DOWN TO EARTH

City's Floating Labourers

By AS M Nurunnabi

ers from a prominent aspect in the city of its socio-economic life. The labourers are generally majority of these persons divided into two classes those who hold regular jobs and those who work at purely 40 years. They are mostly iltemporary jobs of various na- literate but a sizeable number ture. The latter class of labourers are generally des- ucation.

ignated as floating labourers. In every village or town of involved mainly in five trades the country, we find exis- and professions. The larger children tence of floating labourers. proportion of them work as Lately we have been observ- day labourers with no clear ing in city areas a steadily specification of work they are growing number of them, called upon to do. They are This increase in mainly at- largely unskilled. Next in tributable to a surge in migra- order of their number are tion of people from the vil- those who work at construclages to urban areas caused by tion sites with some measure paucity of job opportunities of skill at various odd jobs in the villages since the ma- connected with construction jority of them are landless. or as assistants to the skilled On the other hand, there is a workers engaged in congeneral belief that in the vast struction work. Other smaller in some neighbourhood expanding economies in city groups include carpenters, areas, there are greater op- road construction workers, portunities for employment. gardeners, etc. On an aver-In this context, to escape the age, most of them remain suffering of growing unem- employed for about three ployment in rural areas, weeks in a month. The repeople in large numbers maining seven days in a without any means to fall month when they find no back upon make a bee line work are spent in great hardfor the city. The frequency of ship in the absence of any major natural calamities like income during that period floods, cyclones and tidal Most of them find work when surges are the other con- fortune favours them at the tributing factors for the in- assembling points in the varcreasingly high incidence of ious areas of the city. migration of people from the villages affected by the large- employment through conscale damage caused to rural tractors who appear at the

Because of expectancy of number of labourers for varigreater job opportunities ous kinds of jobs connected here. Dhaka city attracts the with the work of the contraclargest number of people who tors. In fact, a large propormainly from the ranks of tion of floating labourers find floating labourers. Their employment in this way. A number has become so large small number of them, parthat their presence may be ticularly semi-skilled masons seen in every city locality ev- and carpenters get work ery day. Some of the main ar- through their own initiatives eas where such floating or through their friends and labourers assemble everyday in the hope of finding work are New Market. Elephant which the floating labourers Road, Mirpur, Kalyanpur, Mohakhali, Cantonment, Ka-

ing labourers was conducted under the auspices of the Institute of Social Welfare and Research: the Dhaka University. The results of the survey highlight some important aspects of the life and

From Page 1

blamed the Prime Minister

for forcing the Opposition to

resort to hartals and other

agitation causing suffering to

People are suffering for

the Prime Minister's lust for

power." Hasina said, adding

the Opposition's current agi-

tation is to establish the vot-

ers' list. Hasina said, "It is a

voters' list of BNP." Names of

many voters were dropped

from the list, she com-

The Awami League chief

wanted to know how the

Election Commission could

announce to give identity

cards to all voters by

December 16 when experts

and international organisa-

tions said it would take at

BNP will get the identity

Hasina blamed Begum Zia for

the present political situa-

tion. She said she had writ-

ten two letters to the Prime

Minister, but she didn't re-

spond to those letters on the

problems of farmers and in-

dustrial workers, and their

accepted my proposals, 18

DU teachers

meet Hasina

University teachers yesterday

called on Awami League

president Sheikh Hasina at

her Dhanmondi residence,

the current political, eco-

nomic and law and order sit-

sented by Dr A B M Zahurul

Haq, Dr Sultana Sahfi, Dr

Durgadas Bhattacharya, Dr

Shamsul Huda Harun, Dr

Arefin Siddiqui, Dr Shusil

Ranjan Howlader, Prof Abdus

Salam, Dr Anwara Hossain, Dr

Hossain Mansur, Dr Harun,

Abul Hashem, Dr Mostafa

Chowdhury and Dr S M

They exchanged views on

A delegation of Dhaka

"Had the Prime Minister

In reply to a question,

"Only the workers of the

least three years.

solutions.

reports UNB.

Imamul Huq.

cards," she alleged.

Commenting on the vot-

ing rights of people.

the people.

plained.

