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## A subhuman camp life

**Stranded Pakistanis want the Bangladesh government to rehabilitate them here on humanitarian ground as Pakistan is not sympathetic to their demand for repatriation**

SHAHADAT HOSSAIN RIAJ

As many as 30,000 stranded Pakistanis have been leading a subhuman life at seven camps in the port city for 33 years.

Around 2000 people cram into a decrepit two-storied building at the Sardar Bahadur camp, the largest one in the port city. It is feared that the ramshackle building, constructed in 1952, may collapse any time as big cracks developed at many points. Besides, others are living in tiny thatched and dingy rooms nearby the building.

There are no electricity or gas facilities for them in the camp. They get water supply two days a week from only one line at Sardar Bahadur camp.

There are two toilets and a bathroom for 2000 people, includ-

ing around 1000 women to have refresh and bath. The situation goes from bad to worse in other camps.

Earlier, railway authorities had disconnected water lines in 1987 and electricity lines in 2001 for non-payment of arrears defying the relief ministry order. Relief ministry was supposed to pay the bills.

Of them 25,000 are staying at Sardar Bahadur camp, 1,000 at Halishahar camp, 1,500 at Firozshah camp, 500 at Hamjarbagh camp, 1,500 at Foubabad, 350 at Shershab colony camp and 150 at Shulakbahar camp in the port city.

Sardar Bahadur camp is divided into 11 sectors surrounding by the Warless, Jhautala, Ambagan and Pahartali area.

They took shelter at different government buildings when Pakistani occupation forces surrendered to joint forces of India and Bangladesh on December 16 in 1971.

We want the Bangladesh government to rehabilitate us here on humanitarian ground as Pakistani government was not sympathetic to us, said MZ Azam, convenor of Stranded Pakistani Youth Rehabilitation Movement (SPYRM), zonal office Chittagong. We are sure that we can never go back home, Azam added.

The Pak government is indifferent to our repatriation as it feared a political crisis, he said.

The government also used to distribute relief materials once in three months but it has been sus-

pended since January 2004, informed an on-local Jahangir.

No government or non-government organisation came till date to mitigate their sufferings.

SPYRM was conducting four primary schools at Sardar Bahadur, Roufabad, Halishihar and Firozshah colony camp. Later, the schools were handed over to an Ireland based welfare organisation "Concern". But "Concern" authorities closed the schools on January 1 this year leaving around 1200 kids out of education.

Literacy rate is not more than five per cent here and closure of the schools will aggravate the situation, Azam said.

"Now I work at a boutique house, said Imran, a ten-year-old boy and a student of class five at

Concern School at Sardar Bahadur camp.

The stranded Pakistanis also face some social hazards here. It is alleged that the local Bangladeshis disturb them and very often try to occupy the land inside the camp.

Muhammad Saieed Uppal, counsellor of Pakistan High Commission in Dhaka, visited the Sardar Bahadur Camp on July 9 to see for himself the situation at the camps. He on an emergency basis sanctioned a deep tube-well at the camp to reduce the water crisis. But the camp authorities are yet to get permission from the railway (eastern zone) engineering office to install the tube-well.

Azam seeks government and NGOs support to mitigate their hardship.



## France keen on investment, joint collaboration

**Rasul Nizam, the honorary consul of France in Chittagong, tells The Daily Star**

NURUL ALAM

France wants to tap the potentialities for investment and joint collaboration in Chittagong, country's business hub and the second largest city, said Rasul Nizam, the honorary consul of France in Chittagong.

A high profile French business delegation is expected to arrive in Chittagong during its visit to Bangladesh by the end of this year to explore investment possibilities and other areas of interests, Nizam said. "France is keen to strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries through promotion of trade and commerce," he added.

"Such recognition indicates that France gives more importance and attention to the port city and I hope Chittagong will have a fair share in any deal of bilateral interests between the two countries," Nizam said in an interview with The Daily Star.

French Ambassador to Bangladesh Michel Lummaux conferred the most distinguished order Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur (Knight of the Legion of honour) on Nizam at a ceremony in Chittagong on July 24.

