

DOWN TO EARTH

Dubious Quality Street Foods

By ASM Nurunnabi

Street foods have become an important part of our city life. They are typical not only of Dhaka alone, in several cities of South East Asia, such as Bangkok and Singapore, their presence is also noticeable, but there is a more hygienic and organised system operates.

There are many spots on city thoroughfares where a variety of eatables are offered for sale from mobile and makeshift stalls. Besides seasonal fruits, the fare mainly consists of rice, curry, dal and roti and different kinds of snacks and beverages. The locations of this business can be found mainly in the streets of Motijheel, Dilkusha, Sadarghat, Tejgaon and many other busy places like bus stops, railway stations, launch ghats, etc. Maintenance of hygiene and sanitary condition in matters of food preparation and handling is lacking in most cases. There is no check-up by the municipal authorities of the standard of foods offered for sale. The raw materials used for the preparation of these foods are mostly sub-standard to make them cheaper.

Here, as elsewhere, socio-economic factors play an important role in their growing importance. Due to urbanisation and industrialisation, people are becoming more and more busy with their jobs which leave them very little time to prepare food at home. Many of the customers of street food are migrants from rural areas who have settled down under extremely poor conditions in urban slums or squatter settlements where basic services are non-existent or limited at best. The lack of water and electricity, lack of facilities to prepare food at home, the distance between home and work place, and time constraint and above all the cheapness and convenience of street foods — all these factors contribute to the growing popularity of street foods.

The street foods repre-

sent an important economic activity in view of their necessity and importance in the day-to-day life of certain socio-economic strata. The ramifications of street foods constitute a vast industry that involves thousands of people. It provides employment to a large segment of the urban population who might otherwise remain unemployed including women and city migrants.

Besides some basic items of Bangalee diet such as rice, dal, curry, roti, etc. the seasonal fruits occupy an important place in the business of sidewalk eatables. Though most of our people, by and large, are hard pressed to spend extra money beyond their essential needs, they seem to harbour a definite craving for the native seasonal fruits. This perhaps explains the existence of so many food vendors on sidewalks and their brisk business at all seasons.

