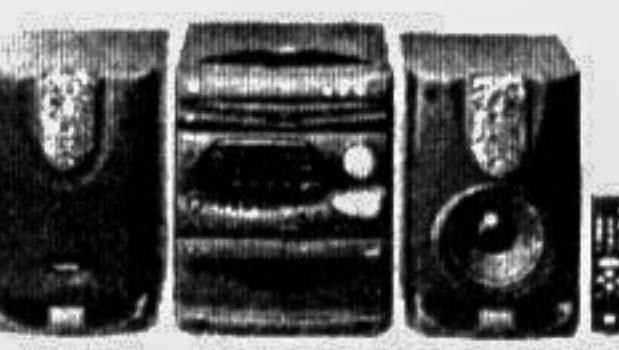


AEI

Bangladesh Air Express International Limited

PLEASE CONTACT:  
Head Office Tel : 9565114, Logistics Office Tel : 9884851, Fax : (880-2) 9886531, E-mail : dac@aeilogis.com  
Chittagong Office Tel : (031) 721085, Fax : (880-31) 710106, Internet : fedcp@spctnet.com.smtp.  
Air and Ocean-Forwarding • Customs Brokerage • Warehousing and Distribution • Express • NVOCC

Quality Worldwide Logistics



GIFT OFFER FROM PHILIPS

Hurry!!! while stocks last

Transcom Electronics Limited

Official licensee of Philips Electronics N.V. for lighting products, radio and TV sets  
Dhaka : 815307-10, 819625-9, 601594  
Ctg : 716353, 723578 Khulna : 720304, Bogra : 6215

Backed by  
Guarantee

Let's make things better

PHILIPS

## Down to Earth City's Shrinking Open Spaces

By A S M Nurunnabi

City's open spaces are shrinking frighteningly. Dhaka city once prided on its large open spaces, particularly in the Ramna area. In summer when its numerous *krishnachura* trees were in bloom, the entire area was filled with a riot of colour, as if on fire. With most of these trees gone now — victims of urban development — the vacant landscape excites nostalgic memories in old-timers. In winter also, the verdant area used to acquire a singular appeal as a mild nipp in the air merged with bright sunshine.

The old part of the city was also not without its open spaces previously. Though they seemed to meet the needs of that time, considering the low density of population in the past. Now most of the city's open spaces in old areas are either no longer available or have become haunts of anti-social elements.

In planning for a modern city, provisions are made for the recreational facilities or at least for large open spaces for its citizens. For the Dhaka city, such provisions may exist on paper, but such facilities are sadly lacking in reality.

In the context of our social ethos, the needs of the majority of the city's inhabitants are simple. They consist in some open spaces or parks for taking a breath of fresh air or for children to play and have fun. Now in the frenzy for rapid urban growth, these simple basic amenities are being eliminated or forgotten.

We need hardly emphasise that in the burgeoning growth of city life, the modern concept of civic space has assumed supreme importance. It conveys the existence of a place where city dwellers of all strata, irrespective of class, religion or age meet to socialise themselves with one another. Philosophically expressed, civic space may also be places where we can feel the earth beneath our feet and when earth yields beneath our feet, it gives us a unique feeling of pleasure which pavement never does. Such open spaces conceive the value and emotion of our urban people. They reflect

the image and quality of our people, enhance social interaction and consolidate our cultural and traditional homogeneity.

Unlike many European and American cities, there are in the city some designated civic spaces. They are mainly the Ramna Park, the Suhrawardy Udayan, Osmani Udayan and the Sangsabha Bhavan Plaza. These civic spaces, however, suffer from certain ills which detract from their attraction. We may look at the case of Ramna Park, for instance. This once truly beautiful tract of sylvan shades and the home of tall green trees is slowly but surely heading towards an uncertain future in order to make room for a swelling population and on account of the apparent caprice of myopic town planners. Hotel, tennis complex, mosque — all have chipped away from its spatial existence. Furthermore, the authorities are reportedly thinking of snatching more space from the park to accommodate new constructions. This trend of mindless expansion of the metropolis at the cost of the Ramna Park is very much galling.

