

A menace called the Sattala slum

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Officials and employees of the Infectious Diseases Hospital (IDH) in Mohakhali have for long complained that crime and lawlessness is rampant in the area because of the presence of the Sat Tala slum on land belonging to the hospital.

The hospital's total area happens to be thirty-five acres. But the main building has been built on approximately three acres while the rest have been occupied by the slum dwellers.

"We still do not have our own dormitories inside the hospital's compound, which has been one of our main demands for a long time, as the slum people have encroached the land," said a staff

of the hospital.

The Sat Tala slum has become notorious for extortion, drug trade and other illegal businesses. A number of listed criminals also reportedly use the slum as their hideouts. It has been alleged that local hoodlums even forcibly redirect supply lines of utility services meant for the hospital to the slum.

The Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) launched an operation in the slum on October 4 but most known criminals had escaped the drive, said locals.

In a recent incident, around six people were injured when a group of miscreants of the slum attacked the hospital and caused damage to an ambulance, chairs, tables, windows and other office equip-

ment in a reported fight over the area's water supply line on October 14.

The damage amounted to some 2.15 lakh Taka according to the hospital's authorities.

Officials said that musclemen of the slum had re-routed the hospital's water supply line into the slum. They have also allegedly targeted the gas and electricity supplies for the hospital.

Locals said that there was a drive to remove the slum dwellers from that place but an influential political figure filed a writ in the High Court to stop the eviction.

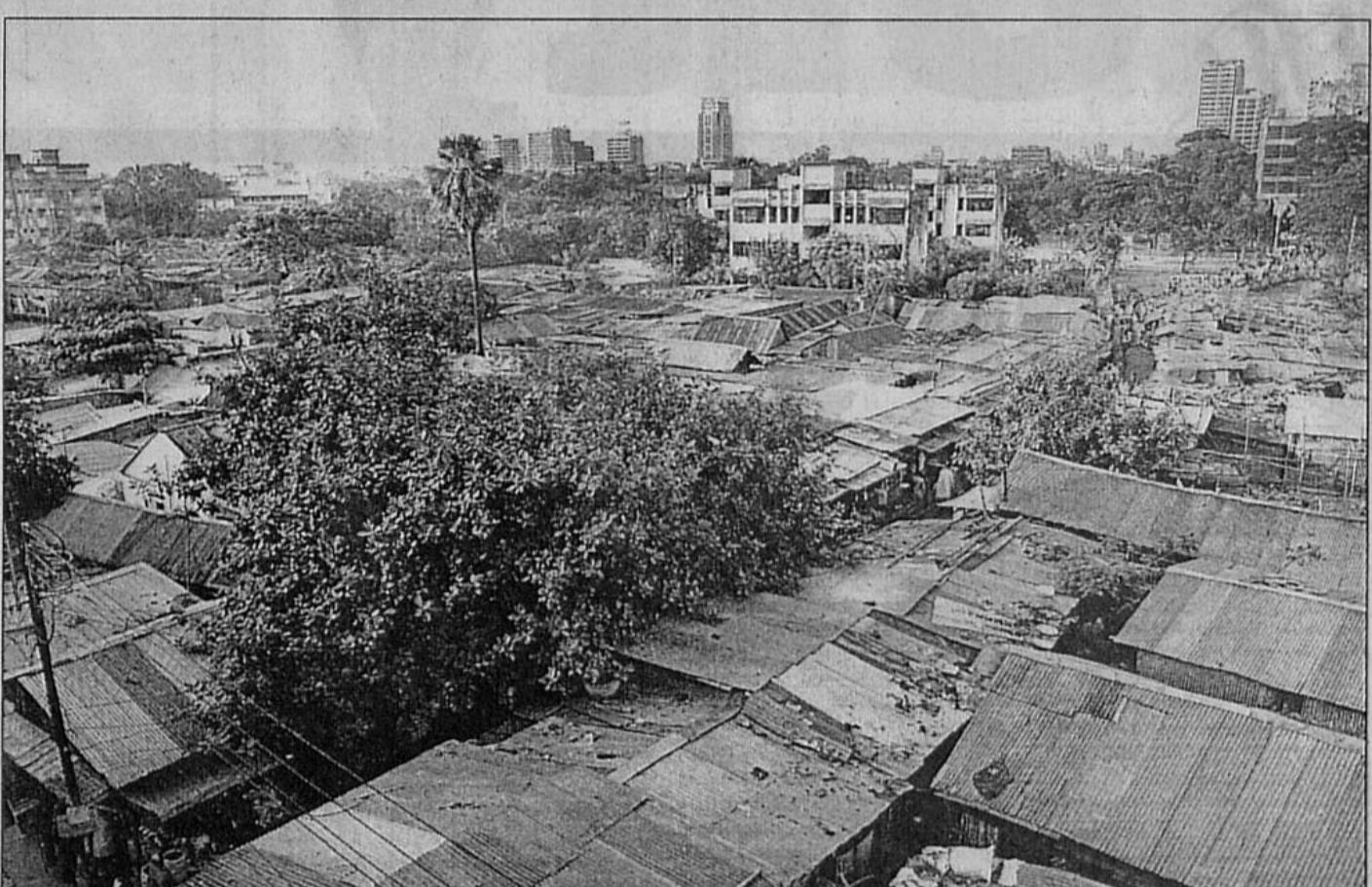
Residents and hospital officials said that there was a large presence of outsiders in the area. Around one thousand illegal

