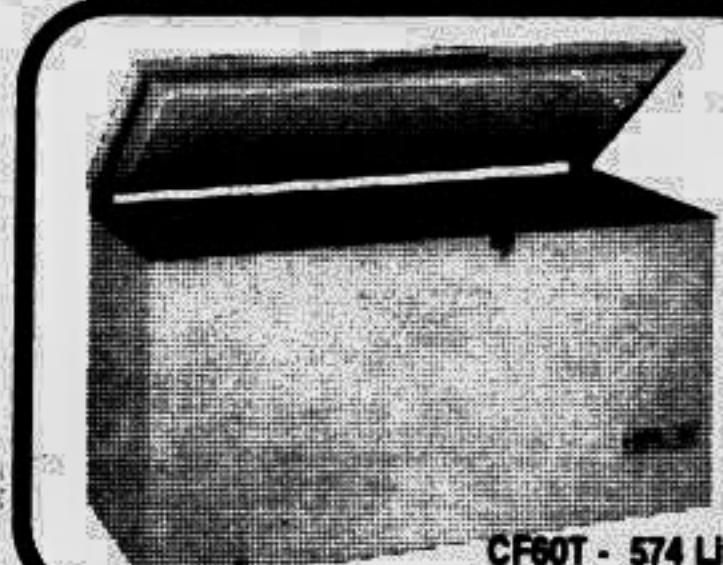




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Down to Earth The urban nucleus families

By A S M Nurunnabi

By nucleus families, we mean the small family units comprising husband, wife and their children. A nucleus family emerges mainly from the break-up of a joint family which had a long tradition of existence in our society but which has been gradually disintegrating, particularly in urban areas owing to various socio-economic factors.

From the earliest times, family has been the basic unit which has given protective cover to man to conduct his life, with all the beneficial implications inherent in ensuring security of life and living. Nowadays the institution of family is faced with multifarious problems. Particularly in urban areas where nucleus families have been increasingly confronting problems of civic insecurity, terrorism, road accidents, etc. which have assumed alarming proportions. Besides, in Dhaka city, under the pressure of mounting population, the housing problem has been steadily becoming acute, putting other ancillary facilities like recreational outlets, public transport, public utilities under severe strain.

Against this background, a research institute recently conducted a sample survey covering about 150 families in the city to get ideas about the reasons for their growth, their socio-economic and psychological problems and their total impact on the overall social ethos. The survey yielded some interesting aspects of our social life. The more important aspects of the result are outlined below.

It was revealed that in majority of cases, the compulsions of professions and occupations were cited as an important factor in their opting for their life and living in a nucleus family, breaking away from the joint family system. The growth of individualism among the members in a joint family is also a causative factor in the emergence of nucleus families.

The survey has shown that the husbands and wives are mostly educated. Though the percentage of educated women among them is high, their participation in economic activi-

ties is comparatively less pronounced. A majority of them are found to be housewives. In the matter of family income, all the surveyed families are comparatively in an easy financial position with some exceptions of cases suffering from the stress of rising prices. There are, however, some high income groups with a monthly income of Tk 50,000 and above.

Most of the nucleus families are found to live in rented houses, whereas 25 per cent of them have their own houses. The number of families who live in houses provided by government or their appointing authorities is relatively small.

Most of such families are found to suffer from fear of social insecurity. The insecurity mainly relates to apprehend thefts or burglary, hijacking on roads and safety of their children while going to and coming from school.

The parents of nucleus families experience problems when they together plan outing for purposes like visiting friends and relatives, attending marriage receptions, etc. On such occasions, a large part of them take their children with them, while a smaller part leave their children with their relatives or servants.

Most of such families are found to be deprived of institutional recreation facilities. A large part of them depend on TV and radio as means of their recreation, while a smaller proportion find recreation in visiting friends and relatives.

Since the majority of such families previously used to live with their fathers and mothers in joint family, some heads of nucleus families continue to share some part of the financial burden of their parents on regular or non-regular basis.

