

DOWN TO EARTH

Unhappy Denizens of Old Dhaka

By A S M Nurunnabi

Inhabitants of old Dhaka areas with roots in the past seem to be seething with discontent on various counts as evidenced from some prominent wall-writings at different important locations of the city. These wall-writings carry slogans like: "Give back democratic rights to Dhakays (residents of old Dhaka)", "Dhaka exists but no Dhakays", "Dhaka grieves for the non-existence of Dhakays". It is understood that the youths of old Dhaka with roots in the past are planning a rally of their own which will be first of its kind in the Dhaka city.

The objectives of the projected rally are said to have many aspects. Its sponsors aim at organising the youths of old Dhaka and creating among them a consciousness about their past history and culture. In their opinion, the original inhabitants of Dhaka, who are sometimes treated with indifference and ridicule, made the maximum sacrifice in building up the city as the capital; yet it is felt that their political contribution, socio-economic and cultural heritage are in the process of extinction. They feel that government has not taken any keen interest in the preservation of historical and archaeological relics of old Dhaka and so they have declared their intention of doing something about it.

Though belated, it is now their belief that if this state of things is allowed to continue, their very identity may be wiped out in no time. It is claimed that the life and culture of the inhabitants of old Dhaka formed an invaluable part of our national culture, and so, unless proper steps are taken, the identity of Dhaka as a historic city with its glorious cultural past may fall into oblivion.

They also feel aggrieved that in their 750-year-long history, the inhabitants of old Dhaka were never narrow-minded; yet it was strange that they were sometimes accused of narrow parochial-

ism. After the partition of Bengal in 1947, migrants from different districts and also from India who settled here seemed to forget that the inhabitants of old Dhaka extended cooperation to them in a spirit of co-existence.

The sponsors of the proposed movement were asked if their demands would create any division or tension between residents having roots in the past and the new residents coming from outside. In their reply, it was said that any success that might be achieved in their efforts to improve life in old Dhaka would be equally shared by both the groups and hence their relations would be strengthened.

The main demands proposed by the sponsors are, among others, are that a quota should be fixed for candidates belonging to the old families of Dhaka for posts in the government and semigovernment departments; a similar quota should also be fixed for them in the seats available for admission in different educational institutions in the city, and also in the matter of allotment of khas and RAJUK lands in the city. In order that the problems and interests of old Dhaka are properly represented in parliament, the political parties should nominate candidates from among members of old families of Dhaka to contest parliamentary elections from constituencies covering the areas of old Dhaka.

It is too early to foresee what impact these new elements of agitation in the life of old Dhaka will ultimately create. But there is no denying, according to observers, that there are some palpable ills which plague the old part of the city. Among them are horrendous traffic jams clogging most of the streets, lanes and by-lanes in that part of the city. The condition of life and living in some areas of old Dhaka are most pitiable, as they appear to be enclaves of squalor and

poverty.

There are scanty open spaces for the residents of that area. There is a handful of parks like Armanitola Maidan, Bahadur Shah Park, Sirajudowla Park where encroachment in one form or another always goes on. The Buckland Bund which was once the source of pleasant enjoyment for seekers of open air, are now a congested venue due to jostling crowds of hawkers of various classes.

The big area that will be ultimately available after the shifting of the Dhaka Central Jail should be judiciously used by the town planners to compensate the loss suffered by the residents of that area in the matter of open space, as opined by some observers.

Most of the roads, lanes and by-lanes in that area are also in a bad shape being in an advanced state of disrepair. The underground sewers which date back to the twenties need replacement in the interest of public health.

All these factors, among others, may have played a part in creating a psychological attitude among the inhabitants with old roots in that part of the city in favour of launching an agitational programme for achieving a better deal in their life. This seems to be a sensitive issue. Any feelings of deprivation and neglect need to be tackled in a spirit of understanding and readiness to help, so that the wind may be taken out of the sail of their possible agitational programme.

