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## Sidewalks sport winterwear

By A Maher



Winter clothes have once again flooded popular markets of the capital. As the season brings in its first chilly tang, people especially the younger generation are looking forward to more varieties of winter clothing. This year though variety is not the motto of the markets, at least not the ones that used to give the most diversity. Many frequented spots are the areas around the General Post Office (GPO), Elephant Road, Farmgate and areas adjacent to Dhaka College, New Market and Gausia shopping centres.

This year though it seems vendors are getting more into light winter-wear instead of the usual cardigans and sweaters. Blazers are found in almost every "shop" on the sidewalk. Many customers initially get confused then suspicious at these smart chic outfits that have the air of designer apparels.

"At first I was surprised, rather taken aback at finding clothes of such standards and almost shocking prices on the sidewalks. The shirts were of good quality and they might well have been from a shop in Eastern Plaza or Elephant Road," said Salahuddin Ahmed, a second-year student of Dhaka University.

"We sell almost identical garments with those of (adjacent) Elephant Road, but customers buy both from there and at our prices. It is like we are actually competing with those flashy and air-conditioned arcades," said Mokhless, 'salesman' of one side-walk shop near the filling station opposite Dhaka College.

Prices range between 140-250 tk depending on the size

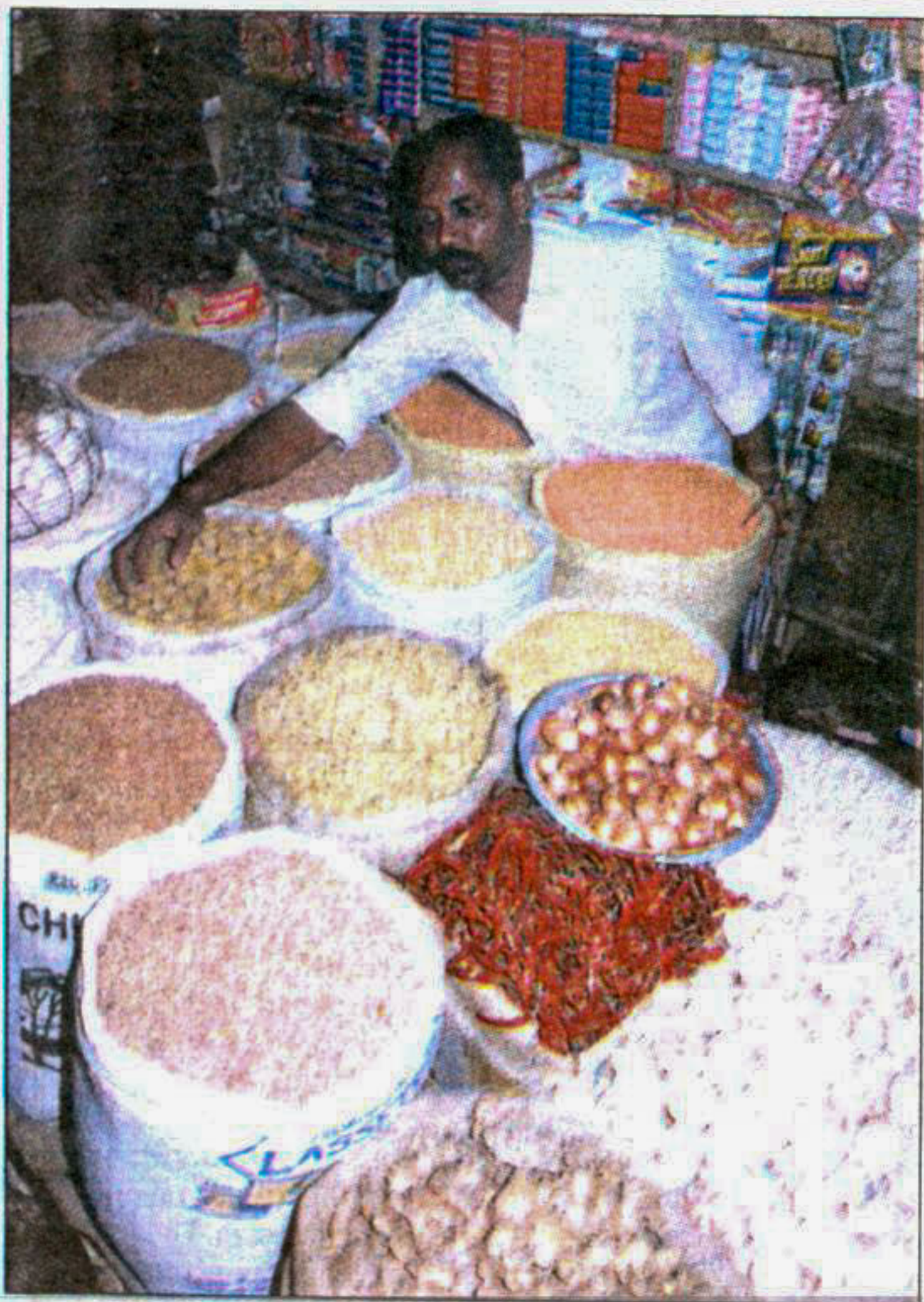
and look of the garment -- a brand name would inch the price up by a few tens. The ladies' cardigan sections were truly "street" priced, a mushy green sweater costing 100 taka. Women customers in larger numbers crowded these shops and many, according to the shopkeepers, are from the affluent section of the society.

