

Factions, lack of open space hinder hawkers' rehab

By Raziur Rahman

Countless factions of hawker associations, their unwillingness to shift to designated places and shortage of suitable open spaces in the city have emerged as the major barriers in rehabilitation of evicted hawkers, sources said.

The city pavements and parts of roads were occupied by hawkers for years due to authorities' slow decision making process, lack of coordination among agencies concerned and corruption as well as inertia of a section of dishonest men in those, sources alleged.

The pavements and parts of roads are hawker-free for over two weeks now after the DCC and the DMP evicted them from most of the busiest areas including Gulistan, Farmgate, Nilkhet and Motijheel. The eviction drive was launched after the Eid holidays last month.

This has eased movement of pedestrians and vehicles to a great extent.

But taking advantage of inadequate policemen, the hawkers are

now playing cat and mouse in some areas.

Though the hawkers have launched a movement demanding immediate rehabilitation, they do not want to shift to places proposed by the DCC (Dhaka City Corporation).

About two and a half years back, the DCC proposed eight places in the city for rehabilitation of hawkers, sources there said.

The places are Muktangan, a road near the Notre Dame College, Polashi, the road on the eastern side of Mirpur Muktiyoddha Market, Panthapath, DCC's dumping ground near Jatrabari crossing, a place near the Motijheel Ideal School and the eastern part of Osmani Uddyan.

But the move failed as the hawkers did not agree to shift to those places, leaving the pavements, said a DCC official.

An official at DCC's Estate Department said that higher authorities recently approved a

proposal for rehabilitation of the evicted hawkers at the eastern portion of Osmani Uddyan on a temporary basis.

About six months back, DCC handed over the road on the eastern side of the Mirpur Muktiyoddha Market. "But the hawkers were not eager to sit there", an official at DCC's Estate Department told this correspondent yesterday.

DCC has taken initiatives again to rehabilitate the hawkers in the rest six places.

A senior official said they have already sent the relevant file to higher authorities for approval, with an objection that the space at Panthapath is not adequate for rehabilitating hawkers.

But the hawkers are still not interested to accept the designated places.

When contacted, President of Bangladesh Hawkers Federation

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Double-murder Kalyanpur situation still tense: 3 held

By Staff Correspondent

A tense situation was prevailing in the city's Kalyanpur area yesterday following Sunday's clashes between police and local people who were protesting the killing of two persons, including a Jubo Dal leader.

Faruk, a local terrorist and his gang allegedly shot dead Jubo Dal leader Abul Kashem, 35, and his accomplice Rezaul Karim, 38, inside a club at Kalyanpur on Saturday night.

The trouble began Sunday morning when a large number of local people brought out a procession and tried to hold a rally putting up a barricade on Mirpur Road.

According to sources, Kashem, president of Jubo Dal ward No 11 unit and also a contractor of PWD, was a probable candidate for the post of ward commissioner.

Police have, so far, arrested three people, including Faruk for their alleged involvement in the double-murder. They were produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court yesterday.

Additional police have been deployed in Kalyanpur area to avoid further incident.

One bill passed, 3 more placed in JS

Jatiya Sangsad yesterday passed the Arbitration Bill 2000 providing measures for speedy resolution of disputes relating to international trade, reports UNB.