The need of the hour seems to be to create an awareness among the residents of the old part of the city that they are not treated as a separate entity in the urban life but an integral part of the whole development process covering all aspects of their life without any distinction being made in favour of new areas of the city. This perspective may help relieve any feelings of discontent that may be prevailing in the old part of the city.



BNP vice-chairman Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury addressing a public meeting organised by the Jatiyatabadi Juba Dal at Gulistan Square in the city yesterday. — Star photo

JJD rally: Stop hartals

From Page 1

League did not allow the opposition parties more than 20 seats in the 300-member Parliament during its rule and during Ershad's rule 75 per cent voter turnout was declared while the actual turnout was 5 per cent.

"It is funny that the AL and JP, along with the Jamaat-Islami which had opposed the liberation war, have now become champions of democracy," Chowdhury said.

The BNP leader said: "We do not boast of state power, but certainly we are proud of it. Our sense of pride has pushed our leader, Begum Khaleda Zia, to be flexible on the issue of an interim government, and announce that she is ready to step down 30 days before the polls."

Acting Secretary General of the BNP Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said right to observe hartal is part of the democratic process, but there should be genuine reasons behind enforcing a hartal.

The opposition parties had enforced hartals on special occasions such as the day of inauguration of the Jamuna Bridge project, opening day of the SAARC conference, visit of international investors to the capital, and when smooth transportation of relief materials to the flood-hit northern districts was needed. Now they have enforced hartal when the school authorities will take final examinations of the students, he said.

Telecommunication Minister Tariqul Islam alleged that AL chief Sheikh Hasina had gone mad for power. "What she wants is an Awami caretaker government which

Dacoits stab

From Page 1

They reportedly drove the bus to Bittipara of Kushtia and got down there. The dacoits also stabbed three passengers and looted goods.

The driver of the bus, then drove to Jhenidah Sadar Hospital where the injured persons were admitted. Of the injured, Habibur Rahman succumbed to his injuries.

5 injured in bomb blast as mastans clash

By Staff Correspondent

At least five persons were injured when a bomb exploded in the Amilgola Chhotia Masjid premises at Lalbagh during a clash between two groups of local mastans at around 7 pm yesterday.

Local people said tension mounted in the area following the arrest of three "identified terrorists" earlier in the morning yesterday.

Police arrested Anisur Rahman Tannu, Mohammad Erfan and Swamsul Haq Chowdhury from a residence at Water Works Road along with gun, three knives and six cocktails.

Over 225 people including some eminent personalities and representatives from across the country attended the conference.

The participants in the conference expressed their concern over the delay in approving FEMA's proposals to undertake election monitoring programme and hoped that it would be cleared soon.

It was also decided that the FEMA will arrange a meeting inviting all the coalition members at the end of November to review the process of its activities.

Prof. Muhammad Shamsul Hoq, Prof. Rehman Sobhan, Barrister Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed, Shafiqur Rahman, Mahfuz Anam editor of The Daily Star, Rezaul Karim, Dr. Kazi Faruque and Abul Ahsan, among others, addressed the conference.

Floods kill 231 in Thailand

BANGKOK, Oct. 27: A total of 231 people died in Thailand's worst floods in decades, causing 3.5 billion baht (135 million dollars) in damage and destroying vast tracts of farmland, officials said today, reports AFP.

AL calls hartal at B'baria today

From Our Correspondent

BRAHMANBARIA, Oct. 27: The Awami League has called a half-day hartal from 6 am tomorrow in the district town in protest against the killing of Chhatra League leader Sheikh Shahnewaz on October 16.

The Awami League, Chhatra League and Samik League today brought out a militant procession in the town this morning wearing burial cloths demanding arrests of the killers of Shahnewaz.

The Awami League also held a rally at Bar Library premises in the afternoon. Party's district leaders Advocate Sirajul Islam and Advocate Lutful Hye Bachchu addressed the rally.

Meanwhile, State Minister for Relief and Disaster Management Harun-ur-Rashid arrived here this morning. He is scheduled to open newly constructed 100-bed Brahmanbaria hospital at 10 am tomorrow.

