

Arunima: A home away from home

CITY CORRESPONDENT

She exuded confidence as she spoke. "I have a combination of intelligence, education and merit. Why can't I live on my own?" asked 54-year-old Atia Begum.

A former schoolteacher, separated from her husband, Atia found a room of her own at 'Arunima', a project of a social welfare organisation Proshanti Foundation - inaugurated on May 21.

This is a hostel with residential facilities for unmarried, divorced or widowed women over 30. Designed to provide a safe haven, it also helps to generate employment for them.

"We do not like to call it a hostel," said Salina Akther, general secretary of Arunima. "Inmates should refer to it as their permanent home," she said.

Salina feels the necessity of places like Arunima became intense because of the changing social scenario. There are a number of young unmarried, divorced and widowed women who are confronted with the severe problem of a place to live.

In most cases women live with

parents or siblings despite many hardships and disadvantages. Most of the time they are unwillingly dragged into mundane squabbles.

"Smooth relationship with relatives that prevail when a woman lives with her husband changes when she is separated, divorced or widowed," said Atia Begum.

"They are left with no option other than to be accommodative in such a situation," Salina said. She added that student's hostel or working women's hostel is not the right place for women who find them misfits in such surroundings.

"A divorcee or spinster in her 40s cannot cope and adjust with the young in a hostel," she explained.

"But in a place like Arunima, women with common backgrounds and can share their joys and sorrows," Salina said. She was substantiated by Atia who claimed the inmates help each other to overcome grief like she did by assisting her roommate in overcoming the pangs of agony after her husband and son died.

Apart from accommodation, the boarders enjoy food, medical facilities, group insurance, library

and TV, Internet, computer games, gardening, gymnasium and newspaper facilities. Single or shared accommodation is available at a cost of Tk 3,000,000 a month.

"We have to charge our boarders as we do not get any financial assistance from home or abroad," said the general secretary. She added the organisation is trying to accommodate women over 30 from the lower income group by engaging them as service providers i.e. cooks, cleaners for paying members.

"We provide free accommodation and pay wages for their services," she said.

The organisation not only provides accommodation for its paying members but also helps them to develop as small entrepreneurs. They are provided with training, raw material and knowledge in different market oriented matters.

At present it can accommodate 25 but plans to set up a complex of 20,000 square feet for 150 women. The authorities said they also plan to put up hostels like Arunima in cities outside Dhaka.



ARUNIMA
A PROJECT OF PROSHANTI FOUNDATION
15 Holy Lane Shyamoli, Dhaka

SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

Focus on developing libraries

Bangladesh Library Commission proposed

KAUSAR ISLAM AYON

The government proposes the formation of Bangladesh Library Commission (BLC) to stretch library facilities all over the country. This commission will work for the improvisa-

tion of the existing libraries and build new ones as well.

A committee formed by the government has already submitted its report to the cultural affairs ministry on the formation and substructure of BLC.

Cultural Affairs Secretary Mudabbir

Hussain Chowdhury said that the proposal is now being analysed. "We will hopefully submit the final report in the cabinet meeting for approval soon."

Dr Wakil Ahmed, convener of the formation committee of the library commission, hoped if the proposed commission is formed, it will

help to spread knowledge at grass root levels, which is the demand of the present times. Readers all over the country could get themselves updated with current news.

"With the goal to build a knowledge-based society that would sweep away all obscurity, we have suggested the formation of an effective commission that will help reach our goals," said the convener.

According to the report, 2,962 existing libraries all over the country will come under the commission's purview. The commission will work for the improvisation of these libraries with suggestions, financial aid and infrastructure support from the authorities.

Among the proposed libraries, there are 68 public and three national libraries. Among the rest, 2,250 are libraries for various educational institutions and 641 are private.

Most libraries are in the urban areas depriving the rural society of libraries. The committee has proposed building new libraries under this commission at the necessary places.

The secretary said that under this commission they have planned to stretch libraries at upazila level. "We have planned to build up community auditorium cum libraries at every Upazila and these libraries will be under supervision of the commission," he explained.

The proposed commission will consist of 18 members headed by an eminent educationist and will work to build up professionalism developing a wage structure for this sector.

The upcoming commission will also take responsibility to build up a digital network among the libraries all over the country and will provide internet facilities as well.

The commission will work as a directorate to the cultural affairs ministry and will get funds from the government under the budget of the same ministry.

No reference lab yet to monitor standard of path labs

FAIZUL A TANIM

The much-awaited reference laboratory is yet to be set up despite official instructions.

The health minister recently gave the directive at the two-day 22nd National Convention of the Pathological Society of Bangladesh.

The main objective of such lab will be to conduct quality control over the country's diagnostic centres. It will also train pathologists.

City dwellers allege that the city's pathological labs have become a threat to their health. Wrong diagnosis, variation in pathological test rates, illegal commission from path labs, lack of proper equipment and finally non-acceptance of health certificates in foreign countries are some complaints.

"A visit to seven to eight labs around Dhaka showed that fasting blood sugar test ranged from Tk 78-102 while urine culture and sensitivity test cost anything between Tk 203-317," said Kamal Ahmed, a patient referring to a diagnostic centre on Elephant Road.

A senior doctor from the pathology department of a medical college said: "Most of

complaints are true. Some doctors insist on patients going to a specific lab for tests because it allows him to earn a monthly commission."

