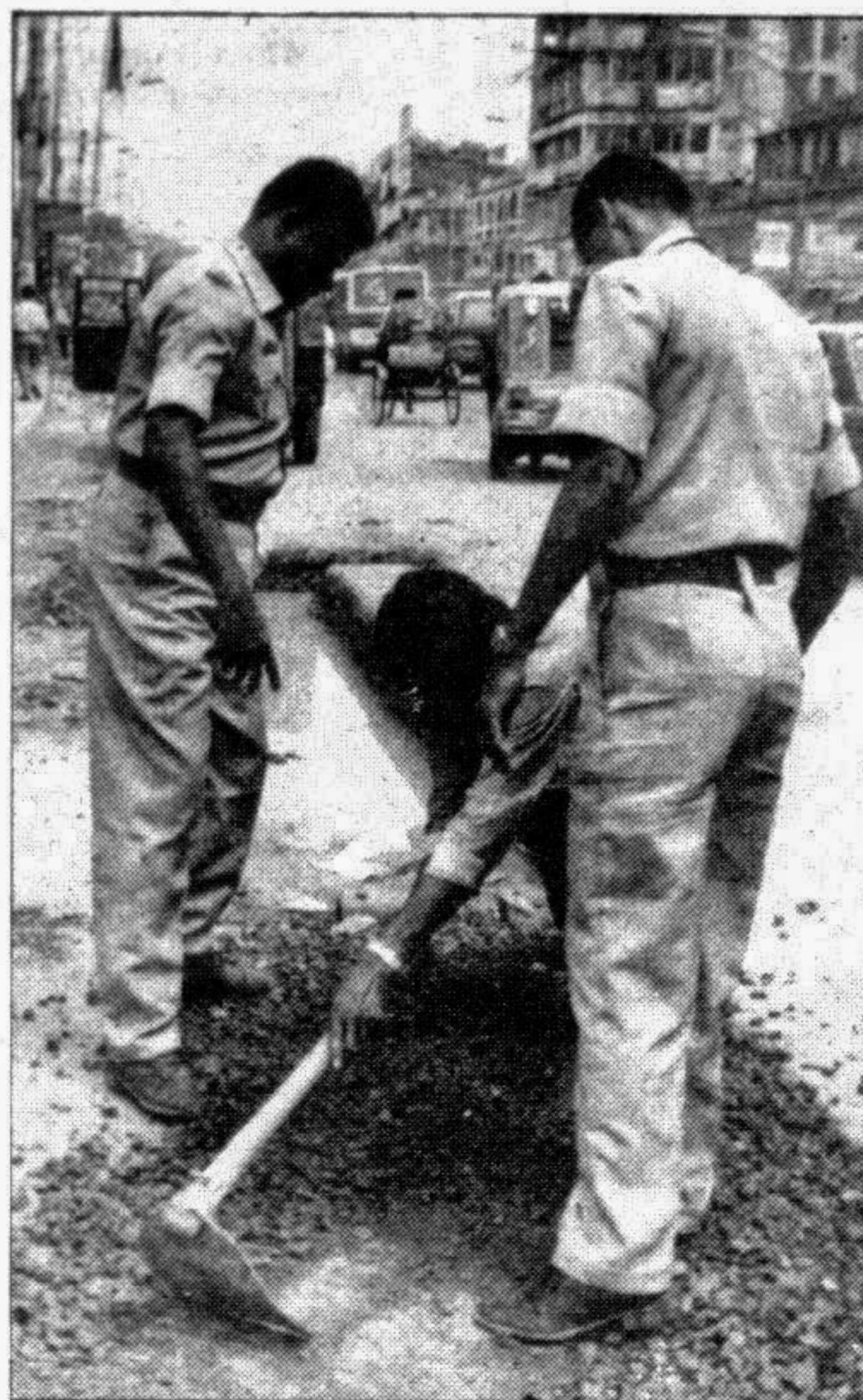
The minister called upon the physicians, officials and employee involved in health services to intensify their works for making the Health for All by the Year 2000 a success.

Later, the minister visited the under-construction divisional health office and general hospital in the port city.

### Chinese minister leaves city

The Chinese Vice-Foreign Minister, Tang Ziaxuan, left city Thursday night ending a three day visit to Bangladesh, reports BSS.

Additional Foreign Secretary Mohiuddin Ahmed saw him off at the Zia International Airport.



Two policemen took upon themselves the responsibility of supervising the filling work of a roadside ditch near the Malibagh-Mouchak road-crossing in the city recently. Such unplanned digging of roads by different development agencies has been a familiar cause behind the frequent traffic jams and has added to the woes of the pedestrian in many parts of the city. — Star photo by AKM Mohsin.

### Arham's world of pottery on display

By Staff Correspondent

Arham-Ul-Huq Chowdhury had his solo exhibition opening at the Alliance Francaise last evening.

The Exhibition was opened by Dr Humayan Rashid Chowdhury, and M Xavier Baras from the French Embassy was a special guest.

Although it was his first venture, the young artist should tremendous promise in his miniature Moghul art painting, which he said was inspired by yet another artist Sharukh Shahid, who had his exhibition at the Alliance gallery last winter.

There were 24 vases (pottery works), and six pieces of furniture, which include a throne, a set of tables with calligraphy, a dressing table, a screen and a safe.

Arham, who is a second-year student at the Anthropology Department at the Dhaka University, writes on gardening in the daily 'Bichitra', and is a collector of antiques.



Teak-Glass cabinet: Moghul miniature, elephants, camels, and wrestlers fighting at Agra from the Babur-Nama.



Pottery lamp: An Indian craftsman stamping gold and silver lace (L) and Raga miniature (R).

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