

# Public libraries given a boost to mark Gronthagar Borsho

AVIK SANWAR RAHMAN

To mark the 'Gronthagar Borsho' (Year of the Library) 2003, the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) are jointly planning to create ward wise branches of public libraries throughout the city on a community participation basis.

DCC has agreed to provide space for the libraries in community centres and in ward commissioners' offices. Based on the initiative of the local people and the ward commissioners, the Department of Public Libraries of the Ministry of

Cultural Affairs has supplied books for four libraries. About 600 books were supplied to the Moghbazar Community Centre Library in Ward 54, 600 books for Paltan Community Centre, and 300 books each for Sayesta Khan Kalyan Kendra and Islambag Community Centre in Ward 65. The number of books was supplied according to the facilities provided by the ward commissioners. The local ward commissioners of the three wards have contributed *almira* and shelves for the books, and chairs and tables for the readers.

"This library was inaugurated on May 11, 2003. So far few people have come to know about this library.

We hope more people will know as they come to the commissioner for official purposes and functions like marriage, birthdays and other occasions", said SM Nazrul Islam, the librarian of the Paltan Community Centre.

So far, there were only two branches of public library -- in Suchona Community Centre, Mohammadpur and in Armanitola. Introducing ward wise public libraries would benefit the readers at all levels. "Our library is open from 4 pm to 8 pm. Students and people of all ages come here. Besides books, people are interested in daily newspapers and magazines," said Nazrul

Islam. "We've forgotten the library culture that once was with us, the library will increase readers and develop a healthy culture within our society," said a local residence of Purana Paltan.

"As a part of the project, DCC agreed to provide space for libraries in 13 wards. The Department of Public Libraries will provide an honorarium of Tk 1000 for a part time librarian. Gradually we will establish public libraries in all 90 wards," said Md Anisuddin Mian, the director of the Department of Public Library.



Public libraries will soon be established in all ninety wards of the city.

# Utility system loss and Buriganga conservation city priorities

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) is, at present, running at an average 55 per cent system loss.

"Out of thousands of WASA employees, in fact only 55 meter readers and officials of WASA are causing this system loss," said Local Government Division secretary, AYBI Siddiqui, at a meeting held at the Prime Minister's Office last Monday.

Without mentioning the name of the minister, AYBI Siddiqui informed the members of the meeting, "An influential minister of the government is supporting some of the meter readers who are active members of an employees' combined bargain association."

"After terminating one of the corrupt officers of WASA

recently, the revenue collection of WASA has improved but the system loss has not been improved," he added.

Principal secretary to the Prime Minister, Kamal Uddin Siddiqui, chaired the meeting, which was also attended by a good number of secretaries of the government, high officials of utility service providers, representatives of the Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB) and members of the armed forces.

In the meeting, Kamal Uddin Siddiqui also inquired about developments regarding conservation of the Buriganga River. Replying to the question, BIWTA (Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority) chairman, Abul Hossain Chowdhury, said, "Because of 250 pending cases, the initiatives undertaken earlier to save the Buriganga River have been proving inef-

fective."

Kamal Uddin Siddiqui ordered the BIWTA chairman to hire the best lawyers of the country to fight the cases. "The funding will not be any problem. I trust that the finance secretary will release the necessary funds for this."

Finance Secretary, Zakir Ahmed Khan, also present at the meeting said, "If the PM's office direct us to release the funds we will of course provide the funds for fighting these cases."

Kamal Uddin Siddiqui came down heavily on the Dhaka Electric Supply Company Ltd (DESCO) and expressed his dissatisfaction over its performance.

Representatives of DESCO told the meeting that the system loss of DESCO is at present 26 per cent, which has decreased from the previous

46 per cent. Kamal Uddin Siddiqui set a timetable of ninety days for DESCO to reduce the system loss from 26 per cent to zero, or warned that the government would abolish DESCO and return it under the control of Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA).

Kamal Uddin Siddiqui refused to believe that the system loss of DESA is also 26 per cent and asked DESA chairman AA Rab to improve its performance at the earliest.

The Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP) and RAJUK will jointly carry out an aerial survey to construct a road to link Bijoy Sarani to Tongi Diversion Road (at Security Printing Press in Tejgaon), a source at the meeting said.

Executive director of the DTCB, Kamrul Islam Siddiqui, expressed his frustration because many development projects undertaken by the different government agencies ignored the DUTP, sources of the meeting said. He also informed that a rule was enacted in the Jatiya Sangsad in this regard.

Kamal Uddin Siddiqui vented his anger about the performance of Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTB).

According to sources of the meeting, the BTB has the capacity of providing 4 lakh 18 thousand telephone lines to the subscribers in Dhaka city. Although there is a huge crisis for the BTB telephones 14 thousand lines have not been distributed yet.

Principal Secretary ordered the Chairman of the BTB to distribute it within a very short time.



Conservation of the Buriganga should be given top priority in terms of funds, according to Prime Minister's Office.

# The quandary of being a mother and a maid

Female servants, like Shirin, are almost powerless to protect their young daughters from sexual harassment by their employers

CITY CORRESPONDENT

"Can I send my little girl to work somewhere knowing full well that she could be the victim of sexual harassment?" asks Shirin Akhter, a housemaid in the Elephant Road area.

Shirin's daughter Sony is only eleven years old. But while her mother harbours dreams of Sony becoming a doctor or engineer someday, the brute reality is that she has to start earning a living soon through some form of child labour, and working as a servant in a private residence is the first option.

But human vultures lurk everywhere and young girls are their most common prey. Sony, who goes to a school for the poor and destitute called Shurovi at Dhanmondi, used to stay with her mother at the house of a private service holder and one day, the world came down on her.

"Last month, Sony complained that in my absence, the master's younger brother Shahid acted indecently with her. But I couldn't believe it was sexual harassment as she was only a baby," said Shirin.

But Shirin's belief was shattered days later when she accidentally arrived just at the right moment to prevent Shahid from raping Sony. Shirin complained to her master Towhid Hasan but Towhid did not take any action against his brother. Rather, he told her to keep her mouth shut regarding the incidence.

Shirin had to leave her job to ensure the safety and security of Sony. But she doesn't know where she will find a safe haven.

"Becoming a prostitute is better than continuously tolerating sexual harassment," said a frustrated Shirin.

Shirin recalled that when she first came to Dhaka city as a maid, she was about Sony's age and faced the same difficulties. And it is an every-day fight against lewd advances for thousands of others like Sony in Dhaka.

"The people are maybe different but the type of harassment remains the same. The worst thing is that there's no one out there to protect us," says Shirin.



Trapped by circumstances, but dreaming of a better future, life can be cruel for female servants like Shirin

## crisistelephonenumbers

### COURIER SERVICES

#### International

Air Borne Express- 9561371, 9561372, 9550724  
Air Couriers Intl (BD) Ltd.- 8815970  
Aramex International Courier- 9558003, 9559582, 9565075  
Airspeed Express- 9563494  
Asian Courier Services Ltd.- 8313543  
Baishakhi Courier Service- 9558606  
Banmgladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114  
Bangladesh Courier Service- 9563989  
Bengal Express- 9560642, 9552666  
Bangladesh Intl Courier- 953636  
Continental Service Ltd.- 9552948, 9558425  
DHL Worldwide Express- 9881703-7, 9886305-9, 9882057  
Enem Express- 9330699  
Fedex Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114  
Modhuban Courier Service-

9550884  
Overseas Courier Service- 9352431, 8321169  
Pacific Courier- 9568446  
Reliance Express Service- 9558515, 7110249  
Sky International Service- 9660442  
SkyNet world Wide Express- 9558062, 9560258, 7114787, 7113184  
TNT Express- 9566662, 9558239, 8618155  
Union Courier Service- 9341722  
United Parcel Service Air alliance Ltd.- 8826429, 8810223

