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Down to Earth

Multi-Facets of Mess Life in City

By ASM Nurunnabi

Mess is an English word meaning a group of persons staying in the same quarters and take meals out of a common kitchen. It is a popular style of living of a good number of individuals in all urban areas. The members of a mess belong to different classes with a variety of social and financial backgrounds. This is the characteristic feature of mess life. On account of the large-scale popularity of the concept, mess life has almost acquired the character of an institution.

From a look at our social history, it will be seen that the mess system has its roots in the hoary past. Over the years as the pattern of urban life grew in scope and diversity, the mess system kept pace with it, particularly on account of the growing housing needs of the expanding urban population.

In the context of the Dhaka city, the development of the system in recent years has been phenomenal. It is difficult to estimate the total number of messes in the city, but at a guess, it can be said that the number may exceed a few thousands. Like city slums, it is always on the rise. Among the many areas where such a system is said to be operating, we may mention some of the main locations such as South Kamalapur, Mugdapara, Kathal Bagan, Mirpur, Arambagh, Rampura, Jatrabari, Fakirapul, Malibagh and in some areas of old Dhaka. There is no denying that these proliferating establishments go a long way in meeting the accommodation needs of a large number of low-income group people.

The majority of residents of such establishments comprise low-grade service holders with

Latif Siddiqui MP sued on charge of violence

TANGAIL, Aug 29: A case was filed here today against 14 people, including Abdul Latif Siddiqui MP, accusing them of resorting to violence and making an attempt on the life of a local labour leader, reports UNB.

The case was filed with Kalihati thana, making the local MP as the principal accused, police said.

They said a group of armed terrorists attacked Kalihati Thana Engineering Workers Union general secretary Abdul Malek at the union office at about 8:30 pm Thursday and chopped him with sharp weapons.

The attackers also blasted crackers and created panic in the area, leaving another labour leader, Haider Ali, seriously injured.

The miscreants again attacked the two labour leaders when they were being taken to Kalihati thana health complex and stabbed Malek indiscriminately.

Police rescued Malek in an unconscious state and sent him to Pangu Hospital in Dhaka.

Malek reportedly had an exchange of hot words with Latif Siddiqui MP during an inter-school football match at Kalihati High School playground on Thursday afternoon.

According to the case filed by Malek's wife Monowara Begum, associates of the ruling Party MP had threatened to kill him.

A tense situation was prevailing in the area.

JRC talks

From Page 1

According to international water-sharing rules, Bangladesh and India should get 33 per cent of the total flow each. But in the absence of any agreement, India is taking 85-90 per cent of the total flow in the lean period.

As a result of the unilateral withdrawal of the Teesta water by Indian authorities, Bangladesh is getting only 10-15 per cent (3,000-4,000 cusec). The lowest flow recorded on January 13 last was only 2,700 cusec.

But the country's largest irrigation project, the Teesta Barrage, constructed at a cost of Tk 1,000 crore, and its 34-kilometre main distribution canal need at least 8,000 cusec water in the lean season, the source said.

The total command area under the project is 7.5 lakh hectares of which 5.4 lakh hectares are under the irrigation network.

The source said if Bangladesh gets its due share of Teesta water, additional crops worth Tk 400 crore will be produced in the first phase and crops worth Tk 1,400 crore in the second phase.

ROK Vice FM due in city Sept 1

Ki Choo Lee, Vice Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea will arrive in the city on September 1 on a three-day visit to Bangladesh, reports BSS.

The Korean minister's visit is expected to elevate the existing ties between the two countries and give an impetus to expanding trade and economic relations.

During his stay, Ki Choo Lee will call on foreign and finance ministers. He is scheduled to visit Dhaka Export Processing Zone and Bangladesh-Korea Friendship Hospital in Savar.

In recent years, Korea has been a major source of overseas investment in Bangladesh.

Clinton-Gujral

From Page 1

the line of control (LOC) by Indian troops in Kashmir "are against the spirit of the dialogue," Sharif told a news conference in Quetta.

Sharif renewed an allegation that India has deployed missiles on the Pakistan border and said: "It is a matter of grave concern for us."

