

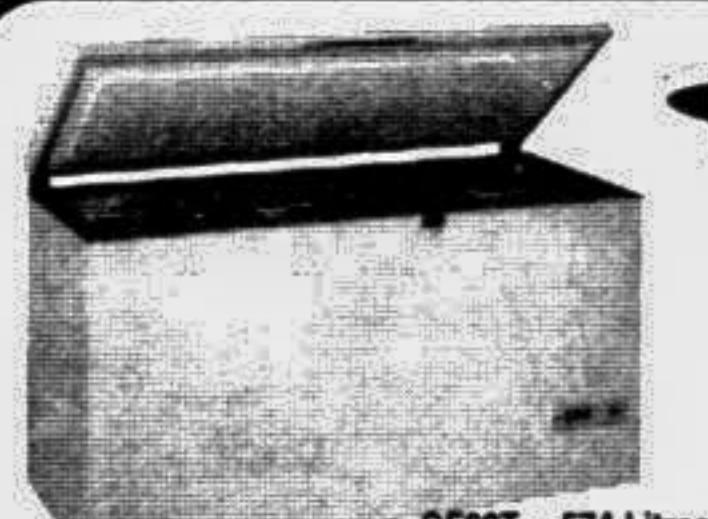


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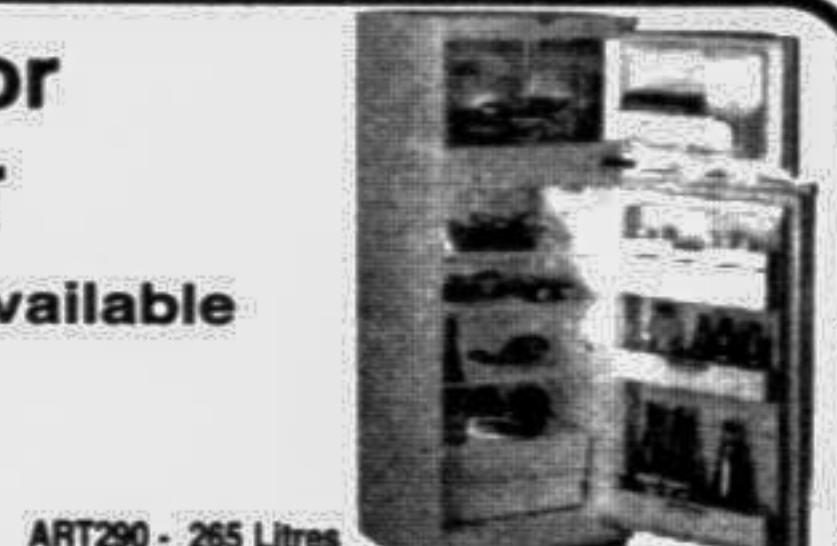


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Down to Earth

Vestiges of old Facilities on Buriganga River

By A S M Nurunnabi

The Buriganga river at present is in terrible straits on account of various factors. Yet on this wretched stretch of the polluted river, vestiges of some old practices still continue for those who, of necessity, have to use them.

Take for instance, the floating hotels on water front of the river, located near Wiseghat. Such floating hotels, which form a characteristic feature of the city life, are now much reduced in number, standing among a medley of water vessels of various sizes — uncoveted and covered boats, cargo boats, speed boats, tugs, motor launches, tankers, etc. In the foreground, however, the conspicuous existence of some house-boats cannot be missed. These serve as popular floating restaurants-cum-residential hotels catering meals from early morning till midnight.

These houseboats serving as eating houses are unadorned, lacklustre and mostly worn out with their existence dating back almost half a century. According to a source well acquainted with situations at such hotels, the Muslim hotels get more customers than any other time of the year, particularly prior to the important festivals of Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha.

A substantial number of customers here are transit passengers staying for a day or two or even for shorter duration before they undertake onward journeys. There are also boarders who stay for some days in connection with their cases before civil courts. Besides such common visitors, people come in large numbers at the lone Hindu hotel here at the time of Langalbandhi Mela on the Sitalakhya river near Narayanganj.

