



### thecitythatwas

Motijheel in downtown was built during the Mughal period. During the time there was a big Mahal for Mirja Mohammad which housed a large pond known as Sukaku Mahal's pond. The area was later named Motijheel. A mazar called Shahjalal's mazar where fairs were organised existed. Motijheel and Dilkusha gardens were in the same place earlier. The road dividing the two places was constructed during the British rule.

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# City back to schooldays on a nervous note

SABRINA KARIM MURSHED

The city is back to schooldays again. The morning roads got cluttered up yesterday with vehicles scooting children as most schools resumed their normal classes after a long spate of hartals and student strike.

But a sense of insecurity still prevails among guardians and teachers.

Schools shut down last week as the opposition parties called hartals protesting the grenade attack on an Awami League rally on August 21. Also, Bangladesh Chhatra League enforced a student strike from August 22, which was withdrawn on Thursday.

Few schools opened on Thursday and student turn-up was low.

"I took my son to school on Thursday as I heard on the television news bulletin on Wednesday night that the strike had been withdrawn," said Syeda Fatema Zohra, mother of Nazid Murshed, a student of class four of Mastermind.

Yesterday was a heartening sight with students in school dress and guardians crowding the school gates.

"We are still scared. The situation does not allow anyone to relax once they send their kids to school," said Shazia Afrin, mother of Samin Akber, a student of London Grace International School. "I cannot consider school as a safe place for my son because of bomb threats. But I cannot keep him home forever."

At the entrance to Mohammedpur Preparatory Higher Secondary School, Anisa Begum was about to break into tears. Guardians sent their children to the school without knowing the authorities received a bomb threat the night before. Police were informed but ended finding nothing.

The school has posted a notice on the

Happy to be back at school, they and pull, with arms around each other. Life was so boring last week, they seem to say. Yet the fear of bomb threats shroud their security.

"If I knew about the bomb threat, I

father of two daughters studying in the

However, Azhar Ali, chairman of the school, said police carried out a routine check. He admitted that there was a

Many schools have beefed up security. Saint Francis Xavier's Green Herald International School has police forces deployed on its premises.

"We feel a little shaky after what

Other schools such as Scholastica increased the number of security personnel. "Earlier, we had two or three

gatekeepers. But now the authorities have employed professional security

worried about making up lost lessons because of the unexpected closure. Most schools have decided to take extra classes on weekends and other holidays to make up the academic losses.

"We have to compensate for the loss anyhow," said Professor Nurul Alam, chairman of European Standard School. He said guardians should not unnecessarily panic.

## city express

The latest crop of quotes from the city's press -words worth repeating, we feel, for their humour, insight or sheer outrageousness. Star City does not necessarily support the opinions expressed in this

"In spite of being instructed by the prime minister, the principal did not give me the job, but said: "I am the one who will give you the job, not the prime minister."

> -- Sharifa Begum Mother of Yasmin, who was tortured to death by the police

Told reporters on September 1 before two policemen were hanged Source: Bhorer Kagoj

"If I had died, the coalition government of Khaleda and Nizami would have reaped all benefits."

-- Sheikh Hasina President of Awami League and Leader of the **Opposition** 

Said at a meeting with the teachers of Bangladesh Agriculture University on September 3 Source: Prothom Alo

"Two or three bomb blasts do not necessarily hamper national security.'

-- Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan **BNP Secretary General and LGRD Minister** Said at a press conference on August 29 Source: Prothom Alo



"As soon as the ministers of our country get their hands on power, they are under the impression that they have got Aladdin's magic lamp."

**Rokanuddin Mahmud** President of the Supreme Court Bar **Association** 

-- Barrister

Said in a speech at Chittagong Press Club on September 3 Source: Ajker Kagoj

"FBI failed to track down culprits of the Twin Towers attack, but the US attacked Afghanistan and later Iraq acting on its false

-- ATM Hemayet Uddin Leader of Islami Shashantantro Andolon

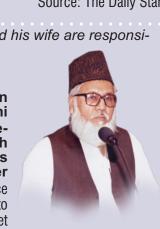
Said at a demonstration on September 3 on the recent arrival of an FBI agent in Bangladesh to investigate the August 21 grenade attack Source: The Daily Star

"Shamsur Rahman and his wife are responsible for the birth of

-- Motiur Rahman Nizami Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh and Industries Minister

Harkatul Jihad."

Said at a press conference on September 3, pointing to the eminent poet Source: Prothom Alo



hug, laugh, push

gate yesterday announcing that no one --visitors or guardians -- is allowed to

enter the institution.

would not have sent my son to school," said Farhana Islam. "Now I want to take my child home but the authorities would

"We have become hostage to criminals," grumbled Alamgir Hossain,

Mohammadpur Preparatory School.

hoax bomb threat.

happened to the school in Russia," said a member of school.

personnel," said a teacher of the school.

Above everything, the schools are

### SSMCH GYNECOLOGY DEPT

## Brokers prey on patients

**CITY CORRESPONDENT** 

Patients and attendants, mostly poor, coming to the gynecology and obstetrics department of Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital (SSMCH) fall into the hands of brokers, who exploit them in the name of helping them buy medicines and get admitted to the hospital.

They also lure them to private diagnostic centres for pathological ests at high costs

Anytime of the day, these brokers can be found loitering around the hospital's outpatient centre and especially at the gynecology department.

