The Daily Star

DHAKA SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 1996

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Yeltsin sacks chief of armed forces

MOSCOW, Oct 18: The Chief of Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, general Mikhail Kolesnikov, was fired by President Boris Yeltsin today, Russian television quoted the Defence Ministry as saying, reports AFP.

Kolesnikov was also dismissed from his post of first deputy of Defence Minister Igor Rodionov.

Kolesnikov was replaced by General Viktor Samsonov, who had been the chief of staff for coordination of military cooperation in the Commonwealth of Independent States, the television said.

Yeltsin also fired the deputy head of the Kremlin administration today.

The official, Vladimir Antipov, deputy of influential Kremlin chief of staff Anatoly Chubais, was in charge of personnel issues, the Itar-Tass news agency said, quoting a spokesman.

The firing came a day after Yeltsin sacked his national security adviser Alexander Lebed.

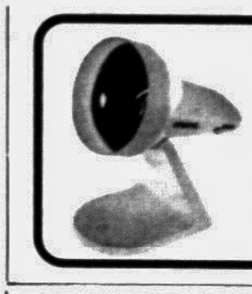
Lebed faced further hostility today as parliament called for an enquiry into accusations that he was trying to mount a coup while the Kremlin was poised to strip him of his final powers.

But Lebed himself vowed to bounce back, saying he would continue to strive for power through democratic means.

Dismissing Yeltsin as 'an elderly and sick person' who bears the main responsibility for the current crisis in Russia, Lebed said he would be going to the theatre in the evening "to watch Ivan the Terrible, and leans how to run the state party," WTN television reported.

"But I have to think about how — of course it will be democratic," he added of his own ambition to rise to power in Russia.

Lebed received a further blow to his ambitions however when the presidency warned Friday it would oust him completely from all his positions of responsibility, saying the controversial Chechen portfolio would soon be removed from his remit.



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PHILIPS

DOWN TO EARTH

Efforts For Improvements In City Life

By A S M Nurunnabi

Under the auspices of The Daily Star, large-scale efforts were lately undertaken through the launching of the 'Save Dhaka, Clean Dhaka' campaign with the help of Boy Scouts and other conscious segments of society to effect improvements in the over-all look of the city. This campaign may be regarded as the precursor of the package programme now to be initiated with the concerted efforts of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and other service and development-oriented government, semi-government and autonomous agencies under the stewardship of a high-powered committee formed by the LGRD and Cooperatives Ministry. The problems facing city life are undoubtedly multi-faceted and serious and the immediate ones include drainage, water-logging, open manholes, traffic jams sewerage bottlenecks, acute drinking water shortage and last, not least, load shedding of the most unconsciable nature. We have been used to seeing that most of these problems went over the head and past the eyes of those running the DCC. This time the definite objectives of the package programme chalked out by the LGRD Committee lead the citizenry to express cautious optimism about achieving those objectives.

The main objectives of the package programme include observance of a fortnight to inspire the city dwellers to help clean the city and thereby create healthy atmosphere, clean underground drains as well as city surface drains, adoption of necessary measures for removing waterlogging as expeditiously as possible, removal of electric lines in certain areas of the city by DESA on urgent basis, building an overbridge at Jatrabari to ease out traffic jams as in other areas like Kawran Bazar and Gabtoli, identification of six places in the city for political parties to hold meetings so that such meetings do not create traffic jams, completion of the crash programme taken up in 1995-96 fiscal year to set up road-grill divider from Mohakhali to PG Hospital and formation of a sub-committee in coordination with the BRTC, DMP and DCC to make Motijheel C/A rickshaw-free from its centre.

In this context, it was felt by some observers that in the matter of burgeoning traffic congestion in the city, which is a major burning problem, new-fangled ideas were sometimes heard like building underpasses or tunnels. According to knowledgeable sources, these facilities may be quite in place in highly developed cities like London or Paris. But for Dhaka, according to some, it may at best be cosmetic and the idea of it, while grandiose, is still out of keeping with the present urban setting. Instead, it is felt that fly-overs plus over-bridges, as already adopted in some other schemes, are more appropriate and feasible ideas. The newly proposed over-bridge at Jatrabari is in line with this concept. At the same time, it is considered desirable that the gradual elimination of rickshaws from the main city streets be taken up by the city's traffic controllers.

There is no denying that we are faced with the prospect of an emerging mega city, with its millions dominating our future with inadequate infrastructural scenario. The thought is definitely depressing. However, it may be kept in view that there is potential to permit human needs to be met in more efficient ways then now. And here the role of the coordinated activities among the concerned service agencies assumes paramount importance.