A knowledgeable old timer of the city said these eating houses had emerged after the partition of the sub-continent in 1947. The income which keeps them in trade comes from the sale of cooked foods — mainly rice, vegetables, pulses and fish curries. Diners mostly belonging to the modest income bracket — hawkers, small retail-

ers, manual labourers and so on — are regular customers here. Items of eatables served at these establishments are comparatively cheap because of lower standard of ingredients used for preparation of the food items.

A typical houseboat used as a hotel has a dining room where about 12 persons can have their meals at a time. Normally 40 feet long and 12 feet in breadth, it has double decks. There are other smaller floating hotels, moored in the vicinity of the river bank, immediate surroundings of which are far from happy. Dirt, filth and garbage of every description define their location. Getting to one of them or disembarking from them is precarious owing to unstable wooden planks used by customers at those boats. Owners of these hotels face various problems, the chief among them is periodic visitation by mastans who seek to enjoy themselves for sometime on board with their questionable companions.

There are other major river terminals such as those at Goalundo, Narayanganj, Chandpur, Nagarbari, Barisal and Bahadurabad. But nowhere any floating restaurants and hotels can be seen, except at Wiseghat in Dhaka. Because of construction of the long wall along the bank known as the Buckland Bund, most of the floating hotels anchored there are not visible from the road. The existing floating hotels are now a minority — remnant of the once brisk hotel business for customers of small means in the early part of the fifties.

They have now almost ceased to be objects of curiosity and novelty among the city dwellers.

In the opinion of observers, if we are true to our tradition and heritage, these ignored and neglected ramshackle floating hotels could be made attractive by imaginative entrepreneurs if they carry out some innovations on modern lines. With better cuisine and other necessary facilities, some such boats could be developed into fine mo-

sters.

Petrobangla clarifies

By Staff Correspondent

Petrobangla in a clarificatory item on 'Growing disinterest in exploration work: Oil cos relinquish half of blocks 13, 14 and 16' published on November 5, said that the PSC contractors

relinquished the areas as part of a normal practice of the PSC.

The allocated area is to be relinquished in stages on fulfilment of the work obligations under the PSC. The relinquished area, in turn, may be opened for fresh oil and gas exploration under separate PSC.

The acting VC said the university would be reopened as early as possible. He might call an emergency meeting of the Syndicate soon to finalise the date of reopening, he added.

"This ensures proper attention by the contractor for implementing the PSC obligation and safeguards the interest of the host country against wilful negligence in carrying out the exploration work by the contractor," it added.

"We are very fed up with the frequent shutdown as it is doing harm to the academic activities," resented Ranjan Ali Tanveer, whose Honors final year examinations could not be held due to the hartal on Tuesday.

The clarification further noted that Petrobangla was currently purchasing gas from Cail and Occidental for Sangu and Jalalabad gasfields respectively as per the provision of a separate Gas Purchase & Sales Agreement (GSPA) and there was no dispute with any of the companies on the gas purchase issue.

The dead were identified as Narayan Chandra, 60, and his nephew Babul, 27.

Sources said 12 people out of a group of 20-25 who drank rectified spirit at a temple on Wednesday night were admitted to private hospitals on Thursday after they fell sick.

Narayan and Babul died in the hospital today while condition of Kishore, 25, was stated to be critical. All the sick were taken to treatment in private hospitals to avoid arrest.

The dead were identified as Alpana, 18, daughter of Anwar Ali under Itma thana of Kishoreganj district and Lal Miah, 50, son of Yousf Ali of Hashempur, Kishoreganj.

The incident occurred when some 20 labourers were levelled a small hill in the area.

Suddenly, a big chunk of earth fell on them, resulting in death of two on the spot and injury of 10 others, witnesses said.

People from nearby areas and fire service personnel rushed to the spot and recovered the bodies. The bodies were sent to MAG Osmani Hospital for autopsy.

In a statement, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said the government had filed the cases against BNP leaders who narrowly escaped death during the three-day hartal and were seriously injured.

"It's nothing but a conspiracy of the government to send them to jail failing to send them to the graveyard," he said, adding that everything is possible for this government.

The BNP leader demanded immediate trial of those who had tried to kill the BNP leaders and withdrawal of all false cases against BNP leaders and activists.