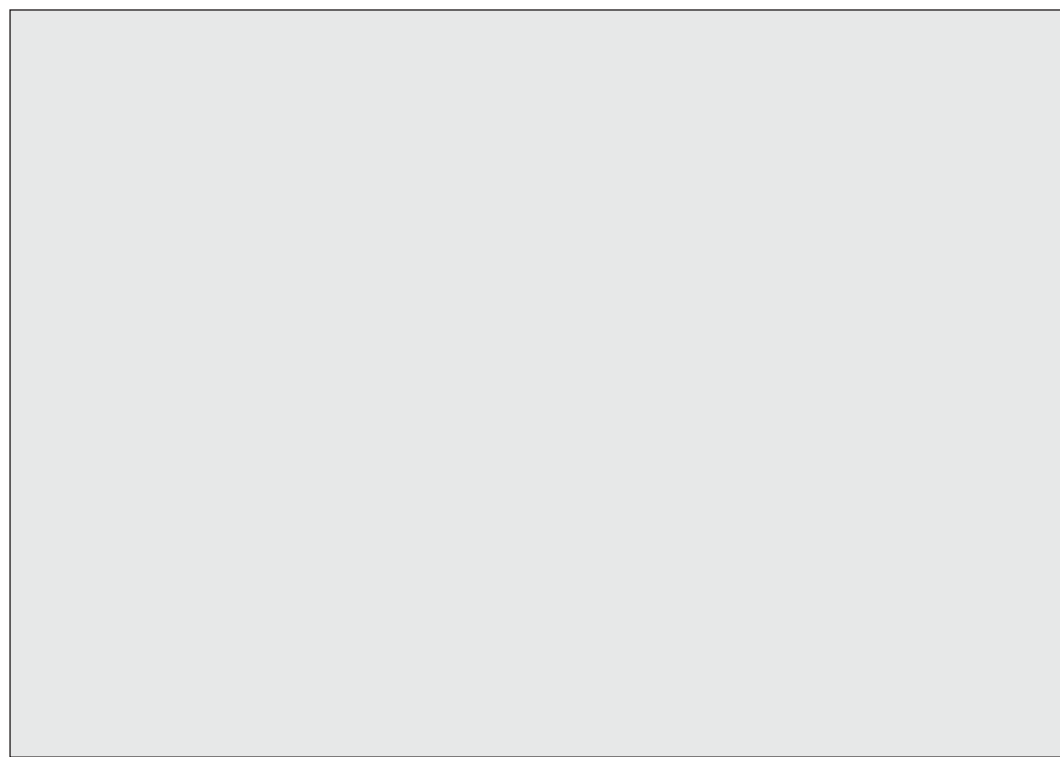
Law Minister Abdul Matin Khasru introduced two other bills the Supreme Court Judges (Remuneration & Privileges) (Amendment) Bill and the Law Commission (Amendment) Bill 2001.

The first bill proposed for raising the household allowance to Tk 750 for the Chief Justice and Tk 710 and Tk 685 per month for Judges of the Appellate Division and the High Court Division respectively. The enhancement will be effective from July 1999.

The second bill proposed for engagement of experts in the existing 3-member Law Commission to make it more dynamic.

Advocate Fazle Rabbi of Jatiya Party raised objection to the introduction of the Law Commission Bill pointing to a provision in

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Workers are being evacuated through the windows after fire broke out at a sweater factory in the city's Tejgaon area yesterday evening. Wool worth nearly one crore taka was gutted in the fire and ten workers received minor injuries during evacuation. -- Star photo

Peace talks postponed after Jewish settler's murder

Israeli army reimpose clampdown on Gaza

GAZA CITY, Jan 15: Israel cancelled peace talks with the Palestinians Monday and reimposed a total clampdown on the Gaza Strip following the murder of a Jewish settler in the Palestinian territory, reports AFP.

"The Israeli side asked to cancel the meeting that was supposed to be held this afternoon, even though the time is limited," the head of the Palestinian parliament Ahmed Qorei told AFP.

"We consider this an Israeli escape from the negotiations and we hold them responsible for wasting time," Qorei said.

An Israeli official blamed the meeting's cancellation on the abduction and murder of Jewish settler Rony Tzalah Sunday in the southern Gaza Strip.

"We cancelled the meeting because of this matter of the Israeli yesterday," the official said. "We see

the Palestinian Authority as responsible. They have to use the authority they have to stop the violence."

He added that a joint security session was still supposed to take

Latest

JERUSALEM, Jan 15: Israeli-Palestinian peace talks originally scheduled for today will now be held tomorrow, reports AFP.

The Israeli side cancelled the Monday meeting after the killing of a Jewish settler in the Gaza Strip, Israeli radio said.

Parliament speaker Ahmed Qorei and the Israelis will represent the Palestinian side at the Tuesday talks by Foreign Minister Shlomo Ben Ami, the radio said.

place Monday.

But Palestinian chief negotiator

Saeb Erakat told AFP, "There are no plans for any meetings, political or security, after the Israeli side cancelled the negotiating meeting."