He vowed that the Pakistani armed forces were fully capable of meeting any threat to the country's security.

Foreign minister Gohar Ayub Khan told parliament on Thursday the Indians were sending "mixed signals" about the next round of talks scheduled for September in New Delhi.

JS: Women

From Page 1

in the male dominated parliament," Barrister Rabeya Bhuiyan, said speaking as chief guest at the seminar.

The seminar also discussed a draft bill, scheduled to be placed in the parliament by Rabeya Bhuiyan. The bill will seek no more than two hundred male members and no less than one hundred female members' in parliament.

Prof Nazma Chowdhury said women should have one third representation in the parliament. "It is high time for us to come forward and give due importance to women empowerment," she said.

Maleka Begum of Gana Shasthya said shortage of funds was the number one problem during election campaigns of women. "Women can not spend as much money as men can. This is a major obstacle for women candidates to win elections. So, I welcome the initiative of Rabeya Bhuiyan and give all our support for one third representation of women in parliament."

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JS session

From Page 1

ary Affairs Minister Abdul Matin Khasru told UNB that the ensuing session would be a session of legislation.

LRD Minister Zillur Rahaman said the two Local Government Bills would be placed and passed during this session to ensure elections to the village and Union Councils in December.

Some 1600 questions, 2300 resolution motions, 31 special privilege motions and three notices for general discussions were submitted by the ruling and opposition legislators, the sources said adding two previous amendment bills — President Award Fund (Amendment) and Drug Control Ordinance (Amendment) are expected to be tabled in this session.

Apart from legislative businesses, the current session is likely to witness some stormy scenes as it begins the sitting at a time when the opposition camp generated a lot of heat on the street.

The raise in fuel prices, alleged repression on opposition, and the law and order situation may figure prominently during this session.

Ruling Awami League and Opposition BNP will determine their strategies for this session at their respective parliamentary party meetings this afternoon.

The Business Advisory Committee on Thursday decided to hold general discussions on foreign policy, a terrorism-free society and fair price of jute.

Gene bank

From Page 1

have to be well prepared now to fight against rampant patentship of things. If North takes resources from us and develops things and again sells those to us in exchange of patent royalties, why should we lag behind in protecting our resources."

R K Arora, ---- talking to The Daily Star said, "IPGRI, founded in 1971 (previous name — International Board for PGR) was working for strengthening national programmes in member countries. About Bangladesh, Arora commented, "Here strengthening national programme is more a question of better coordination. You have some brilliant scientists and experts in this country."

In Bangladesh, there are genebanks in various agro-research institutions like — BIRRI, BAR and BARI. But, the scientist who attended the workshop that discussed some 28 research papers, felt the urgency of a national genebank so that local varieties are not lost for ever.

Conservation of rice varieties in the country started back in early '70s with the establishment of genebank for rice at BIRRI and the total collection reached up to 7,100 varieties. Agriculture Minister Begum Motia Chowdhury while inaugurating the workshop on Tuesday last had said that before the invent of high yielding varieties (HYVs), there were over 8,000 local varieties in '60s.

Zia was involved in plot to kill Bangabandhu: AL

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman yesterday alleged that former President Ziaur Rahman was involved in the conspiracy of the killing of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, reports BSS.

"He (Zia) not only protected Bangabandhu's self-confessed killers from legal action through the so-called indemnity Act, but also awarded them with diplomatic assignments," Rahman said.

"Through these activities, it appears that Zia was not only happy at the assassination of Bangabandhu but also backed the assassination plot," he added.

The Awami League leader said the earlier statements of the killers also substantiate the idea that Zia was involved in the plot.

He was addressing a discussion organised by BCL city unit (North) in observance of the month-long national mourning at the Shishu Academy auditorium. The meeting was also addressed by Awami League pre-

Shima's death

JS sub-committee to prepare final report formed

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Aug 29: A teenage boy drowned in a pond at Kastaghara area in the town this afternoon.

The dead was identified as Dharmajyoti alias Sumon, 16, son of Advocate Dhrubajyoti Shyam. Sumon passed SSC this year with star marks.