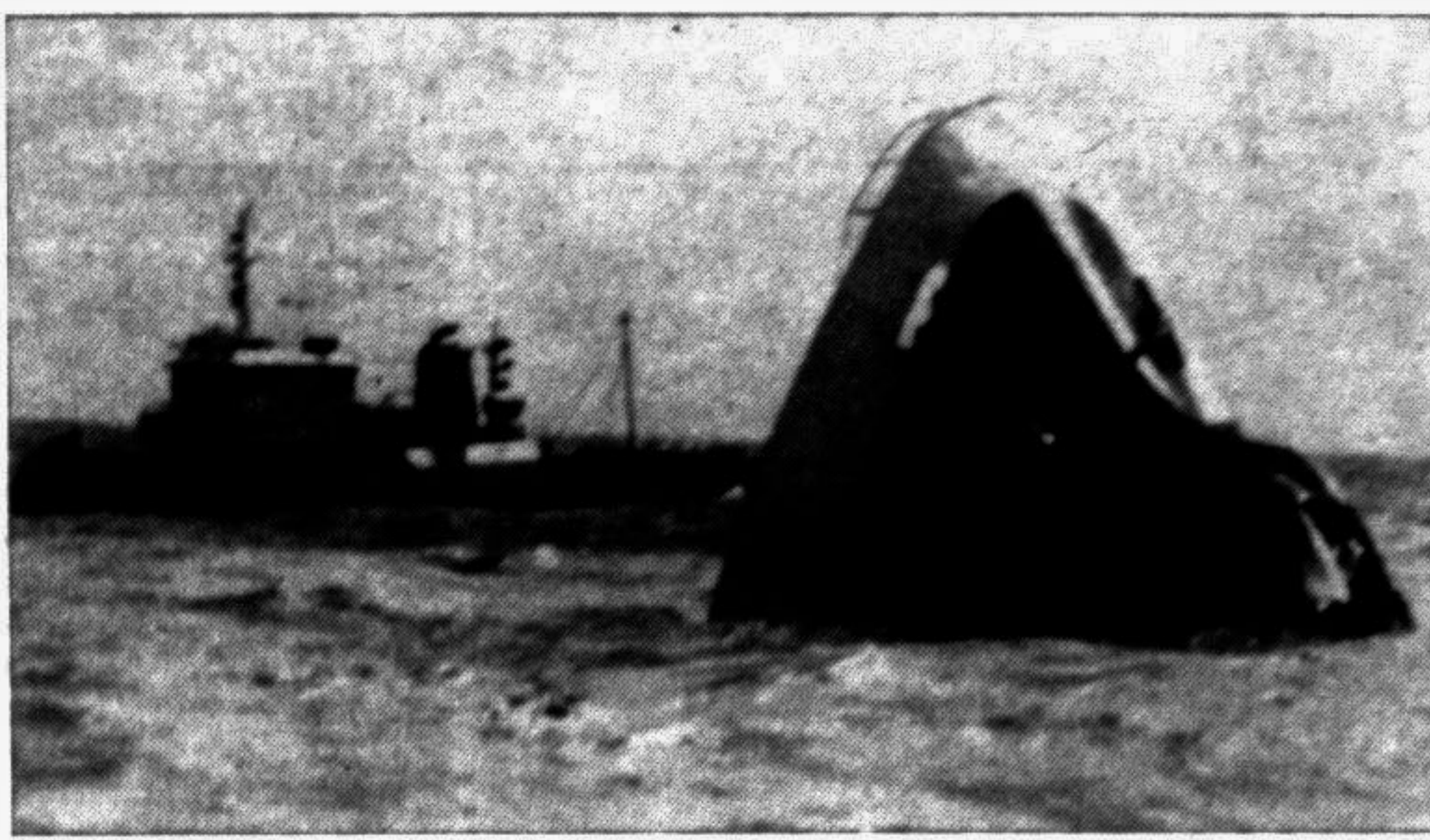
Various types of fruits according to our seasons are sold on the sidewalks. To make their wares easily accessible to customers with small means, the fruits with some size are cut into small pieces carrying low price tags. A cursory view of the business in some areas will suggest that, depending on seasons, the favourite items are cucumber, water melons, pineapples, papaya, green coconut, etc. When temperature rises in summer, the items mainly offered are sugarcane juice, water melons and iced shabat. Ice cream vendors also do a brisk business. Black berries and sweet hog plum (Amra) when in season also draw a large number of customers.

Bangladesh is experiencing one of the highest urban growth rates in the region. Commensurate with this growth, the urban people's dependence on street foods has been marking a significant rise. On the question whether street foods of Dhaka are safe for health, people seldom differ.

Everybody would agree that our street foods are not adequately hygienic. The street food vendors are mostly lacking in knowledge of hygiene, nutrition and sanitation. The lack of control by the authorities and the vendors' lack of knowledge about safe food handling practices pose potential health risk to consumers.

The issue of street foods has assumed such importance in the fast growing urban economies in the developing countries that the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) takes interest in their quality and safety questions as well as consideration of their valuable food and nutrition aspects. One FAO expert termed the street foods as "a problem, a challenge and an opportunity for development." The problem lies in the control of the quality and safety of foods offered for sale. The opportunity is the strengthening of traditional and local food habits, the development of small industries and co-operative marketing structure. And lastly, the challenge is to provide government and municipal authorities with the means to assure the safety and quality of street foods.

The ways the street foods business is conducted at present need to be changed with firm guidance. It seems urgently necessary to stop uncontrolled sales of unhygienic and sub-standard items of food in the interest of public health. With a view to raising them to a healthy standard, the health authorities should initiate actions including, among other things, strict food quality control measures, provision of clean environment, supply of clean water, and use of safe raw materials for preparation of such foods. In this manner, it may be possible to convert the attending problems into opportunities for developing dependable food retailing outlets for the vast number of urban people mainly with low income.