The Israeli official said that while Palestinian attacks upon Israelis have dropped from around 60 incidents per night to between 20 and 25, "they are grave enough" to merit the cancelling of political meetings at least for "today."

The two sides were to have picked up negotiations where they left off Saturday night after a meeting in Gaza City, presided over by former Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

The body of Tzalah, 32, who went missing Sunday in the southern Gaza Strip while working in a greenhouse, was discovered in a field in the Palestinian autonomous town of Khan Yunes.

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Fire at city sweater factory

By Staff Correspondent

Fire gutted a huge quantity of wool at a sweater factory in the city's Tejgaon area yesterday evening, Fire Brigade sources said.

The fire originated from an electric motor of a conning machine at Sydney Garments Factory on the fourth floor of a five storied building at 158 Tejgaon at about 3:45 pm.

Tejgaon police quoting the General Diary said that fire gutted goods worth about Tk 1 crore.

Eight fire fighting units from four city stations rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze after one and half hours, Fire Brigade sources said.

More than ten people received minor injuries during evacuation of the factory workers.

D-8 Commission meet begins in city today

The 9th meeting of the D-8 Commission begins in Dhaka today to review the progress in economic cooperation among the member states, reports UNB.

The Commission, the executive body of the forum grouping together Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey, will also discuss bottlenecks in implementing the projects as well as prepare ground for the 3rd summit to be held in Cairo by the end of February.

Briefing newsmen on the 2-day meeting of the commission, Foreign Secretary (Multilateral & Economic Affairs) Dr Toufiq Ali said trade would feature prominently on the agenda of the 9th session.

It will also discuss measures in easing the visa restrictions for business people of the member states and infrastructure facilities for enhancing trade and investment.

Trade volume of D-8 countries is just under 6 per cent of total world trade while intra-trade of the forum is little over 3.5 per cent, which is better than SAARC trade.

Dr Ali said Egypt would host a meeting of business people from the D-8 before the 3rd summit to evolve ways for cooperation in enhancing the volume of trade.

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Making a complete mockery of the Dhaka City Corporation's drive to rid the pavements of makeshift markets, hawkers have started restoring their business on the footpath at Purana Paltan.

-- Star photo

Disaster on the river Meghna JS body wants culprits punished right away

By Nazrul Islam

The parliamentary standing committee on the Ministry of Shipping has asked authorities concerned to mete out exemplary punishment to people responsible for the disaster on the river Meghna on December 29 last year that claimed nearly 200 lives.

In the early hours of December 29, Shariatpur-bound passenger vessel ML Rajhonsi with some 300 passengers on board was hit by MV Jalkapot-2 at Ekhlashpur in Motlab Upazila, some 30 kilometres off the Chandpur river port.

Both the two committees, formed to identify reasons behind the tragic accident and assess damages, held Jalkapot-2 responsible in their preliminary reports.

At its meeting yesterday, the standing committee asked the Shipping Directorate to submit its probe report on causes of riverine accidents, meeting sources said. The directorate has formed its own

committee to find out the possible reasons behind ferry disasters under the Inland Marine Safety Rules.

Presided over by Colonel (ret'd.) Shawkat Ali, chairman of the JS body, the meeting noted that the vessel responsible for the tragic death of some 200 passengers should not be allowed to ply on any routes before the matter was settled.

Ministry officials told the meeting that the authorities concerned had been directed to nab the master, sailors and other personnel of the vessel responsible for the accident as soon as possible. They said the "killer" vessel left the scene when the other vessel was sinking after being hit.

Officials said that the owner of MV Jalkapot-2 did not provide proper information to the investigation committee to protect his employees who are actually responsible for the incident.

The meeting also discussed Bangladesh's status in the International Maritime Organisation (IMO). It expressed satisfaction that the country had been put on the organisation's "white list". Bangladesh is the 71st member of the IMO.

Feasibility of private container terminals at Patenga and Pangaon in Chittagong, to be constructed by SSA Bangladesh Limited, also came up for review. Although asked to submit a comparative report on the terminals at the previous meeting, the Chittagong Port Authorities (CPA) didn't, the committee observed.