BNP govt using terrorists to foil agitation, says Hasina

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday accused the BNP government of releasing branded criminals from jails and letting loose against her party men, reports UNB.

In a statement, she said the government has become imbalanced by the ongoing agitation and is using 'terrorists' to foil the opposition-led agitation.

Hasina alleged that BNP terrorists equipped with modern weapons are attacking Awami League men, looting and damaging their property and houses throughout the country.

The terrorists under the cover of administration have resorted to a reign of terror making common people's life uncertain, she said.

Referring to deterioration of law and order, the Awami League President said the armed hoodlums backed by the ruling party had committed 26 murders and over 1000 dacoities in Gaorgaon thana of Mymensingh district in one year.

She said 58 members of the Awami League and its front organisations, including former AL MP Altaf Hossain Gola and Juba League leader Ashrafuddin Badal, were harassed by police as they protested terrorism of the BNP.

She said killers of police officer Farhad and JCD activists forced Chhatra League members to leave Salmullah Medical College hostel on Thursday night at gun-point. Police refused to accept case on the incident.

Bodies to ensure quality

From Page 1

Standardization Organisation (ISO) certification, which is now being carried out by the foreign certification organisations.

The regulatory body, as the report said, will ensure that Code of Good Practice, as mentioned in the Agreement, is being followed.

The Commerce Ministry study aims at producing a number of recommendations for developing the concept of quality management.

This study is expected to be completed by the next six months. Then, its recommendations may be considered by the government to adopt as policy and strategies for the manufacturing and service sectors, a well-placed source at the ministry told The Daily Star yesterday.

After successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round GATT talks, the World Trade Organisation started functioning from January 1995, bringing the international trade under its net. Since

then, it has become imperative for Bangladesh to upgrade the quality of exportables as the country had adopted a policy of export-led growth, officials said.

According to official statistics, Bangladesh earned 3182.45 billion US dollars from exports in the first 11 months of the fiscal 1994-95. This earning indicated 36.09 per cent growth in the export earning from the previous fiscal year.

The problem of quality management of industrial outputs has to be approached in the context of global competition, opportunities and challenges posed by the Uruguay Round and appropriate strategies have to be adopted concerning quality management on a priority basis, the source said quoting the study, which is now at its interim stage.

The study viewed that the government should adopt a TQM policy and the existing technical regulations, standards and conformity process

of Bangladesh had to be compiled in a single volume. A central coordinating office and enquiry point had to be established to coordinate quality management activities of Bangladesh in the manufacturing and service industries.

It further suggested that, in cooperation with ISO, quality auditing and certification bodies, both in the public and private sector, has to be developed.

It stressed the need for developing quality consultants and undertake awareness, training, education programmes for businessmen, government officials and representatives of both public and private sector organisations.

It noted that the current Industrial Policy had adopted an old concept of "product quality" rather than the newer concept of TQM, which is internationally widely accepted and practiced, and that the ATBT encourages adoption of TQM.

The Midnight File

Ex Italian PM Craxi sentenced

MILAN, Italy, Oct. 27: Former Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi was sentenced in his absence today to four years in prison for illegally financing of his Italian Socialist Party, court chairman Romeo Simi de Burgis said. He is currently in Tunisia, reports AFP.

'Women should be economic actors'

By Staff Correspondent

Women should be seen as economic actors, responsive to opportunities and economic incentives, according to discussions on the first day of a two day long workshop on "Gender issues in Export-based Industrialisation in Bangladesh", held at a city hotel yesterday.

"It is not a question of helping women, but developing new alternatives, creating new opportunities for them," Khaled Shams, Deputy managing director, of Grameen Bank and managing director of Grameen Udyog, pointed out.

"Women need jobs, not meaning small income-generating activities," Dr. Naila Kabir of the University of Sussex said.

The workshop organised by the Centre for Policy Dialogue and the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, explored the reasons for the recent increase in female employment in the export-based industry. Participants were drawn from the garments industry, the government, international organisations, NGOs, the research community, and trade unions.