"I am not an employee here, but serve the doctors and staff by bringing them tea," said a middleaged lady at the outpatient department who refused to give her name. However, hospital staffs said her main job is to take

patients to nearby clinics for tests. If a patient at the outpatient department is asked to get pathological tests done, the brokers make them believe that the nearby clinics are the better

ones to do it. For bringing each patient, they get a certain amount n commission from the clinics.

The poor and those from outside Dhaka are the main targets of the brokers.

The brokers can easily confuse patients and convince them because there is no written direction anywhere for the patients to follow. They fail to understand what to do and where to go and finally get ensnared by the brokers," said a fifth year student of the medical

About 30 patients get admitted to the gynecology and obstetrics department of the hospital. Most of them have to pay Tk 50 to the gatekeeper to enter the department on the fifth floor. Patients also complain that sometimes the lift operators refuse to let them use the facility without payment.

Around ten brokers are always seen loitering around the department. The moment the doctors hand prescriptions to patients, they grab it on the pretext of helping them. But the patients often have to pay more to buy medicines because of underhand

dealings between the drug stores and the brokers.

"For a normal child birth, a patient needs medicines worth between Tk 500 and Tk 900. But they have to pay at least Tk 1,500 if a broker arranges it," said an intern doctor working in the department. Moreover, the drug stores often push low quality medicines of unknown brands for more profit.

Sources said the department has low supply of drugs and cannot afford to give them to all patients. The department facilities are in a shabby state with a single labour room and an operation theatre for Caesarian sections. It can accommodate 42 patients in the postnatal ward but usually patients outnumber the capacity. There are ten beds in the eclampsia ward and 27 beds in the antenatal ward.

Male attendants freely enter the wards to the embarrassment of the patients. "There is no privacy here," said Nasima Banu, attendant of a patient in the postnatal ward. Nobody is barred from entering the labour room and caesarian operations are done in

Attendants complained that patients are mostly treated by the

interns and none of the seniors visit them. "The uterus of a patient prolapsed after delivery a few days ago," an attendant complained, adding that nobody bothered about the maltreatment. Vice-principal Sharfuzzaman strongly denied leaving patients to

the hands of interns. "We have a large number of mid-level and honorary doctors and interns do not even get a chance to work," he said. He refused to comment on brokers. "The director of the hospital is the right person to talk about it," he said.

Abul Khair Bhuiyan, director of the SSMCH, said the authorities are trying their best to get the brokers arrested. "Being the director of the hospital, I myself went to the outpatient department and caught a broker of a clinic," he said. However, he said it is hard to ward off the brokers. "They would stay away for a few days whenever we crack down on them and then they appear," he added.

# End of life in arson attack

MIZANUR KHAN

It was just another day for 45year-old Khadiza Khan, a government employee, who woke up to the early morning light -- unaware of her and her daughter's end in an arson attack waiting in the

An open theatre usually signifies performance of song and

dance, but this is an open threatre for Caesarian sections, where

anyone immaterial of gender could freely walk into

wings. Khadiza did not hurry to office as it was Friday, a weekly holiday. Still, she was busy making breakfast for her daughters and packing up to travel to Dohar, 45 kilometres south of Dhaka, to see her

ailing husband Manzur Hossain. "Ammu (mother) made us breakfast and we had it together.

She told us to stay in our aunt's she did not come. We went to our place and not to annoy her. She said she would be back home by the evening," said 16-year-old Manjila Khan Mamy, Khadiza's eldest daughter.

Khadiza left home at 9:00am on June 4 for her in-laws' home village taking her 8-year-old daughter Erin with her. Two others Mamy and Ami spent all day with their aunt and came back to their Mirpur home in the evening only to see their mother did not return

"Next day the opposition enforced a hartal and we thought she staved back there because of the strike. That day is over, but aunt's place again and heard the nighttime news on an arson attack on a double-decker that made us really sad," Mamy continued.

Desperate, two little children called their father, who returned from Saudi Arabia four years ago because of his illness. He told them by phone that he saw Khadiza off to the bus station.

'The bus was set on fire at 8:00pm and it takes nearly three hours to reach the capital from Dohar. We called our relatives and her colleagues, but nobody knew. All of them told us she would be back by next morning," Mamy sobbed

After a sleepless night, the morning arrived with a jolt. Khadiza and her daughter Erin, burnt in the arson attack beyond recognition, were found at the emergency department of Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

"Nobody allowed us to see the burnt face of our mother. Only Abbu (father) identified our mother seeing her bangles. Erin was cradled in mother's arms -charred," nine-grader Ami said, bursting into tears.

The motherless children now live with their aunt in Mirpur, who bears all expenses for food. shelter, medicines, clothes and education. "We don't want to stop

going to school. We have to finish our studies. We really don't know what awaits us," Ami said.

Mamy is waiting for enrollment in college. "I want to do a part-time job to make a living. We don't want to be a burden on others."

After the death of their mother, the two received Tk 25,000 from the social welfare ministry and Tk 40,000 from Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation, while their mother's colleagues gave another Tk 20,000.

Ami and Mamy do not want to stay with their father in Dohar because of his second marriage. "We are alone, we do not have anybody now in our family. We

have nowhere to go," Ami said. Ami and Mamy hate politics which took their mother's life. "If anybody wants to enforce strike, they can do so but should not kill innocents. We appeal to our prime minister and leader of the opposition not to orphan anybody," Ami sobbed.

Unable to bear educational expenses on their own, Ami and Mamy appealed for financial help. (Bank account: Manjila Khan, S/A 34134602, Agrani Bank, New Eskaton Branch, Dhaka)



Mamy and Ami left destitute losing their mother to an arson attack during a hartal on June 5.