An oil tanker loaded with 2800 tonnes of crude sinks off the South Korean port city of Pusan Thursday, spreading a six-kilometre long oil slick. — AFP/UNB photo

Civic reception to Special Olympic team Sept 29

By Staff Correspondent

A civic reception will be accorded to the Bangladesh sports team which demonstrated remarkable performance in the 1995 Special Olympics World Games in Connecticut, USA in July this year.

The Bangladesh team of the disabled, comprising 11 boys and four girls, won 5 golds, 6 silvers and 6 bronzes in football and badminton events in the Special Olympics, participated by some 7,200 disabled athletes from 140 countries.

Shikha O Sangskritik Charcha Kendra (Centre for Education and Culture) will arrange the reception at the auditorium of the National Museum on September 29. Deputy Leader of the Parliament A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury, former Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the House Abdus Samad Azad and Justice Habibur Rahman are expected to attend the reception as special guests, leaders of the Centre told reporters here yesterday.

"It is very regrettable that this commendable success by the disabled sports team was ignored by the government as well as the Press," said F R Mahmud Hasan, Coordinator of the Centre.

"If any medal is won in the

Olympics or say, any other international event, the whole nation applauds. But these children were totally ignored even though they did remarkably well," Hasan said.

Prof Anisuzzaman, Convenor of the Centre urged the government to come forward to promote sports among the disabled.

A H M Mostafa, sports director of the Special Olympics, Bangladesh, two of the guardians of the athletes — Dr Abu Solaiman Mandal and Salma Haq — were also present on the occasion.

The Bangladesh athletes were: Suman Parvez, Manzur Morshed Khan Palash, Kazi Ehsan Haq, Shafiqul Islam, Lulu Marjan, Anisuzzaman Mandal, Afroza Khanam Rina, Rumana Salam, Atiqur Rahman Uddin Kachi, Masum Ekram, Masiuddin Chowdhury Jami, Faizur Rahman Sunny, Fahmida Hossain Luna and Asif Uddowla.

The Special Olympics world games is held every four years since the first meet in 1968 in Chicago.

The games were initiated by Eunice Kennedy Shriver in 1963 as a summer 'day-camp' of 100 children and adults in Maryland.

Sarbahara men attack villagers: 1 killed, 25 hurt

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Sept 22: One person was shot dead and at least 25 others received bullet injuries as members of the outlawed Sarbahara party opened fire on villagers at village Mobarakpur under Mogaammadpur thana in Magura midnight last night.

The victim was identified as Shibu Pada, 21, of village Mobarakpur. Among the injured, the condition of four — Arun, Shyamapada, Shukumar and Khalil — all hail from the same village were stated to be critical.

Police said, the Sarbahara Party men numbering 50 opened fire on villagers as two small traders of the village refused to give them Tk one lakh as toll.

The assailants beaten up the traders, Shyamapada and Goura. They opened fire indiscriminately on villagers after being chased.

Injured persons were rushed to the Magura Sadar Hospital.

Transport strike

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series of clashes between supporters of the two organisations in last few days over toll collection.

On hearing the death news, supporters of the Bangladesh Paribahan Sangstha went on the rampage in the town, damaging some 30 vehicles.

They brought out a procession with the body in the afternoon and enforced the transport strike in protest.

Post and Telecommunications Minister Tariqul Islam, who was in the town, at a protest meeting of the Bangladesh Paribahan Sangstha gave the assurance that the killers would be brought to book.

Clean Dhaka

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tion made an impressive effort by mobilising its fleet of garbage trucks and cleaning the streets from early hours of the day.

In several places the Scouts held rallies, read out their pledge to keep the city clean and started the work with brooms and spades.

At about 9 am, more than 300 Scouts and Cub-scouts met at the Kamalapur railway station and completed cleaning the area between the station and the Kamalapur railway colony.

The Scouts and volunteers were found to be cleaning the roads and areas of Bangla Bazar, Rankin Street at Wari, North Brook Hall Road, Azimpur Mouchak colony, New DOHS, BADC colony, areas of old Dhaka, Mirpur Section 6, Rayer Bazar, Jigatala, Victoria Park, the vicinity of Udayan School, Plassey Barrack area, BUET area, Arambagh, Gandaria, Goran, Narinda, parts of Saidabad, Nazrul Islam Road, Abhoy Das Lane, K M Das Lane and some areas of Jatrabari, Postagola, Bangshal, Siddique Bazar, English Road, Lakshimbazar, Khilgaon, Chowdhuripara and other areas.

