



Pro-government Bijoy Utsab Udjapan Parishad sets up its office (left) and erects makeshift stalls on Outer Stadium premises.



Ctg tense over Victory Day celebrations

Political division undermines the spirit of liberation war as rivals announce programmes at same venue

SHAHADAT HOSSAIN RIAD

Political division over the celebration of Victory Day in the port city is marring the sanctity of the spirit of the War of Liberation as rivals lock horns over the venue of a fair like in the previous year.

A tense situation is prevailing over holding of Victory Day celebration programmes by the rival groups at the same venue.

Rivalry has been marring the solemnity of traditional Muktiuddher Bijoy Mela (Victory Fair) in the port city of Chittagong for the last three years.

The trouble began in 2001 when Bangladesh Muktiuddha Sangsad of Chittagong city, north and south district commands tied to the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) organised

a victory festival evicting the then organisers on the Chittagong Outer Stadium premises.

Pro-government Chittagong city, north district and south district commands of Bangladesh Muktiuddha Sangsad under the banner of Muktiuddher Bijoy Utsab Udjapan Parishad are taking preparation to organise a 25-day Victory Festival titled "Muktiuddher Bijoy Utsab" at the venue from December 5.

On the other hand, opposition backed Muktiuddher Bijoy Mela Parishad announced a month long fair titled "Muktiuddher Bijoy Mela" (Victory Fair) at the same venue beginning today (December 1).

"Muktiuddher Bijoy Mela" was celebrated in and around Chittagong Outer Stadium for 16

years until 2000 but the pro-government organisers took control of the venue in 2001.

Pro-Mela Parishad leaders termed holding of the Victory Festival "capture of the Victory Fair Venue and snatching of the fair" while the organisers of the Victory Festival described it as "restoration of Victory Festival" and reinstatement of real freedom fighters in organising the fair.

Bijoy Utsab Udjapan Parishad has already leased out the fair venue to a private firm to monitor the stall allotment process.

The lessee 'SA Syndicate' has set up some 220 stalls at the outer stadium. SA Syndicate Director Emdadul Aziz Chowdhury told this correspondent that traders already booked around 150 stalls at Tk13,000 to 60,000 each and

special security measures would be taken in and around the fair valley to check any untoward incident. "Private security personnel will be deployed alongside a permanent police camp at the fair ground to face the hazards of visitors round the clock," he added.

A member of Bijoy Utsab Udjapan Parishad said that some Awami League leaders led by Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury took the leadership of the victory fair originally organised by eminent freedom fighters of the port city in 1989 and made money after politicising it.

"The freedom fighters could organise the fair for only two occasions upholding the true history of the War of Liberation before they were forced to step back as the platform was used for

petty political interests in a heinous way," he added.

Meanwhile, Mohiuddin Chowdhury on Wednesday announced that a month long Muktiuddher Bijoy Mela would begin on December 1 on the Outer Stadium premises at any cost.

Abul Hashem, Secretary General of Muktiuddher Bijoy Mela Parishad, told The Daily Star that they are determined to hold the fair as per the announcement of Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury.

"Our Victory Day programmes will begin with a rally of real freedom fighters from Shaheed Minar this morning (December 1) and lighting the 'victory flame' at stadium area." "We will inaugurate the fair at the Outer Stadium evicting the occupiers," he added.

Sprawling city slums give rise to crime

SHAHIDUL ISLAM

Increasing number of slums in the port city, the second largest metropolis, is raising concern among the dwellers as those are giving rise to criminal and anti-social activities.

Statistics of law enforcing agencies and non-government organisations (NGO) showed that the commercial capital has now more than 100 slums in 60 sq km areas.

The ramshackle houses, lack of basic amenities, absence of recreation in life, inhuman living condition, dealing of illegal drugs, criminal activities, presence of criminals, vested interest or political leverage and lack of

raids on several occasions to arrest criminals but failed. The CMP dealt heavily in October last year to demolish the Barisal Colony.

A CMP official said that many criminals generally used to take refuge at the slums to avoid police raid or legal action. And slums are increasing in the port city with the help of a section of unscrupulous police personnel.

An NGO executive said police regularly extort money from the criminals living in the slums and keep their eyes shut to all sorts of criminal and anti-social activities centring the slums.

