

DOWN TO EARTH

Orphanages In Dhaka City

By A S M Nurunnabi

An orphanage which is an institution for rearing orphans by meeting their various needs including education in good environment plays an important role in promoting their social welfare and security. A boy or a girl of early age who has lost his/her father and has no means of support from the other parent is eligible for admission in an orphanage. In a poor country like ours with its low level of socio-economic conditions, such an orphan leads an uncertain life, being bereft of the provisions for the basic human needs. This makes them easy victims of various social evils. In this context, the useful role of the orphanages may be viewed. Besides, our religion lays emphasis on taking care of orphans.

Nawab Sir Salimullah was the pioneer in providing humanitarian service to the orphans in our country. He established a Muslim orphanage in Dhaka in 1909, for organising the orphanages in the city, the Department of Social Welfare of the government has divided the city into seven zones in which there is a total of 35 orphanages under non-government management. The total number of inmates of these orphanages is reported to be 1,018 at present. The total recurring yearly capitation grant for these institutions is said to be Tk. 48,86,400 during the current fiscal year. In some cases, the capitation grant is supplemented by food grants under the World Food Programme. In many cases, the financial resources of these non-government orphanages are augmented from private donations, zakat money and proceeds from sales of hides of sacrificial animals during Eid-ul-Azha obtained as charity from members of the public.

To ensure proper utilisation of the funds, the Department of Social Welfare has suitable mechanism in the form of Project Officers

of gazetted status who also look after other aspects of administration of these orphanages.

Besides the non-government orphanages, there are three orphanages under government management. One is located at Tejgaon which accommodates 200 girls, the second one is at Mirpur with 100 boys and the third one is at Azimpur with 100 girls. The amount of expenditure for each inmate of the government-managed orphanages is reported to be Tk. 720 per month.

It is understood that in most of the orphanages, both government and non-government, facilities are provided for general and religious education and for vocational training in several trades. An inmate is allowed to stay in an orphanage till the age of 18 years or when he passes the secondary school certificate examination. Those inmates who acquire knowledge, skills and experience in any trade or vocational field are helped by the authorities of the orphanages in getting employment outside. There are government instructions to maintain the provision of 10 per cent quota for the orphans and the disabled in non-gazetted government posts. Besides, it is understood that government is considering to give priority to youths from orphanages in receiving credit facilities under the poverty alleviation programmes.

The managements of the non-government orphanages are encouraged by the government to take advantage of the opportunities for the inmates of their orphanages available under the poverty alleviation programmes run by the ministries of children and women's affairs, youth and sports and labour and manpower. The orphans are also encouraged by government to take part in various training programmes organised by government for which the orphans are given all the

government facilities.

For selection of candidates for admission in a government orphanage, there is a committee consisting of the Deputy Director of Social Welfare as chairman, the head of the institution concerned and representatives of the Deputy Commissioner and the Civil Surgeon and a prominent social worker. For non-government orphanages, there is also a selection committee in which a representative of the Department of Social Welfare is included and the selection is required to be approved by that department.

In this important sphere of social welfare, the efforts of the government alone in dealing with the problems of welfare of the orphans are not considered enough in these circumstances, it is necessary that the affluent sections of the society should come forward to help the orphanages with their financial support. In this context, it is also necessary that the managers of the orphanages should ensure that the orphans under their charge are not deprived of their just dues.

It is further felt by some observers that the amount of capitation grant at present given to the orphanages under non-government management is rather low, leaving those institutions to fend for themselves for augmentation of their funds. In view of the fact that these institutions look after a larger number of inmates, as compared with those in the government-managed ones, it is generally considered desirable that government give greater attention to the question of provision of larger allocation of funds by way of capitation grants to these institutions so that their larger of inmates are assured better living conditions and facilities. The cause of humanitarian service for the orphans may be served better in this way.



Commerce and Information Minister M Shamsul Islam saw off Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani at the Zia International Airport yesterday. Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Dr Khandaker Mosarrat Hossain is also seen. — PID photo

Fighting in Bosnia ignoring ceasefire

SARAJEVO, Oct 13: Bosnia's ceasefire, which brought quiet and joy to Sarajevo, was marred by bitter fighting in the northwest which rivals said threatened its future, reports Reuters.

The Bosnian government and rebel Serbs accused each other of mounting large-scale attacks near the town of Sanski Most, taken by government forces on Wednesday, after the ceasefire came into force early on Thursday.

In other parts of Bosnia, only sporadic shooting was reported, raising hopes for the ceasefire, due to last for 60 days, would hold and start the country on the path towards peace after three and half years of war.

The warring sides are due to convene somewhere on the east coast of the United States at the end of the month for peace talks international mediators hope will lead to agreement on the division of Bosnia between Serbs and a Muslim-Croat federation.

