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# Down to Earth

## Of banner & graffiti galore in city

By A S M Nurunnabi

Banners seem to form an indispensable part of urban culture. They have mainly commercial and political ends to meet.

The banners carrying commercial messages are often found to be seasonal. For example, with the advent of the academic year for schools, we find a marked change in the city's landscape.

Banners advertising admissions to English medium private schools are found aplenty. The profession is particularly noticeable in some select areas of the city. The English medium schools are in no way an economically easy proposition for the parents of the children attracted by such advertisements.

Yet the large number of banners advertising such schools on city streets seems to convey the impression that whatever the qualitative nature of such schools, they are an indication of a thriving business.

Besides the English medium schools, the street banners cover a wide range of subjects, notably training in different computer courses, training in different technical trades, competitive claims of excellence by different coaching centres for admission to different courses of study at universities, medical and engineering colleges and other technical centres, etc.

Display of banners announcing reduction sales of consumer items at some shopping establishments, etc. is endemic throughout the year, but at times of festivals, they take an euphoric form. The prospective buyers are bewildered by such publicity campaign and are unable to decide whether there is actually any reduction in prices or they are merely eye wash.

From the large volume of banners used for various purposes in the city, it may be felt that banner painting must be a big business. It does not seem to be less lucrative than signboard painting. One reason for widespread use of banners as a medium of publicity may that they attract more public attention for long periods at lesser costs. Of course when there are heavy rains or storms, they are liable to be damaged.

The indispensability of banners is also obvious for several purposes. When processions and rallies are organised, a few banners carrying slogans of the sponsoring agencies and their purposes are an absolute necessity. Even when symposia and seminars are held indoors, a big banner identifying the occasion is placed behind the rostrum. This helps photograph the occasion for the purpose of publicity.

The banners constitute a characteristic aspect of the city landscape. Though they somewhat clutter the lower airspace their function as eye-catching medium of publicity cannot be underestimated. As such a rising trend of their use is inevitable for various purposes.

Graffiti or wall-writing has a long tradition in our country. The tradition has, however, worked as a drag on the clean facade of an urban area. Graffiti is resorted to mainly for conveying political messages and slogans. It has become so pervasive that it constitutes one of the distressing aspects of our city life. The abominable disfiguration of the city's walls and buildings that it entails is a constant eyesore. It was generally observed previously that these wall-writings were often executed in a crude manner with unsymmetrical and rough formation of the alphabetical letters carrying the messages. Lately some improvement is noticeable in this respect. This seems to be due to the factor that nowadays most of the wall-writings are done with the help of ready-made metal castings containing the alphabetical letters.

Whatever forms the wall-writings take, either crude or improved, the city landscape invariably suffers from their existence. Since there appear to be no rules or regulations either



Connoisseurs appreciate a painting by renowned artist Shahabuddin Ahmed at a solo exhibition at Designer's Den Art and Fashion Gallery at Gulshan in the city yesterday.

## Shahabuddin's show at Designer's Den

By Staff Correspondent

Top Bangladeshi artists, art critics, art collectors and local and foreign dignitaries were present at the inaugural ceremony of the solo exhibition of the renowned artist Shahabuddin Ahmed at Designer's Den Art and Fashion Gallery at Gulshan in the city yesterday evening, bringing into fore some of his recent works.

The exhibition drew a large number of art lovers who also came to have a glimpse of the artist who recently turned 50.

Late minister for youth, culture and sports Obaidul Quader presided over the opening ceremony of the solo exhibition. French Charge de Affaires Jean-Guy de Wargny and Managing Director of Graameen-Phone Trond Moe were also present as the special guests.

Quader, paying rich tribute to Shahabuddin, said he has received innumerable honours and accolades both in Bangladesh and abroad. The fact that his works were displayed in the 1988 Seoul and 1992 Barcelona Olympics bears testimony to his brilliance, he added.

The minister also said Shahabuddin took part in the War

## 'Hands of terrorist much longer than law's'

By Staff Correspondent

Naznin Akhter, elder sister of university student Rubel who was killed in police custody, yesterday said people need security of life prior to rights to vote and food.

"What shall we do by establishing rights to vote and food if there is no security of life? Rights to vote and food are meaningless if there is no guarantee of life."

Addressing a discussion on "Insecurity in civil society and ways of resistance", organised by human rights organisation Jana Odhikar at the Central Public Library, Naznin said a number of innocent people were killed in police custody even after the murder of Rubel.

Shamim Reza Rubel, a meritorious BEA student at the Independent University, was beaten to death in the custody of Detective Branch police on July 23 last year.