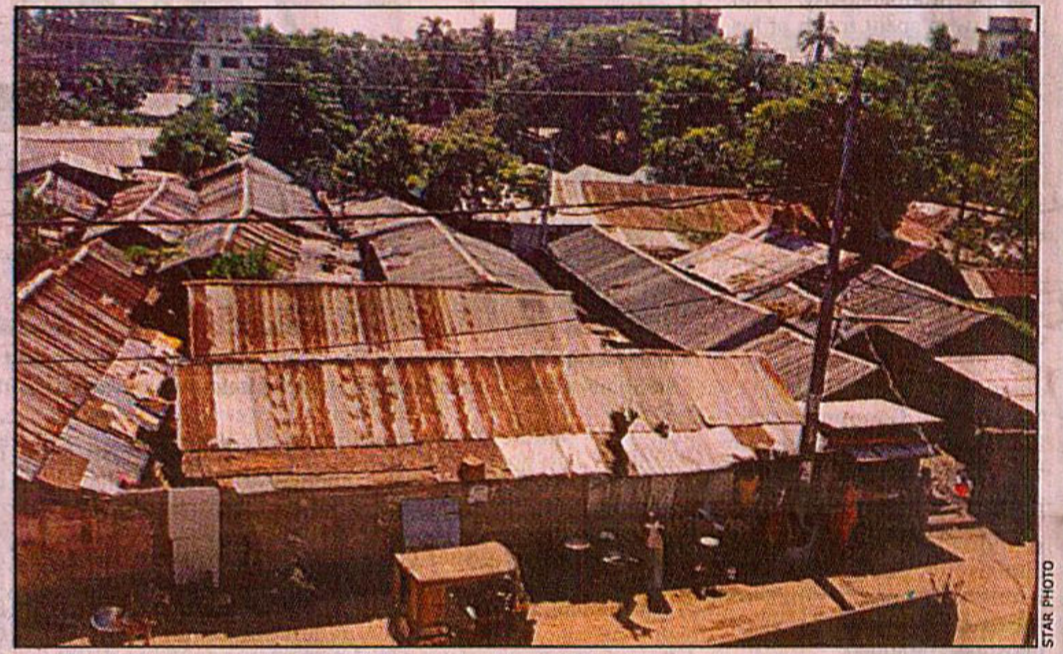
Illegal slums on the railway land are also a concern in Chittagong. Most of these slums have turned into notorious

family alive in 1999 and two other girls in 1997.