Hasina threatens sit-in

she said.

rabari, Sadarghat, etc.

The city's floating labour- living of the floating labourers

The survey shows that the (about 85%) are males and their age ranges from 12 to of them received primary ed-

These labourers are found

There are others who get economies by such calami- assembling points with their trucks to collect required acquaintances.

The great misfortune from suffer is that they are not offered wages at rates prevailmalapur, Shahjahanpur, Jat- ing in the market. When they see the prospect of finding Recently a survey of float- any work bleak on any day at proper wages, they sometimes, under pressure of sheer necessity of earning some income, are obliged to accept jobs at much reduced rate. By and large, the floating labourers are haunted by

farmers and 17 workers

would not have been killed.

Replying to another query.

Hasina said she would give

the fear of financial insecurity all the time. Since most of them have no savings left to fall back upon, it is not unusual that sometimes they pass their days in great privation when they get no work or when they are unable to go for work on account of ill ness. This proves particularly hard on those who happen to live with their families and

On account of their poor economic condition, it is inevitable that they find shelter in city slums and squatter settlements. Their constant struggle for existence gives them very limited free time for relaxation. Some of them, however, seeks recreation in radio and card playing. A small number of them find entertainment in TV and VCP shops or restaurants. Some while away their time in group singing.

The survey indicates that they are not connected with any trade union. Their association with any political activity is marginal. There are however, occasions when a political party offer them small sums of money for taking part in meetings and ral-

The survey reveals an acute degree of economic distress among the city's floating labourers. Because of their illiteracy, ignorance and want of any skill in any particular field, they fall easy victims to adverse circum stances in life and living. Since they are not organized under any trade union, there is no concerted move for bringing about any effective change in their living condi-

In the present circumstances, their hope for a better life lies in the various poverty alleviation programmes of the government. the NGOs and the activities of the Grameen Bank which put emphasis on acquisition of knowledge, skills and experience for various trades and occupations. These strategies may ease the pressure of their migration to urban areas in search of jobs when they may get opportunities for bettering their lot in their

BCS (Customs & Excise) Assoc threatens agitation

reply if the Prime Minister By Staff Correspondent

writes to her. "But what is the use of writing and replying to letters... Our demand is clear We have demanded a caretaker government of 199 model to conduct elections,

which was accepted by the BNP at that time. "I do not understand why the Prime Minister is ignoring the demand for a caretaker government in 1995, demands. when she could take part in the 1991 election conducted

by a caretaker government, said Hasina. About the Prime Minister's offer for resignation 30 days ahead of election. Hasina said it's not the question of who will resign when. The main question is people are demanding an election to be supervised by a neutral caretaker authority so that they could elect a gov-

About her meeting with Dr Mohammad Yunus, Hasina said she had invited him to congratulate him for earning reputation for the country, particularly in the World Women's Conference in Beijing.

ernment of their choice.

When asked about Yunus press interview, Hasina said the Prime Minister has already invited him to join politics and if he does so he no longer remains a neutral person. She asked as to how the Prime Minister has forgotten the concept of caretaker government.

House looted in Khulna

The delegation was repre- From Our Correspondent KHULNA, Oct 6: A group of armed goons raided the house of BNP activist Abdul Latif of Mollapara at noon today and looted valuables

worth over one lakh taka. They also ransacked all the rooms of the house and later destroyed the BNP office at Ward No-31, witnesses said.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Excise) Association has threatened a series of agitation programmes unless the authorities consider their 15point demand by October 14. The Association at a meet-

ing on Thursday resolved to submit a memorandum to the Chairman of the National Board of Revenue (NBR) soon urging him to consider their

The demands of the Association include, introduction of a permanent rule for promotion and transfer, removal of irregularities in recruiting officers in the department of customs excise and VAT from outside the BCS (Customs and Excise). Cadre, and stopping the contractual recruitment.