"Nowadays all sorts of people buy from us. It is not demeaning to buy from the foot-paths because you can get the same in an arcade at higher

prices. We only don't have permanent shops," said Shaheen. He owns a shop on the terrace along Gausia market.

Many, though, plan to rent spaces in regular shops and by the look of sales they could be successful within a short time. Daily sales go up to 5000 taka for some while the unlucky ones still have something around 500-700.

The origin of these "Levis", "Hillfiger" and "Reebok" shirts is quite interesting. Most of the market supply for the side-



**Ramadan factor**  
Supply seems okay, still consumers fear price-hike during the holy month. Every year it is the same story retold.  
—Star photo: Anisur Rahman

## Prices sustain buying spree

By Staff Correspondent

Prices of essentials particularly ingredients for *ifrar* items and green vegetable remained stable despite rush-buying for Ramadan in different kitchen markets yesterday.

Prices of onion, dry fruits and gram flour, however, marked notable rise. Other items like spices and various types of flavouring items became dearer.

Price of locally produced onion increased from Tk 24 to Tk 36 per kilogram (kg) and dry gram flour cost from Tk 35 to Tk 40 a kg, gram flour made from kheshari cost Tk 26 per kg, a jump by at least Tk 8.

Dry fruits, like dates, marked slight increases. Date fruit of various qualities cost between Tk 60 and Tk 120 per kg. Price of dried sultana rose to Tk 60 per kg from its previous price of Tk 55.

Puffed rice is priced at 35 per kg, while the price of widely consumed best quality pressed rice remained at Tk 20 a kg.

Prices of green vegetables also remained stable. Prices of brinjal of both categories, round and long, cost Tk 26 and 15 per kg.

Prices of green peas fell from Tk 90 to Tk 80 per kg. A medium size cauliflower cost Tk 12 while a large sized one cost Tk 20.

Pulses of various categories marked slight rise. Kheshari cost Tk 38 from previous price of Tk 36 per kg. Masur cost Tk 45 from previous price of Tk 43

a kg.

Price of sugar remained at Tk 33 but some traders said it may rise by taka one or two by next week.

Price of banana, widely consumed fruit during Ramadan, increased from Tk 30 to Tk 35 a dozen.

Prices of other fruits like orange and apple marked slight increase by at least five taka per kg. Orange imported from India cost Tk 80 a dozen, while local category cost between 45 and 50 taka a dozen.

Prices of grains of all categories marked slight fall by at least two taka.

Supply of essentials was satisfactory, traders at the New Market, said but added that prices of some items may go up before the Eid festival.

## Banking in Ramadan

Bangladesh Bank and all scheduled banks will remain open from 9 am to 3:30 pm with a 15-minute break for Zohr prayers from 1:15 pm Sunday through Thursday during the holy month of Ramadan, a Bangladesh Bank press release said.

The transaction hours of banks will be from 9 am to 2 pm. Transaction will also be made as usual through internal arrangement during the 15-minute break of Zohr prayers, the central bank said.

