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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 garbage.

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 calls 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 village 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 Agargaon area.

Malek has a pavement tea 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 metropolitan Dhaka are concentrated in about 2,700 slums. These densely populated slums are environmentally hazardous and, in most cases, unfit for human dwellings.

But the Urban Research Centre, a Dhaka University-based organisation, differs with it. According to the centre the numbers of slums in the capital city is 1,125.

According to the land ownership, researchers identified three types of slums in the city. One type was erected in land owned by the government and another type was built in open lands of different organisations.

The third type of slums were built by private citizens in their own lands. ADB study shows that about 75 per cent slums are built in private lands.

The study, conducted this year, found that the slum population has reached over 1.1 million. But it puts the total number of poor people at 5 million, most of whom also live in a slum-like condition.

More than 60 per cent of the urban poor work 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 Project Director Khademul Islam said, "Almost all the women and children in the slums suffer from one disease or 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 musclemen and of eviction by the authorities.

Bilkis Akter (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 musclemen. "We are hostages to them," she added.

Polygamies are 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 Nilufar, the lone women athlete of Bangladesh in the Atlanta Olympics, claimed the long-jump silver on the second day.

The tourney 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 the 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.

QC 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 be nabbed.

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

DCC men

From Page 1

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 Abul 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.

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 was 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 was announced by the FBCCI Election Board as follows:

President: Yussuf Abdullah Harun — Comilla Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Vice-President: Kazi Md Shafiqul Islam — Bangladesh Leather Goods Manufacturing Association.

Members, Executive Committee: Chamber Group: M A Mumin — Sylhet Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Md Rajib Sharif — Bangladesh Chamber of Industries; Mir

Nasir Hossain — Faridpur Chamber of Commerce and Industry; S M Nazrul 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 Akhand 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 — Nowabganj Chamber of Commerce and Industry; AKM Shamsuddin — Mymensingh Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Mohammad Ali Sarkar — Rajshahi Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Md Nazib Rahman — Rajbari Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

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 Agailghara 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 in to the river. He is feared to have drowned.

Mayor Hanif

From Page 1

held in the cordial atmosphere. Two former administrators and the former mayor gave their considered opinions and valuable suggestions after a detailed discussion on the existing problems in the city.

They assured all-out cooperation in ensuring better civic facilities. Mayor Hanif thanked his predecessors for their suggestions.

Former mayor Barrister Abul Hasnat and former administrator H N Ashiqur Rahman could not be present as they are outside the country.

Second bridge

From Page 1

than five lakh people commute by boat from the area to the city, officials at the Babubazar Zinzira 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 Caissons 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."

4 die in road accidents

By Staff Correspondent

At least four persons were killed in separate road accidents in Dhaka, Gazipur and Sylhet yesterday and Tuesday.

BSS says, one unknown youth of about 26 was killed when the tempo he was travelling in overturned near Tejgaon industrial area.

In another accident, an unknown person died as a baby taxi collided with a mini bus at Tongi. The victim, who was reportedly passenger of the baby taxi, was declared dead when he was taken to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Our Staff Correspondent in Sylhet adds: An unknown pedestrian, 40, was crushed to death under the wheels of a speeding truck at the link point of Mominkhola Road and approach of Shahjalal Bridge yesterday morning.

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 Sirpur area on Sylhet-Tamabil road Tuesday afternoon.

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

Cargo movement

From Page 1

MT.

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 4,30,035 MT.

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

During the July-September period a total of 74,869 TEUs containers were handled here, up from 63,704 TEUs containers handled in the corresponding period of the last fiscal, port officials said.

Moreover, in the July-September period handled the Chittagong Port handled 320 vessels, down from 328 vessels handled during the same period of the previous fiscal.

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PHILIPS

Body to review supply position of fertiliser soon

The government has decided to constitute a committee headed by former adviser M Anisuzzaman to review the overall supply position of fertiliser in the country and make recommendations in this respect, reports BSS.

A decision to this effect was taken yesterday at the meeting of the National Co-ordination Committee on Fertiliser with Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury in the chair. Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed was present at the meeting.

The committee will formulate specific recommendations on procurement and supply of all kinds of fertiliser for submission to the government, according to an official handout issued in the city yesterday.

The ministers for Agriculture and Industries and members of the Sangsad belonging to both Treasury and Opposition benches will be included in the committee later.

The meeting held discussion on the supply of fertiliser during the coming Boro season and expressed satisfaction over the present low average price of fertiliser as compared to that of the last year during this period.

Ctg: Murders

From Page 1

ters early this morning.

Talking to this correspondent SP of Chittagong Abdur Rauf said Krishna was taken to the Chittagong Medical College Hospital for medical examination.

Krishna was kidnapped by the terrorists while she was returning home last night from a cinema hall accompanied by her maternal uncle, the SP said.

Her maternal uncle rushed to the Hathazari thana and informed the police of the abduction of Krishna.

Thana police searched for Krishna the whole night but found her this morning.