French President Jacques Chirac

announced Nizam's name for the award on June 4. The Legion of d'Honneur, created by Napoleon 1, is France's highest decoration that is bestowed by the government to honour persons for their distinguished services in military or civilian life.

"Such an award is really a blessing for us to draw more support from France in investment, trade and commerce," Nizam added saying, "I will also try to draw more attention from French government to Chittagong".

He, honorary consul of France in Chittagong for the past 35 years, said "Chittagong bears a legacy of friendship and trade link with France since the period of erstwhile Pakistan".

"France appointed a consul in Chittagong in the early 50's (1950) while Karachi was the capital of Pakistan. There was even no consul general of France in Dhaka when Robert Duvauchelle started to work in Chittagong as consul," Nizam said. "This thing happened as France felt the importance of Chittagong," he added.

"After independence Robert Duvauchelle was posted in Dhaka as ambassador of France," he said.

"France provided assistance to



install the country's lone oil refinery Eastern Refinery Ltd. at Patenga in Chittagong in mid 60's," he said.

Nizam said, "Chittagong has been receiving good financial assistance from France for educational and cultural activities in order to improve friendly ties between the two countries".

Alliance Franchise has been operating in Chittagong with a view to teaching French language, he said. Besides, it helps Chittagong University and Independent University of Bangladesh (IUB) teach French language to students.

"Alliance Franchise is also engaged in holding various cultural programmes here to promote friendly relations between the two countries," he said.

**Shrimp fries collected in abundance from Moheshkhali in Cox's Bazar wait for water transports at Fisheriesghat in the port city. Lack of transports having suitable arrangement causes death of a huge quantity of fries during transportation.**



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**Chittagong City Corporation Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury, centre, received gold key for his contribution to education, health and conservation of environment at the mayoral conference in Japan on Thursday. Hiyago Prefecture Governor Tosijo Iedo handed over the award to him.**



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**Young members of Prama recite at a function organised on the occasion of the 63rd death anniversary of poet Rabindranath Tagore at Shilpakala Academy on Friday. Prama, a cultural organisation, arranged the event.**

## the week that was

### Six students get Commendation Award

Six students of Presidency International School, a leading English medium school in the port city, won the Commendation Award in the essay competition-2004 of Royal Commonwealth Society, London.

Md. Ashikul Islam and Farah Ahmed from Class-B, Salman Haque from Class-C, Faria Alam, Fiaz Uddin and Faiza from Class-D got the award.

Irfanuddin Ahmed and Faria Alam of the school got the award in 2002 and 2003, says a press release.

As many as 1500 English medium schools from 51 countries of the world take part every year in the essay competition of Royal Commonwealth Society, London.

### MBA Alumni Assoc reunion

The first reunion of MBA Alumni Association of International Islamic University, Chittagong (IIUC) was held at a community centre on Friday.

Former commerce minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury was present as chief guest. Chittagong University (CU) Vice-Chancellor Prof. AJM Nooruddin Chowdhury, IIUC Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr AKM Azharul Islam, administrative science faculty dean Dr Syed Mohammad Athar and head of business administration Prof. Farid Ahmad Hossain were the special guests.

Amir Khosru in his speech stressed the need for professionalism for prosperity. Convener of association Muhammad

Shahrier Hossain presided.

Glaxo SmithKline manager Tahir Siddique, Mashiud-Dowla of Lever Brothers Bangladesh, ANM Ibrahim Khan of PIL Bangladesh Ltd, Masrurul Maula and Shamima Sultana also spoke. Later, a cultural programme was held.

### Arrest of PCP leaders protested

Pahari Chhatra Parishad (PCP), an organisation of the students of Chittagong Hill Tracts, at a rally in the city on Saturday protested the arrest of its six leaders including central president Mithun Chakma and vice-president Rupon Chakma. PCP also demanded immediate release of the leaders.

The rally was held on Shaheed Minar premises with PCP General Secretary Alokesh Chakma. Chittagong University unit Chhatra Federation convenor Samiul Alam Richi and Pahari Jubo Forum General Secretary Dipankar Chakma also addressed the rally.