## Road accidents kill 9 in Ctg, Tangail

At least nine people were killed and 77 others injured in separate road accidents in Chittagong and Tangail yesterday, report agencies.

Of them, five were killed in Chittagong and the rest four in Tangail.

UNB reports: At least five people were killed and 75 injured in a tragic accident near Mirersarai on Dhaka-Chittagong highway at 4 pm yesterday.

Witnesses said the accident took place when a Chittagong bound bus from Dhaka rammed two babytaxis and three rickshaws. The bus then skidded off the road and fell into a roadside ditch.

Rickshaw puller Hasan, 35, Abul Hossain, 40, and bus passenger Fazlur Rahman, 30, Chandra Das, 32 and Subal Das, 22, died on the spot.

Of the injured, nine were rushed to CMCH and others were admitted to Mirersarai Health Complex.

The bus was salvaged in the evening.

Four persons were killed and two others injured in a road accident near Tangail bus terminal yesterday morning, according to BSS.

Police said, the accident occurred when a Bogra-bound truck from Dhaka overturned near Tangail bus terminal. Three persons on board fell under the truck and died on the spot. Another person succumbed to his injuries at Tangail Hospital.

The truck was loaded with fertiliser and the victims were

## NSU convocation held

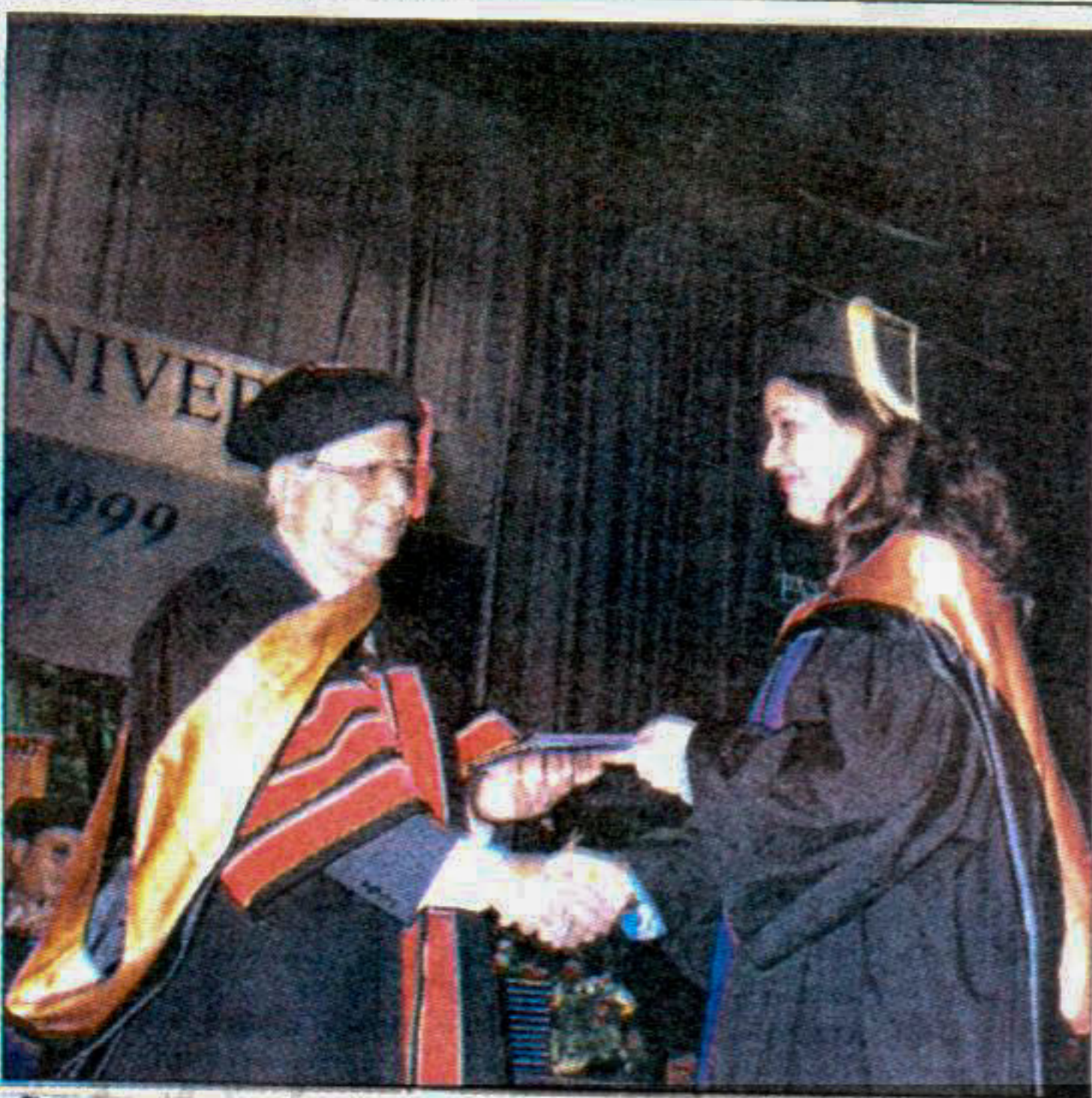
By DU Correspondent

The third convocation ceremony of North South University (NSU) was held at the Osmani Memorial Hall in the city yesterday.

One hundred students were conferred graduation and post graduation degrees on different subjects including Business Administration, Computer Science, Environmental Studies and Economics.

Nominated by Chancellor of the university President Shahabuddin Ahmed, Pro Vice-Chancellor Prof. Hafiz GA Siddiqui conferred the degrees.

Dr. G. Warren Smith, President of Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, US was the chief guest while US Ambassador John C. Holzman was the guest of honour at the ceremony.



**Congrats graduates**  
North South University had its convocation at the Osmani Memorial Hall in the capital yesterday.  
—Star photo

## Jubo League activist shot dead in city

A Jubo League activists was shot dead and four others sustained bullet injuries when gunmen fired on them at BG Press Staff Quarters Math (field) in Tejgaon Industrial area in the city yesterday evening, police and hospital sources said.

The dead was identified as Abu Siddiqui Barun, 25, son of Nuru Mia, a resident of city's Green Road area. Barun was an activist of the local Awami Jubo League, police said.