As for the benefits accruing from living in a nucleus family, the majority of such families cite individual freedom for the members, financial adequacy, and proper care and attention for their children. Among the disadvantages, the majority mention lack of proper security for their homes and children in their absence, while a smaller number indicate problems in

taking proper care of their children.

It is not possible to lose sight of the fact that the emergence of nucleus families mainly in urban areas is an inexorable phenomenon of social evolution in modern times. As such it seems necessary to focus our attention on those aspects which may ensure security and fruitful life pattern for a nucleus family.

Keeping these considerations in view, sociologists make suggestions which include the following. The housing problem poses a serious cause for worry for most of the city's nucleus families. To mitigate this problem, as far as possible, measures may be taken both at government and non-government levels to make provisions for housing at affordable prices.

Since such families suffer widely from feelings of insecurity, it is felt necessary that effective steps be taken to improve the law and order situation in order to create proper security image for all citizens.

The problems faced in taking care of the children when both the parents of a nucleus family need to remain outside for their occupations or other business may be tackled if more day-care centres for children of satisfactory standards are set up in different localities of the city. The parents of such families may not grudge reasonable expenditure for taking advantage of the services of the day-care centres if such centres are able to offer proper standard of care for their children.

The sample study of city's nucleus families reveals some basic trends in our present socio-economic scenarios. This trend seems inevitable in the fast growing urbanisation of life which requires suitable adjustments in our life style. The examples in other modern societies both in western and eastern countries may serve as our guide in coping with the problems faced in such societies. In emulating their examples, the important point to remember is that we follow the positive aspects of those societies keeping intact our own old good values which have stood the test of time.



Police searching the damaged room of the Dental College hostel after bomb explosion yesterday. — Star photo

Bomb blast in Dental college hostel room

By Staff Correspondent

A bomb was exploded inside a room of dental college dormitory at Sobhanbagh in Mohammadpur thana area in the city yesterday afternoon.

According to police none was hurt in the explosion which damaged the walls on the fourth floor of the dormitory at about 1:30 pm.

Police seized a revolver and ten bullets from the room (number 509) after the explosion.

Locals alleged that a gang of local miscreants under the shelter of a local political leader used that room. The gang used to take shelter inside it after committing crimes in the area.

Police said that room no 509 was not allocated to any one. But several people used the room regularly.

A case was lodged with Mohammadpur thana in this connection, but police were yet to arrest anyone till filing of this report last night.

Mannan Bhuiyan

From page 1
Janakantha office and the case was filed after his visit.

The cases filed against BNP leaders including Anwar Zahid and Sadek Hossain Khoka clearly proved that the attacks were pre-planned and conspiratorial, he added.

Bhuiyan said it was clear that Juba League 'terrorists' who attacked BNP procession and fired at Begum Zia's car attacked the Janakantha office.

He demanded immediate release of Anwar Zahid and withdrawal of 'false cases' against BNP leaders and activists.

Presided over by city BNP Convenor Sadek Hossain Khoka the meeting was also addressed by, among others, Tariqul Islam, Mirza Abbas, Nazrul Islam Khan, Fazlur Rahman Patal, Abdu Salam, Jamil Sharif Hiru and Taksir Hossain Jashim.

Sadek Hossain Khoka said BNP believes in democratic and constitutional movement and it never allows any attack on newspaper office. He alleged that hired goons of the ruling party attacked the BNP procession and the Janakantha office.

Later, a procession was brought out from the rally venue. Participated by leaders and activists of BNP and its front organisations, the procession terminated in front of the party central office at Nayapatan.

He added : An opinion poll published today predicts Sonia Gandhi will lose her first bid for public office.

If Sonia loses from the Beliary parliamentary constituency in the southern state of Karnataka, it would be the election's biggest upset, as her Congress party has won every election in the district since India's independence five decades ago.

Sonia is the president of the Congress Party and its most likely choice for prime minis-

ter. However, under India's parliamentary system, she first must win a seat in parliament to be a contender for the top post.