shops have been set up and fifty to sixty thousand Taka is raised every day in extortion money from those shops.

The bigger shops have to pay fifty to sixty Taka per day while the smaller ones ten to twenty. Humayun, Rashu, Kallu and Chunnu were the main criminals involved in extortion, said sources.

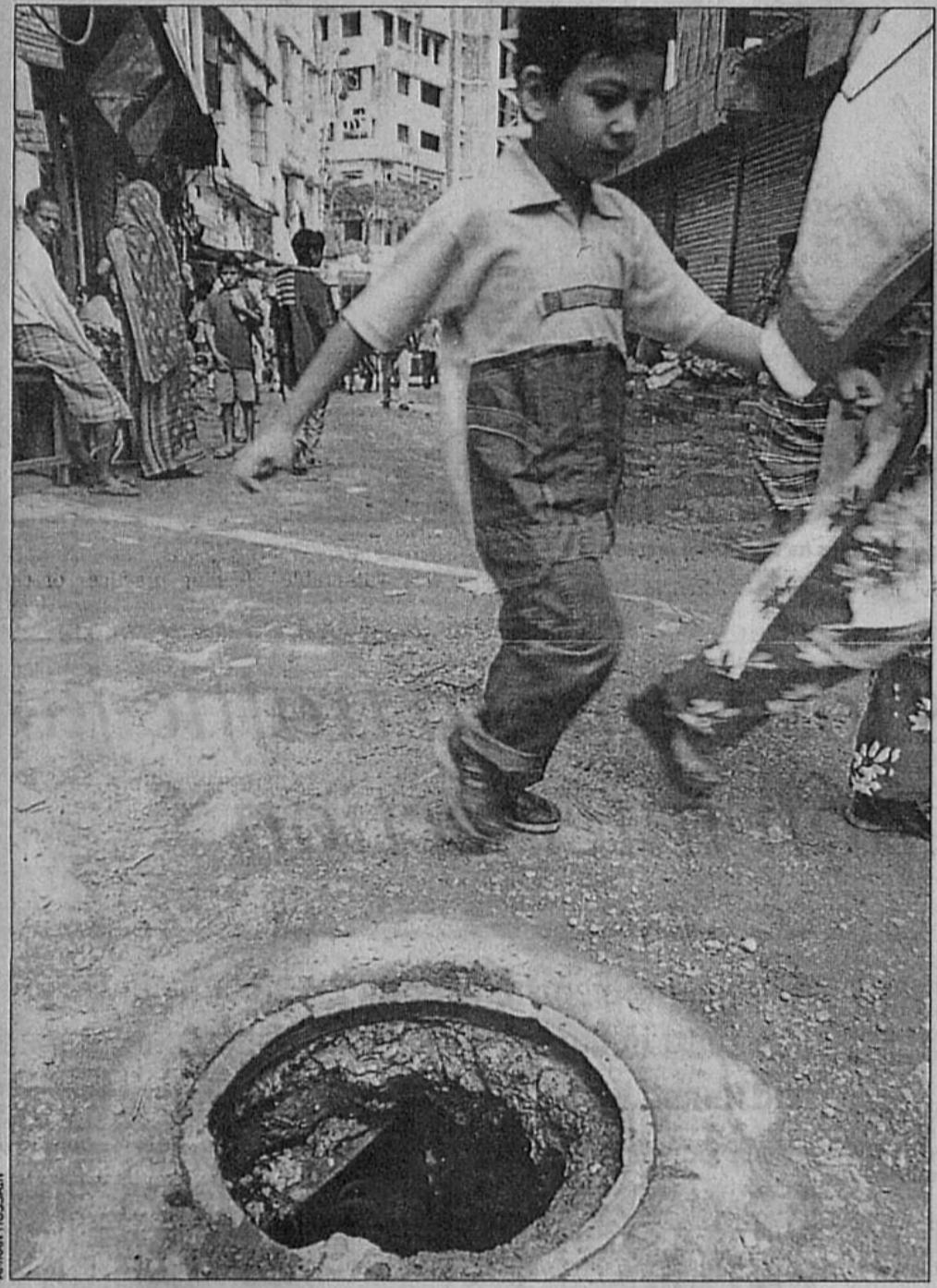
Sub Inspector Mizanur Rahman of the Gulshan Police Station told Star City that patrolling had increased in the area since the RAB operation although some locals disagreed.