Of the injured Kiran, the elder brother of the dead, was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital, hospital sources said, adding Kiran is the General Secretary of Ward No 37 of Awami Jubo League.

Referring anonymity, a senior police official told The Daily Star last night that "The murder was a sequel to previous rivalry between two factions of local Jubo League."

The incident occurred when Barun, Kiran, and their associates were preparing for playing badminton at the BG Press Staff Quarters field at about 6 pm.

Suddenly, the assailants appeared on the spot and opened fire.

Barun received bullets in his chest and died on the spot. Kiran and three others were also shot.

None, however, was arrested in this connection till filing of this report last night.

## BNP won't allow any pre-JS polls

By Staff Correspondent

Senior BNP leaders yesterday said that they would not allow the government to hold any election in the country before the Jatiya Sangsad polls and without the participation by the mainstream opposition parties.

Addressing a public rally at See page 11 col 5

## Sign of civility

From Our Correspondent

SIRAJGANJ, Dec 9: In a rare political gesture, Chayan Islam, winner of yesterday's by-election in the Sirajganj-7 Jatiya Sangsad constituency, met his main rival, Hasibur Rahman Swapan, at the latter's Shahjapur residence yesterday.

During his meeting, Chayan asked his rival to accept the election results. Swapan reportedly replied in the affirmative. Chayan also asked for Swapan's co-operation in his battle against terrorism in the constituency.

When contacted by the Daily Star, Chayan confirmed the meeting. Swapan was not available for comments.

"The by-election results have brought me both joys and sorrows -- I'm happy the people have placed their confidence in me but it's painful that my supporters and I have been subject to repression since our expulsion from the Awami League on November 10," said Chayan.

## Kill Mypics with Protector Plus

A new computer virus, called Mypics worm, has been discovered. It has the potential to spread rapidly through Internet and cause great damage to computers on January 1, 2000, UNB reports.

Virus Emergency Response Team at Proland software in an alert notice through Internet said Mypics is the first virus written to trigger in the year 2000.

It said Mypics is the worm that spreads on systems running Windows 95, Windows 98 and Windows NT. This worm spreads on its own, using email, and carries a destructive payload that triggers in the year 2000.