In these areas Scouts and youth groups were seen to be cleaning the streets, collecting the garbage and putting them in the designated garbage bins. In some parts they were seen helping the DCC garbage cleaners by loading the waste material in the trucks.

While cleaning the areas the Scouts were seen knocking from door to door advising the local people against littering the road side with the waste material. They also urged them to place their garbage in the designated place and at a particular time.

In some areas the local school boys were also seen to be participating in the campaign.

The Save Dhaka, Clean Dhaka campaign will be held again on next Friday, September 29 between 9 and 11 am.

The Midnight File

BJP behind 'milk miracle' propaganda: Congress

NEW DELHI, Sept 22: The Congress-I today charged that the BJP was behind the 'milk miracle' propaganda and said 'whatever it may do, Lord Ganesh will not come to its rescue in the coming Lok Sabha polls. "Replying to questions, the party spokesman, V N Gadgil, said 'having exhausted Lord Rama the BJP is now trying Lord Ganesh to win the Lok Sabha elections, reports PTI.

Govt plans to explore African markets

The government is planning to make a breakthrough in the African markets shortly through the state-owned TCB, as a shot in the arm of the country's private sector to explore the still untapped markets, reports UNB.

Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB) is now busy sifting through the trade responses from South Africa, the gateway of the African continent, following the recent visit by a high-level Bangladesh trade delegation.

During the visit, the delegation had met with government ministers and chamber leaders in the cities of Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban in a bid to prepare the groundwork for more export from Bangladesh in the post-apartheid South Africa.

"We have got very good response from the business circles of the country (South Africa) — there are very good prospects for exports from Bangladesh," said TCB chairman Shoaib Ahmed, a leading member of the trade delegation comprised of government and private sector representatives.

Posts and Telecommunications Minister M Tariqul Islam led

JKLF splits

SRINAGAR, Sept 22: The Jammu-Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), spearheading the separatist movement in Kashmir, split today, marking a serious setback to the six-year-old campaign, reports AP.

Both groups expelled top leaders from their organisation, accusing each other of being pro-India and not being serious about winning independence for the northern state.

The Front is credited with starting the armed rebellion in 1989 against the Indian government, but over the years it shed much of its militancy and is now regarded as a moderate group.

Javed Mir, a senior vice-president of the group, which operates both in India and in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, said the group has expelled Amanullah Khan from the post of chairman and appointed Yasin Malik in his place.

White Paper

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meeting demanded publication of a White Paper on the Dinajpur incident.

The meeting was addressed, among others, by Rokeya Kabir, Dr Feroza Begum, Khorshedi Alam, Selma Khaleque, Sultana Islam, Saima Ali, Yasmeen Murshed, Rashida Hossain, Latifa Akanda, Dr Halida Khandaker, Meherunnessa Islam, Hasina Nazrul, Jahanaara Begum and Nazneen Azim.

They demanded exemplary punishment of those responsible for the Dinajpur incident.

Khatunganj

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convenient places as road communication is very congested and narrow in and around Khatunganj which is also a factor against relocation of business," he informed.

Replying to a question, the chamber president said "amenities at Agrabad commercial area is good as it has been developed more than that of Khatunganj. Agrabad commercial area has posh hotels, banks and car parking facilities, beside easy communication links with other areas of the city."

Two foreign banks, Indosuez and Standard Chartered, have already relocated their offices to Agrabad commercial area, in addition to other banks.

The Standard Chartered Bank recently relocated its branch to Agrabad commercial area from in front of New Market in Khatunganj. "Now our transactions improved here as most of our clients are located at Agrabad," said Iftekhar Ali Khan, manager of the bank.

Earlier, our office was out of the way, clients used to face difficulty to go there and that is why we shifted our bank's office to Agrabad commercial area," he said.

"FIFA should make a fair decision in choosing between Japan and South Korea," he said.