Mofazzel Hossain Chowdhury told the meeting that negotiations were on with the SSA and the British Consortium in this regard and the comparative study would be submitted at the committee's

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British scientists develop leukaemia cell destroyer

LONDON, Jan 15: British scientists on Monday announced the discovery of a treatment that can seek and destroy leukaemia cells and which could lead to a new way of treating cancer, reports AFP.

Researchers at the Hammersmith Hospital and Imperial College School of Medicine in London have spent six years investigating the disease.

Their work identified a gene, labelled WT-1, which is present in cells that cause leukaemia. Tracing the gene allowed the researchers to identify the cells responsible for the disease.

The discovery, detailed in the publication Hammersmith Research, has led scientists to use the principle in developing immune cells that can recognise a WT-1 "label" on cancer cells and destroy them.

Results have shown the specially engineered immune cells will destroy leukaemia cells and ignore normal cells of the same type.

Clinical trials among leukaemia patients will now be carried out

within two years.

Hans Stauss, of Imperial College, said: "The principle we have developed can be applied to almost all forms of leukaemia and could signal a huge step forward in how we treat the disease."

"What makes this work even more exciting is that our findings can also be applied to solid cancers, such as breast or lung cancer, where there is similar over-expression of WT-1."

"The possibilities for new treatments are enormous."

David Grant, scientific director for the Leukaemia Research Fund, which helped pay for the research, said: "This could well be the chink in the armour cancer doctors have been looking for."

"We look forward to the results of this trial and introducing a whole new range of therapies to patients."

Around 18,000 people are diagnosed with leukaemia or one of the related cancers of the blood in Britain every year.

Rajuk under threat from lake-fillers

By Staff Correspondent

Rajuk officials in their bid to ensure compliance with an environmental protection law, are increasingly coming under threat from a vested quarter engaged in filling up a chunk of the Gulshan Lake at Gulshan section-1 near the shooting club.

Rajuk officials recently prevented the Cooperative Society of the Sena Kalyan Sangstha (SKS) from filling up the lake. The SKS claims to own the entire lake.

When SKS started filling up the lake in early December, Rajuk intervened and told them to obtain a permission to fill up the lake. But the Society again started filling up the lake taking advantage of long Eid holidays.

The Executive Engineers of Rajuk Shaha Didarul Alam and Dr Qamrul Ahsan recently went to the Gulshan thana to file a case under the "Protection of Playground, Open Space, Natural Waterbody and Lowlying area" act. But sources said the thana refused to accept the case and rather advised the engineers to file a General Diary (GD). So far, Rajuk has filed more than six GDs with the thana.

"We have posted our security guards to protect the lake but every

night the guards are coming under threat by armed gangs," said a Rajuk official.

The Senakalyan Cooperative Society is claiming the entire lake on the spot on the basis of "some documents".

"These documents do not give anyone any immunity from the law of the land," said a Rajuk official adding that the SKS Cooperative must obtain permission first to fill up the lake.

None of the Society could be reached for comments.

JP calls hartal in Magura today

From Our Correspondent

MAGURA, Jan 15: Jatiya Party (JP) called a dawn-to-dusk hartal in the town tomorrow protesting attack on its central leader and district general secretary Advocate Hasan Seraj Suja.

Police and witnesses said armed activists of the BNP-backed Jubo Dal and Jatibatbadi Chhatra Dal attacked Advocate Suja when he arrived at the local court premises riding a motor-bike at around 10:30 am today.

BNP takes up programme to mark Zia's birthday

By Staff Correspondent

BNP has taken up an 11-day programme, beginning today, to mark the 65th birth anniversary of party's founder and former president Ziaur Rahman which falls on January 19.

A 75-member national committee has been formed with Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury as convenor, said a press release.

City BNP president Sadek Hossain Khoka MP has been made member-secretary and Nazrul Islam Khan coordinator of the committee.

As part of the central programme, the Jatiyatbadi Muktiyoddha Dal will hold a discussion meeting at 3:30 pm today at its central office. JASAS will organise a discussion meeting and musical soiree at Shishu Academy auditorium on January 17.