To help ensure her election, she is also running from a second district, Amethi, in Uttar Pradesh state. Her husband, who was assassinated, had run from Amethi. But it was seen as less secure than Bellary because the Congress Party candidate selected by Sonia to run last year lost.

According to the poll published in the Times of India newspaper, Sonia's opponent, Sushma Swaraj of the Bharatiya Janata Party, was projected to win 61 per cent of the vote, and Sonia, 37 per cent. The poll said 11 per cent of the voters were undecided.

Meanwhile, the chief cleric of New Delhi's largest mosque asked the capital's Muslims today to reject the Congress Party in voting because it had failed to resolve the myriad problems facing the community.

The imam's directive, delivered in a fiery sermon to 4,000 worshippers during Friday prayers, will reduce the chances of a Congress win in the city of 12 million, where Muslims have contributed to the party's electoral successes in the past.

Today, we have to seriously think what the Congress Party has given Muslims," said Syed Ahmed Bukhari in his hour-long sermon. "My answer is deprivation, injustice, poverty, unemployment and political and religious persecution."

Reuters from Srinagar adds : Indian police placed senior leaders of Kashmir's main separatist alliance under house arrest today as a precautionary measure ahead of parliamentary polls.

"For precautionary measures, most of the Hurriyat leaders — including Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Umar Farooq, Moulana Abbas Ansari and Shabir Ahmad Shah — have been put under house arrest," a police official said.

30 drowned in boat capsized

Flood situation in Bihar grim

Bhagalpur-Sahebganj road in a stretch of two kilometres near Trimohan village under Kahalgaon sub-division in Bhagalpur district.

Ganga was flowing 24 cm above the danger mark at Kahalgaon and was still maintaining rising trend posing fresh threat to vast areas in Bhagalpur and Kathiawar, the sources said.

Other major rivers like Gandak, Burhi Gandak, Kosi, Mahananda, Bagmati and Adhara group of rivers maintained tremendous pressure on their embankments, they said claiming that flood-fighting operations continued on a war-footing to prevent breach and check erosion.

Nearly five million people continue to reel under the impact of floods in more than 3200 villages spread over 21 districts in north and central Bihar. Standing crops and other property worth over Rs 60 crore, have so far been destroyed in the current spell of floods.

Result today
East Timor braces for more violence

DILI (EAST TIMOR) Sept 3: East Timor braced for more violence with the announcement tomorrow of the result of a ballot on independence, an option fiercely opposed by pro-Jakarta militiamen who now control much of the territory, report agencies.

The result is expected to show overwhelming support for independence, but pro-Jakarta militiamen have been waging a campaign of terror against East Timorese who want to sever links with Indonesia.

Anti-independence militiamen occupied towns and villages across East Timor today and police evacuated dozens of UN staff workers from one of the many areas that were under siege by the marauding gangs.

"They are burning everything. They don't respect anything. They are out of control. They are crazy," said one of the 54 United Nations workers who returned to Dili, the territorial capital, from the town of Maliana, southwest of the capital. He spoke on condition of anonymity, saying he feared reprisals.

"Indonesian police are doing nothing to stop the violence," said another evacuated UN worker, American David Peace.

Forty of the evacuated staffers were foreigners acting as liaison officers or civilian police. The rest were East Timorese.

Earlier story on page 5

Israel says peace deal near, Arafat denies any accord

JERUSALEM, Sept 3 : Israel said today it was set to sign an elusive peace deal with the Palestinians after resolving a bitter dispute over prisoner releases, but PLO leader Yasser Arafat denied there was any agreement, reports AFP.

"We are very close to reaching a final agreement with the two sides for the betterment of the peace process and there is no doubt about the implementation of Wye from Israel's point of view," Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy said.

"It could be that we will conclude it today," Levy said at a press conference with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, but he said the signing would likely be delayed until after the Jewish Sabbath tomorrow evening.

Prime Minister Ehud Barak's office said later that a deal would "probably" be signed tomorrow, with both Israeli and Egyptian officials saying the ceremony would likely take place in the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh.