Bosnia's Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic, said that a Serbs counter-attack to recapture Sanski most put the youthful truce at risk.

Bosnia government and Serb officials met at Sarajevo airport on Thursday for the first meeting of the joint commission on the ceasefire. They discussed ways of monitoring the truce, including defining the confrontation line.

Hearty send-off

The Iranian President and Madame Hashemi Rafsanjani, were given a warm sendoff when they left Dhaka yesterday afternoon for Tehran ending a four-day state visit to Bangladesh reports BSS.

Information and Commerce Minister and Begum M Shamsul Islam saw them off at the Zia International Airport.

Also present at the airport to bid them farewell were the minister in waiting, Energy Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharrat Hossain, the lady in waiting, Rabeya Chowdhury, MP, the Iranian ambassador in Bangladesh, Mohammad Bayat, the Bangladesh ambassador to Iran Syed Moazzem Ali and the members of the Iranian community in Dhaka.

Two little kids presented bouquets to President and Madame Rafsanjani.

The Iranian President was given a 21-gun salute and four jets of Bangladesh Air Force escorted the Iran Air Boeing 747, carrying him, up to the last point of Bangladesh air space.

2 health officials killed in Mongla road accident

By Staff Correspondent

Two senior officials of the Health Department were killed in a road accident near Mongla on Thursday. According to Health Directorate sources, Dr Sheikh Haidar Ali Deputy Director of the department and Ali Akbar, Senior Health Education Officer died in the accident while they were returning to Bagerhat from Mongla after ending their official duties.

The Namaz-e-Janaza of Dr Haidar Ali will be held today at 6/c, 12/12, Mirpur after Asr prayers.

Two other injured persons—Dr Azhar Ali and the driver Shahjahan Nabi—were admitted to Khulna General Hospital.

Minor girl violated

By Staff Correspondent

A ten-year old girl was allegedly raped by a young man in West Hazirpara area in the city Thursday night.

The girl was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) later at the night. Medical sources said yesterday. The young man, a neighbour of the girl and a mechanic in a rickshaw garage, lured her to a house nearby and raped her. The girl is a student of class two in a local primary school.

AL firm

From Page 1

had already met the Prime Minister on October 9.

They had communicated to the premier the 'urgency of resolving the political stand-off.

A source close to the group told The Daily Star last night that they had an appointment to meet Hasina today. The time is yet to be fixed, he added.

The group had sought an appointment with Hasina yesterday but she was preoccupied with other programmes including a meeting with Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and a joint meeting of the party Presidium and Secretariat.

US envoy

US Ambassador in Bangladesh David N Merrill yesterday had an exclusive meeting with Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina at her Dhanmondi residence, party sources said.

They mainly discussed the latest political situation in the country during their about one and half an hour meeting, the sources said without elaborating.

AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman attended the meeting for some time.

The Midnight File

40000 flee Serb-held town

SARAJEVO, Oct 13: Up to 40,000 Serb civilians fled the Serb-held town of Prijedor in north-west Bosnia today, a UN aid official said. The town was shelled earlier in the day. "We have information from our people that 40,000 people fled Prijedor today," Kris Janowski, spokesman in Sarajevo for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), told Reuters.

World Standards Day today

The World Standards Day will be observed in Bangladesh as elsewhere in the world today reports UNB.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday issued separate messages on the occasion.

Golam Azam meets Rafsanjani

Jamaat-e-Islami leader Golam Azam made a courtesy call on the visiting Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani at the state guest house Korotoa yesterday, reports UNB.

During the 45-minute meeting from 10:45 am, the Iranian President and the Jamaat Ameer exchanged views on Muslim Ummah and hoped that the existing friendly relations between the two brotherly Muslim countries will be strengthened further in the years to come.

Golam Azam expressed his gratitude to the Iranian leader and said the Iranian Islamic revolution had set an instance that state revolution was still possible on the basis of Islamic ideals.

Party central leaders Maulana Mattur Rahman Nizami, Maulana AKM Yusuf, Md Kamaruzzaman and Abdul Quader Mollah accompanied the Jamaat Ameer during the meeting.

Politicians demand Chakmas' removal from Arunachal

NEW DELHI, Oct 13: Leaders of almost all political parties of Arunachal Pradesh would resign from the primary membership of their respective parties if the centre did not take "appropriate steps for the immediate removal" of Chakma and Hajong tribes settled in the north-eastern border state by December last this year, reports PTI.

Such leaders would include the state Chief Minister, Gegong Apang, and other ruling Congress (I) leaders, Apang told a press conference here today.

RU ban

From Page 1

and rallies with the prior permission of the proctor between 11 am and 2 pm.

For cultural activities the timing will be from 11 am to 8 pm.

Two organisations will not be allowed to hold programmes at the same time, the press release said.

Residential halls and the academic building have been kept out of such activities.

It also banned carrying of illegal weapons, besides posting and writing on walls.

