

Dhaka Day by Day

Children's Fascination for Bicycles

by A S M Nurunnabi

All children seem to have an ingrained feeling of attraction for bicycles. After a child is just able to stand on its own legs, its joys know no bound when it is given a tricycle. Though there is scarcity of open space or park in the city for the child's free riding of the tricycle, there is usually no dearth of enthusiasm on the part of the child as it moves around in the tricycle from one room to another within the narrow confines of his house. The child's parents also feel happy seeing their child thus occupied. In the absence of the tricycle, the child would have been an object of constant observation so that it does not engage into any mischief.

The period during which a child can be made happy with a tricycle is short. Thereafter, as the child grows, its need for a bicycle is keenly felt. Boys without bicycles, look wistfully at those riding their own bicycles before their eyes. A boy of ten once told of his sad disappointment when a friend of his who has his own bicycle and who sometimes offered him opportunities for riding it, once promised that he would again bring the cycle in the afternoon of a particular day. On that fateful day, there were heavy showers submerging the road which could not be used for cycling. Well ahead of that afternoon, the poor friend took great pains to clear water from that road, but to his great disappointment, the friend who owned the cycle did not turn up.

Nowadays there are several places in the city, for example, at Azimpur, Elephant Road, Kalabagan, Rayer Bazar, Sadarghat, Mirpur, where children, without the means of owning a

bicycle, can avail the facility of riding a bicycle on payment of a charge on hourly basis. At a place opposite the Dhanmondi Playground near Road No 8 one comes across such a makeshift shop where children can hire bicycles at the rate of Tk 15 per hour for new models of bicycles and Tk 10 per hour for older models. The person in charge of the hire service said he allows some concession if the hiring is done for a longer spell.

It was learnt from his that his clients are mostly children from poorer sections. When asked how such children could afford the rent which is apparently high, he informed that their craving for this hobby was so intense that they somehow manage the required money. It was, however, noticed that in most of the cycles given to the children on hire, the brake system was faulty, particularly in the old models. This is a matter for concern, because in the absence of the safety factor, the children who sometimes opt for the older models account of the economy in charge, are at the risk of accident when the faulty cycles move on the busy roads of the city. There is thus potential danger in the use of such defective cycles on the roads. This state of affairs perhaps exist in other places also. At some other places, there may be more concessional rates. But the children who mainly use such cycles don't understand the need for the safety factor. All they are interested in are the gaiety and thrill of the experience of cycle riding.

If some sort of control could be introduced in this regard, potential hazards to mainly poor children might have been avoided.



A dangerous fascination — Star photo



Prime Minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina addressing the extended meet of the City Awami League at the party's central office yesterday. — Star photo

'Select a woman MP from Buddhists'

Bangladesh National Buddhist Youth Federation urged Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to include a representative of the Bengali Buddhist community while electing 30 women MPs from the reserved seats, reports UNB.

In a joint statement yesterday, the federation leaders recalled the Buddhist community's contribution in the liberation struggle of the Bengali Nation, led by Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The Buddhist youth leaders also mentioned the community's significant role in nation-building and in establishing democracy and civil society.

They said there was a quota for Bengali Buddhists in the national assembly during the Pakistan days, but it was abolished after independence.

"Since the independence of Bangladesh, no representative of the Bengali Barua Buddhist community living in the country can be elected as member of parliament," the leaders said.

They urged Prime Minister and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina to nominate a woman MP from the "neglected" Bengali Buddhist community while filling up the 30 seats reserved for women.

The joint statement was issued by Buddhist Youth Federation president Dr Sukumar Barua, general secretary Kishore Kumar Barua, organising secretary Buddhaananda Bhikkhu and publicity secretary Bhikkhu Sunandopriyo.

'Compensation for fire victims a farce'

By Staff Correspondent

Trade union leaders of export oriented garments factories have said that the compensation for the deaths in a recent fire accident announced by the owners was a farce, said a press release.

The leader while addressing a workers rally in front of the National Press Club, said, factory owners had declared this kind of compensation packages earlier which were not actually realised.

Leaders of the National Garments Workers Federation said frequent accidents in the garments factories proved that the owners did not take proper measures to avoid fires. Trade union leaders demanded one lakh taka as compensation for each killed and 50,000 taka for each injured worker.

Call to rescue 36 Hill people

By Staff Correspondent

Chittagong Hill Tracts National Coordination and Peace Council (CHTPC) has urged the country's law enforcing agencies to rescue 36 people from different areas of the Hill Districts.

In a press release, CHTPC said Kalpana Chakma, a leader of Hill Women's Federation, was kidnapped from Rangamati few days ago. A total of 36 persons, including 7 tribal people have been missing miraculously from different chutia villages, it said.