In this connection, we may also bear in mind that our failure in effecting over-all important in our city life involves the potential risk of turning our emerging mega city into a mega slum. This possibility in the context of development of healthy urban life is fraught with ominous implications. Dhaka has several large slums with an alarming growth rate. According to a report, from 2156 slums within the metropolitan area in 1991, the number reached 2679 in 1996. Estimated slum population of 720,000 in 1991 has increased to 1.1 million at a rate more than 1.5 times than that of the city. The causative factors for the large-scale migration from the rural areas to urban areas are well-known.

According to knowledgeable quarters, the best way to tackle the vulnerability of mega slums to a mega city is to make a start by promoting local initiatives. To this end, many NGOs have advocated community management of the urban environment. There is, however, little evidence of any appropriate general or governmental understanding of what constitutes meaningful and effective community participation in collaboration with relevant service agencies in a complex operating environment. On this account and also on account of the still prevailing uncertainties about the effectiveness of the role of the projected coordinated activities of the concerned service agencies, the city dwellers may keep their fingers crossed about how far the proposed improvements will go in enhancing the quality of civic life of the city.

Scouts from Chinhamukta Group in Palassey area campaigning among auto-rickshaw drivers to keep their stand clean as part of the Save Dhaka Clean Dhaka campaign yesterday. — Star photo

Save Dhaka

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spades. On the past two Fridays, we conducted motivation campaign, urging people to keep their premises clean. Today we decided to get some brooms and spades so that children could clear some drains and clean the garbage," Ali said.

"However, we need to coordinate our actions with the city corporation. If they could provide us the logistics then it would have helped the corporations sweepers to make their job easier," he added.

But there was a problem. The children scooped out poly bags from the drains and left them on the side. There was no bins around.

Residents told this correspondent that they are faced with a Hobson's choice. The city corporation has forgotten us as they say the colony is a Railway zone. Railway authorities say the corporation has the task to dispose of the rubbish.

The entire colony has become a huge bin-yard, its drains unable to hold the poly bags. Railway sweepers rarely make any effort to clean those, some residents complained.

Saiful Islam Mullick and Abdul Malek, leader and the deputy leader of the local scouts unit at Narinda observed that they are working with their "forces" since last year.

But their work was seriously hampered by lack of communication equipment which could make their task easier. Besides, the city corporation did not bother to coordinate with them. If they could provide some help like baskets and spades the boys and girls would definitely supplement the corporation's celeanliness operations, they said.

Problems of funding to provide some snacks or drinks to children or provide them with transport fares also dented their enthusiasm, campaign leaders and children in other areas noted.

The campaign will continue next Friday.

Yesterday the campaign was conducted in different parts of the city during which boys and girls moved around their localities urging people to dump their garbage at collection points between 6 pm to 9 pm, the time fixed by the city corporation.

Girl and boy scouts of Dhaka district railway scouts clearing garbage at Shajahanpur yesterday. — Star photo

Power purchase from India

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dollars for this scheme from its Aid Savings Fund for Bangladesh, the sources said. It costs 210 million dollars to set up a 210 MW power station.

As per the initial discussion with the Indian government regarding this, India would set up transmission line up to the border and Bangladesh would make its own arrangement. This would take nine to twelve months, the source pointed out.

The original idea of power purchase from India as well as from Nepal or Bhutan was conceived at a SAARC inter-ministerial meeting last year. The meeting had resolved that the SAARC countries could set up a common grid for oil, gas and power for optimum use of the natural resources, the sources mentioned.

Power generation in the eastern zone, covering Chittagong, Dhaka and Sylhet regions, is mainly gas-based while that in the western zone is oil-based because of the absence of gas supply network there.

Production of one kilowatt hour of power costs by a gas-fired power plant in the eastern zone Tk 0.54 and between Tk 5.50 and 7 by a oil-based power plant in the western zone. On the one hand the costly operation in the western zone is being subsidised by the government and on the other, the power plants there are not capable of meeting the demand in the region, the sources pointed out.

Housewife beaten to death

BAGERHAT, Oct 18: A middle-aged housewife was allegedly beaten to death at village Kalikabari in Morelganj thana of the district today, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Sufia Begum, 36.

Police said Sufia was rushed to the thana health complex but died there at about 4:30 this evening. She was beaten by her husband Abdur Rob.

Meanwhile, police arrested three persons from the village along with the victim's husband Abdur Rob. The two other arrested are: Nagor Molla and Sultan Molla.

Havilder major

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the end of his third remand.

Thakur, said to be one of the masterminds of assassination of Bangabandhu, was arrested from his residence in the city on October 3.