The Association's planned programmes include, wearing black badges by all officers and employees of the department for seven days from October 14, one, two and three hours work abstentions on October 20, 21 and 22 respectively and a full-day work abstention on October 23, says a press re-

Indian power firm official shot

dead in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, Oct 6: One of the officials of a state-run Indian power firm, National Hydel Power Corporation, has been shot dead by suspected Muslim militants while another has been critically injured, police said here

Thursday, reports AFP. They were travelling in a jeep near a petrol pump in Quamarwari district (12 kilometres, seven miles from here) when some people came and showered bullets at them," witness said.

The two officials, K K Joshi and Pillai were rushed to the nearby Soura Medical Institute where Pillai died.

"K K Joshi is in a critical condition," hospital authorities said.

In 1990, Muslim guerillas abducted two Swedish nationals working on the Uri Power Project from the same area and released them after 97 days of captivity.



32-hr hartal begins

From Page 1 programnies planned by the major opposition parties and leading trade union organisations almost in succession from today is likely to disrupt normal life in the country for the rest of this month.

The programmes an nounced by various political parties and trade union or ganisations from their separate platforms begins today with the three major opposition parties' 32-hour hartal in five divisional headquarters.

The three parties had also announced a 96-hour-hartal programme from October 16 if their demands are not met by October 16. The parties are likely to announce their next course of action at the end of the hartal period.

The Left Democratic Front (LDF) is scheduled to stage demonstrations on October 9 and stage a rally on October 14 in front of the Prime Minister's Secretariat demanding resignation of the BNP government. It is likely to announce its next pro grammes on October 20. On the other hand,

Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Samity (Ashraf) has called a 48-hour transport strike

Road accidents

From Page 1

Our Sirajgani correspondent reported that one person, Abul Hossain of Amlapara in the town, was killed when a microbus knocked him down midnight last night. The driver of the micro-bus fled away. Agitated people set ablaze the vehicle.

from October 14, demanding reduction of the prices of spares, tyres and tubes.

The workers of jute and textile sectors are scheduled to observe a 96-hour strike from October 22. They also plan a road-rail barricade from 6 am to 5 pm during that period. Their next course of action may be announced on October 28.

Then, a non-stop transport strike is scheduled to begin on October 29, called by the Sarak Paribahan Samity (Abbas). The top leader of the Samity is a ruling party MP.

Rallies, picketing and demonstrations are likely to be daily events for most of the month, sources concerned pointed out. Business community has already expressed concern at the situa-

Pabna BCL leader jailed

PABNA, Oct 6: A pro-Awami League Chhatra League leader has been awarded one-year imprisonment for damaging the car of a Thana Nirbahi Officer in 1991, reports UNB.

K M Hasan Kabir, former Vice President of Pabna Edward College Students Union, damaged the car of the TNO of Chatmohor thana during a hartal called by the Awami League in May 1991. according to the prosecution story

Second class magistrate Abul Kalam Azad gave the verdict on Thursday.



Only 96 foreign buyers

From Page 1 day exhibition which concluded in the capital yesterday. Last year, spot orders worth 23 million were received.

This year, 42 garment manufacturers and exporters, 7 textile units, 6 manufacturers of garments accessories, 5 service organizations and 4 other organisations participated in the fair at Hotel Sonargaon.

The foreign buyers who

visited the exhibition came mainly from Germany, UK, Italy, USA, Canada, France, the Netherlands, Singapore, Hongkong, Thailand, Malaysia, India, Spain, Finland Belgium, and Scandinavian countries. Besides, 300 local buyers and representatives of foreign buying houses also visited the fair.

BGMEA hoped that BA-TEXPO '95 would fetch orders worth another 600 million dollars in coming

Move to relocate Aricha ghat protested

MANIKGANJ, Oct 6: Local people, including business men, have strongly protested the government move to relocate the Aricha ghat to Paturia, and warned of greater action programme, reports UNB.

The protesters, under the banner of Ghat Relocation Resistance Committee, have announced a series of agitational programmes, including a four-hour road blockade on October 9 and a half-day hartal on October 12. They threw the pro-

grammes at a press conference on Wednesday

It was addressed by the committee leaders Mokhlesur Rahman, Satiyan Kanti Pandit Vajan, Hamidur Rahman Khan, Anwar Hossain Badal, Afzal Hossain, Rahim Khan, Khandaker Yar Ali and Bikash Saha.

