

## National

North Surma Bus Terminal

## 'Illegal' lease protested

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Aug 30: The North Surma Bus Terminal Public Interest Protection Committee has announced a 9-day agitation programme to press for immediate cancellation of the 'illegal' lease of the bus terminal area to a private party. The announcement was given at a press conference held at the Sylhet Press Club on Saturday evening.

Leaders of the committee in a written statement placed in the press conference alleged that, the Sylhet Municipality authority had leased out the terminal for 10 years to an individual illegally and without calling any tender. It had been given for only Taka 5 lakh where as through tender the amount would be at least Taka 25 lakh, they alleged. They also called upon the authority for taking immediate measures. Sujat Ali Rafique, Lecturer of Shah Khurram College read out the written statement in the

conference.

The agitation programme includes, public meetings at places from today (August 27 to September 1), torch procession on September 3 and 6-hour hartal in the greater Tuker Bazar area (concerned union) on September 4. If the demands are not met, further agitation programme would be announced on September 4, it was told in the press conference.

The committee earlier had handed over a memorandum to the Speaker in the Jatiya Sangsads, who is also the MP from the Sylhet Sadar Constituency.

On the other hand, the Sylhet Bibhag Ganadabi Parishad (Sylhet Division Public Demands Council) pressed a day-long hartal on August 27 in the South Surma area southern part of Sylhet town to press for immediate cancellation of the 'illegal' lease of Sylhet Central Bus Terminal located in the South Surma area.

It has been alleged that the municipality authority had given the lease without any tender or open announcement to the private parties. Besides, the valuable road side lands near the terminal had also been leased out and sold illegally by the municipality and Roads and Highways authority, the council alleged further.

Abdul Mukit Khan MP, extended his support for the movement against the illegal leasing out and selling of lands in the central bus terminal and roadside areas.

On the other hand, the municipality authority on Friday last instructed some lessee for stopping the construction of a building in the terminal area informing that, an enquiry had been going on by some government agency regarding the lease. The lessee started the construction works of a building for opening a restaurant, sources alleged.

A BORDER INDEED: The border between Bangladesh and India separates the houses of father and son at Haddo at Bangladeshi side and Painter of the other. The BDR men are present to help the pressmen to see the split family at Bhomra border in Satkhira.

— Star photo by A K M Mohsin

## Homes for homeless expected

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAHI, Aug 30: Rajshahi Development Authority (RDA) has undertaken a programme of rehabilitating floating people and slum-dwellers of the city.

Official sources said RDA

has planned to build some five storied buildings under the programme.

For the first phase, a project of building 11 five-storied buildings with 220 flats has been prepared and the project was recently sent to the Ministry of Works for approval. The project will cost Taka 7.96 crore.

Number of floating people and slum-dwellers in the city is increasing day by day. Hundreds of people are rushing to the city everyday to seek works. Most of them return back to their villages, but a good number of people do not go back home. They work here and there or seek work in the day and take shelter in the bus stands, railway stations, market premises, footpaths and anywhere else they get opportunity at night. Later, they manage to have a place in the already established slums or new slums.

According to informations gathered by RDA through some non-government organisations (NGOs), there are 17 well-established slums in the city. Be-

sides these, there are also some small slums or cluster of huts and makeshifts numbering one to 11, scattered here and there all over the city.

The 17 established big slums are — Bari Kuthi slum, Char Shrimpuri slum, Maldah Colony slum, Shiroi Colony slum, Choto Bongram slum, Bihari Colony slum, Hajrapurkut slum, Laximpur slum, Dingadoba slum, Char Kazla slum, Binodpur slum, Bhadra slum, Verapura slum, Naodapara slum, Sopura slum, Nobaganga slum and Tikapura slum.

About 58,000 people of about 10,000 families live in these slums. Some other 5,000 people live in the scattered and small slums.

According to RDA information, about nine per cent of the total population of the city live in the slums. In addition to them, some other three per cent people, numbering about 21,000 in total, are floating people who do not have any kind of shelter.

These floating and slum people come mainly from Rangpur, Gaibandha, Kurigram, Sirajganj, Pabna, Natore, Naogaon, Bogra and Chapainawabganj. They usually pull rickshaws and carts, work in the crop-fields, hawk goods on

the streets, serve in the houses and do any other works they get to earn their livelihood. Some of them become beggars. Some also engage themselves in unfair jobs.

According to the statistics gathered by RDA, 13 per cent of these people pull rickshaws, vans and carts. The number of people working as motor transport workers in eight per cent, small traders 11 per cent, day labourers 12 per cent, hawkers six per cent, shop workers 20 per cent and the rest 30 per cent are engaged in different jobs.

RDA sources said, the buildings will be built in Bari Kuthi and Kazihata area. Each of the 11 buildings will have 20 flats of 400 square feet and 300 square feet area. There will be two rooms, a bathroom cum toilet, a kitchen and facilities of water supply in each flat.

When contacted, RDA chairman Abdus Salek said that the flats would be distributed among the slum-dwellers through tenders on hire-purchase system.

One has to pay Taka 1,000 to Taka 1,500 every month for 25 consecutive years to possess the allocated flat as their own.

"Though it is not certain at all, but we hope the project will be approved by early next financial year," said Abu Salek.

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