#### National

Asian courier Service Ltd.- 8313543  
BAE- 9884851  
Central Courier Service- 9881118  
Confidence Courier Service Ltd. 9567036  
Chisty Courier- 7110177-9, 7100842-4  
Cosmopol Services- 9552793, 9557975

Dhaka Courier Services- 7236222  
Dolphin Courier- 9558802  
Dreamland Courier Service- 9550326, 9566975  
Pioneer Courier Services- 9561727, 9569759  
Probashi Courier Services- 9346359  
Rainbow Express Parcel Services Ltd.- 8322773, 8315703  
Reliance Express Services- 9558515, 7110249  
Sundaban Courier Services- 9551984, 9556189, 9551656  
Sunrise Courier Services- 9568751

#### SPECIAL NOTICE

**For Flood Forecasts**  
Contact:  
Flood Processing and Forecasting Circle: 8121491, 7114295-6  
Flood Forecasting Warning Centre: 9553118

### LIBRARY & INFO-

#### Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers

Central Public Library- 8626001-4,  
Shishu Academy- 9564128  
Shilpakala Academy- 8614673  
Bangla Academy- 8619550  
Islamic Foundation- 9550280, 9556407  
Nazrul Institute- 9114602  
Ford Foundation- 8116133  
Alliance Francaise- 8611557  
British Council- 8618867-8, 8618905-7  
Community Development Library- 8113769, 8113604  
Goethe Institute Intl- Dhaka- 9126525-6  
Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library- 8615096  
The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314  
Drk Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412

### HEALTH

#### Hospitals

##### Heart

National Institute of Cardio Vascular Diseases (NICVD), - 9130800, 9122560-59

##### Burn

Dhaka Medical College Hospital Burn Unit-8626812-6

##### Cancer

National Cancer Institute-8014914, 8826561-65  
BangaBandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University-8612550-4, 861455-9

##### Diabetes

Diabetic Research Hospital (BIRDEM)- 9661551-5, 8616641-50

##### Mother & Child Care

Shishu Hospital- 9119119, 8116061-62

Azimpur Mother & Child Health Training Institute- 8624827, 8624980

##### Eye

Islamia Eye Hospital-9110794, 9119315  
National Eye Hospital- 8117202, 8114807

##### Dental

Dental College- 9002035

##### Orthopaedics

National Orthopaedics (Pangu) Hospital- 9114075, 9112150

##### General

Dhaka Medical College Hospital- 8626812-6  
Holy Family Hospital- 83111731-25  
BangaBandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital- 8612550-4, 8614545-9  
Bangladesh Medical College & Hospital- 8115443, 9118202,

Shamarita Hospital- 9131901  
Suhrawardy Hospital -- 9130800, 9122560-69  
Salimullah Medical Collage Hospital -- 7310061-4, 7319002-6  
Cholera Research Hospital (ICDRB)- 8811751-60  
Monowra Hospital 8319802, 8318135

##### Blood Bank

Red Crescent Centre- 9116563  
Sandhani (DMCH)- 8624040  
Sandhani (SMCH)- 7310061, 7310061.7319022  
Dhaka Medical Collage Hospital- 8626812-9

##### Eye Bank

Sandhani International Eye Bank- 8614040

##### Ambulance Service-

Fire Service & Civil Defence Ambulance 9555555, 9556666-7, 9567734, Fire Services Siddique Bazar (HQ) 9556667,

Mohammadpur 9112078, Khilgaon 7218329, Mirpur 9001055, Tongi 9801070, Demra 7400111, Postagola 7410771, Narayanganj 9715644, Sadarghat 7119759, Mirpur 10 Circle 9002269, 9001055, Mirpur TVG Complex 9001189, Narayanganj Port 9715365, Hajiganj (N Ganj) 9715531, Mondalpara (N. Ganj River) 9712015, N. Gan Bander 9712095, Dhaka EPZ (Savar) 7701444, Markajul Al Islami 9127867, Holy Family Hospital 8311721-5.

##### Ambulances For Dead Body

Anzuman Mafidul Islam (Kakrail) 9336611, Gandaria 7319808, 7318166, Al-Markajul Islam 9127867,