Earlier, a procession was brought out that paraded through fares of the city.

Meanwhile, United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF) Chittagong unit also condemned the arrest of PCP leaders by the army personnel from a rally at Khagrachhari and demanded their unconditional release.

### Training meet for Ansar-VDP

Director General of Ansar-VDP Major General Monzurul Alam at a training meet here on Sunday urged all concerned to carry their duties with utmost honesty, dedication and sincerity.

The meeting was held at the University of Science and Technology, Chittagong (USTC)

auditorium at Foy's Lake with commander of Ansar-VDP's Chittagong and Hill Tracts Range AKM Mizanur Rahman in the chair.

Ansar-VDP Director (Training) Col. Faruk Ahmed was present as special guest. Chittagong district adjutant Fakhrul Islam, circle adjutant and company commander Kazi Enamul Haq, upazila Ansar-VDP officer Abdul Quddus, upazila trainer Abdul Mostakim and Rokeya Parvin also spoke.

### Come to the aid of flood victims

The first cabinet meeting of Lions Club International District 315 B-4 was held at a city hotel on Sunday with a call to come forward in aid of the flood-affected people.

Lions Governor Ekram Hossain was present as the chief guest while Vice District Governor Anwar Showkat Absar was the special guest.

Immediate-past governor Rafique Ahmad, multiple council chairman AKM Golam Kibria, international director Sheikh Kabir Hossain and cabinet treasurer M Aslam Chowdhury also attended the meeting.

### Preserve fish spawning centres

Shipping Minister Colonel (Retd) Akbar Hossain here on Sunday said that safety of fish spawning centres should be ensured for preserving and increasing fish resources.

He was addressing as the chief guest the Marine Fisheries Academy Ex-cadets' National Convention at the Institute of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB), Chittagong centre auditorium.

He called upon the cadets for collecting marine fishes following the rules and regulations of the government. He said that two high-powered speedboats are being procured to help the Coast Guard check illegal fishing in the Bay of Bengal.

Akbar also underscored the need for stopping fish-fry collection from the rivers and canals of the Sundarbans. He said that fish fries of different species were being destroyed threatening the fish resources.

### Lever Brothers launches tree plantation

The tree plantation programme of Lever Brothers Bangladesh Limited was formally launched at its Kalurghat factory site on Sunday.

Company's supply chain director Kamran Bakar inaugurated the programme. General Factory Manager Hasan Jafar Chowdhury, Human Resource Manager Saleh U Ahmed, Technical Services Manager Rajib Barua, Production Manager Luthful Bari, Safety Manager Mashiud-Dowla, Personal Services Manager M Shahabuddin and employees union president Shahidul Alam were present.

Lever Brothers has taken a plan to plant over 1,000 trees this year.

### Lottery at shopping malls banned

Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) banned lotteries at different shopping arcades and markets in the port city during

Eid.

The CMP officials said this to the leaders of Bangladesh Shop Owners Federation, Chittagong unit at a view exchange meeting on Sunday.

CMP Commissioner Amjad Hossain, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Special Branch) YM Belalur Rahman, Deputy Commissioner (North) Abdullahel Baki, Deputy Commissioner (Port) SM Ruhul Amin, Federation President Salah Uddin, General Secretary of Hotel Restaurant Owners Association M Mominul Haq, Federation leaders Abul Kashem, Giasuddin Bhuiyan, Abul Monzur Ahmad and Nazrul Islam Manik attended the meeting at the CMP conference room.

### Prize giving ceremony

Minister for Fisheries and Livestock Abdullah Al Noman said that the government has taken up a massive programme to enhance the quality of education.

"For this, the BNP-led government has made highest allocation in the sector," he said while he was speaking as chief guest at the annual prize giving ceremony of South-West Bakalia High School on Friday.

Vice-President of the managing committee Mohiuddin Ahmad presided. School inspector of Chittagong Education Board Prof. Ali Hossain, headmaster Gofran Hasan, managing committee member Shafikul Azam Hiru, BNP leaders Abu Sufian and Dr Shahadat Hossain also addressed it.