A case was filed with Hathazari thana but none was arrested so far.

The medical test report will be given shortly, police said.

Robbery

Meanwhile, An employee of a petrol pump in the city was robbed of Tk 1,60,000 in the Tigerpass area today, police said.

According to Police, two armed snatchers riding a motorcycle attacked the employee at noon while he was carrying the money to deposit with a bank at Agrabad. The petrol pump employee was in another motorcycle.

A case was filed with Kotwali thana but none was arrested so far.

Terrorists

From Page 1

his two accomplices — Moon, 30, and Abul Kamal, 25 — with a loaded revolver.

On his confessional statement, police arrested two other associates of Shailla from Narda area in Gulshan thana later in the day and recovered eight tolas of gold ornaments from their possession which they robbed from a jewellery at Tongi last April.

They are Shahid alias Sharif and Ali Hossain.

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.

Second bridge

From Page 1

than five lakh people commute by boat from the area to the city, officials at the Babubazar Zinzira 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 Caissons 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."

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Indo-Russian defence pact without \$1.8b jet sale

NEW DELHI, Oct 23: India and Russia signed a defence co-operation agreement today but did not clinch a 1.8 billion US dollar warplane deal, a Russian embassy official said, reports Reuter.

The official said visiting Russian Defence Minister Igor Rodionov and Indian Defence Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav signed a pact to foster closer ties between the armed forces and periodic exchange of information on matters of military interest.

But the two could not reach an agreement on the widely reported 1.8 billion US dollar sale of 40 multi-purpose Sukhoi Su-30 jets.

The issue of sale of war-

planes to India definitely figured in the bilateral talks but the two countries could not come down to signing the deal, the Russian official told Reuters.

He declined to say if the issue was still open for future discussion or to comment further.

As the former Soviet Union's main non-communist ally, India was one of Moscow's biggest arms clients.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin visited India in January 1993, helping clinch a debt repayment pact covering money which New Delhi owed Moscow mainly for military purchases.

Relations soured again after the United States forced Moscow to cancel a 250 million US dollar sale of Cryogenic rocket engines on the grounds they could be used to build missiles.

But Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov's Indian visit last March helped revive relations.

During Primakov's visit, the two countries agreed to set up a hotline telephone link between New Delhi and Moscow for the leaders of the two countries to hold crisis talks.

Terrorists

From Page 1

later to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared him dead, hospital sources said.

Three of the five injured — Zahir, 24, Delwar, 25, and Shahidul, 26 — were admitted to the Narayanganj general hospital, said our Narayanganj correspondent quoting police.

According to local people, two rival groups were locked in a clash near a yarn mill in Ailpara of Pathantuli area, Khokhon, who reportedly belonged to a groups came under attack when he tried to settle the matter between the rival groups.

A case was lodged with Siddhirganj thana police added.

Capt Huda

From Page 1

killing of four national leaders in jail, arrested Nurul Huda from his house on Tuesday.

A day before, Shahana Begum, wife of Serniabat's son Chief Whip Abul Hasnat Abdullah, filed a case with Ramna police accusing four persons of killing her father-in-law and other family members.

The accused are: Major (retd) Shahriar, Major (retd) Aziz Pasha, Captain (retd) Mazed and Captain (retd) Nurul Huda.

Besides, Shahana mentioned that some unidentified people were also involved in the killing.

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Radio, TV channel

From Page 1

1996 he claimed, the electronic media was swarmed by people of a particular political party. After the elections, a number of presenters, producers and news readers were barred on the pretext of their affiliation with the previous ruling party and various other reasons.

Reazuddin Ahmed in his paper advocated free-flow of information in the electronic media and observed that such a situation was only possible if there is withdrawal of restrictions on setting up of private Radio and TV stations.

Atiqul Huq Chowdhury giving his long experience said TV had never been free of partisan control under different regimes since independence. He suggested private channels to function. He observed that parliament should approve a policy for electronic media and set up a committee for this purpose.

ABM Musa observed that the government-formed committee to examine autonomy of Radio and TV should have included experienced people in the field. It would have been better if such a committee was formed by parliament.

Khandaker Ali Ashraf said the tradition set during Ayub Khan's era is continuing in Radio and TV.

He suggested that the committee on autonomy of Radio and TV should have been formed with people from all shades of opinion.

Shafiqur Rahman, former general secretary of the Press Club, said autonomy for Radio and TV is a matter of time only. There will certainly be autonomy for the electronic media

One murdered in Beanibazar

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Oct 23: A young man was killed his cousin at Beanibazar thana this afternoon.

The victim, Abdul Hasib, 22 had an exchange of hot words with his cousin, Chunu Miah on erecting a bamboo frame. At one stage, Chunu allegedly hit Hasib with a piece of brick causing his instantaneous death.

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Interested persons may apply in plain paper by 10th November, 1996 to the following address for further information.

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Bangladesh Telegraph & Telephone Board

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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