Proposed Bankruptcy Law

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own banks are identified as major causes for loan defaulting. Besides, waiver of interest encourages borrowers to default.

The amount of default loan is likely to rise as a loanee will be regarded as defaulter if he or she fails to repay an installment within one month of the repayment date from January 1998. Presently, a loan becomes classified if it is not paid within six months of the repayment date.

Under the proposed law, Bankruptcy Courts, as many as required, will be set up with judges not below the status of a district judge or an additional district judge and an appeal could be made with the High Court.

The court will try to realise the overdue loan from the defaulter by liquidating the fixed assets and seizing liquid cash. The bank concerned can accept the money below the loan amount or the court can declare the defaulter bankrupt.

A bankrupt will not be entitled to take any fresh loan from any bank until he repays the amount or the court changes its decision. He or she will also not be qualified to become a member of parliament (MP).

"It will be an epoch-making law," Banking Division Secretary Shah Abdul Hannan said, adding that a defaulter, who is unable to repay due to genuine reasons, would be able under the law to make appeal to the court for relief.

But a top official of a private bank noted that the law would not work unless it is properly implemented. "A strong political will is needed to tackle the default culture ... but I don't see that determination," he said.

The official observed the prevailing default culture could be checked to some extent if the existing laws relating to bank loan default were implemented properly.

He suggested that the loan defaulters should be brought to book under criminal offences as they are not only accused of breach of contract, but also breach of trust."

If they are not charged with criminal offence as are in the United States and the United Kingdom, their trial would be very difficult, he said.

Aug 15 killers

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in this regard.

She also urged them to project the true history of the liberation war and the role of Bangabandhu in the struggle for independence. "Let the future generation know of the true history of the nation."

Responding to the demand of children at the function, the Prime Minister said she will keep one day free from her busy schedule for the children. "I want to get back my little Russel among you."

"Please pray for the departed soul of my little Russel," said a weeping Prime Minister.

Earlier, a munajat was offered for Russel.

Later, the Prime Minister distributed prizes among the children who secured first, second and third positions in different competitions, organised by the parishad.

The function was also addressed by K M Shahidullah, Master Surai Hasan Shami, M Samad Chowdhury, Secretary General of the Parishad, Md Nur Ali, President of Russel Academy and Yusuf Abdullah Harun, Chief Advisor of the Parishad.

They termed the killing of August 15 as the most brutal in the world history and demanded exemplary puhishment to the persons responsible.

Master Surain Hasan Shami, a member of the parishad, demanded punishment of the killers of Shaheed Russel.

The function was rounded off with a cultural show.

Durga Puja

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mensingh, Bogra, Sirajganj, Magura, Bhola, Pirojpur and other parts of the country said the Durga Puja was being celebrated in a befitting manner.

Meanwhile, police has taken tight security measures to avoid any untoward incident in puja mandaps.

Besides police, seven special teams of Detective Branch of Dhaka Metropolitan Police will guard the 110 puja mandaps in the 15 thanas of the city.

Police officials said each DB team includes and inspector, one sub-inspector and three constables.

The plainclothes police will keep special vigilance on the mandaps of Lalbagh and Kotwali.

Khaleda in Madina

BNP chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia arrived in the holy city of Madina Monwara from Jeddah on Wednesday evening, reports UNB.

She was received at the airport by a large number of Bangladeshi expatriates staying in the holy city.

Begum Zia, alongwith her entourage, flew in here on board a Royal aircraft and stayed in a state guest house in Madina, according to a message received in Dhaka yesterday.

The same evening, Begum Zia went to the *rowza mobarak* of Prophet Muhammad (SM) and offered fateha. She also offered her Magreb and Esha prayers at the Masjidunnabi (Prophet's Mosque).

Begum Zia prayed for continued peace, progress and prosperity of the Muslim ummah and of Bangladesh.

She also visited the mazars of some *'shahbis'* (companions) of Prophet (SM) and number of historical places in Madina.

Begum Zia went to Saudi Arabia on October 13 to perform holy Umrah at the invitation of King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz.

Death in custody BHRC demands judicial inquiry

Bangladesh Human Rights Commission (BHRC) yesterday demanded a judicial inquiry into the death of a young man in police custody, reports UNB.

Sohel Mahmud Tuhin, 20, an activist of BNP-backed Juba Dal, was found dead in police custody at the city's Motijheel Thana on Thursday morning.

In a statement, BHRC president Kazi Abdur Rezzak said police had arrested Tuhin without any specific charge and inflicted inhuman torture on him. Killing through torture is a serious violation of the Constitution and International Human Rights Charter, he added.

