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Down to Earth

City's Look Suffers from Many Scars

By A S M Nurunnabi

Various factors cause defacing of the city's landscape. The resultant unseemly look of the city is an eye-sore to its residents. Among the reasons behind this phenomenon, we mention the widespread prevalence of graffiti or wall-writing in almost all areas of the city. Graffiti has a long tradition in our country. The tradition has, however, worked as a drag of the clean facade of the city. 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 defacement of the city's walls and buildings that entails is a constant source of feeling uneasy.

It was generally observed that previously 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 fact 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 from the municipal authorities or any other quarter to regulate this unsightly aspect of city life, the propensity for resorting to this sort of activity for any cause whatsoever has been steadily on the increase.

Previously under autocratic regimes, orders were issued to wipe out the ugly signs. This bore some results for a temporary period. But the graffiti culture is so much ingrained in us that it seems that no amount of efforts backed by proper civic ethos will ever eliminate it completely.

Lately a new trend is noticeable in the use of the city walls as vehicles for advertisements of various commercial products. We are used to seeing hoarding signs and billboards along the city streets as advertising media. Now, the entire space of a big portion of a wall is taken up for advertising purposes. The trend seems to be steadily growing in the city. One of the reasons for this new trend may be that painting such advertisements on walls of buildings is more economical than setting up hoardings and billboards and such painted advertisements on walls are more durable and stable, not subject to uprooting by storms or cyclones. In one respect, these painted advertisements are at least less painful to the eye than crudely executed graffiti with political import.

The hoarding signs and billboards set up on the sides of city streets for advertising commercial products are not found to be all innocuous, particularly some of them featuring female models may distract attention of drivers of vehicles thereby risking accidents. On some traffic islands, growth of plants may obstruct view on one side to the traffic movements on the other where there are no clear-cut demarcation of traffic lanes on streets.

Here also lies the potential for accidents. In some areas where there are parks and attractive open spaces, views of natural beauty are sometime obstructed by the erection of large-sized hoardings and billboards. It is felt desirable that in the interest of maintaining open exposure of such spots of natural beauty, the municipal authorities should discourage erection of such hindering hoardings and billboards in those city areas.

No less guilty of disfiguring the city landscape are the widespread and random placement of posters on city walls and buildings for a variety of purposes such as advertising medicines and cures of doubtful nature, computer training, coaching centres, cultural and other functions, etc. The sad part of the story is that some of such posters are found pasted on the already evicted billboards and hoardings, thereby interfering with their publicity message. This, of course, adversely affects the interests of the advertisers who spend considerable amount of construction of such billboards and hoardings.

Display of banners of various descriptions is similarly responsible for affecting the clean look of the city. Banners interfere not only with the clean faces of the landscape but also the city's skyline. When banners of various colours and sizes flutter aloft, they seem to clutter the skyline. Banners advertising admissions to English medium schools, though only seasonal in nature, are found aplenty.

Profusion of banners advertising reduction sales is also in evidence at times of festivals. They take such an euphoric form that 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 eyewash.

Above all, the graffiti problem is felt by observers to be quite a grave one, as they have an important bearing on the make-up of the city's look. As such an imperative necessity in this respect seems to be to devise suitable ways and means for tackling the graffiti problem in the city. A prohibitory regulation by the civic authorities carrying stiff penalties for the sponsors of random placement of graffiti may be an answer. But, at least provisions may be made so that no graffiti is allowed in certain specified areas of the city in the interest of aesthetic considerations.



Celebrating the Month of Victory
A poetry recitation session at a cultural function at the Public Library Auditorium in the city yesterday.

Diouf: FAO observing

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of this government in many ways, including empowerment of the rural women, modern cultivation, better delivery system of agri-inputs, efficient management in production and distribution of food, he said.

All these and Bangladesh's plans to reduce the ranks of its poor by half by the year 2015 also counted in awarding Ceres Medal to the Prime Minister, he added.

Diouf also lauded the efforts of her government to build capacity at the rural level for better yield in agriculture sector and developing a sound food security system in the country.

The FAO Director General said there is no food shortage globally but the developing countries have problems regarding access to food.

There are 82 "low food deficit" nations in the world today and they cannot buy food in the world market due to balance of payment problems, he pointed out.

Half of these 82 countries are in Africa. But in terms of population, Asia comes high. Bangladesh is facing serious problems due to increase in population.

To raise food output, he said, the nations must reach the farmers required knowledge, inputs and an integrated pest management.

On genetically modified (GM) seeds, Diouf said it should be tested scientifically before application. "But there are varieties of seeds which have not been distributed among farm-

Fluctuation in onion price Decline in production & hoarding main reasons

By Mustak Hossain

Gradual decline in production and hoarding by a section of unscrupulous traders are the main reasons for fluctuation in onion price, source concerned said.

Onion production fell by about 8 per cent since the 1996-97 financial year, they said.