The discussion focused mainly on the garments industry, called the "largest single commodity export in Bangladesh," by Prof. Rahman Sobhan, executive chairman of the CPD. Seventy to 80 per cent of the three million workers in the garments sector are women.

The workshop is part of a global project on Technical Cooperation and Women's Lives: Integrating Gender into Development Policy, funded by the UNDP and implemented by UNRISD in collaboration with national partners in Bangladesh, Jamaica, Morocco, Vietnam and Uganda.

Gender concerns and macro-economic issues are usually treated in isolation from one another, Dr. Shahra Razavi of UNRISD said. The aim of the project was to help policy-makers undertake gender issues.

Dr. Nasreen Khondaker who presented the background paper at the workshop, said that the feminisation of the workforce is said to rest on certain factors such as the lower wage costs, their greater docility, and their secondary wage earner status which makes it easier to lay them off. The aim Dr. Khondaker's paper was to provide the implications for

Transport strike

From Page 1

leaders said they held talks with the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) and urged the authorities to implement those.

During the meeting, the BRTA authorities had pledged to contact the Communication Ministry and fix a date for next meeting. But there was no development in this regard, they said.

Save Dhaka

From Page 1

tional Commissioner Bangladesh Scouts and Dr. Monwara Bin-te Rahman were the special guests.

After plantation of saplings, the scouts divided in 7 groups, cleaned the adjacent areas of the CDC. Members of the Rotary Club also participated in the programme.

Later a discussion was held at the CDC where the speakers emphasised the need for cleanliness and tree plantation, particularly in urban areas because the environment gets polluted there more. Manzurul Karim said the government should help the voluntary organisations in such initiatives like cleanliness drive and protecting the environment. Rtn Anwarul Alam said the CDC was established in 1966 with a fund of Tk 25 lakh raised by the Rotarians. The Centre should be developed, he said.

Dr. AKM Shamsuddin the DG health said he was aware of the problems in the CRI and assured all possible help.

Opposition

From Page 1

ties will organise road, rail and waterways blocked on November 6.

The major opposition parties have also announced the programme to observe a dawn-to-dusk hartal across the country from November 11 to 16.

female employment and the main gender issues arising from an export-based industrialisation strategy.

Some discussants, however, differed with the reasons for female employment. Shamsur Rahman, former vice-president of the BGMEA and managing director of Stylecraft Ltd., said that women were employed because of the greater adaptability in learning new skills, and their patience in doing repetitive work. He said that remuneration was not gender based, but skill specific.

The discussion also touched upon the viability of the garments industry as a whole. Grameen said that although the garments industry had done a great job, it was still "a tailoring shop" backward linkages, such as with the handloom textile industry, could create new opportunities for women.

Dr. Kabir said that women's double burden had to be recognised. Women workers are not the same as men. The domestic division of labour has not changed, so government have to ensure that women can participate in the market.

Khaleda-Clinton

From Page 1

gum Khaleda Zia, and US President Bill Clinton" at the New York Public Library on October 22.

The meeting between the two leaders was held on the margins of a small reception hosted by the US President and First Lady Hillary Clinton for those nations that had hosted Hillary, Clinton on her recent trip abroad, said the White House assistant press secretary.

The White House assistant press secretary said this after consultation with the US State Department and the US permanent mission to UN.

The press minister's query with the White House followed a report published by the daily Ittefaq that no such meeting took place.

The White House assistant press secretary also said that there was no scope for any confusion as far as the private meeting of the two leaders is concerned.

Rush for jobs

From Page 1

The people willing to get a job are getting their names registered in the hope that this would automatically ensure an invitation for interview in phases. But against the 40,000 names registered, only 500 people have so far been called for an interview. However BOESL, officials told this correspondent that more people would be called for interview as soon as the FWTF asks for more Bangladeshi workers.

About a report that the registration may be stopped because already an 'unexpected' number of people are on the list, the BMET officials said they received no such directive yet. "But there is a possibility."

A group of people has found a means to earn some money by selling registration forms and postal order sheets to the employment seekers. This correspondent found there people doing brisk business at the BMET office premises.