A RAB official said that they might launch another anti-crime drive in the slum based on information from sources.



An aerial view of the slum which has turned into a safe haven for criminals and drug addicts and peddlars over the years.

PHOTO STAR



AHMAD HOSSAIN

Open manholes in the Kanthalagan Bazar area pose immense danger to children playing around and pedestrians, especially at night when power cuts are on.

Life lost in manhole

FAIZUL TANIM

Four-year-old Noorjahan, who fell into an open manhole at Shahidnagar in Lalbagh area of the city on October 13, could not be rescued in the last 11 days. No-one knows her fate as all attempts to find the baby have proved futile.

The girl, while playing on the street slipped into the manhole. Local residents saw the incident and immediately informed Noorjahan's father Abdul Aziz.

Badshah, a factory worker, brought a plastic pipe and tried to pull her out. Sliding the pipe into the manhole, he saw the baby girl wobbling in the sewage water but despite repeated attempts, Noorjahan could not catch the other end of the pipe.

Fighting there for another six to seven minutes, the girl could not hold any longer. She was washed away with the flow of sewage. Then some people got down through the narrow hole. But their attempts also failed, as they did not find the ill-fated child.

Divers were then called and they rushed to the spot. After several hours of futile searching they went back. But the wailing parents of Noorjahan would not move from that place holding the last bit of hopes to find their baby.

The next day local ward commissioner started fresh rescue attempts. Nurjahan's parents were still wailing at the site. "If we do not find our daughter alive, we want at least the body for proper burial," said the baby girl's father.

Firefighters and sweepers scanned all over but failed to find any clue. The ward commissioner then sealed all the open manholes in the area.

Md Alam, whose factory is right in front

of that manhole, also saw the October 13 incident. "The parents should have taken care of the child since she is just four-year-old. She shouldn't have been left alone to play," said Alam.

Asked why the manholes remain open, Alam said the covers are stolen by thieves and drug addicts. They sell the manhole covers to local scrap metal shops.