It would be the first firm agreement reached with the Palestinians since Barak took office in July pledging to forge peace with the Jewish state's Arab neighbours.

The apparent breakthrough

came after three weeks of fraught on-again-off-again negotiations which were deadlocked over the issue of Palestinian prisoner releases and the timetable for talks on a final peace deal.

But Arafat later sparked confusion when he went back on a statement that an agreement on a revised Wye River accord would be signed in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh as possible venue.

Two senior Israeli officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the prisoner issue was settled after the Palestinians accepted an Israeli offer to free 350 Palestinians held for anti-Israeli activity. The Palestinians had earlier insisted on the release of 400 security prisoners.

The officials said Israel and the Palestinians were still apart on one issue — a clause in the emerging accord barring both sides from taking unilateral actions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The dispute over the prisoners had drawn Albright into a shuttle diplomacy she never sought. She held talks Thursday in Alexandria, Egypt, with Arafat, and in Jerusalem early today with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak to try to resolve the issue.

Earlier, MENA quoting Arafat said, an agreement was reached on all points, according to AP.

No compromise with illegal occupants of land: Nasim

Home Minister Mohammad Nasim yesterday said the government would rescue the capital from the grip of terrorists and illegal drug dealers by gradually removing slums, reports UNB.

"Dhaka city and its inhabitants cannot be kept hostage in the hands of a few terrorists, extortionists and phenydiel dealers," he told a function at Khilgaon Pallima Sangsadsa in the evening.

The Home Minister said he would go ahead with eviction operation by showing respect to the High Court observations and assured that the government had undertaken massive rehabilitation and housing schemes for the poor and slum-dwellers outside the capital.

"We are not against the poor, our politics is for the cause of the poor people, but we won't compromise with illegal occupants, terrorists and drug dealers," he said.

Referring to opposition from some quarters to the eviction of slums, the Home Minister said a vested group in their own interest arranged funds from donors by showing misery of the slums-dwellers, projecting Bangladesh as a nation of beggars and slums without changing condition of the hapless people.

Editor : Mahfuz Anam

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Kibria

From page 1
Finance Minister, ICC president Dr BK Bangur and BCCI president Dr Bhaskar Banerjee emphasised the need for development of regional framework for promoting cooperation among the countries of this region, including Bangladesh.

They underlined the need for more cooperation in areas of tourism, transfer of information technology and joint ventures in various fields, specially agro-based industry.

Bangladesh High Commis-

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Sept 3: Bangladesh Chhatra League Rajshahi Medical College (RMC) unit president, S M Asjad Hasan Ashraf was shot by some unidentified miscreants on the college campus in the early hours.

RMC sources said, a group of miscreants equipped with firearms knocked the door of his room in Teachers' Building No 6 at about 4 am.

When Ashraf came out of the room, the miscreants fired at him and fled the scene, leaving him injured.

He was operated upon at the surgical unit in RMC. His condition was stated to be critical.

The motive behind the attack could not be known.

Meanwhile, RMC sources said, the attack was a sequel to the ongoing intra-party feud on formation of a new committee.

A tense situation is prevailing on the RMC campus. No case till now has been filed in this connection at 9:15 pm.

Sports Reporter

South Korea U-18 team taught Rio de Janeiro Soccer Federation, a sub standard team from Brazil, a good lesson on how to play soccer when they handed them a 0-2 defeat in their last group B match played at the floodlit Bangabandhu National Stadium last evening.

The young lads from South Korea, with their second win in a row, became the last team to book a berth in tomorrow's semi-finals. They will take on arch rivals Japan in the second semi-final scheduled for a 6 pm start.

The winners led the first half 1-0.

Striker Lee Chun Sun, who scored four goals including a hat trick in his team's 7-2 drubbing of Thailand in the first match, put the youthful Koreans ahead in the 44th minute following a brilliant solo run. The tall forward dodged past two Rio defenders before placing the ball home (1-0).