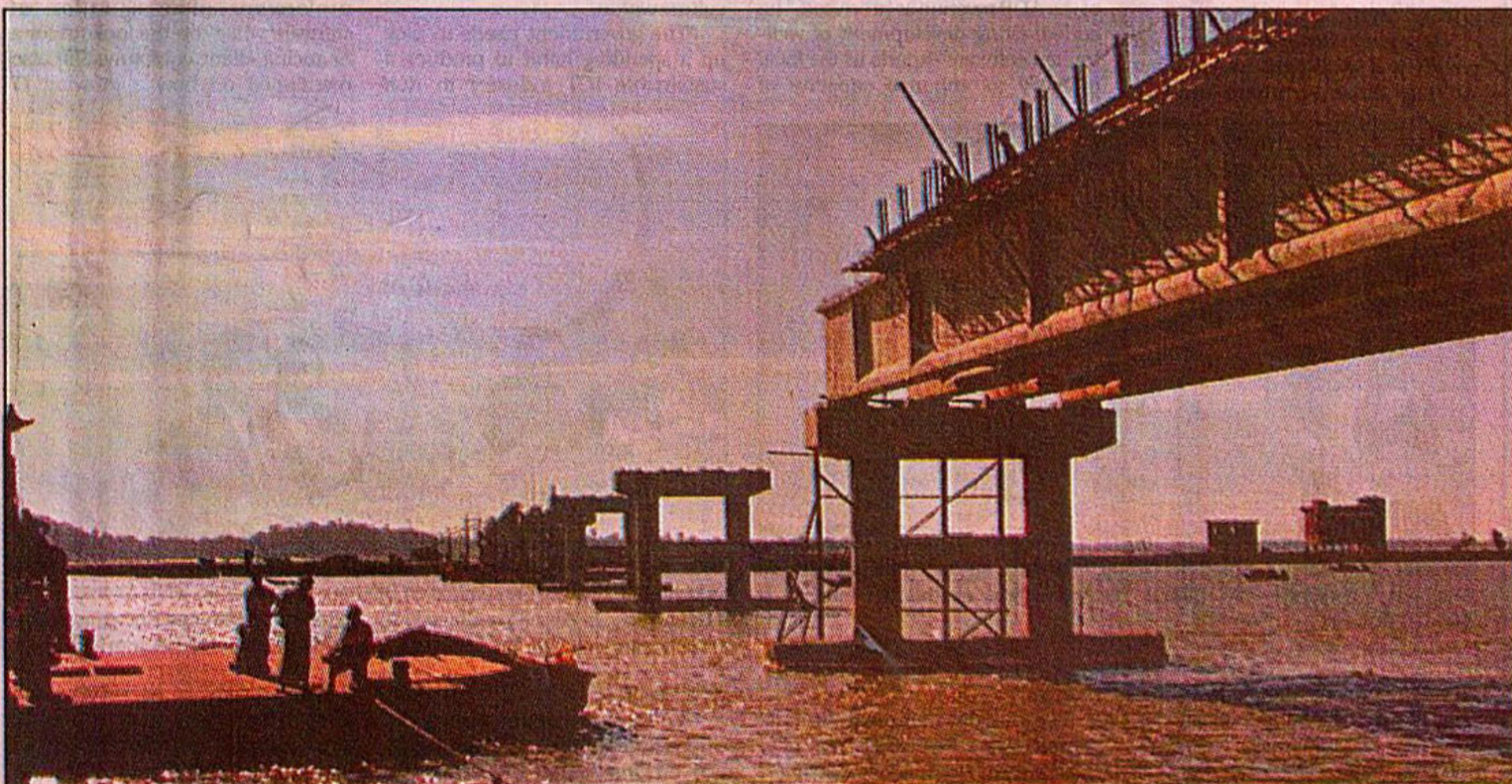
Around 40 people were killed in a dozen of landslides in a decade at Motijharna slum.

The Estate Department of Railway with a poor manpower and insufficient logistics carried out eviction drives throughout the year. But the drives proved to be futile efforts and wastage of labour and money as the recovered lands were left unprotected and illegal occupants find no difficulty to settle there again.

On the other hand, the railway authorities seem to have a little to do against those who have grabbed its huge areas of lands at Motijharna, Madarbari rail crossing and Jhaotala colony.



A slum at Patharghata area in the city.



Construction of the most coveted Baderkhal Bridge to link the offshore island of Moheshkhali with the district headquarters of Cox's Bazar and other parts of the country is going on in full swing. Local people said the bridge that would connect Chakaria of Cox's Bazar at Baderkhal will save two hours while travelling to and from the offshore island.

ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

proper sanitation and leaving scope for different diseases are the main features of slums.

The slums are sprawled at nook and corner of the city.

Barisal Colony at city's Madarbari Rail Crossing, Railway Station Colony, Jamtala Bosti, Jhaotala Colony at Jamal Khan, Kazi Colony at Kazir Dewri, Patharghata Bosti, Goachhi Bagan near Chittagong Medical College hostel at Chateshwari Road, Sher Shah Colony, Tulatali Bosti, Burma Colony, Meah Khan Bazar Bosti, Bou Bazar Bosti, Ghasiarpara Bosti, Bagarbeel Bosti, Matijharna Colony, Tigerpass Bosti, Pahartali Railway Bosti, Ambagan Bosti, Firoz Shah Colony, Tigerpass Francis Colony and Agrabad Bheulur Dighi are 'infamous' slums in Chittagong.

These slums are known as the safe haven for many topnotch and notorious criminals as well as anti-social elements of Chittagong and Greater Chittagong.

The Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) launched 'cleansing'

criminal spots. Bangladesh Railway has 831 acres of abandoned land with 479 acres already under the control of illegal occupants in Chittagong Division.

Scores of slums have grown up on this abandoned land in the city. And they have earned the bad name of "crime points" where peddling of drugs, smuggled goods and illegal firearms take place. Besides, different criminal and anti-social activities frequently occur there. Slums at Barisal Colony, Station Road area and Jamtoli Bosti are the most infamous ones.

The Jamtoli Bosti at Enayet Bazar and Motijharna Slum at Lalkhan Bazar are now "death traps" as the illegal occupants erected thatched houses on the slopes and bottoms of hills risking lives and properties.