"There are more than a hundred scrap metal shops in this area and quite often heroin addicts steal manhole covers and sell them in those shops," said local trader. "This is open secret...The shop owners should stop buying the manhole covers."

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DESA on the internet

SABRINA KARIM MURSHED

Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority (DESA) has launched its official website (www.bd-desa.org) to offer better assistance to its customers.

According to DESA sources, the intended date of the website's launching had been October 20 but it might take a few days more to have it up and running properly. The initiative was taken to ease the sufferings of the consumers.

At present DESA has around 5,28,000 clients in Dhaka, Narayanganj and Tongi. DESA officials said that consumers have often faced harassment regarding different issues of the DESA and the new website could go a long way in easing that situation. "Those who can use computers will be benefited most from it," said one official.

The MIS and Computer Department of DESA has undertaken the project while the Graphic Information System (GIS) is doing the hardware installation as well as helping with the programming. The total cost of the project is around Tk 70 lakh according to a DESA official. The cost is a bit high as servers, associated equipment and firewalls that prevent computer virus attacks had to be purchased, the official added.

Source said the website has been divided into two parts -- static and dynamic. The static part will have information regarding DESA and consumer services. It will have all the circulars and tender notices of DESA posted in it. It will be frequently updated. FAQ or set of frequently asked questions along with answers will be there to help the people. Also the consumers will be able to know about power outage caused by maintenance and repairing work of DESA in advance.

In most cases, consumers become victims to brokers when they want to

get a new electricity connection. With the website, people will be able to download an application form for a new connection. Moreover, they will get to know about necessary documents that should be attached while submitting the application. The entire process will be easier this way.

The most common problem that consumers face is with DESA's billing. Most complaints the DESA receive are of ghost bills. The website will let consumers lodge complaints through its dynamic section. It will have sections highlighted with phrases like 'No reading in bill', 'Highly abnormal bill' and others. A customer can click a certain section and type his complaint there. DESA will reply within ten days and let the client know the present status of his complaint.

The website will have the tariff rule and tariff rate in it. "The tariff rate differs from off-peak to peak hours, from residential connection to agricultural and small industrial connection. The consumer will be able to calculate his own bill when he knows the rate," said one DESA official.

The consumers can download copies of their own bills of the past year or check proper entries of their paid bills when they open an account or ID with the website.

"Like any other website, the accounts and ID will be protected with passwords so that nobody apart from the account holder can open it," said a concerned official of DESA.

However, consumers can not pay the downloaded bills at banks as there is a chance of hacking. Moreover, DESA still does not have contracts with any bank for internet banking options.

"We are trying to sign up contracts with one or more banks for internet banking and hopefully our consumers will be able to pay bills through the internet once we have done that," said an official.

healthouting,taxicab&train timing

HEALTH

Hospitals

Heart

National Institute of Cardio Vascular Diseases (NICVD), 9130800, 912560-59

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 (BIRDDEM)- 9661551-5, 8616641-50

Mother & Child Care

Shishu Hospital- 9119119, 8116061-62

Azimpur Mother & Child Health

Hospital- 8115443, 9118202

Al-Markajul Islam 9127867

Training Institute- 8624827, 8624980

Shamarita Hospital- 9131901

Suhrawardy Hospital- 9130800, 9122560-69

Islamia Eye Hospital- 9110794, 9119315

National Eye Hospital- 8117202, 8114807

Cholera Research Hospital (ICDRB)- 8811751-60

Monowra Hospital 8319802, 8318135

Red Crescent Centre- 9116563

Sandhani (DMCH)- 8624040

Sandhani (SMCH)- 7310061, 7319061

Dhaka Medical Collage Hospital- 8626812-9

Red Crescent Centre- 9116563

Sandhani International Eye Bank- 8614040

Holy Family Hospital- 83111731-25

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital- 8612550-4, 8614545-9

Anzuman Mafidul Islam (Kakrall)- 9336561, 9319808, 7318166,

Al-Markajul Islam 9127867

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Bangladesh Medical College & Hospital- 8115443, 9118202

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