In another statement, he condemned the filing of 'false cases' against leaders and activists of BNP and its front organisations of Uzirpur Thana in Barisal and of Naogaon, and Tarakanda of Mymensingh.

Earlier on November 10, Chhatra League's city convenor Abul Kalam Azad filed a case accusing 21 BNP men of launching an armed attack on a peaceful procession the same day.

Three FIR-named accused in the case filed by Chhatra League were arrested, but none of the accused in the case filed by BNP has so far been arrested.

China, Raza on 12-day demand

By Court Correspondent

Notorious criminal Abdur Razzak China and his accomplice Raza, arrested on charge of killing a policeman in the city, were placed on twelve days' remand by the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court on Thursday.

The court also rejected their bail paper, police said.

Constable Mohsin of Riot Control Division (RCD) was killed in a gunfight with a gang led by Razzak at the TT Para slum at Gopibagh on August 6.

Arrested on November 2, both Razzak and Raza face several other criminal cases.

Staggered examinations have a snowballing effect on the whole system — publication of results gets delayed and accommodation problem in the dormitories becomes acute.

Khulna BNP sues 27 BCL, Jubo League men

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Nov 12: Nazrul Islam Manzu, general secretary of city BNP, filed a case today against 27 people of the ruling party's youth and student front accusing them of launching an armed attack on the day of hartal on November 9 near Khulna thana.

They said due to the "unexpected closures" of the university, the authorities are going to face serious problems in holding the postponed examinations on fresh schedules.

Staggered examinations have a snowballing effect on the whole system — publication of results gets delayed and accommodation problem in the dormitories becomes acute.

Some 4,000 examinees of both undergraduate and post-graduate courses from different departments could not sit for their examinations due to hartals on November 1, 7, 8 and 9, the university officials said.

They said due to the "unexpected closures" of the university, the authorities are going to face serious problems in holding the postponed examinations on fresh schedules.

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Computer shop

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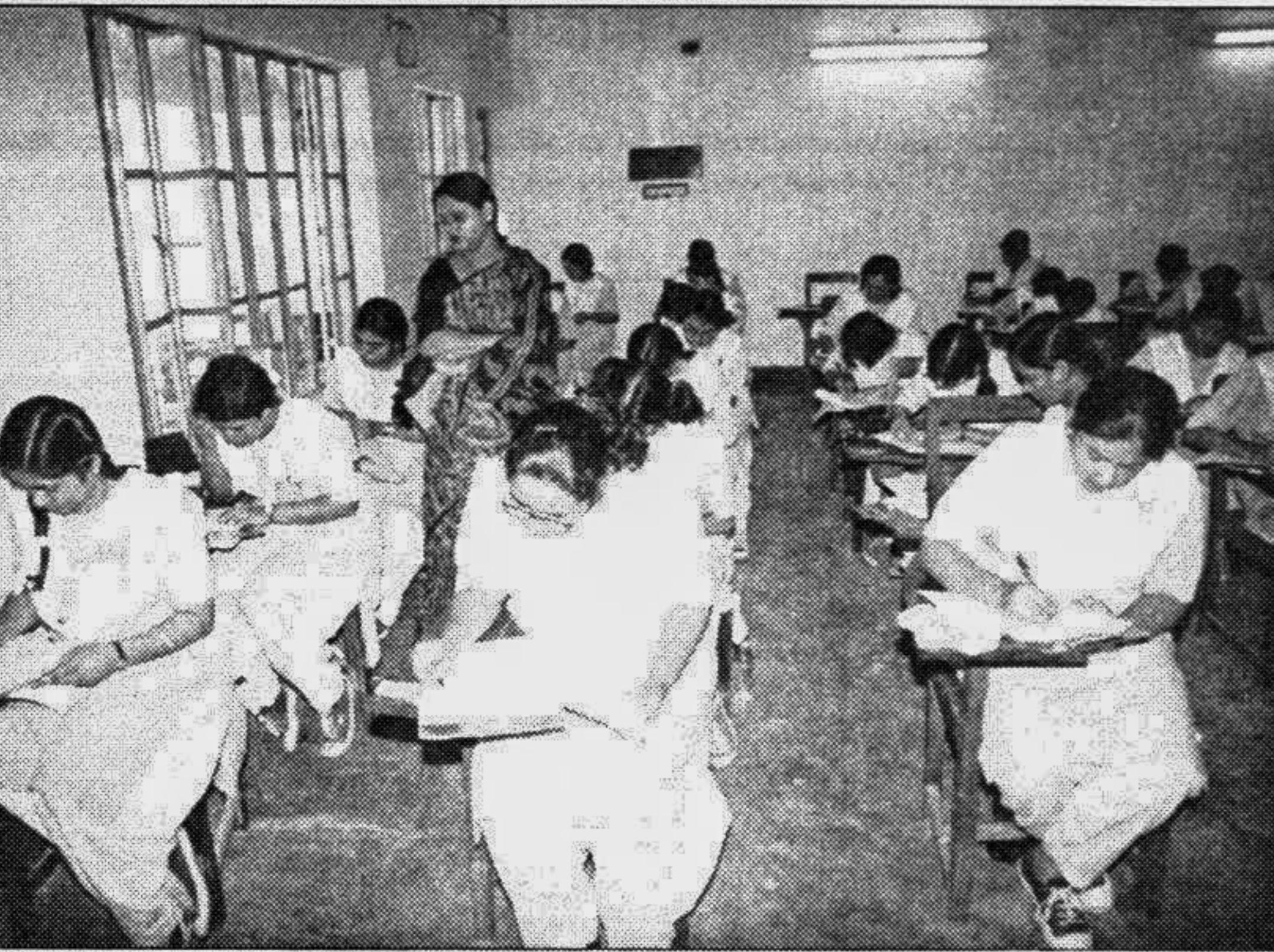
The group took away two computers along with two monitors, a scanner and a mobile phone of the office and cash worth about Tk 30,000. The goons also snatched a wrist watch of one of the clients at the shop.