"Even if the patient requires just one or two tests, the doctor prescribes a range of unnecessary tests to be done as well. This is quite a normal procedure," he added.

Prof Shah Monir Hossain, a senior committee member of the Pathological Society, explained that for the last 10 years or so they had been demanding a reference lab. But only now the government has decided to set one up.

"The project needs to be approved by the Health ministry's planning division and Director General of Health services."

Correction
Rajuk will cancel allocations of residential plots in Gulshan and Banani for converting those into commercial ones after July 1, not June 1 as published in our City page. When contacted Rajuk on receiving phone calls from the residents, the authorities regretted the mistake.



SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

useful telephonenumber

OURIER SERVICES	LIBRARY & INFO-	OUTING	CITY BUS ROUTE																																																														
<p>International Air Borne Express- 9561371, 9561372, 9550724 Air Couriers Int'l (BD) Ltd.- 8815970 Aramex International Courier- 9558003, 9559582, 9565075 Airspeed Express- 9563494 Asian Courier Services Ltd.- 8313543 Baishakhi Courier Service- 9558606 Bannladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114 Bangladesh Courier Service- 9563989 Bengal Express- 9560642, 9552666 Bangladesh Int'l 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-</p>	<p>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</p> <p>National Asian courier Service Ltd- 8313543 BAE- 9884851 Central Courier Service- 9881118 Confidence Courier Service Ltd. 9567036 Chisty Courier- 7110177-9, Cosmopol Services- 9552793, 9557975 Dhaka Courier Services- 7236222</p>	<p>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 Sundarban Courier Services- 9551984, 9556189, 9551656 Sunrise Courier Services- 9568751 World Runner Express Ltd. 9112068, Fax - 880-2-9112068</p>	<p>Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers</p> <p>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 Int'l- Dhaka- 9126525-6 Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library- 8615096 The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314 Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412</p>	<p>Museum and Zoo</p> <p>National Museum- 8619396-9 Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday 3 pm- 8 pm, Thursday closed Muktijuddha Jadughar- 9559091 Open: 10:30 am 6:30 pm, Sunday Closed Bangabandhu Smiti Jadughar- 8110046 Open: 10 am 5 pm, Wednesday closed Ahsan Manzil Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday: 3 pm - 7 pm, Thursday Closed Shishu Jadughar- 9666466 Open: 10 am- 6 pm, Sunday Closed</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Bus No.</th> <th>Route</th> <th>Starts from</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>1</td><td>Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 10, 11, 12</td><td>Golap Shah Mazar</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td>Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 1, 2</td><td>Phoolbaria bus station</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td>Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mahakhali-Airport-Azampur</td><td>Phoolbaria bus station</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>Shyampur-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Airport-Tongi</td><td>Shyampur</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td>Sayedabad-Kamalapur-Motijheel-Airport-Joydebpur-Gazipur</td><td>Sayedabad</td></tr> <tr><td>6A</td><td>Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulshan 1, 2</td><td>Kamalapur</td></tr> <tr><td>6B</td><td>Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2</td><td>Kamalapur</td></tr> <tr><td>6C</td><td>Motijheel Shapla chattr- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2</td><td>Motijheel Shaplachattr</td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td>Sadarghat-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2</td><td>Sadarghat</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td>Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtolli</td><td>Chittagong Road</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td>Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12</td><td>Demra Ranimahall</td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td>Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Malibagh-Rampura-Biswa Road-Tongi Bridge</td><td>Sadarghat</td></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td>Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Tongi Bridge</td><td>Sayedabad</td></tr> <tr><td>11/A</td><td>Sayedabad-Khilgoan-Malibagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge</td><td>Syedabad</td></tr> <tr><td>12</td><td>Shanir Akhra-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammadpur</td><td>Shanir Akhra</td></tr> <tr><td>13</td><td>Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Jhigatola-Shangkar-Mohammedpur</td><td>Motijheel</td></tr> <tr><td>14</td><td>Signboard -Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 12</td><td>Signboard (Chittagong Road)</td></tr> <tr><td>15</td><td>Chittagong Road-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mirpur 12</td><td>Chittagong Road</td></tr> <tr><td>24</td><td>Gulistan-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Airport-Uttara-Bipile</td><td>Gulistan</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Bus No.	Route	Starts from	1	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 10, 11, 12	Golap Shah Mazar	2	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 1, 2	Phoolbaria bus station	3	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mahakhali-Airport-Azampur	Phoolbaria bus station	4	Shyampur-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Airport-Tongi	Shyampur	5	Sayedabad-Kamalapur-Motijheel-Airport-Joydebpur-Gazipur	Sayedabad	6A	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur	6B	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur	6C	Motijheel Shapla chattr- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2	Motijheel Shaplachattr	7	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2	Sadarghat	8	Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtolli	Chittagong Road	9	Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12	Demra Ranimahall	10	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Malibagh-Rampura-Biswa Road-Tongi Bridge	Sadarghat	11	Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Tongi Bridge	Sayedabad	11/A	Sayedabad-Khilgoan-Malibagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge	Syedabad	12	Shanir Akhra-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammadpur	Shanir Akhra	13	Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Jhigatola-Shangkar-Mohammedpur	Motijheel	14	Signboard -Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 12	Signboard (Chittagong Road)	15	Chittagong Road-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mirpur 12	Chittagong Road	24	Gulistan-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Airport-Uttara-Bipile	Gulistan
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TIPS
Do you know according to Dhaka City Corporation, you must deposit your waste at the collection site between