Apart from the unregulated movement of anti-social elements within the periphery of these open spaces, some undesirable developments are also noted in these areas. In Suhrawardy Udayan, some portions have been taken away by some young men for their impromptu cricket playing which drives other visitors away from their attractiveness.

In this context, it is also felt that in the interest of city dwellers, the prime need is to ensure the adoption of appropriate measures to keep the existing open spaces free from encroachments of any kind and also to remain vigilant that the atmosphere there is not vitiated in any manner. The town planners may also give thought as to how, in view of the steady expansion of the city population, further projects may be taken up to broaden the scope of creation of more facilities for healthy activities in open space within the periphery of the city.

Of course, there is no denying that varieties of human events and activities have contributed to the evolution of



A big hole on the pavement outside the Secretariat building.

— Star photo

### 5 more killed in Kashmir violence

JAMMU, Jan 23: An army officer was among five people killed during a fierce clash between separatist rebels and the military in a mountainous area in the northern state of Jammu-Kashmir today, a military spokesman said, reports AP.

The four others killed during the fight were identified as rebels belonging to the Harkat ul-Ansar group, one of the dozen separatist militias operating in the area.

The fighting broke out when Indian troops tried to storm a hideout of the armed group in Keshwan town, 280 kilometers (175 miles) northeast of Jammu, and met with fierce resistance, the spokesman said. Jammu is the winter capital of the Himalayan state.

### Sunni protester

From page 1  
demonstrators and then fled before police could move in. A member of the paramilitary Frontier Corps was among the injured.

While no one has taken responsibility for the shooting, Hangu has a large Shi'ite population and militant members of the two sects have clashed in the past.

The authorities, however, have refused to lay blame and so far no arrests have been made.

The fighting broke out when Indian troops tried to storm a hideout of the armed group in Keshwan town, 280 kilometers (175 miles) northeast of Jammu, and met with fierce resistance, the spokesman said. Jammu is the winter capital of the Himalayan state.

## Nobody is happy under AL rule, says Khaleda

BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday called upon the people to be prepared to launch a greater movement to prevent the implementation of Chittagong Hill Tracts agreement, reports UNB.

The government wants to split the country through signing of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Agreement. "We cannot allow to split the country by implementing this agreement," she said addressing a pre-*iftar* meeting at Shiddeswary High School playground yesterday afternoon.

Begum Zia said Bangladesh will be fragmented into pieces if the agreement is implemented as similar demands would be raised from various parts of the country.

Reiterating her call to launch greater movement after the Eid-ul-Fitr, the Leader of the Opposition said BNP cannot allow anybody to give up the country's one-tenth of territory to the terrorists.

She said the country has to be protected from this 'terrorist' government as the country is not safe under the hands of the present regime.

Criticising the various provisions of CHT peace agreement Begum Zia said "It is the duty of all of us to protect the soil and the people of the country," this accord is a outcome of deep-rooted conspiracy against the country and its people.

Referring to the Ganges Water-sharing Treaty with India,

BNP chief said by signing the treaty the government has sacrificed the national interests as "we did not get the due share of water."

"Nobody is happy under the rule of present government. After taking power, this government could not render any remarkable service for people's welfare."

Begum Zia criticised the government for the dismal state of country's economy, trade and business, deterioration of law and order situation and price hike of essentials.

She said local industries are on the verge of ruination following unhindered entrance of cheap and inferior quality of Indian goods in the country.

The entire production system of the country has been affected by the loadshedding and smuggling, the BNP Chairperson said.

Begum Zia alleged that the government had thrown the farmers into a deep crisis by increasing the prices of fertiliser, fuel and other agricultural inputs.

Organised by Ramna and Tejgaon thana BNP, the meeting was presided over by Maj (retd) Abdul Mannan. Among others, Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Barrister Modub Ahmed, Begum Sarwari Rahaman, Sadeq Hossain Khoka, Mirza Abbas, Goyeshwar Chandra Roy and a large number of local party activists were present.