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Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Scheduled examinations of various schools in the city which could not be held on November 9, owing to opposition organised Hartal (general strike) were conducted on Friday under special arrangements. Photo shows examinations in progress at the Viqarunnissa Noon School.

— Star Photo

Many schools to remain open today

By Staff Correspondent

A good number of business houses, banks, educational institutions, garments factories, markets and NGO offices remained open in the city on the weekly holiday yesterday.

There were dawn to dusk countrywide hartals or November 7-9 last week at the call of opposition parties.

Sources said, educational institutions and offices of different organisations will also remain open today, also a holiday.

A number of Sonali Bank branches in the capital remained open yesterday. At some schools, students sat for their annual examinations.

Customs offices in the city also operated. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina earlier said that banks and customs offices would operate, on weekly holidays, if needed.

They said the factory exceeded its 85,000 tonne production target but a drastic fall in fertiliser sales combined with high storage, transport and expansion costs cut into profits.

Ahad murder: Main accused remanded

By Staff Correspondent

'Kangal' Zaki, the main accused in sergeant Ahad Pervez murder case, was taken on a two-day remand by the Motijheel police yesterday.

Zaki, along with two others — Faruk and Sanaullah — was arrested from a garage at Agha Khan Road under Gulshan Police Station on Wednesday night, police said.

They were produced in the CCMC's Court yesterday.

Ten people have so far been arrested in connection with Ahad murder case, police said.

Sergeant Ahad was killed by a gang of muggers while on duty at the Shapla Crossing in the city's Motijheel area on the night of October 28.

Two die drinking liquor in Barguna

BARGUNA, Nov 12: A liquor tragedy at Betagi thana headquarters of the district claimed lives of two people today and sent another 10 to hospital, reports UNB.

The dead were identified as Narayan Chandra, 60, and his nephew Babul, 27.

Sources said 12 people out of a group of 20-25 who drank rectified spirit at a temple on Wednesday night were admitted to private hospitals on Thursday after they fell sick.

Narayan and Babul died in the hospital today while condition of Kishore, 25, was stated to be critical. All the sick were taken to treatment in private hospitals to avoid arrest.

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Cyclone death toll crosses 9000 in Orissa

By Staff Correspondent

BHUBANESHWAR, India, Nov 12: The death toll in the powerful cyclone that tore through India's impoverished eastern state of Orissa has jumped to more than 9,000, state officials said today, reports Reuters.

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