Naznin Akhter, a Lecturer in Economics at Purana Paltan Girls' Degree College, in her emotion choked voice also gave an elaborate description how brutally police tortured her younger brother in front of family members.

"After Rubel's death, a judicial commission was formed. But no recommendation of the commission has yet been implemented. It was completely an eye-wash", she observed.

"After his killing, police filed eight false cases against Rubel with the motive to identify him as a terrorist, snatcher and armed hoodlum.

The cases proved false, but no action has been taken against the persons who filed those, she alleged.

"Many people talk of democracy and rule of law but these are not for the commonman in our country", she lamented.

"Hands of terrorists are much longer than law's", she said citing examples of some recent killings in custody, including that of Jalal after Rubel's death.

"The police force is now being used for political purposes, and party and even personal interests."

Describing her experience as regards trial of the Rubel murder case, Naznin Akhter said, "We went to most of the reputed lawyers, but none came forward to help us as we did not have enough money. Instead, the lawyers sided with them (killers) because they have money."

"Even we assured lawyers to give Taka one lakh on instalment basis, but this also did not work."

"Democracy and rule of law are false things to our family members now."

Speaking on the occasion, Nasima Islam, widow of veteran workers' leader late Tajul Islam, alleged that the state failed to ensure trial of the killers of her husband.

"Though my husband was killed about 15 years ago, I am still haunted by the panic that befell on my family on February 29, 1984. Today my sons have become adult, but they are still scared. None can feel secure after seeing the killing of innocent student Rubel."

Demand trial of the killers of Rubel and Tajul, poet Farhad Mazhar said, expecting trial of the state is meaningless because the existing state structure is faulty.

## 8000 troops pull out of East Timor Advance peacekeeping team due today

JAKARTA, Sept 17: The Commander of the UN force heading for East Timor, Major General Peter Cosgrove, is expected to arrive in the territory tomorrow, a spokesman for Indonesia's armed forces said.

"Peter Cosgrove will come to Dili on Saturday to talk with Major General Syahnakri in detail on the steps for handing over the job," chief military spokesman Major General Sudrajat told Reuters.

The brigades, each of about 2,000 soldiers, were identified as coming from the marines and the air force's special forces. The statement said police officers still in East Timor would also be withdrawn from the territory, although it did not say when.

Captain Gig Sipasulta from the East Timor Martial Law Military Command said today that 5,000 locally-raised East Timorese security forces had been withdrawn.

"We pulled them out in order to minimize the possibility of conflict," he told the agency.

The withdrawal still continues today and is expected to continue until the arrival of the peacekeeping force.

The Military Command has said the Indonesian armed forces will coordinate with the UN multinational force over their withdrawal.

Military officials said earlier that 5,000 locally-raised

## IAB letter to Rajuk Computerise archive to prevent theft of files

By Staff Correspondent

The Institute of Architects, Bangladesh (IAB) has urged Rajuk to computerise its archive section to prevent theft of important files.

The IAB, the apex body of professional architects in the country, said this in recent letters to the Rajuk Chairman and the Ministry of Public Works to contain increasing irregularities in building construction and town planning.

It is alleged that documents on illegally approved building plans and unauthorised buildings often get missing from Rajuk. Lack of documentation hampers legal action against the offenders.

"Site Inspection Report, particulars about the plan approval process and the copy of the approved plan, all have to be stored in computer," the letter said.

The IAB letter also put forward a set of suggestions which include publication of building construction laws in different newspapers in a reader friendly language.

IAB President Rabul Husain also emphasised the need for strict implementation of existing laws rather than enacting new ones. "The Building Construction Act gives Rajuk the power to demolish unauthorised buildings or those constructed deviating from plans, without going to court. If an architect or engineer is found involved in any such irregularity, Rajuk can bar him from preparing plans and inform respective professional organisations for taking action."

To stop unauthorised construction and deviation from plans, steps must be taken to disconnect gas, electricity, water and telephone lines from any building whose plan has been cancelled.

The IAB has also urged Rajuk to publish addresses and details about newly approved plans for high rise buildings in daily newspapers regularly. It also urges the authorities to publish the address of any building whose plan has been cancelled.

By doing this, Rajuk can greatly help create a social resistance against unauthorised construction.

## Wall collapse: One killed, 10 hurt in Ctg

From Our Correspondent  
CHITTAGONG, Sept 17: One woman was killed and 10 others were injured when the wall of a dilapidated house collapsed during repair work at Dewan Bazar under Kotwali thana in the city this afternoon.

The victim was identified as Suraya Khanam, 30.