CHTPC also said that the CHT problem should be solved through open dialogue.

Zaker Party to launch lawyers' front

Zaker Party has decided to launch its 'Ainjibi' front, says a press release.

Party chairman Pirjada Mostafa Amir Faisal has appointed advocate Abu Bakar Siddique Khan as the convener of front. He has been entrusted with the duty to coordinating the works relating to the formation of the front with the central committee and all bar councils of the country.

In a statement to the press on the occasion, the party chairman said that the people had hoped to see the separation of the judiciary from the executive ever since the independence of the country.

Unfortunately, he said, that goal is yet to be achieved and the black laws continue to persist in the country.

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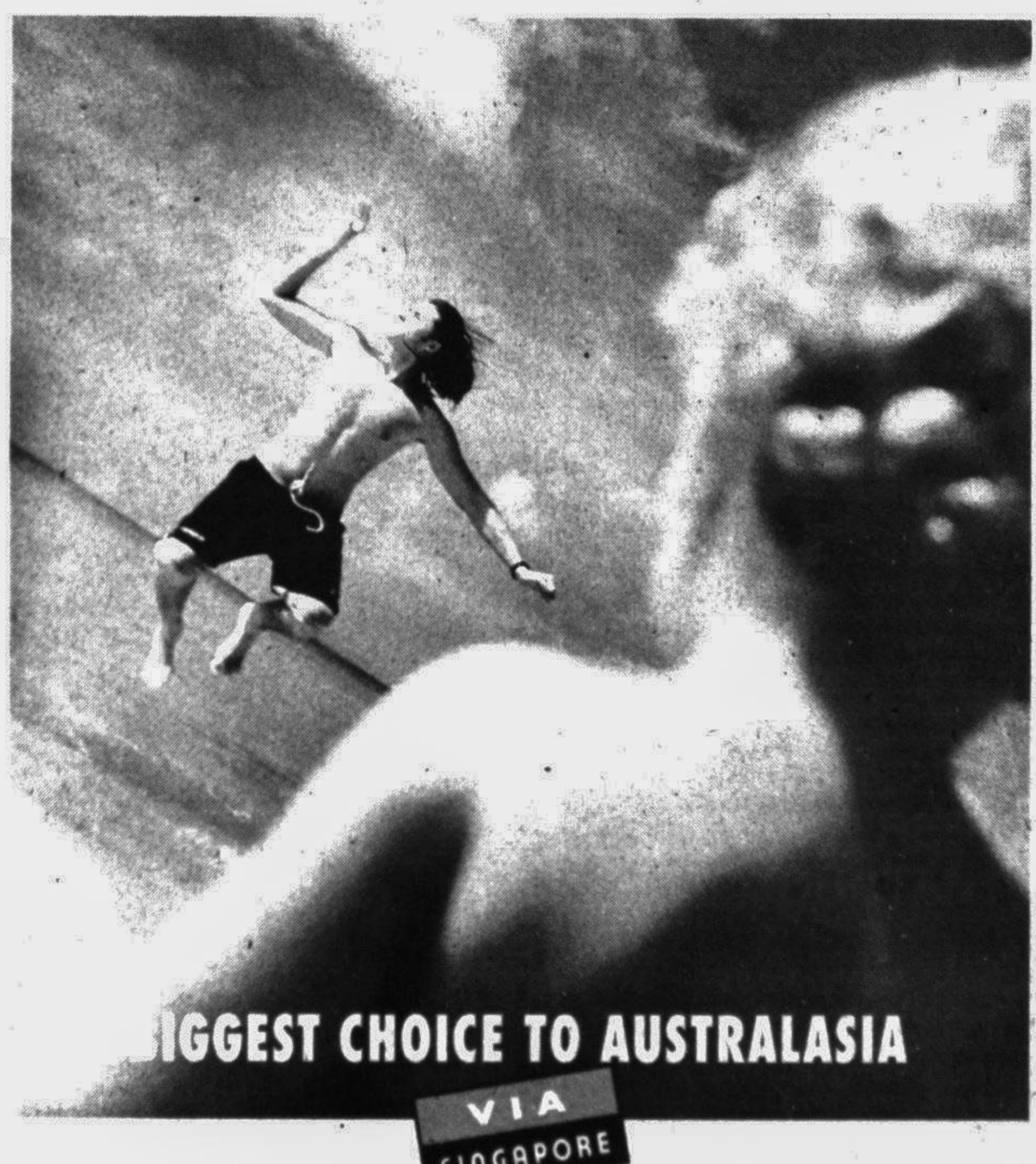
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SINGAPORE AIRLINES

Visitors at a house show of water-colour paintings by Laila Sharmin in the city yesterday.

Star photo

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