Carrying of identity cards has been made mandatory for all students of the university.

Operations

From Page 1

department were suspended when 40 of its vital sets were stolen from the sterilisation section on September 20.

The sets, sterilised after every use, were never returned to the department on the day of the theft, another senior doctor of the PG Hospital alleged.

"The sterilisation section simply said that the sets could not be found. And later they admitted that those were missing from their section," he said.

A probe body comprising high officials was formed by the hospital authorities following the theft. There was speculation among the hospital employees that the theft had been committed by some 'insiders' of the hospital.

BGMEA call

From Page 1

will lose crores of takas if the garment factory owners fail to ship the ordered items by December 31.

In a day's halt, the garments industries lose seven million dollars, the said. "The garment factory owners are now puzzled how to face the situation of four-day halt."

Redwan pointed out that a BGMEA delegation recently met opposition leader Sheikh Hasina and requested her to keep the garments factories out of the purview of the four-day halt.

He also appealed to the leaders of the opposition parties and the ruling BNP to resolve the political impasse.

'Govt has created division among transport workers'

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged the people to make the 96-hour hartal a success to force the government to hand over power to a caretaker government to be headed by the Chief Justice to hold fair elections, reports UNB.

"We know hartal brings miseries to people... Hartal will be called off as soon as the Prime Minister accepts the demand," she said while addressing a conference of road transport workers as chief guest at the auditorium of Engineers' Institution yesterday evening.

The policy of the BNP government is to divide and rule, she said, adding that this government had created division among the transport workers. This government patronised mastans and toll collectors to capture the bus terminals, she alleged.

She blasted the government for violating agreements and betraying with the workers.

The conference, organised by Dhaka Sarak Paribahan Samik Samannay Parishad, was presided over by convener of the Samannay Parishad Lutfar Rahman.

Slum dwellers demonstrate

TONGI, Oct 13: More than 2,000 slum dwellers demonstrated in the town today demanding shelter and employment for them, reports UNB.

Tongi Poursabha Chairman Advocate Azmat Ullah attended the rally organised by Prodiapon, an NGO which provides training, credit and legal-aid to slum dwellers.

Muslim sects

From Page 1

not in a state of dignity today, then it will mean that they (Muslims) are away from Islam. In this connection he referred to the experiences in Iran and said it is possible to achieve dignity.

The Iranian President said that 120 crore Muslim population in the world in more than fifty independent states and having more than 60 per cent oil resources could secure a strong and dignified position provided the followed the dictates of the Holy Quran based on unity.

Earlier on his arrival at the Baitul Mokarram mosque, Rafsanjani was received by the Religious Affairs Minister M Keramat Ali. Minister in waiting Khondkar Mosharrat Hossain was present.

Hasina meets

From Page 1

passee in the country over the caretaker government issue. The AL president explained to the Iranian leader her party's stand on the issue.

During the one-hour meeting Sheikh Hasina was accompanied by AL leaders Abdus Samad Azad, Zillur Rahman and Abul Hasan Chowdhury.

Jt Commission

From Page 1

skilled manpower in various industrial sectors.

The two sides affirmed the 'great significance of the historic visit' of President Rafsanjani, the first by an Iranian head of state, to Bangladesh, at the invitation of president Abdur Rahman Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

The communique said that President Rafsanjani extended 'cordial invitation' to President Biswas and Prime Minister Begum Zia to visit Iran, which they accepted.

Dates for the visits will be finalised later through the diplomatic channel, it said.

Dhaka-Tehran

From Page 1

ence in each other's internal affairs as fundamental principles of coexistence among the states.

The two sides expressed their firm conviction that all outstanding issues and problems of the region can be resolved peacefully through dialogue and agreed to work together to strengthen peace and stability in the region. The two sides reaffirmed the need for regular consultations on issues of disarmament and continued cooperation in the framework of the convention on chemical and biological weapons.

EPI vaccination drive begins today

EPI Bangladesh will launch a special vaccination drive in the country from today to arrest measles and neonatal tetanus in high risk areas, reports BSS.

The eight-day drive will cover 23 districts, four city corporations, 130 thanas and 31 municipalities of the country.

Speaking at a press conference in the city yesterday EPI Director Dr Shamsul Haq told newsmen, "We have a target of 30,69,003 new born babies and infants for vaccination under this drive."

He said the drive was undertaken to reach the mid-decade target which was fixed for elimination of neonatal tetanus and reduction of measles deaths by 95 per cent and measles cases by 90 per cent in 1995.

The press conference was also attended by M Mujibul Haq representing Unionif, Director General of Health Prof AK Shamsuddin Siddiquee and Dr Yousuf Toufiq, Country Representative of a USAID project in the health sector.