Leaders and workers of BNP and its front organisations will place wreaths at Zia's mazar at 9 am on January 19 and the party will arrange a discussion meeting at the Engineers' Institution auditorium at 3:30 pm the same day.

Jatiyatbadi Mohila Dal, Chhatra Dal and Jubo Dal will bring out colourful rallies separately on January 20, 21 and 22 respectively. Krishak Dal will hold a discussion meeting on Jan 23, and Zia Shishu-Kishore Sangathan will hold a children's and juvenile rally at Shishu Academy on Jan 24.

The party has instructed its all city and district committees to take up a 3-day programme.

N'ganj Sramik League activist beaten to death

NARAYANGANJ, Jan 15: A Jatiya Sramik League activist was beaten to death by unidentified hoodlums at Pagla Nandlalpur area in Fatulla thana Sunday night, reports UNB.

The dead was identified as Alamgir Chokder, 25, son of Shamsur Chokder of the area. Alamgir is also a small trader.

Witnesses said the gang called Alamgir out of his house at about 7 pm and took him to a field in the area. They beat him up mercilessly. He was rushed to Narayanganj Sadar Hospital where the attending doctors declared him dead.

Amendment to Brick Burning Act '89 okayed

The Cabinet in a meeting yesterday discussed in detail the report of the Agriculture Commission that incorporates recommendations for further improvement of the sector through necessary reforms, reports UNB.

A ministerial committee was formed in the meeting to work out techniques and methods after reviewing the commission's suggestions for implementing the report.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina presided over the meeting that approved the draft of Bangladesh Disabled Welfare Bill 2001 and the proposed Brick Burning Control Act 1989 (Amendment) Bill.

The regular weekly meeting of the council of ministers was held at the PM's office.

Salvadoran quake death toll rises to over 400

SAN SALVADOR, Jan 15: Strong aftershocks yesterday sent rescuers fleeing from the search for survivors of an earthquake that killed more than 400 people, reports AP.

But they quickly resumed the desperate hunt for hundreds of missing, using sniffer dogs, shovels and their bare hands.

Workers rescued a 22-year-old man trapped for 30 hours under slabs of concrete, reviving dwindling hopes that more survivors might be found in a quake-triggered landslide in Las Colinas, a neighbourhood near the capital.

Drawn by the sound of tapping, workers dug for hours until they reached Sergio Moreno late Sunday. Red Cross volunteer Lucio Castellano said he suffered dehydration and a cut leg, but was in good condition.

As the death toll rose from Satur-

day's magnitude 7.6 quake, President Francisco Flores said he had asked Colombia for 3,000 coffins and overwhelmed officials began to bury some victims in common graves.

The strongest of more than 660 aftershocks led rescuers to scale back digging in Las Colinas, which was buried by dirt that came crashing down from a mountainside on Saturday morning.

"We still don't know anything," said Gladis de Carman, searching for her missing daughter and crying as she spoke on a cell phone to her mother. "And now the ground is shaking again under us."

The largest aftershock, measured at magnitude 5.4, caused more of the hillside to collapse late Sunday afternoon, sending rescuers fleeing in panic.

DU convocation now on Feb 3

The 41st General Convocation of Dhaka University, which was scheduled to be held on January 27, will now be held on February 3, reports UNB.

Official sources said some 10,000 former students who obtained degrees from various departments and institutes of the university would receive certificates in the convocation.

They said the authorities have a plan to confer honorary doctorate degree on Nelson Mandela, former President of South Africa. Nobel laureate economist Prof Amartya Sen is expected to attend the convocation.

The DU authorities also extended the date for registering names for the convocation till January 22.

Vice Chancellors of all reputed universities in the SAARC countries are likely to be invited to attend the convocation.

The 40th general convocation of the Dhaka University was held on December 18, 1999. In the convocation, the 80-year-old university conferred honorary doctorate degrees on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Nobel laureate economist Prof Amartya Sen.

Construction work of the second Buriganga bridge is on in full swing after engineers finally managed to solve the problem hindering erection of a key pillar.

-- Star photo

Editor: Mahfuz Anam