5 killed, 30 hurt in road accident

NARSINGDI, Sept 22: At least five people were killed and 30 others injured in a road mishap at Darikandi in Belabo thana on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway today, reports UNB.

Witnesses said the accident occurred at about 1 pm when a Habiganj-bound bus from Dhaka collided head-on with a Dhaka-bound minibus from Bhairab.

Two passengers — Rustam Ali, 50, and Iqbal Hossain, 40, — died on the spot and three others — Adam Ali, 25, Babul, 24, and Rahim, 50, succumbed to their injuries on way to Bhairab Thana Health Complex.

The bodies were sent to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital morgue for autopsy. Of the injured, 15 people were admitted to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital, five were sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, 10 were admitted to Bhairab Thana Health Complex.

French N-test

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not binding, so members strive for consensus to give them more weight.

The weeklong conference of the UN agency was marked by near-unanimous calls for a nuclear test ban treaty no later than next year.

Many countries also expressed dismay at France's decision to resume nuclear testing and urged France and China, the only two states known to be testing, to stop immediately.

The European Union, which includes France, as well as nuclear-able Russia and the United States, refrained from urging an immediate halt in their formal addresses to the conference.

The resolution was sponsored by 18 countries, including Australia, New Zealand and Japan, which openly condemn French testing.

Maradona

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But he said it would be difficult for him to appear at the 1998 World Cup in France.

Maradona, who was unanimously elected president of the Paris-based international football players union last week by 14 top players from 11 countries, said the new body aimed at promoting players' rights.

"This is a big step forward for the development of football," he said, adding the union will help players to stage better matches.

On the possibility of South Korea outbidding Japan to host the 2002 World Cup, he said South Korea had advantage in terms of its appearance in the cup finals.

But he noted that affluent Japan had a "strong influence" on FIFA.

Pabna JCD faction seeks removal of SP

PABNA, Sept 22: A section of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leaders today demanded immediate removal of Police Super M A Mabud for allegedly instigating terrorism in the town, reports UNB.

Addressing a press conference here this evening, they held the SP responsible for the deterioration of law and order situation and demanded that he be withdrawn from the district in a week.

The press conference was addressed by former VP of Edward College Students' Union Kamrul Hasan Mintu, GS Ziaus Shams and BNP leader Rafiqul Islam Bakul.

They also blamed pourashava chairman Shahidullah Bachchu, who recently joined BNP, for unleashing violence in the town.

Six people, including three children, have been killed in clashes between two factions of the JCD in the

Beaten to death

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10pm Thursday. After hearing the hue and cry of the driver, local people rushed to the spot and severely beat up two of them. The other two members of the gang managed to escape.

Police arrested injured Mahatab, of Dhalu's slum at Mirpur-10, and admitted him to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Police said that the locals after beating Jashim and his accomplice called a rickshaw and asked the puller to take the injured Jashim and Mahatab to the hospital.

Later police from Tejgaon thana found Jashim dead and picked up injured Mahatab from Indira Road, where they were dropped by the rickshawpuller.

Sources said that the gang apparently hired an autorickshaw from Mohakhali area and travelled different parts of the city for snatching. When they failed to make their bid success, they attacked the driver of the autorickshaw in which they were travelling near Montipurpara at about 10pm.

town since September 15.

Police have arrested some 17 leaders and workers of the JCD, including town unit president Sheikh Tuhin, who is reportedly a supporter of the BNP leader Rafiqul Islam Bakul.

A JCD leader and supporter of Bachchu, Atiqul Islam, was arrested tonight. The JCD faction led by Mosabber Hossain Sanju, brought out a procession in the town protesting the arrest.

AWACS plane with 24 crashes

ANCHORAGE, Alaska, Sept 22: A high-tech military surveillance plane with 24 people aboard crashed on takeoff this morning at Elmendorf Air Force Base. The fate of the servicemen was unknown, reports AP.

The Air Force said the E-3 AWACS plane was heading out for a training mission.

Sent to jail

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woman. The three were handed over to police after the woman alleged that they molested her.