The production was about 1.5 lakh tonnes in 1991-92 financial year, which came down to about 1.3 lakh tonnes in 1995-96, according to the Bureau of Statistics. But consumption increased over the years, it said.

Onion is cultivated in about 84,000 hectares of land. Average yield is about 47 maunds per hectare.

Onion cultivation is more profitable than rice but farmers go for rice cultivation because it is their main food crop, the sources said.

"Withdrawal of import duty on onion is not the only solution to keep onion prices stable," one source said.

Production can be increased only by inspiring farmers to cultivate it. The government should patronise onion cultivation and take effective measures to stop its smuggling, they said. Onion was smuggled to India last year because of less production and high price there, they said.

Year	Yearly demand in Metric Tonnes (MT)	Yearly production in MT	Yearly deficit in thousand
1996-97	4 lakh 15 thousand	1 lakh 42 thousand	2 lakh 73 thousand
1997-98	4 lakh 25 thousand	1 lakh 39 thousand	2 lakh 86 thousand
1998-99	4 lakh 30 thousand	1 lakh 40 thousand	2 lakh 90 thousand

The table was obtained from the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB)

Janaja for Brig Ashfaq today

By Staff Correspondent

The *namaj-e-Janaja* for Brigadier Shabab Ashfaq will be held at Chopper's Den in Dhaka Cantonment at 2:30 pm today, family sources said. He will be laid to eternal rest at the Dhaka Cantonment graveyard, family sources said.

Shabab's elder brother Brigadier Faruq Ashfaq, defence attache at Bangladesh Embassy in Beijing, and his sister, who lives in Australia, have already arrived in Dhaka, they added.

The bullet-ridden body of Brigadier Ashfaq was recovered from officers' mess at Chittagong Cantonment at 4 pm on Wednesday.

Security sources said Brigadier Shabab Ashfaq, commander of 69 Infantry Brigade, based in Bandarban, committed suicide by shooting himself with SMG.

A court of inquiry comprising senior army officers has been formed to probe the death of Brigadier Shabab Ashfaq.

Refrain from speculative stories: ISPR

By Staff Correspondent

The ISPR yesterday urged all concerned to refrain from publishing "speculative stories" on the death of Brig Shabab Ashfaq.

Following is the text of the press release issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations: Brigadier Shabab Ashfaq, Commander, 69 Infantry Brigade at Bandarban, was found dead in his room at Chittagong Cantonment at 1502 hours on December 8. He came to Chittagong Cantonment to participate in a Command Post Exercise, which is routinely held in all formations and units of the Army.

The circumstances, time, environment and the witnesses present around the place of occurrence led to the conclusion that the officer committed suicide by firing two rounds by a Sub Machine Gun (SMG) drawn from his own unit. A High Level Court of Inquiry headed by a Brigadier has been ordered to investigate the case of his death. The element of sabotage or assassination, as it stands at the moment, is almost negligible.

There are some errors in reporting the matter in different newspapers and misleading and mysterious conclusions are drawn in others.

Some of the dailies and weeklies like the Holiday have reported about his posting to Pakistan as the Defence Attache. The posting order of such nature is not out yet, although it was under consideration of the

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Fire at garments factory in city

By Staff Correspondent

Fire broke out at the conference room of a garments factory at Karwan Bazar in city yesterday.

Fire Brigade official said, the fire originated from an electric short circuit at about 8:55 am on the fourth floor of the six-story under-construction building.

Seven fire fighting units from Tejgaon, Mohammadpur, and Palassey rushed to the Southern Garments and extinguished the blaze after one and half hours.

Fire Brigade sources said that fire damaged furniture and air-conditioners worth about Tk 6 lakh.

5-member BNP team leaves for China tomorrow

By Staff Correspondent

A five-member BNP delegation, led by party secretary general Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, leaves here tomorrow for China at the invitation of the Communist Party of China.

Other members of the delegation are: BNP vice chairman Col (Retd) Akbar Hossain MP, Chairperson's Advisory Council member MM Rezaul Karim, joint secretary Ashraf Hossain and Mizanur Rahman Sinha MP.

BNP's senior vice chairman Tariqul Islam, who was scheduled to visit China, cannot make the trip due to illness.

One held

From page 1

accusing seven people, including the arrested and Talukdar Sarwar Hossain, Commissioner of Ward No: 37 of Dhaka City Corporation.

According to police, the murder was a sequel to previous rivalry between two factions of local Jubo League. Kiran, the elder brother of Barun who is the general secretary of Ward No: 37 Jubo League, was the main target of the killers. Barun became the victim when he tried to save his brother from the gun shots of the killers, police added.

Tejgaon police said they arrested Hawladar from Uttar Khan area.

Hawladar was produced before the CMM's Court and police, prayed for a seven-day remand. The court granted remand for four days.

15 hurt as AL, BNP clash in Patuakhali

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Dec 10: At least 15 people were injured, two of them seriously in a clash between the activists of BNP and Awami League at Golachipa under Patuakhali district last night.

