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Life in the city slums

By Abu Sayed

The straw hut, its roof covered by a plastic sheet, occupies a space of not more than 60 square feet. In front of it runs a filthy gutter. The surrounding is littered with garbages.

The hut in a slum in Dhaka is where Abdul Malek (41), his wife and their six children sleep. A portion of the space is used for cooking food and keeping household materials.

Malek takes the place a hell. Yet to his neighbours he is fortunate enough to at least have a space. Many others like him just sleep on the pavements.

Malek was once a farmer at his huddle in Brahmanbaria district. Having endured poverty and hunger Malek along with his family travelled to Dhaka in search of job. He found some work, but in the process he landed his family into a slum at Dhaka's Agara-gaon area.

Malek has a pavement stall, his wife, Achhia, works as a maid in nearby homes and their eldest son is a garment worker.

On an average, Malek earns Tk 80 to 100 per day while his son's monthly salary is Tk 500. The income of Achhia never exceeds Tk 300 in any month.

A study by the Asian Development Bank on urban poverty shows that nearly half the urban poor in non-formal sectors and about 96 per cent boys of over 15 years of age depend on physical labour for their livelihood. Over 60 per cent of women of the age group also work in odd jobs.

The study shows that the rate of child labour is extremely high in Dhaka slums.

These people are deprived of proper sanitation facilities.

They do not have adequate supply of pure drinking water, power, gas or health services.

Association for Realization of Basic Needs (ARBAN) estimated that about 90 per cent of the slum dwellers suffer from different diseases. ARBAN Pro-

ject Director Khademul Islam said, "Almost all the women and children in the slums suffer from one disease of another".

The ADB study also revealed that the slum dwellers live in uncertainty due to lack of social security. There are constant threat of violence by muscle-men and of eviction by the authorities.

Bilkis Aktar (19) of the slum beside Panthopath said, "Women, specially young girls live here under shadows of threat. It is worse for those who are relatively young and beautiful."

She said the girls are, in most cases, being attacked by the local influential muscle-men. "We are hostages to them," she added.

Polygamy is common in slums. Rate of divorce is also high. Girls are married early. So are the boys. Many girls become victims of sexual abuse, including rapes at early age.

The age of marriage in the slums are 15 to 18 for the girls and 18 to 20 for the boys.

About 30 to 40 per cent of men have two to three wives and the average number of children is near 8. Birth control is rarely practised even though family planning workers make regular visits.

The rate of illiteracy is also very high in the slums. A researcher with the Urban Research Centre said, "I was shocked to find that there is not a single government school in 1,125 slums in the capital."

News Network feature

US investors

From Page 1

tended the meeting.

Prime Minister Hasina flew in here Tuesday afternoon to attend the 51st session of the UN General Assembly.

Officials in Bangladesh mission here said the Prime Minister was expected to deliver her speech in Bangla.

Bangladesh Betar will broadcast live the speech of the Prime Minister at 1 am Friday provided telecommunication link can be established, said a Betar press release in Dhaka.

Juthi

From Page 1

three silvers and two bronzes on the penultimate day of the mini-games.

Earlier, Bangladesh got their first medal on the inaugural day when they captured the badminton bronze. On the other hand, Feroza Khatun took the 100m hurdles silver while Nilufer, the lone women athlete of Bangladesh in the Atlanta Olympics, claimed the long-jump silver on the second day.

The journey concludes today.

Transfer

From Page 1

situated in the capital. Besides all posts as well as the infrastructure of the unit have been planned accordingly.

One of the officials, Mohammad Motahar, told this correspondent: "I have no objection to the transfer order but what is bothering me is that I do not know what have I to do in a district level office where there is no post of PCO".

According to a high official of the FPD, the officials concerned would get their dues soon.

OC Teal

From Page 1

Earlier, 8 persons, including the carrier of the smuggled gold, Md Jasim, were arrested by port police. But the kingpins are yet to nabbed.

Meanwhile, there has been no headway in the investigation into the sensational gold smuggling case.

DCC men

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during raids in different parts of the city in the last two days, arrested four persons including the leader of a gang involved in making forged number plates, tokens, driving licences of different types of vehicles and other materials.

The arrested are: Gang leader Pasha Dewan and his accomplice Waliullah, Motaleb and Abu Kashem, police said.

During the raids, a large number of forged materials allegedly issued by the DCC or other authorities concerned for rickshaws, rickshaw-vans and other vehicles were seized. Besides, a number of different types of dices, electronic typewriters and other materials used in making these fake documents were seized, police sources added.