India to reform judicial system

NEW DELHI, Oct 6: India will make major changes in its judicial system to reach out-of-court settlements in some of its millions of pending cases, Prime Minister P V Narashima Rao said today, reports Reuter.

"The time has come when arbitration and conciliation should be widely used," Rao said after opening an International Centre for Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), a government-backed society to reform India's judicial system.

One slaughtered in Comilla

COMILLA, Oct 6: A youngman was slaughtered allegedly by his friends at West Kacher village in Sadar thana of the district on Wednesday night, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Abdur Rashid, 30, son of one Abul Hashem. Family sources said some

friends of Rashid called him out of his residence on Wednesday evening, but he did not return.

On Thursday morning, local people recovered the beheaded body of Rashid from a bush nearby his residence. 10 nurses hurt

in clash

PABNA, Oct 6: About 10 nurses were injured in between two rival groups at the Nurses Training Institute here today reports UNB. Of the injured, Sham-

sunnahar Doly, 21, and Kaberi, 20, were admitted to sadar hospital.

According to institute sources the clash erupted over taking bribes from the student nurses.

A staff nurse had allegedly taken Tk 12,000 from about 100 student nurses giving them assurance of passing the examinations.

But, when the results were published, it was seen that four of the examinees could not pass the examination which led to the clash. A case was filed with sadar hana in this connection.

Tibetan monks demonstrate in Delhi

NEW DELHI, Oct 6 Tibetan monks staged a protest demonstration near the Chinese embassy in New Delhi today against what they said was Beijing's illegal detention of a boy they believe to be their second highest spiritual leader, reports Reuter.

Some 20 monks demanded a memorandum to Prime Minister Narasimha Rao and Beijing that six-year-old Tenzin Gedun Choekyi Nyima be freed and enthroned. Beijing denies it is holding the boy.

TOKYO. Oct 6: Fumihiro Joyu, the flamboyant spokesman of the Aum supreme truth doomsday sect, was taken into custody late tonight at the group's headquarters where an unidentified gunman had opened fire two hours earlier. Japan Broadcasting Corp (NHK) reported, says

The Midnight Rile

Aum spokesman detained

Quake jolts resort area near Tokyo

TOKYO. Oct 6: A resort area near Tokyo suffered its strongest quake in a week of more than 8,600 tembiors today, reportedly trapping six people in a landslide, reports

The quake also toppled computers, furniture and vases. There were no further reports of damage or injury.

Japanese television stations quickly switched to live coverage after the 5.6 preliminary magnitude quake. which was followed about an hour later by another strong jolt, measuring a preliminary magnitude of 4.8. The quake was felt most

strongly in Kozu island, about 80 kilometers south of the Izu peninsula, which has been hit with the quakes. more than 150 of which were strong enough to be felt, in the past week A group of firefighters and

police were searching for six people reported trapped under a landslide on Kozu, a police official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. News reports said the six

were believed to be from a school mountain-climbing expedition.

Teenaged girl kidnapped KHAGRACHHARI, Oct 6: A

teenaged girl was abducted allegedly by tribal youths here Thursday night. Police sources said three tribal youths kidnapped Nasima Akhter, 15, from her brother's house at College road at gunpoint in the dead of night. Nasima's brother Khayer Ahmed filed a case against Ripon Chakma, Nehar Chakma and Priyalal Chakma.

Kidnapped girl rescued

SHERPUR, Oct 6: Police today rescued a school girl who was kidnapped by a group of youths from Bagraksha area of the town earlier in the day

Parvin Shikha, a student of class ten, was kidnapped by the miscreants in a microbus when she was returning home from her tutor's house in the morning. Police rescued her from a

house in Sribordi thana in the afternoon, arrested three persons and seized the microbus. The arrested are: Ariful

Bari Chowdhury Nurunnabi Abdul Halim (driver) and Shahidul Islam.

5 hurt in blast while making bombs

KUHSTIA, Oct 6: Five people were injured in a bomb explosion when they were allegedly making bombs at a house in Bheramara thana today, police said, reports UNB.

Injured Rafiqul Islam. 20. Sarwar Ali. 26. Ripon, 25. Bakul, 26, and Babu, 18, identified as BNP activists. were sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Three of them were stated to be in critical condition.