Sumon went to the pond to have a bath at about 5 pm after playing cricket on a nearby playground.

His body was recovered from the pond.

IOJ renews its programme to gherao TV bhaban

Islami Okya Jote (IOJ), at a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday afternoon, renewed its programme to gherao the TV Bhaban at Ramna on September 18, reports UNB.

The IOJ, an alliance of some smaller political parties and groups preaching Islamic ideology, observed the demonstration day yesterday to protest 'harassment' on its activists on August 22, the day it held a grand rally at Manik Mia Avenue.

Probe report

From Page 1

Officials said statements of journalists, police and some pedestrians who were present at the spot during the incident have been recorded. The committee is taking time in the hope of getting the statement of Habib who is now under treatment at the Combined Military Hospital here.

At one stage when the JP Chairman attempted to deliver his speech, a group of workers raised slogans and started shouting. The other group also raised counter-slogans, followed by brandishing of arms by both the groups. The pandemonium ensued when one group demanded that Sharifuddin be allowed to speak before Ershad, the sources said.

The situation was however brought under control by Ershad.

The meeting ended with a brief speech by Ershad calling upon party leaders and workers for unity.

Ershad

From Page 1

Rangpur Pourasava Chairman for long over leadership of the party in the district.

Workers of both groups were present there.

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Blackmail: 5 arrested in Narayanganj

"blackmailers" shut the door from outside.

After some time, Abul said, two people identifying themselves as police entered the room and threatened to arrest him on charge of anti-social activities. They also made him sign a blank sheet of paper and then took several photographs of him along with a girl.

He said he had paid them Tk 30,000 in two installments, but he came to the thana failing to arrange any more money as per the demand of the blackmailers.

Police suspected that the arrested are members of an organised group, involved in cheating people in various ways.

English

From Page 1

bers of parliament the country should concentrate on Indian sports like hockey and kabaddi — a territorial team game of tag — rather than cricket.

Yadav said cricket was a "Gulami (servitude) game" imposed on India by British colonialists.

The use of English in the Indian parliament, which has adopted Hindi as its official language, Hindi, spoken in the north but which bears little resemblance to southern languages, is the most widely spoken, by almost half the population.

English remains favoured among the country's affluent middle class.

Donors would enquire about the usual issues like the progress in reforms, particularly in the financial sector and the administration, and privatisation. Various other issues would come up for discussion.

sodium member Abdul Jalil, State Minister for Social Welfare Dr Mozammel Haq, Dr Mostafa Jalal Mohiuddin, Prof Abdul Mannan Chowdhury and BCL president Enamul Haq Shamim.

BCL city unit (North) president Mazhar Hossain was in the chair.

The Awami League General Secretary also urged the party and BCL workers to mobilise the people to carry forward the development activities of the government following the evil design of the anti-liberation forces.

He criticised BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia for backing these forces saying her (Begum Zia) husband had promoted the cause of anti-liberation forces secretly to establish his power base, but today she is aiding them openly to destabilise the country.

In this context, he referred to the recent hartals called by the BNP and extreme rightwing and religion-based parties to protest the ugly act of an Israeli woman and the fuel price refluxion.

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The badly damaged car of Shama.

— Star photo

Arsenic contamination
6 thanas in Chandpur worst affected

CHANDPUR, Aug 29: Arsenic problem has turned worse in the district as contents of arsenic have been detected in the waters of almost all tubewells in its six thanas.

They said without making an alternative arrangement for safe water, we cannot seal off many other tubewells where arsenic elements have been detected.

Due to lack of equipment to detect arsenic, Mainuddin said, scanning of tubewell waters cannot be carried out.

Everyday, a large number of people from remote areas come to the thana public health engineering offices with complaints of arsenic diseases, the engineers said.

Hajiganj thana public health engineer Delwar Hossain told UNB that 96 per cent of his thana's 3,000 tubewells have arsenic elements.

IFRCS Under Secy General due today

Margareta Wahalstrom, Under Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRCS) arrived in the city today, reports BSS.