BHRC has decided to conduct an inquiry into the death of Tuhin and prepare a complete report within a week. It has sought cooperation from all concerned in this regard.

The commission called for withdrawal of all policemen of Motijheel thana from their duties for the sake of inquiry.

Falling edn standard

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The results of Rajshahi Board are likely to be announced today.

Uniform question paper for all boards and absence of 'question bank' are the main reasons behind the debacle in the results of this year's HSC examinations, Principal of Dhaka Colleges Prof Abdus Sattar said here yesterday.

He told UNB that most of students failed this year as it was made compulsory for them to get pass marks in both essay type and objective type questions. "The students could not adapt themselves to the newly introduced system ."

Prof Sattar said the language and 'nature' of questions were also changed to some extent. This could be another reason for their failure.

When asked about the possible fault of computer system, he said computer should not be blamed for the poor percentage in this year's HSC results. He, however, suggested that the system be conducted more efficiently.

Prof Sattar said the students failed to do well in English, but it was not a cause of the overall disaster. Absence of skilled teachers in this subject, particularly in remote areas, caused their failure.

He suggested improvement of the standard of English language teaching staff in the secondary level. "In fact, there is a little scope for learning language after this level."

When contacted, Chairman of Comilla Education Board Prof Anwarul Azim Siddiqui said main reason of this year's s result debacle in HSC examination is poor performance in English and Mathematics.

"Result also depends on basic quality of the students of a certain batch," he said but ruled out any major fault in the computer system causing low percentage of pass. "The computer system rather helped us a lot in preparing the results. "

Prof Azim also pointed out shortage of efficient English teachers. "A large number of colleges were established across the country in recent years without any skilled teacher in English," he said.

Subhas Saha, a teacher of Viqarunnisa Noon College, said uniform question system and absence of 'question bank' could be the causes of the poor percentage in the HSC results. He also said the type of question was changed this year which the students could follow.

Delhi seminar

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which was a river of discord should now be "the river of friendship" and let it be a symbol of growing friendship and cooperation among the countries.

The experts including former government officials, economists, scientists, engineers, politicians and journalists observed that inter-country negotiations were hampered in the past due to various reasons.

The statement said that the academic and other agencies outside the government channels could play a useful role in promoting better understanding, clarifying misconceptions and facilitating the task of governments in tackling difficult issues.

Shafi Sami, the Bangladesh high commissioner to India, addressed the concluding session yesterday

Six dacoits held in Barisal

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Oct 18: Six dacoits, including a woman were arrested today several hours after they looted valuable goods from two fishing trawlers at the Jalmahal area in Meghna river under Hizla thana of the district.

About 15 dacoits riding in a speed boat swooped on the fishing trawlers at around 4 am and started looting. Hearing hue and cry, when fishermen of other trawlers rushed the scene, some of the dacoits escaped by the speed boat leaving six of them behind.

Later, Mehendiganj thana police arrested the six from Dadpur area and recovered some looted goods from their possession.

Dacoits kill one in N'ganj

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Oct 18: One person was killed when dacoits opened fire on the villagers in Painadee village under Siddhirganj thana early today.

The victim was identified as Kamal, 27, son of one Khalil Mia. His sister Shilpi, 22, also received bullet injury in her leg. Kamal died on the spot, witnesses said.

Hearing hue and cry, the villagers rushed the scene and chased the dacoits.

According to sources, about 10 to 12 dacoits attacked the house of Rahman, a cement trader, and looted cash and valuables worth Tk 60,000.

Tofael returns

Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed on his return home after a five-day visit to China last night said that he had successful trip as the Chinese leaders had expressed their keen interest to be with Bangladesh in its development endeavours, reports BSS.

Headmaster blamed for Ideal School situation

Teachers' Council of Ideal School and College at a press conference in the city yesterday urged all concerned to take immediate steps to bring normalcy in the institution, reports UNB.

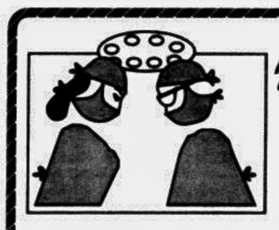
Reading out a written statement, Council Secretary Abdullah M Kawsar described the ongoing situation and blamed the headmaster of the school for the present crisis.

He said all quarters should come forward to resolve the crisis as final examinations of different classes and test examination of SSC examinees are to be held soon.

Fake police officer

BAGERHAT, Oct 18: A fake CID police officer was arrested from the district town today, reports UNB.

The fake officer was identified as Habib Sheikh, 30, of village Khalisha in Sadar thana of Pirojpur district.



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