Some organised gangs used to sell these forged materials to a section of rickshaw owners and pullers, they said.

Presently, more than 1.5 lakh rickshaws ply the city, almost half of which are not authorised by the DCC, according to reports.

Meanwhile, Mayor of the DCC Mohammad Hanif visited the DMP headquarters following the arrests and recovery of the forged materials. The DMP Commissioner A K Al Mamun and other senior DMP officials were present at the time, said a press release.

This conversion to digital will be made free of cost and Digital telephone set will be supplied free of cost subject to return of existing analog telephone set. Valued subscribers are requested to contact '886799' in case they face any problem or require any information.

DFF-24218-23/10

G-1322

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Technical cutover of 7500 new Digital Exchange at Gulshan and conversion of '61' group Analog Telephones into Digital

It is notified for information of the valued telephone subscribers that the technical cutover of 7500 lines new Digital Exchange will be made in the afternoon of 24th October '96. After the said cutover all analog telephones of '61' group of Gulshan Exchange will be converted into Digital. The converted numbers will be of seven digits instead of present six digits. As a result first two digits of '61' group will be replaced by '988' and subsequent four digits will remain unchanged. For example, present '61-0177' number will be converted by '988-0177'.

This conversion to digital will be made free of cost and Digital telephone set will be supplied free of cost subject to return of existing analog telephone set. Valued subscribers are requested to contact '886799' in case they face any problem or require any information.

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The Daily Star

Final results of FBCCI polls

Help uphold interest of community: Harun

Yussuf Abdullah Harun, newly elected President of the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), took over as chief of the apex trade body in its annual general meeting yesterday, reports UNB.

The new FBCCI President urged all members of the business community to extend help and support to him in his effort to uphold the interest of the business community forgetting the pre-election differences.

The outgoing President, Salman F Rahman, presided over the first session of the annual general meeting held at the Conference Centre of the FBCCI.

Ali Ashraf, an MP and Chairman of the FBCCI Election Board, announced the final results of elections of President, Vice-President and 30 members of the Executive Committee 1996-97 and 1997-98 which was unanimously approved.

Salman told the meeting that during last two years, he always had received ungrudging support and cooperation from business community and tried collectively to protect and safeguard the interest of the business community and enhance the image of the FBCCI.

"The responsibility for all mistakes during the tenure is mine while the success is yours," he added. Salman welcomed the newly elected members of the Executive Committee, the Vice-President and the President and wished them all success.

Yussuf Abdullah Harun presided over the second session of the Annual General Meeting. He congratulated the chairman and members of the Election Board and the Election Appeal Board for conducting the election peacefully and neutrally.

New executive body

The newly elected Executive Committee of the Federation as announced by the FBCCI Election Board is as follows:

President: Yussuf Abdullah Harun — Comilla Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Md Nazirul Islam — Khulna Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Md Rafiqul Islam — Dinajpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry; AKM Shamsuddoha — Kishoreganj Chamber of Commerce and Industry; M. Jahangir Akhund Salim — Chandpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Abdur Razzaque Khan — Jessore Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Md Golam Mostafa — Rangpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry; M. Rezaul Malik — Barisal Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Dewan Sultan Ahmed — Lakshmipur Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Md Abdul Wahed — Nowrangpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry; AKM Shamsuddin — Mymensingh Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Mohammad Ali Sarkar — Rajshahi Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Md Nazibar Rahman — Rajbari Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Members, Executive Committee: Association Group: Mohammad Ali — Bangladesh Vegetable and Oil Refinery and Vanspati Manufacturers Association; Khurshed Ali Molla — Bangladesh Electronic Manufacturers' Association; Mohammad Noor Ali — Bangladesh Association of Recruiting Agencies; 314: Abu Alam Chowdhury — Advertising Agencies Association of Bangladesh; Saifullah Chowdhury — Bangladesh Corrugated Carton Manufacturers Association; Sukumar Ranjan Ghosh — Bangladesh Film Distributors Association; Tareq Kamal — Bangladesh Master Stevedores Association; Obaidur Rahman — Bangladesh Aluminium Manufacturers' Association; M Afzal Hossain — Bangladesh Textile Mill Owners Association; Abdul Majid — Bangladesh Hardware and Machinery Merchants Association; Mrs Maleka Khan — National Association of Small and Cottage Industries; Taher Subhan — Bangladesh Textile Mills Association; Syed Mohd. Shamsul Kaunain (Kutub) — Bangladesh Thikader Samity; M Abdul Haque — Bangladesh Reconditioned Vehicles Importers and Dealers Association and Khandaker Ruhul Amin — Bangladesh Restaurant Owners Association.