The worm spreads through outlook express by sending itself to 50 addresses picked from the address book. It could result in rapid spread and the consequences of the infection could be disastrous.

The infected mail carries an attachment, pics4-you.exe, with the email subject blank, and the body containing the message: Here's some pictures for you! Execution of the attachment will result in the hard drive being formatted, post January 1, 2000. Details could be known on the website: <http://www.pspil.com/trojan-info/win32/mypics.htm>.

A programme named Protector Plus will detect and remove the trojan. The latest version of the protector could be downloaded from <http://www.pspil.com>.

If anyone wants to know more or faces problems in the use of the Protector Plus, he can simply send an e-mail to the address support@pspil.com seeking help.

## Sad saga of Sufias

Government's rehab rhetoric dies down

By Special Correspondent

They are part of the city's 'floating' population, joining the squads who sleep rough on the pavements and under the porches. 'Amena', 'Sufia' and 'Maleka' have been wandering ever since they were thrown out of the bordellos at Narayan-ganj's Tanbazar and city's Kandupatty by police.

But Sufia (not her real name) plays with her lovely baby during the day and does odd jobs at the restaurants around the city centre and indulges in her old trade, walking the streets after dusk.

She is one of the inmates, some 3500 who had been forced out of the two brothels in Narayan-ganj by the police to 'cleanse' the town of 'sin' and 'their resettlement in society.'

A number of them were herded to the Kashimpur and Pubali homes for the vagrants in late July amidst protests by social workers and human rights activists.

Sex workers also refused to live in ghetto-like conditions without an income and a future. The rights groups and NGOs filed a petition in the High Court on August 1, the hearing of which begun yesterday, challenging the eviction.

While the rights groups took the government to court, the government announced a rehabilitation plan to help the former sex workers with training to operate sewing machines and provide a working capital of Tk 7,000 per head under a Tk two crore fund, the creation of which was announced by the Prime Minister. But the Social Welfare Department received only Tk 1,55,18,000 out of which only 30 lakh had been spent.

Only 120 former sex workers are still in the vagrant homes. Tk 30 lakh has been spent for the rehabilitation of others.

They have all melted in the crowd of cities and towns all over the country, including Narayan-ganj driving their old trade, reports said.

Even their leader Sathi, daughter of a freedom fighter,



**Home, sweet home?**

All the talks on sex-worker rehabilitation have made little difference to Sufia and her child, and many others like them. Walkways along major streets in the capital are now their home.

Star photo: A K M Mohsin

got some money and went back to live with her parents in Bagerhat under the rehabilitation scheme. The district administration gave her father a piece of public land to build a home. But the boatmen of police boat of the load thana drove them out, sending all members of the family to hospital, heav-

ily beaten and badly wounded. There had been no further reports of Sathi. Officials said the fund would be spent if the Tanbazar inmates ask for help to get rehabilitated. But Sufia has found a better way to help themselves — getting back to the 'trade'.

## Sharna snubbed

Imports preferred to home-made fertiliser

By Reaz Ahmad

Bangladesh will import over three lakh tonnes of urea this year to prevent a severe chemical fertiliser shortage, even though a home-grown, environmentally friendly alternative is available.

Officials said the imports will provide short term relief, while the government sets up three more fertiliser factories to ensure a stable supply in the future.

However, experts said the government should add Sharna, a bio-fertiliser developed in Bangladesh, to the list of fertiliser covered by the governments agricultural extension.

If the government promoted Sharna, it would be produced in bulk and serve as a substitute for commercial fertiliser, they said.

Invented and patented in 1995 by Dr. Abdul Khaleque, a Bangladeshi scientist, Sharna is an environmentally friendly fertiliser that activates the soil's biological and mineral components.

Tested successfully in 22 countries, including China, India, North Korea, Thailand and the UAE, Chittagong University's botany department issued a report recently that gave Sharna high marks.

An official with NAMNAM, a North Korean corporation, said they also tested Sharna and achieved "remarkably good" results.

"However, one-year-trial is not sufficient," said Song Yong Hun, the general manager of NAMNAM's Dhaka office. "It needs more time before we reach a final conclusion. After

House wife stabbed to death  
By Staff Correspondent  
A young housewife was stabbed to death in front of her one and half years old daughter in her bedroom at Ulan Road  
See page 11 col 8

this year's crop harvest, we can go for mass application."