Witnesses said the clashing groups used lethal weapons and exploded crackers during an hour-long clash.

At least ten shops were ransacked and two houses looted during the clash.

Police rushed to the spot and chased the feuding groups. They also picked up Ashim Saha, a Jubo Dal activist from the spot.

The seriously injured, identified as Mannu, 20, and Sanjoy, 21, were admitted to local health complex.

11-party call to cancel CCC polls schedule

By Staff Correspondent

The 11-party alliance yesterday called upon the government to immediately cancel the election schedule of Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) for saving the country and the democratic process from 'possible dangers'.

The parties, at a meeting, also asked the government to initiate talk with sincerity with the mainstream opposition and other political parties and announce fresh schedule on the basis of a dialogue.

Besides, the alliance suggested holding of all the four city corporation elections at a time and freeing the process from 'communal publicity', muscle power and money power.

The meeting also urged the mainstream opposition party, BNP, to give up its 'irresponsible rigidity'.

Held at Gano Forum office with its leader Pankaj Bhat-tacharya in the chair, the meeting hoped that the ruling Awami League would refrain from its 'suicidal move in holding the CCC polls unilaterally'.

The meeting said the Election Commission has completely ignored the recommendations, suggestions, and requests made by the 11 political parties and unilaterally declared the CCC polls schedule.

Shahjalal Varsity

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Held at Gano Forum office with its leader Pankaj Bhat-tacharya in the chair, the meeting hoped that the ruling Awami League would refrain from its 'suicidal move in holding the CCC polls unilaterally'.

An official of Shahjalal University said that the main gate was unlocked by a police officer at 4 pm in presence of a magistrate and varsity officials.

ISLAM GROUP

স্বপ্ন সত্যি করার আরেকটি সুযোগ

স্বপ্ন এবং সত্যের মাঝখানে রয়েছে একটি মাত্র ছোট সিঁড়ি- সিঁদান্ত। একটি সিঁদান্তই বদলে দিতে পারে আপনার ভাগ্য। জমি কিনে বাড়ি করার সিঁদান্তটি দিন। বাকি কাজটুকু সহজ করে দেবে ইষ্টার্ণ হাউজিং।

ইষ্টার্ণ হাউজিং লিঃ পুনরায় দিচ্ছে আপনাকে এককালীন নগদ দামে জমি কেনার সীমিত সময়ের সুযোগ। আগে আসুন, নিজের পছন্দের প্রুটটি বেছে নিন অন্যদের আগে।

এক সঙ্গে জমির পুরোটা দাম পরিশোধের কারণে আপনি হবেন দারুণ লাভবান।

ইষ্টার্ণ হাউজিংয়ের নির্ধারিত জমি আপনি পাবেন যে-এলাকার জমি সে-এলাকার চলতি বাজারদরের চেয়ে কাঠাপ্রতি ২ লক্ষ টাকা পর্যন্ত কমে। ইষ্টার্ণ হাউজিংয়ের কাছ থেকে কেনা আপনার জমির দাম ৫ বছরে বেড়ে ৩ গুণ হবে।

এই সুযোগ ১১ ডিসেম্বর ১৯৯৯ থেকে ২৫ জানুয়ারী ২০০০ পর্যন্ত

এই সুযোগ ৮৫ দিনের জন্য

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Phone: 9551155, 9553605, 9555203, 9552307.

BJMC: 764 Date: 7/12/99 DFP-27561-8/12 G-2096

Kalyan Singh to form new party

NEW DELHI, Dec 10: A prominent Indian politician announced today after being sacked by the ruling Hindu nationalists that he had decided to form a new political party to take on his former mentors, reports AFP.

The United News of India (UNI) quoted Kalyan Singh as telling reporters in the northern city of Lucknow that he would decide on the party's name in consultation with his colleagues.

Singh was expelled Thursday by the BJP party, which heads India's ruling multi-party coalition, for defying Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. Singh said Friday that he would concentrate his career in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, where in the past decade he helped the Hindu nationalist BJP to emerge as a dominant force.

Housewife murder: Arrested two remanded

Rent-a-car shop ransacked

By Staff Correspondent

One Tasfiqur Rahman and his cousin, arrested in connection with the killing of his wife Sohana Rahman in the city, were placed on a three-day police remand yesterday.

Sohana Rahman, 21, was stabbed to death in front of her one and a-half year old daughter at their residence at Ulan Road in West Rampura on Wednesday.

Another suspect, Anis, cousin of Tasfiqur, was still absconding, police said.

By Staff Correspondent

A gang of youths ransacked a rent-a-car shop at Uttara in the city, damaged at least four of its vehicles and took away Tk 7000 at gun point last night.

They also beat up the manager of the shop - Mobile Rent-a-Car - at Road No 15, police said.

Kazi Shahidur Kadir, owner of the shop, told The Daily Star that the gang attacked the shop as he refused to rent them a car a week ago.