BCL worker in Barisal beaten up, thrown into river

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Oct 23: A college student, also an activist of BCL, was beaten up by some terrorists and later thrown into river Sandhya at Doarika ferry ghat under Babuganj thana, some 15 kilometres from here last night.

According to police and witnesses, Alimul Islam Rubel, 22, a student of the Barisal Govt College went to Agailjhara in the morning to attend a wedding ceremony. While returning home he had an altercation with some terrorists. After the altercation they forcibly took Rubel away from the ferry ghat and beat him mercilessly. At one stage Rubel was thrown into the river. He is feared to have drowned.

Second bridge

From Page 1

that five lakh people commute by boat from the area to the city, officials at the Babubazar Zirzira ghat said.

Asked about press reports that a large under-construction pillar had disappeared into the river "in a matter of hours," officials of the firm at the site said that the government had formed a committee comprising a BUET teacher and three RHD engineers to look into the matter.

"Sinking of Caissions or pillars is a part of the technology to build a modern bridge," said the engineer. "We have to sink each pillar upto 32.5 meters in the earth to build the bridge. There is nothing to panic."

Police are interrogating the armed hoodlums. An arms case was registered against them.

Meanwhile, arrest of an alleged terrorist yesterday triggered a rowdy protest near Polytechnic Institute disrupting traffic on Tongi Diversion Road in the city.

A group of unruly people from nearby a slum put barricades on Tongi Diversion Road after police arrested one Kiron. They also damaged several vehicles.

Some local leaders with the help of police brought the situation under control after half-an-hour.

Cargo movement

From Page 1

During the corresponding period of the previous fiscal (95-96) the import cargo handled by Chittagong Port stood at 22,50,605 MT and the export cargo at 43,035 MT.

However, the handling of containers increased during the period under review.

The victim met his tragic end of life when he tried to cross the road at about 6 am and fell under the truck.

A case has been registered.

Another report says, one person was killed in a road accident at Sripur area on Sylhet-Tamabil road Tuesday afternoon.

Hiron Miah, 30, who was on his way to Tamabil from Sylhet on a truck received serious

wounds as the truck overturned. He succumbed to his injuries when was being taken to the Sylhet MAG Osmany Medical College Hospital.

The driver and helper managed to escape just after the accident took place.

A case had been started.

Khaleda

From Page 1

manpower and other resources. Lack of education and modern technological skill have slowed down the pace of development.

Begum Zia told the Chinese ambassador during the meeting that the friendship between Bangladesh and China was historical and inseparable.

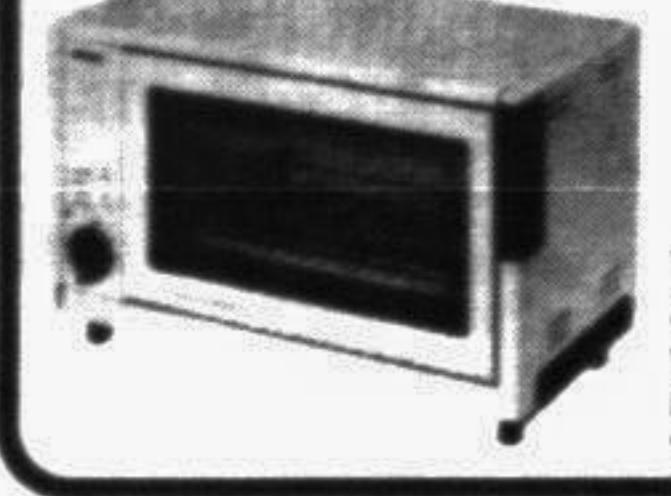
"This relation between the two countries has developed through the centuries."

She mentioned the visit of 7th century Chinese philosopher Huen Sung to Sonargaon and of the 11th century Buddhist scholar Atish Dipankar of Bangladesh to Tibet for preaching Buddhism.

Begum Zia said Bangladesh-China friendship had deepened during the regime of late President Ziaur Rahman through the exchange of visits between the two countries by political, cultural and commercial delegations.

She also mentioned her visit to China in 1991 soon after becoming the Prime Minister and in 1995 as the head of Bangladesh delegation to the Beijing Conference on Women.

The ambassadors expressed their satisfaction with the discussion.



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