Shahidul Islam, one of those doing this for the last one and a half months said "We are selling the forms at between Tk 5 and Tk 10 each". With a Ten Taka postal order, the rate stands at Tk 20 Islam, a madrasa student said. There are about 100 youngmen like Islam doing this.

Abu Bakr Siddique, a young-man from Roumari, Kurigram, emerging out of the queue with a paper in his hand pondered when he would be called for an interview.

"I deposited the form and they (BMET office) give me this letter, which contained the writings that I would be called for interview in appropriate time," said Bakr, a semi-skilled factory worker having primary level education.

When asked why he came all the way from Roumari to the capital while there is an office for registration in Rangpur, an innocent-looking Bakr said that he thought getting registered in Dhaka would ensure him a quick job.

One killed, 40 hurt in Sylhet clash

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Oct. 27: A 55-year old man was killed and 40 others were injured in a clash between rival groups of villagers at Kashkanakpur under Jakiganj thana this afternoon. Of the injured, 14 including 4 women with critical wounds have been admitted to the Sylhet Osmany Medical College Hospital.

The deceased was identified as Abdul Jabbar. The clash took place over grazing goats in a paddy field of the village. A case has been filed with the Jakiganj police.

3 cos penalised

From Page 1

rants to the shareholders. The review, pointed out that during the last quarter, the Commission imposed penalty on two listed companies for 'willful and deliberate' delayed payment of dividend.

The SEC received 16 complaints during the current quarter compared to nine complaints during the previous quarter, all of which were taken up for redressal of grievances during the related quarter.

Of these, two complaints were about delayed or non-refund of over-subscribed amount, five about delayed or non-receipt of dividend, one about delayed or non-receipt of annual or half-yearly accounts and eight of miscellaneous nature.

Some 38 DSE listed companies held the annual general meetings of shareholders in the July-September quarter compared to 27 listed companies during the previous quarter.

At the same time 35 companies declared dividend — 29 companies cash final dividend, six companies cash interim dividend and six companies stock dividend. In the previous quarter 17 declared dividend — 16 cash final dividend and one stock dividend.

The rate of dividends varied from eight per cent to 120 per cent during the current quarter compared to 5 per cent to 110 per cent during the previous quarter.

25 hurt as youths attack house in N'ganj

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Oct. 27: At least 25 people including five women were injured when a group of youths attacked a house at Chitashal village under Bandar thana this morning.

The injured included Suruj Ali, 50, his wife Herenena, 40, their four sons - Amjad Hossain, 25, Nazir Hossain, 27, Nabi Hossain, 29, and Hamid Miah, 25, Abdul Qadir, 28, Malum Hossain, 20, and Momena Khatun, 30.

They were admitted to Narayanganj sadar and general hospitals.

Sources said the attack was a sequel to a long-time dispute between Suruj Ali and one Azim over a farmland. Recently, Ali took possession of the land after a court gave verdict in favour of him.

Aricha

From Page 1

two days and redeployment of two ferries.

Besides, employees and workers of the BIWT and members of the Aricha ghat Relocation Resistance Committee have been rendering voluntary services to ease the traffic jam.

Meanwhile, 23 coaches from Dhaka reached at the Aricha ghat this morning defying the suspension decision by the Owners' Association. However, the coaches were ferried at about 5 pm.

The BIWT officials said they are capable to ferry about 2,400 vehicles a day through the existing ferries against the arrival of about 3,000.

Tanbazar

From Page 1

of the Dhaka city. On September 9, both fled the house following alleged torture by their employer.

They came across a man who lured them of better job. Later, the man took them to Tanbazar and sold to Fatema, sources said.

Ramna police took the rescued girls to their custody.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

Printed & Published by A. S. Mahmud, Managing Director, on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd, 52, Motiheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, from City Publishing House Ltd, 90 Kakrail, Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhanmandi B/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4, Commercial: 500091 (Direct), Fax No: 58-02-860305, GPO Box No: 3267, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA.