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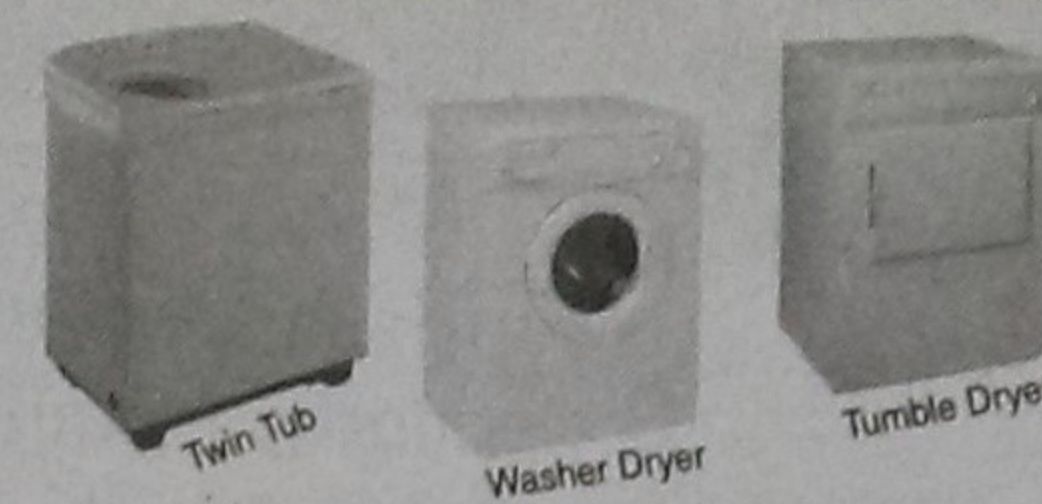
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## Down to Earth Woes of city dwellers

By ASM Nurunnabi

To any keenly observing citizen, it will appear that the city's roads, drains, and sewerage systems suffer from lack of proper maintenance and neglect. There has been only sporadic and isolated efforts at improvement which in effect fail to bridge a major gap in the city's health, sanitation and environmental infrastructure.

There has been no dearth of media publicity of the public suffering and complaint in respect of specific areas of the city in this regard. Yet the reaction of the concerned authorities has been, by and large, indifferent or negative. Observers are of the opinion that most of the city's road network outside a small part of VIP roads lie in a state of ill-repair and proper maintenance.

Following every monsoon, the city roads in many areas suffer from water-logging. During the last monsoon, rainfall had been abnormally high, causing many areas and even high roads to be inundated on a scale never seen in recent past. The incessant rains coupled with the heavy pressure of mounting volume of vehicular traffic cause damage to the road surface in many areas, most of which develop large pot-holes and large-scale breakage in road surface. Repair work is never taken up in time. For example, the stretch of the main road running beside the 5-star Sonargang Hotel along Kawran Bazar has been in a state of continued disrepair for a long time, there by creating conditions under which a ride by any mode of conveyance over that stretch of road is a painful experience.

The continued default of the concerned agencies in the mat-

ter of repair and reconstruction leads to a process of unabated decay which presents a sorry picture of the major part of the city's road network. Literally crores of taka are wasted every year on poor road repair work. It is felt that if roads are to be repaired with quality materials and in a way that will ensure durability, then the whole process - from selecting contractors, purchasing materials and supervising the work done - will have to be thoroughly reviewed. It is the experience of many who have travelled to places like Bangkok or Singapore that roads in those places are well-maintained and durable, not subject to short-term defects. We have recently observed instances where groups of contractors combine together to get tenders accepted in their favour, without allowing tender by any outside parties even to the extent of preventing sales of tender forms to them. This monopoly of work tenders by interested groups tends to undermine competitiveness in work tender. Which paves the way for poor quality of work at higher rates.

Next to the drains are the city's drains in equally wretched condition. There has been no lack of media publicity about the poor functioning of the city's drainage system which has been a major cause of general suffering of the citizens. Replacement of the surface drains by storm sewers has not worked satisfactorily.

The over-all situation that has resulted is so wretched that it has also become the biggest cause of pollution of environment and direct threat to health

and sanitation of the city's population.

The sanitation system is made further pitiable by the city's time-worn sewerage system. Some of the underground sewers are said to date to the twenties of the last century, particularly in old Dhaka. It is felt by the sufferers that the sewerage lines, where not performing well, should be replaced on a priority basis. An efficient sewerage system is regarded to be more important from the sanitation point of view than even roads with good surface.

Thus the state of city's sewerage is as galling as the drainage and roads system is at its worst. The general public, the tax payers in particular, have come to react with a growing sense of frustration over the inaction and inertia of the public utility agencies such as the Dhaka City Corporation and the WASA.

Yet another aspect connected with the city's sanitation is the present state of negligence on the part of the Dhaka City Corporation staff in regular clearance of the roadside garbage dumps. The big garbage containers are at present

placed by the main roads. On account of default of timely clearance, this garbage containers overflow with their nauseating contents vitiating the nearby environment.

In view of the above picture of the city's distressing situation in infrastructural aspects, observers tend to feel that city is sinking into gradual civic chaos and remedial measures can be delayed only at the cost of the health and well-being of the entire population of the city.

## Defaulting broker loses DSE membership

Star Report

In an unprecedented move the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) has forfeited the membership of a broker for its failure to settle claims.

The claims have fallen due as the member, T Mashfu, failed to fully compensate for the fake shares pumped through his brokerage house. A total of 1.5 crore worth of fake shares were pumped through his workstations against which, sources say, the member had deposited an amount of Tk 1.05 crore.

The member failed to deposit the remaining Tk 45 lakh and the DSE management on June 17 this year declared the member a defaulter.

Following the DSE declaration, the member had appeared before the court and obtained a stay. The stay was vacated recently and the management last week decided to forfeit the membership to settle his claims with other brokers who were handed fake scripts.

The broker along with two others were suspended on September last year by the DSE as well as the capital market regulators - the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) - on charge of pumping fake shares into the market. The moves were result of preliminary findings.

## Garment workers hold rallies in support of Monday's strike

By staff correspondent

The National Garments Workers Federation and Bangladesh Garments Workers Unity Council held separate rallies and brought out processions in the city yesterday in support of their scheduled strike in garments factories on Monday.

The Federation also supported a 48-hour strike in industries from Monday called by the Sramik Kamachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP). Addressing a rally at Muktagang, Federation leaders demanded implementation of the four-point agreement signed with the BGMEA and announcement of minimum wage for garments workers.

They also demanded compensation to the families of those killed in a fire at Globe Knitting factory in the city recently, payment of arrears salaries and wages in different garments factories and an end to such 'torture' on garments workers.

The leaders condemned 'police attack' on workers of Akolade Garments in the city on Thursday and demanded compensation to the family of Tota Mia, killed in the incident.

The rally was followed by a procession. At another rally, Council leaders also demanded immediate implementation of the four-point agreement with BGMEA and denounced 'police attack' on workers of Akolade Garments.

## Clashes at AJM: 4 arrested

From Our Correspondent  
NARAYANGANJ, Sept 8: Siddhirganj police last night arrested four people for their alleged involvement in clashes at Adanjee Jute Mills in the last three days.

Police raided different areas of the jute mills and arrested Dulal, 20, Abdur Rahman, 30, Mujibur Rahman, 22, and Swapan, 20.

Of the arrested, Mujib and Swapan are mill workers while the rest are outsiders and supporters of former CBA leader Rehanuddin Rehan.



More than 300 shanties have sprung up on the 1.5 acres of land behind the OT Complex of Dhaka Medical College Hospital, which was allocated for construction of a Burn Unit. - Star photo

## DMCH burn unit Construction delayed as slum people refuse to quit site

Star Report

With construction materials at the site, work for setting up of a 50-bed burn unit at Dhaka Medical College Hospital cannot be started as slums raised by a section of hospital employees are yet to be removed.

The construction work was scheduled to begin on Wednesday, to be completed in 18 months.

The 1.5 acre land behind the newly built Operation Theatre Complex has been demarcated by red flags in four corners but a section of Class III and IV employees living in about 300 shanties there refuse to vacate the area unless they are provided with a 'suitable land'. A good number of dwellings have been rented to outsiders, it is alleged.

The Tk 7 crore project includes construction of one two-storey building and another three-storey building.

The hospital authorities

asked the illegal occupants several times to evacuate the land but they turned a deaf ear to all requests," said a hospital official requesting anonymity.

It is also alleged that DMCH Deputy Director Dr Babar Ali is supporting the slum dwellers in their effort to raise a 'housing block' on the land.

When contacted, Dr Babar Ali denied the allegation saying, "What is my interest in supporting them? The allegation is

## Ctg killings: Another accused held

From Our Correspondent  
CHITTAGONG, Sept 8: Another FIR-named accused in the sensational eight-murder case was arrested here last night.

Chandgaon thana police arrested Md Farid Ahmed alias Tiger Farid from his house in Chandgaon residential area. Farid was sent to jail today.

baseless. Some of the slum dwellers having political connection are spreading such rumour against me.

"In fact, it is me who helped removal of slums from the premises of the OT Complex. Those who were affected are now trying to tarnish my image."

A meeting held on August 30 and chaired by Joint Secretary Dr Nargis Makduma decided that the slums should be immediately removed, but not applying force, sources said.

Director of the hospital Brigadier Badrul Munir, when contacted said, "We are trying our best to find a solution to the problem. We do not want to create an unwanted situation. We hope there will be a peaceful solution."

Despite very limited facilities, the DMCH treated 1,480 patients with burn injuries since 1996.

## Musharraf for mutual reduction with India in armed forces

No talks until terrorism stopped: Vajpayee

UNITED NATIONS, Sept 8: Pakistan's military ruler, General Pervez Musharraf, said yesterday that he wanted proportional and mutual reductions with India in their armed forces, report agencies.

Speaking at a news conference on the sidelines of the UN Millennium Summit, Musharraf also said he did not intend to run for office when Pakistan returned to elected government.

"I am a soldier and I remain a soldier. I like acting like a soldier. I would be a total failure," he said.

His proposals for military cuts would apply to "conventional and unconventional forces," he said.

"The details can be worked if all sides are keen on the proposal."

Speaking to the summit on Wednesday, Musharraf had said he would not allow Pakistan to be drawn into a nuclear conflict. Asked whether that meant that he was renouncing the use of nuclear weapons, he replied, "I am going a step further. Why talk of nuclear weapons? There shouldn't be any war. Let's banish conflict in South Asia. Let's remove all forces from there. Let's remove all nuclear weapons."

Musharraf said, Pakistan will accept anyone's help to resolve its border dispute with India, since the United Nations can't seem to do it.

"This issue has been in the United Nations since 1948. It's the longest-standing dispute. It is high time."

"There must be sincerity on both sides," Musharraf said. "I would like to meet on any level, any place, any time. The ball is totally in your court. I don't see any progress."

He urged US President Bill Clinton to use stronger methods to press India to resolve the Kashmir dispute.

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee accused Pakistan of crimes against humanity and reaffirmed his refusal to talk to its military ruler until he abjures "cross-border terrorism."

In a headline speech to the Asia Society in New York yesterday, Vajpayee did not refer to

General Musharraf's offer at the United Nations of talks "at any level, at any time and anywhere."

But he said Pakistan "has consciously opted to pursue the path of hostility by promoting terrorism in different parts of India," including aircraft hijacking and the slaughter of men, women and children to scuttle nascent peace talks in Kashmir.

Denouncing what he called the cloak of "jihad" (Islamic holy war) for guerrilla action in Kashmir, he said: "This is nothing but an attempt by those who have adopted cross-border terrorism as an instrument of state policy to disown responsibility for their terrible crimes against humanity."

Vajpayee said the current Pakistani leadership had publicly repudiated past agreements with India on improving relations, and for any dialogue to be meaningful, Islamabad must first "demonstrate its commitment to existing bilateral agreements and abjure cross-border terrorism."

Vajpayee said peace would be best guaranteed in the new century by nuclear disarmament, not by nuclear weapons.

But since current nuclear powers have no inclination to give up their stockpiles, India will keep a "credible minimum nuclear deterrent."

"Our experience has taught us that to defend peace, we have to be strong," he told the audience.

## 18 injured in Manikganj road accidents

MANIKGANJ, Sept 8: At least 18 people were injured, three of them seriously, in two separate accidents on Dhaka-Aricha highway today, reports UNB.

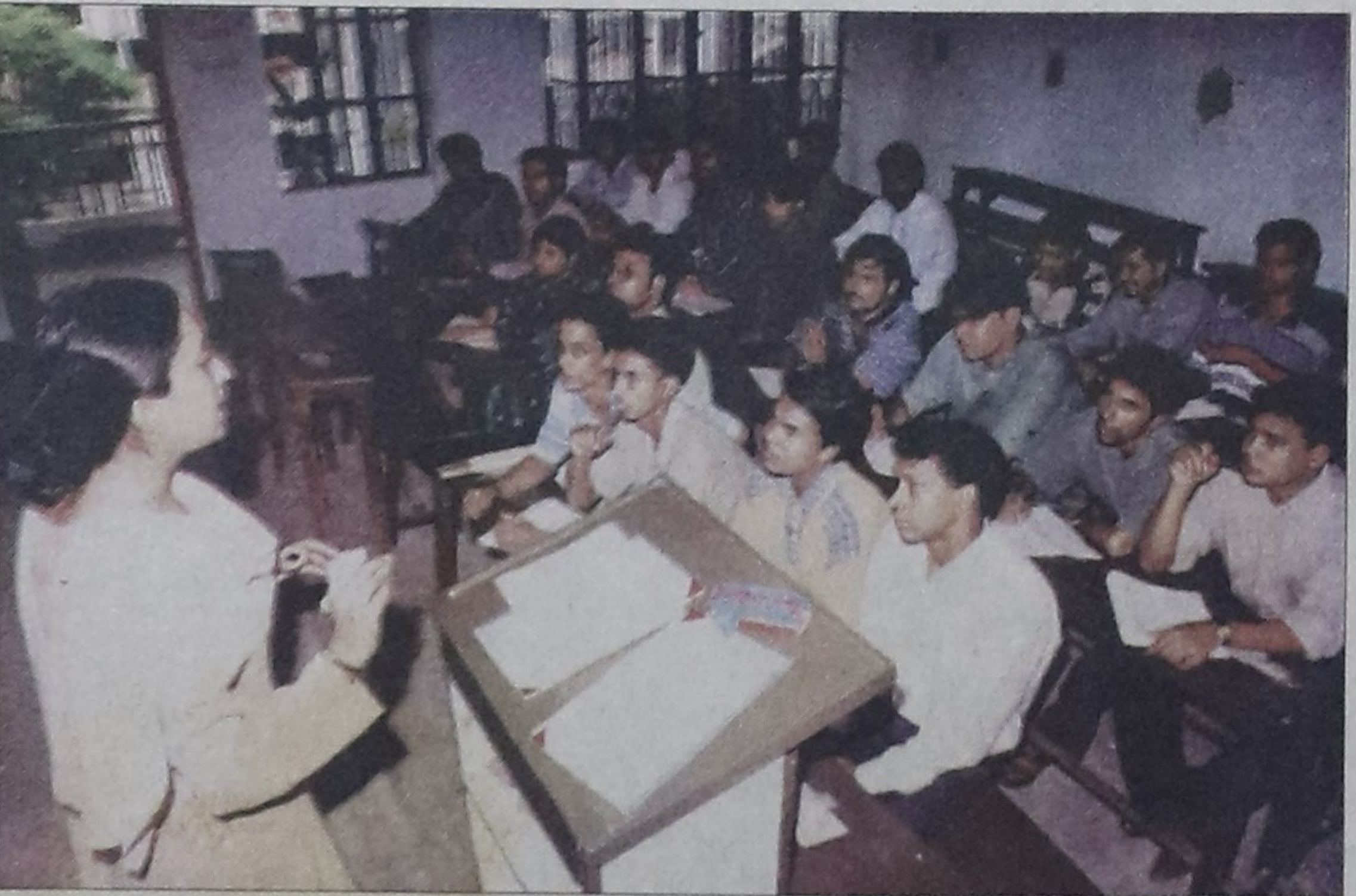
Police and witnesses said a passenger bus coming from Rajbari collided with another bus in Tesra area at about 2 pm, injuring 16 people.

Four of the injured—Eya-zuddin Bepari 40, Aran Nesa, 27, Azim Sheikh 20, and Nazmul Islam Sentu, 40, were admitted to Manikganj Sadar Hospital.

Later, Nazmul was sent to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in critical condition.

Another 12 unidentified people injured in the accident were also sent to different hospitals in the capital.

In other accident in Jalga area, a Manikganj-bound truck coming from Dhaka fell into a roadside ditch, leaving two people injured.



Non-government schools and colleges are now running behind schedules owing to days of teachers' strike. As a result, some of the institutions are open on Fridays to make up for classes, which was the case with Sheikh Borhanuddin College in the city yesterday. -Star photo

## College student stabbed to death at Mymensingh

MYMENSINGH, Sept 8: A college student was stabbed to death and another injured at Natun Bazar level crossing here today, reports UNB.

Police said Sohail 20, son of Alhaj Jamsed Ali of Gohailkandi Jamtola area in the town, and his friend Sohan 22 were came under attack at about 3 pm.

They were rushed to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital where doctors declared Sohail dead. Condition of Sohan was stated to be critical.

The reason behind the killing could not be known immediately.

## Dengue: 11 more hospitalised in city

By Staff Correspondent  
Eleven more people with dengue fever were admitted to different hospitals and private clinics in the city yesterday.

Dhaka Medical College Hospital reported admitting two, Miford Hospital and Dhaka Shishu Hospital one each, BIRDEM and The Red Crescent Holy Family Hospital three each and Bangladesh Medical College Hospital reported admitting one patient.

According to official figure, a total of 52 people have so far died of dengue fever cross the country.

## Correction

Our report on the findings of a parliamentary sub-committee published on September 8 under the headline "SPA mostly misused" inadvertently contained inaccurate information about the number of people detained under the Special Powers Act (SPA) by successive governments. This happened due to ambiguous information in the report about he detainees.

The statistics mentioned in the report in this regard is actually of the people the governments kept under detention while quelling power.

In fact, the number of people detained under different governments are as follows: Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (74-75) - 3,336, Khondakar Moshitque Ahmed, Ziaur Rahman and Justice Abdus Sattar (75-81) - 8,242, HM Ershad (82-90) - 27,973, Khaleda Zia (91-95) and Sheikh Hasina (96-98) - 11,733.



These two disabled girls were among many at a colourful rally in the city yesterday marking the International Literacy Day. - Star photo

## Prisoners not paid for their work

By Staff Correspondent

Convicted prisoners engaged in productive work in different central jails contribute over Tk one crore to the national exchequer every year without being paid for their labour, home ministry sources said yesterday.

Out of about 65,000 prisoners in jails now, 15,000 are convicts. Of them, about 4000 are engaged in industrial units at the jails.

The earnings from their products last year stood at Tk. one crore 21 lakh, the sources said. Goods produced by prisoners are sold through sales centres at the jails, and those have good demand, they said.

Prisoners sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for long periods are usually engaged in weaving, carpet making, manufacturing bamboo and cane product and such other work to train them in different vocations so that they can be self-reliant when released, they

said. The practice of such labour without payment is being followed in the subcontract since pre-colonial days, one source said.

He avoided a direct reply when asked why prisoners in Bangladesh are not paid for their work while payments are made in some countries in the subcontract.

Besides industrial units, prisoners are also engaged for cooking, cleaning etc. If prisoners engaged in industrial units are paid, others will also raise the same demand.

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## 4 BNP activists killed as buses collide in Khulna

KHULNA, Sept 8: Four BNP activists were killed and many injured in a road accident while they were returning from a grand rally of the four-party alliance in the city today, reports UNB.

The accident took place at Katakhal - on Khulna-Mongla road at about 8:30 pm when a bus carrying BNP activists and supporters collided with another bus.

The injured have been taken to Khulna Sadar Hospital. Ahmed Nazir, press secretary to BNP chief Khaleda Zia, told UNB over telephone.

The four died on the spot. The injured have been taken to Khulna Sadar Hospital. Ahmed Nazir, press secretary to BNP chief Khaleda Zia, told UNB over telephone.

## Results of 1270 HSC students under Jessore Board withheld

From Our Correspondent  
JHENAIDAH, Sept 8: The HSC results of 1270 students of 550 colleges in different districts under Jessore Education Board have been withheld due to revision of subjects in the syllabus and the communication gap in this regard between the colleges and the board.

The students as well as their guardians have threatened to go for legal action against the college authorities and the education board soon if the authorities do not take necessary measures in this regard.

Talking to the heads of some colleges it was learnt that the authorities received necessary instructions regarding the change of curriculum only after three months of completing admission procedure according to the old curriculum.

The education board officials could not identify the faulty admission procedure even after three months of admission. Vice Principal of Saitaluka College Md. Fariduddin said.

Badrul Amin, Deputy controller of the board, told The Daily Star he has so far received 200 applications from students and guardians seeking solution to the problem. "We will take decision regarding the problem in a meeting shortly", he added.

## 105 BNP MPs demand withdrawal of 'false case' against Khaleda

About 105 opposition legislators have demanded withdrawal of the 'false' case against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, reports UNB.

In a statement yesterday, the opposition MPs accused the government of harassing the opposition and the case is a part of the government's political vendetta.

They said the government is trying to tarnish the image of Khaleda Zia who is on a movement to restore independence, sovereignty and democracy of the country and ensure livelihood of the people. It is also trying to mislead the nation about its opposition leader.

The opposition MPs said the countrymen is now very conscious and well informed about the 'trumped up cases' by the venal government. They said that since coming to power, this government has been filing thousands of false cases against the leaders and workers of BNP.

The signatories to the statement included Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, Oil Ahmed, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Khandaker Dewar Hossain, Dr Khondakar Mosharraf Hossain, Sheikh

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## Top terrorist Lamba Samad held in Pabna

From A Correspondent

PABNA, Sept 8: Abdus Samad alias Lamba Samad, 45, top terrorist of Pabna and Commander of the outlawed Purba Banglar Communist Party, was arrested from a house at village Charpara in Sadar upazila in the early hours today.

Police said, Samad was wanted in 23 criminal cases, including 16 murders. He was sent to jail today.