The woman had reportedly gone there to see her husband who is an employee of the garden.

Police, however, said that the woman resided with her husband inside the garden. Police claimed that there were exchange of angry words between the woman and the two policemen and the youth Thursday afternoon in presence of her husband.

At one stage the couple started screaming and local people came and caught them, police said.

Ctg Customs

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Mannan was posted in a Bangladesh embassy in December last year.

The sources said one commissioner is needed all the move now since the port city has been declared the commercial capital of the country.



Hashimoto elected LDP president

TOKYO, Sept 22: International Trade and Industry Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto today overwhelmingly won elections for the leadership of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the traditional springboard to the Japanese premiership, reports AFP.

Hashimoto, who forged a reputation as a tough negotiator in trade talks with the United States, will replace Foreign Minister Yohei Kono as LDP president in the party's convention next Monday.

"I was deeply impressed by the support, which far exceeded my expectations, and keenly feel the weight of my new responsibilities," Hashimoto told a news conference after the result was announced.

Officials said the 58-year-old trade minister won 304 votes, comprising 239 from LDP members of parliament and 65 votes from the party's rank and file.

One shot dead

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his belly. Noor Hossain succumbed to his injuries after an hour of his admission to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

None was arrested in this connection till filing of this report last night. A case has been filed with Mirpur thana.

Meanwhile, a housewife Rezina Begum Nupur, 20, reportedly committed suicide in her house at Rampura under Shabujbagh thana early hours yesterday. Nupur, wife of one Rezul Karim, hanged herself, sources said.

An unnatural death case has been filed with Shabujbagh thana.

Besides, two persons identified as Abul Kashem, 60, and Md Rajib were killed in two road accidents at Aminbazar in the city yesterday.

Opposition preparing

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enue, Jatiya Party at the Panthapath and Jamaat-e-Islami at the Motijheel Shapla Chattr.

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina holds a meeting of her party leaders of the city and adjoining districts at the party's central office today afternoon to discuss preparations for the grand rally.

Presidents and general secretaries of AL units of Dhaka city, Gazipur, Narsingdi, Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Tangail, Munshiganj, Brahmanbaria, Comilla-north, Narayanganj and Manikganj districts will attend the meeting, party sources said.

Sheikh Hasina will also hold a meeting with the leaders of the party's front organisations tomorrow afternoon at the same venue.

When contacted, an Awami League presidium member said "appropriate programmes" will be declared from the rally to compel the government to concede to the demand. He said the new programme will be finalised in the morning of September 28.

A meeting of Jatiya Party secretariat will discuss tomorrow preparations for the 'grand rally'. Party secretary general Anwar Hossain Manju asked all concerned to attend the meeting in time. JP leader Moudud Ahmed said "we will give a much bigger programme" at the rally.

Greenfield public cos

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into commercial operation. Asked on the difference of opinion, the chairman of the SEC, Sultanuzzaman Khan, said: "Many people previously ignored greenfield companies. Now the situation has changed. There may be some differences of opinion. But I hope that they would reach a consensus thrashing out the differences, provided they see things in the practical context."

Elaborating, he said, this is not an entirely new concept and in some countries greenfield public companies raise fund from "Over-the-Counter Market" or unlisted securities or from venture capital companies. In some other countries, such companies raise fund through a initial public offer (IPO).

According to sources, the committee members have diverse opinion regarding acquisition of land, completion of construction of building, opening of letters of credit,

shipment and erection of plant machinery.

The committee members are also debating over who should make the forecast, how the investors' interests are to be protected and whether the current legal system is adequate to safeguard the interest of the small investors, sources said.

Asked if the guidelines would be changed completely, the SEC chairman said, "on receiving the report from the committee, it will be placed before the advisory committee for its approval. Then we will make changes, if needed."

Peierls, who developed A-bomb, dies

OXFORD, Sept 22: Sir Rudolph Peierls, whose work led to the development of the first atomic bomb in 1945, died in Oxford, his family said today, he was 88, reports AFP.

In 1940, German-born Peierls and Austria-born Otto Frisch produced the first practical blueprint for the atomic bomb.

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