Chittagong Vegetable Oil Industries Limited currently markets Sharna through Islamic Trade and Commerce Limited. An 800-gram packet of Sharna costs Tk 240. Commerce sells over two lakh packets in Bangladesh monthly.

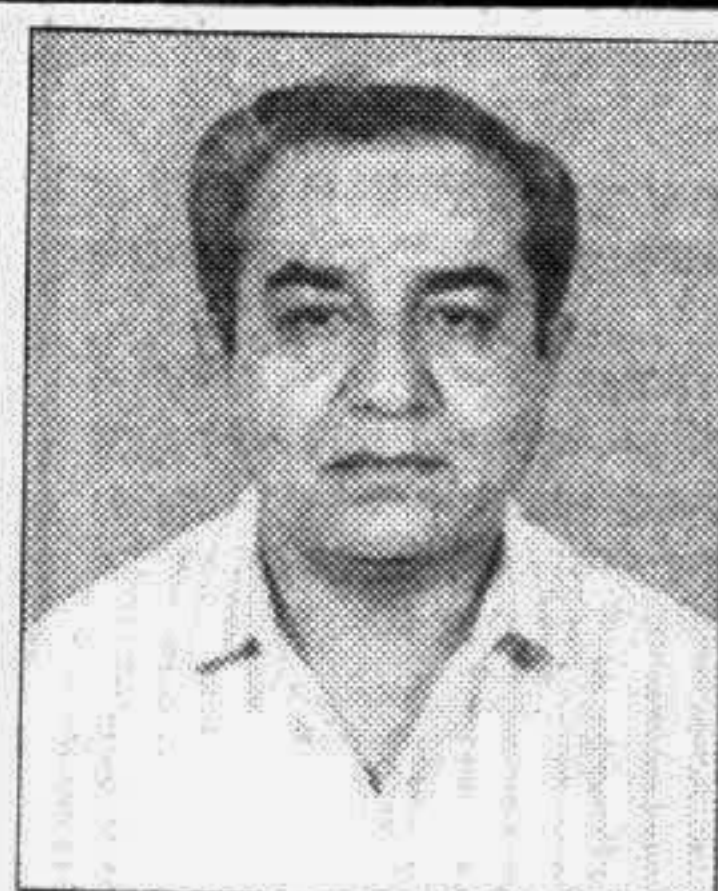
Khaleque said a small amount of Sharna, unlike its chemical counterparts, increases the soil's fertility without polluting the water table or killing the small plants and animals that also enrich the soil.

"The government should promote bio-fertiliser in order to preserve soil fertility diminished by aggressive chemical fertilisers," said Khaleque.

Perplexed by a long legal battle launched by an agricultural official over Sharna's contents, the agricultural extension department hasn't included the bio-fertiliser into its promotion drive.

However, sources said that once the legal tangle are resolved, Sharna could be included in the extension.

## WE MOURN



We sadly announce that our much beloved **Mr. M. M. Farrokh Shirazi** has died of heart failure at the Peel Memorial Hospital in Ontario, Canada at 9.15 p.m. (Canadian Time) on December 7, 1999 (Inna Lillahe Wa Inna Ilaihe Rajeun). Mr. Shirazi was the Advisor of Aftab Bahumukhi Farm Ltd. — an enterprise of the Islam Group. He was also the former Director of Dhaka Jute Mills Ltd., National Jute Mills Ltd., Sonali Jute Mills Ltd. and Crescent Enterprise Ltd. — all are concerns of the Islam Group. His mortal remains are expected to reach Dhaka on Friday morning, December 17, 1999. His Namaz-e-Janaza and burial will be held at the Hossaini Dalan Imambara, Dhaka. All friends, relatives, colleagues and well-wishers may contact his residence at 10 Ispahani Colony, Maghbazar, Dhaka, or Tel: 404875, 9114438, 019-342249 for information on the date and time of the Namaz-e-Janaza.

Allah is indeed merciful to grant him a life so worthy of honour and we pray that may He rest his soul in peace. Ameen.

— Members of the bereaved family

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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