### Devalue Taka

From page 1

The meeting of exporters called for resolving congestion, go-slow and closure-like situation at the Chittagong Port within February 15 "through whatever means the government deems fit to bring the situation under control."

It also called for not harassing the exporters and not blocking the business of any running factory "under the group concept for defaulting by any project of a group."

The exporters resolved that exporters representatives would soon meet the parliamentary committee on Finance.

Those who spoke at the meeting included Monjurul Hoq, president, BKMEA, Anwar Hossain, president, Bangladesh Jewellery Exporter Association, Farid Uddin Ahmed, president, Bangladesh Fruits, Vegetable and Allied Products Exporters Association, MA Satter, chairman, Bangladesh Finished Leather Goods Exporters Association, M A Bhruoze Ispahani, president, Bangladesh Jute Mills Association, Najmul Huq, president, Bangladesh Jute Spinners Association, Rafiqul Islam, managing director, Wintex Garments Ltd, Golam Zakaria, managing director, Oasis Pvt Ltd, Atiqul Islam, director, Islam Garments Ltd, Md Shajahan, president, BTMA and Shafiqullah Chowdhury, president, Corrugated Carton Manufacturer Association and Golam Mostafa, president, Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association.

BGMEA 2nd vice-president Eng Nurul Haque Sikder, vice-president Abul Quasem Haider and Treasurer K M Zaman Romel, EC member Uzair Afzal FCA and Atiqul Islam as well as several other BGMEA members were present.

## PM offers fateha at Bangabandhu's mazar

TUNGIPARA, Jan 23: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina laid wreaths and offered *fateha* at the mazar of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman here today, reports UNB.

Hasina drove to her ancestral home at about 12.10 pm and offered *fateha* at the mazar of Bangabandhu seeking eternal peace of his departed soul.

Newly appointed whips Prof Khaleda Kanam and Mujibul Haq Mujib, Sheikh Helaluddin MP, Nur-e-Alam Chowdhury MP and Shahjahan Khan MP accompanied the Prime Minister.

Local Awami League leaders and workers and a huge number of people greeted the Prime Minister when she arrived at the mazar premises.

A *milad mahfil* was also held there after the Jumma prayers and *munajat* was offered for the peace, progress and prosperity of the country.

The Prime Minister will stay overnight here. She will distribute warm cloths among the destitute people tomorrow morning. She will return to the capital in the afternoon.

### Indian EC's love for animals

NEW DELHI, Jan 23: India's Election Commission ventured into animal rights today, ordering its officials in the eastern state of Bihar to stop a top politician from using pigeons in his campaign ads, reports AP.

Chief Election Commissioner M S Gill's orders followed complaints by animal rights activists about Rashtriya Janata Dal ads featuring photographs of pigeons with lanterns around their necks.

Rashtriya Janata Dal spokesman Shakeel Ahmed Khan welcomed the Election Commission's directive, saying an activist put up the posters at his own expense without the approval of the party. He said the party would ask the activist to remove the offending posters.

However, Khan said pigeons are traditionally seen as symbols of peace and he did not think it amounted to cruelty to the birds.

The Election Commission, charged with ensuring voting and campaigning is free and fair, has broad powers. Commission officials said today they wanted to phase out the use of any animals in political advertising, because it could lead to mistreatment of animals.

The lantern is the symbol of Laloo Prasad Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal. Party symbols appear alongside names on balloons in India, where nearly half the adults are illiterate.

Yadav remains one of the most powerful politicians in Bihar, even after stepping down as the state's top elected official because he had been charged with stealing state funds. Yadav had his wife replace him as chief minister.

In the last election in 1996, the same activist trained parrots to call out slogans in support of Yadav, again without the party's consent.

### Leopard

From page 1  
also tried to block its departure for Dhaka when doctor of Mirpur Zoo rushed there to bring it back. This delayed its arrival at the zoo.