Bihac From Page 1

'slip of the tongue.'

"I was told later that the decree which was signed was for gas to go to Bosnia and Herzegovina — both to the Serb part and the Muslim-Croat part," Rybkin told reporters. "Maybe it was a slip of the tongue by the President," Rybkin said, referring to his earlier report of gas going to Serbia and Montenegro

Asked by a journalist to confirm that the mistake had been due to a slip of the tongue, Rybkin said: "Yes, but not mine.

Prices

From Page 1

24 against Tk 15 to 18. Potato was selling at Tk 9 to 10 against its earlier price of Tk 7 to 8.

Prices of onion, garlic and ginger also rose substantially. Onion was selling at Tk 20 per kg yesterday compared to Tk 16 about a month ago. Ginger was selling at Tk 48 to 60 per kg against Tk 40 last month.

A medium size of htlsha. which was sold at Tk 50 to 60 a month back was selling at Tk 80 and above yesterday. A chicken earlier sold at Tk 40 to 45 was selling at Tk. 60

Israel to release 1200 Palestinians

TEL AVIV. Oct 6: Israel will release more than 1,200 Palestinian prisoners over the next few days in its first move to implement the West Bank autonomy agreement narrowly approved Friday, a Cabinet minister said, reports AP

Two dozen women prisoners will be freed on Sunday, and about 1,200 men will be released on Tuesday, said Environment Minister Yossi Sarid, a key Israeli peace negotiator.

Israel holds more than 5,000 Palestinian security prisoners, and the release of nearly half of them was a key element of the autonomy pact Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO chief Yasser Arafat signed at the White House last week.

Flood From Page

five thana health complexes are finding it very hard to cope with the rush of diarrhoea patients.

Our Natore Correspondent reports: Part of the Natore-Bogra highway have gone under flood waters. The flood control barrage at Maheshpur village is threatened with erosion by flood waters.

Eyes of one gouged out

From Staff Correspondent BARISAL, Oct 6: Angry villagers gouged out both the eyes of one Selim reportedly a dacoit yesterday at Dauatala village along the Bamna-Mathbaria than border area of Barguna district. Police and witnesses said

people of the area were angry with notorious dacoit Selim, 36, for a long time. He was caught and beaten mercilessly by the villagers and later both his eyes were gauged out.

Selim was admitted to Barguna Sadar Hospital in a critical condition. A case was

CSE list

From Page 1 rent transactions to build up

a sound image of the Chitta-

gong Stock Exchange," Kamal

He said the CSE is now set for starting floor trading from October 10 with 23 companies listed so far. By the end of this month, the number of listed companies may reach

45, Kamal hoped. Earlier, October 16 was fixed for formal inauguration of the CSE by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, but it was later postponed due to hartal programmes called by the opposition political parties. A

fresh date is yet to be fixed. Meanwhile, CSE organised 'mock' floor trading for few

PM assures

From Page 1 the Prime Minister flew to Atrai thana in Naogaon dis-

trict and visited flood af-

fected areas.

Local officials apprised the Prime Minister of the flood situation of Atrai thana. Some 19,820 families of 8 unions in Atrai thana have been affected by the flood. The PM talked with the people and distributed relief among

She also visited the floodhit areas of Rohonpur and Gomostapur thana of Chapainawabganj district and distributed relief among the flood victims in flood shel-

Officials of Chapainawabganj district told the Prime Minister that 51 unions of 6 thanas of the district were affected by the flood.

A total of 57,131 families were affected, 95,750 houses damaged totally while 30,353 partly. District authorities have set up 57 flood shelters where 3,485 people have taken shelter.

Standing crops of 11,163 hectares of land were damaged completely and 6,636 hectares partially. About 70 bridges and culverts were damaged or washed away. Thirty educational institutions were damaged totally and 58 partly.

Forty-seven medical teams are working in the district to provide medicare to the flood affected people.

BSS adds: Begum Zia today

extended her stay at Bogra for one more day to extensively visit and supervise relief operations in flood-hit northern districts.

As per the programme. the Prime Minister was scheduled to return Dhaka tonight.