A total of 1.95 million dol-

lar has been earmarked to meet the cost of the special drive. Of the amount 97 per cent will be provided by Unicef, 1.5 per cent by the USAID and the rest by the government of Bangladesh.

According to an EPI statement, neonatal tetanus remains a significant public health problem in Bangladesh despite relatively high coverage of t2+ in the country.

The 1994 national disease incidence survey indicated that neonatal tetanus deaths occur at a rate of 6 per 1000 live births in Bangladesh. "Thus, over 23,000 neonatal tetanus deaths are likely to occur annually," it said.

However, at least 1,260,000 children of 9 to 23 months old continue to be unprotected against measles. Given a case-fatality rate of 1 to 3 per cent, it is possible that 12,600 to 37,800 measles related deaths could occur annually in this age group, the statement said.

Snatcher held in city

By Staff Correspondent

At least three persons including an alleged snatcher were injured when three snatchers hurled cocktails while fleeing in an auto-rickshaw to escape a chase by the speed enforcement police near the Central Road in Lalbag area in the city yesterday afternoon.

People around intercepted the auto-rickshaw and caught one of the snatchers aged about 25. The angry people beat the alleged snatcher and burnt the auto-rickshaw. The driver and two other snatchers fled away.

The two injured persons, Mohammad Ali, 14, and Lat Mian, 62, were given first aid in a local clinic and the alleged snatcher was later admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital under police guard.

Police said the speed enforcement police chased the snatchers from near the Doel Chatter in Dhaka University area after they snatched gold ornaments from a woman in a rickshaw.

Sectarian tension Curfew in Pak town

MULTAN, Pakistan, Oct 13: An indefinite curfew was imposed on the central Pakistan town of Fazilpur, gripped by sectarian tension following an attempt to assassinate a Sunni Muslim leader, city officials said today, reports AP.

Tension heightened Thursday after a court refused bail for six members of the minority Shi'ite community accused of attempting to kill Faizul Haq Usmani, chief of the local Sunni Muslims last month.

Shi'ite supporters reacted violently after the ruling, setting fire to several make-shift stalls and injuring at least six people in random shooting, police said.

They blocked traffic on the national highway for three hours.

PM: Teachers

From Page 1

a self-reliant one, she said the present government had incorporated in the curricula courses on tree plantation, dairy and poultry farming and pisciculture to guide the students to seize the opportunities of self-employment after completion of their studies.

Begum Zia said her government not only had made primary education compulsory but also executed it. She described Food for Education Programme for the poor, girls' stipend and tuition-free education programme up to Class Ten and compulsory primary education programme as a means to eliminate poverty from the country.

Side by side, she said that her government had expanded the facilities of the teachers by raising salaries, giving promotions and filling up the vacant posts for the teachers by a special BCS examination.

The Prime Minister assured them of a microbus for the teachers of the college, a generator, development of the college auditorium and the mosque.

Thanking the Prime Minister for her steps to improve the condition of the teachers and raise the rate of literacy in the country, Principal of Jagannath University College Prof Mohammad Zunayed said Jagannath College campus had been made terrorism-free while the standard of education as well as attendance were on the rise.

Violence against women Chop off their hands, says Phoolan

MADRAS, Oct 13: The former dacoit queen, Phoolan Devi, Thursday said people should not hesitate to chop off the hands of those indulging in violence against women, and urged the centre and the state governments to fix 50 per cent reservation for women in education, employment and elections, in order to end crimes against them, reports PTI.

Addressing a conference, sponsored by the Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) here to launch a new women's movement against the menace of liquor and cultural degeneration, she said exclusive reservation for women should be announced by the governments to promote their interests.

Phoolan Devi said women all over the country should stand up to defend their self-respect and honour which were sought to be undermined by vested interests. Even the law of the land had failed to put an end to the insults and harassment heaped on the women, she regretted.

No option was left to women but to take up arms against the "oppressors and the bureaucrats" who unleashed atrocities against dalits, particularly women, she said.

Phoolan Devi said even in states ruled by women chief ministers, the state of women was in no way better than that of their counterparts in other states.

The crime committed by upper caste sections against

dalits and backward class people was on the rise, she said adding bigger people who committed serious crimes had been allowed to go scot free while the poor and downtrodden who caused minor crimes were awarded stern punishment.

Recalling her tale of woe, she said the day she was subjected to harassment by an upper caste gang several



Phoolan Devi

years ago in her native village, she took a vow to fight them tooth and nail. She also narrated the incidents in which she punished a section of people who harassed depressed classes, by shaving their moustache and cutting off their noses. Through such actions, she could make them realise their misconduct, she claimed.

Later, addressing a press conference, she flayed the Mayawati government in Uttar Pradesh for launching a witch-hunt against her.



Nirmal Committee brought out a procession in the city yesterday demanding government action against those trying to glorify Monam Khan, a war-time collaborator, as a 'shaheed'. — Star photo