Finally, it was brought to Dhaka from Sylhet Thursday night by a veterinarian of the zoo Dr Shahiduzzaman and his assistants.

"We have taken care of it as much as possible. It has no bad internal injuries, the leopard is likely to survive," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

The leopard shook off its tranquiliser-induced slumber yesterday morning, raising hopes among the zoo keepers that chances of its survival are fair.

Leopard is a protected animal as the species is on the verge of extinction.

It was not immediately known whether any one had been taken into custody for illegally trapping and torturing the animal.

Fourteen of them were interested to perform all the three functions of a merchant bank — issue management, underwriting and portfolio management. The rest were only seeking issue managers' licences.

Later, some other applications were filed.

These were sent to the PMO, which took about five months until releasing the files on Sunday last.



Palestinian boys in Damascus taking part in a protest to mark Jerusalem Day yesterday.

The day was declared in 1981 by Iran's late spiritual leader Ayatollah Khomeini who said Muslims should observe the last Friday of Ramadan to protest Israel's capture of Arab East Jerusalem in the 1967 Middle East War.

— AP/UNB photo

## Americans can stomach affair, not a lie

WASHINGTON, Jan 23: As details of an alleged White House affair dribbled out, many Americans were giving President Bill Clinton the benefit of the doubt but warned that there is only so much they can stomach, reports AP.

"I believe his behaviour was entirely inappropriate and stupid, if it's true," said Barbara Rhodie, 55, a film producer from Heathrow, Florida.

"It's true," said Jacki Brune, 31, of Los Angeles. "I think he should be impeached."

The buzz in bars, the talk on TV and the chatter in cafes across the country Thursday turned to the topic of Monica Lewinsky, a 24-year-old former White House intern and employee. She is said to have told a friend in secretly taped conversations that she and the president had an affair. But she later signed an affidavit in the Paula Jones sexual harassment case denying the affair.

"If it's true," said Jacki Brune, 31, of Los Angeles. "I think he should be impeached."

"Telling her to lie, that's what crosses the line," said Jamie Phace, 22, of Portland, Oregon.

Julie Roe, shopping at the Kirkwood Mall in Bismarck, North Dakota, said he should do his job, unless he lied under oath.

"Then he has to be impeached," Roe, 65, said. "He has to pay the consequences just like anybody else."

"Others were offended by Lewinsky's age and allegations

denied the affair and efforts to cover it up.

Polls immediately after the allegations became public suggested that a narrow majority of Americans were prepared to believe Clinton and Lewinsky had a sexual relationship. Still, most Americans said they didn't want Clinton out of office.

What has Americans most upset: The possibility that Clinton may have asked her to lie under oath. A quick ABC poll Wednesday night found that 53 per cent of those surveyed said Clinton should resign if he had an affair and told the woman to lie about it.

Attorney William Ginsburg also complained his client had been questioned in a hotel room for hours by FBI agents and prosecutors without an attorney to represent her.

"She has been targeted. She is a target," he told the Associated Press. A target, according to the manual used by federal prosecutors, is someone likely to be indicted.

Ginsburg said he is seeking a deal to gain immunity from prosecution for his client in exchange for her testimony. But Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr's investigators have rejected the idea.

"Their position is they are not going to give her immunity," he said.

A permanent platform for the off-shore gasfield is likely to be installed in a couple of months. It is now being constructed in Dubai, the sources said.

### Gas reserve

From page 1

Meanwhile, Cairn's drilling of an exploratory well in Rajan, Chittagong, is now in an advanced stage. Prospects of striking a gasfield there bright, sources said.

Cairn will drill four more off-shore wells around Sangu and two on shore wells in Chittagong. Extensive seismic data collection in blocks 15 and 16 is now underway.

If drilling of the off-shore wells increase the gas reserves of Sangu to Chittagong Gate would increase.

Construction of a gas processing plant by Cairn in Sylhet is nearing completion and it will go into operation by March.