The wall collapsed at around 2.30 pm, injuring 11 people including Suraya Khanam who was waiting for a baby-taxi, standing beside the wall. She died on way to hospital.

Of the injured, three were admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital in critical condition.



## জাতীয় বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি জাদুঘর আগারগাঁও, শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা

### "তরুণ ও অপেশাদার বিজ্ঞানীদের উদ্ভাবিত প্রকল্প উন্নয়ন"

প্রকল্পের আওতায় ১৯৯৯-২০০০ আর্থিক বছরে মেধাবী দরিদ্র উদ্ভাবক ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের শিক্ষা বৃত্তি প্রদান

জাতীয় বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি জাদুঘর পরিচালিত "তরুণ ও অপেশাদার বিজ্ঞানীদের উদ্ভাবিত প্রকল্প উন্নয়ন" প্রকল্পের আওতায়

- ৬ষ্ঠ শ্রেণী থেকে ১০ম শ্রেণীতে অধ্যয়নরত ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদেরকে জুনিয়র গ্রুপে এবং একাদশ শ্রেণী ও তদউর্ধ্ব অধ্যয়নরত ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদেরকে সিনিয়র গ্রুপে এক বছরের জন্য বৃত্তি প্রদান করা হবে।
- বৃত্তির হার প্রতিমাসে জুনিয়র গ্রুপে ২০০/- টাকা এবং সিনিয়র গ্রুপে ৩০০/- টাকা।
- জাতীয় বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি সত্ত্বা অথবা অন্য কোন জাতীয় বা আন্তর্জাতিক বিজ্ঞান প্রদর্শনীর উদ্ভাবনীমূলক প্রকল্প প্রতিযোগিতায় অংশগ্রহণকারী মেধাবী দরিদ্র উদ্ভাবক ছাত্র-ছাত্রীরাই আবেদন করতে পারবে।

উল্লেখিত শর্তপূর্ণকারী আগ্রহী ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের নিকট থেকে নিম্নের তথ্যাদিসহ সাদা কাগজে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

(১) আবেদনকারীর নাম (২) পিতার নাম (৩) ঠিকানা (৪) পেশা (৫) শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা (৬) প্রকল্পের নাম ও চিত্রসহ বর্ণনা।

দরখাস্ত আগামী ২৭শে সেপ্টেম্বর, ১৯৯৯ তারিখের মধ্যে নিম্নস্বাক্ষরকারীর নিকট পৌঁছাতে হবে।

নির্বাচিত প্রকল্পসমূহের উদ্ভাবকদেরকে বিশেষজ্ঞ বিজ্ঞানী/প্রযুক্তিবিদদের সরাসরি তত্ত্বাবধানে স্ব প্রকল্প উন্নয়ন করতে হবে।

তিন মাসের মধ্যে প্রকল্প উন্নয়নের কাজ সমাপ্ত করতে হবে।

প্রকল্প উন্নয়নকালে উদ্ভাবকদেরকে নিজ ব্যবস্থাপনায় ঢাকায় অবস্থান করতে হবে।

প্রকল্প উন্নয়নকালে উদ্ভাবকদেরকে প্রতিমাসে ২০০০/- টাকা হারে ভাতা দেয়া হবে।


প্রাথমিকভাবে বাছাইকৃত আবেদনকারীদেরকে আগামী ২১ অক্টোবর '৯৯ তারিখের (সম্ভাব্য) মধ্যে সাক্ষাৎকার গ্রহণের জন্য পত্রের মাধ্যমে আহ্বান করা হবে।

মোঃ হাবিবুর রহমান চৌধুরী  
পরিচালক  
ফোনঃ ৯১১২০৮৪, ৯১১৪১২৮

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## জাতীয় বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তি জাদুঘর

আগারগাঁও, শেরেবাংলা নগর, ঢাকা

### "তরুণ ও অপেশাদার বিজ্ঞানীদের উদ্ভাবিত প্রকল্প উন্নয়ন"

শীর্ষক প্রকল্পের আওতায় ১৯৯৯-২০০০ আর্থিক বছরে তরুণ ও অপেশাদার উদ্ভাবকদের সম্ভাবনাময় প্রকল্পসমূহের মান উন্নয়ন করা হবে।

আগ্রহী উদ্ভাবকদের নিকট থেকে নিম্নের তথ্যাদিসহ সাদা কাগজে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

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- নির্বাচিত প্রকল্পসমূহের উদ্ভাবকদেরকে বিশেষজ্ঞ বিজ্ঞানী/প্রযুক্তিবিদদের সরাসরি তত্ত্বাবধানে স্ব প্রকল্প উন্নয়ন করতে হবে।
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