Over 200 thatched houses have been erected in the hillock slum of Jamtoli Bosti by some unscrupulous elements. Two incidents of landslides at the slum buried 10 members of a

An Estate Department official said railway authorities would be benefited if these lands could be recovered.

"We conduct at least 4 to 5 drives a month to evict illegal occupants," the official said adding that the drives do not prove much effective as the evicted settle at the same area again for lack of proper protective measures.

Local "mastans" are making money capturing the railway land illegally and giving rise to the criminal and anti-social activities, he said. The poor slum people are not benefited as they are to pay rent to the criminals there, he added.

Meanwhile, Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) took a project styled "Poverty Reduction Scheme in Slums" to upgrade the conditions of the slums and ensure basic needs like education and healthcare for its dwellers.

"Our efforts were already paying dividends and such initiatives would bring a change in the slums," a CCC official said.

the week that was

Chitra Nadir Parey screened

A three-day screening of Chitra Nadir Parey, a short-film, ended here on Saturday.

Theatre and Arts for Less Fortunate (TALF) as a part of its efforts for encouraging fair films and creating audiences of such films, screened the short-film at Agrabad Karmachery Kalyan Centre auditorium.

TALF had been organizing screening of fair films, particularly short ones, in Chittagong once a month for the last three months. The money collected from the screening of films are spent for different development activities, sources said.

CPA fines 30 vessels

Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) fined 30 vessels Tk 2.26 lakh and detained two

other ships on charge of tax evasion and for non-renewal of survey certificates during a three-day drive that ended here on Saturday.

CPA Magistrate Munir Chowdhury fined the vessels and realised the money during the drive conducted on the port channel.

In the drive a fishing trawler -- Friendship-1 was detained along with its crew from Sadarghat and brought to the port jetty for non-payment of port taxes amounting to Tk 5 lakh. Another trawler -- Rawnak, was detained at Patenga area for evading tax for over one and a half-years.

Mohaanna Daan observed

The Mohaanna Daan (giving rice), a religious ceremony of Murma tribes, was held amid a great festivity in Bandarban on Saturday.

Earlier, they observed the "Kathin Chibar Daan" at different Buddhist

Kiangs. Around 300 Buddhist monks from over 150 Kiangs of the district gathered at the ceremony at Murma inhabited Madyampara of Ujanipara and received rice from the devotees. Young Murma girls standing in front of makeshift houses erected in rows on both sides of the roads leading to the function venue gave away the rice to the monks. Later the devotees worshiped the Buddha with the monks conducting the rites.

'Ensure quality education'

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Md. Nasiruddin urged the teachers to ensure quality education for the children to help build an educated nation.

He was addressing as the chief guest the launching ceremony of English medium system of teaching following National Education Curriculum at Manarat Residential School and College in the city on Friday.

He said that in the tough competition of the present day world there was necessity of receiving education in English medium to survive in the working fields.

He urged the parents and teachers to take care of the children to grow interest home culture in them to uphold the tradition and play role in nation building.

Principal Hafsa Begum presided.

Workshop on breast cancer

A two-day workshop ended here on Wednesday with a call for creating awareness against breast cancer to save the mothers from the fatal disease and thus save the future generation of the country.

Cancer Support Group and Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) jointly organised the workshop on breast cancer at CCC Teachers' Training Centre

Babul Enthralled Audiences



Babul Jaladas (left), son of renowned drummer Binoy Banshi Jaladas, enthralled audiences with drum beats at a cultural function organised by Odhikar O Nanyan Parishad, a conglomerate of 40 NGOs, at DC Hill Park on Friday.

auditorium. Former Principal of Chittagong Medical College Professor Noor Jahan Bhuiyan, Assistant Professor Khondoker AK Azad, CCC Chief Medical Officer Dr. Sarfaraz Khan and Medical Officer Salim Akhter Chowdhury spoke at the workshop.

Khondoker AK Azad told the workshop that at present around 34 per cent women are attacked with breast cancer in Malaysia, 17 per cent in India and 12 per cent in Saudi Arabia. A study conducted by Chittagong Medical College Hospital said around 15.5 per cent of the women in Bangladesh were suffering from breast cancer, he said.

UCEP Skill Dev Centre to be set up

Telecom Malaysia has assured UCEP cooperation to set up a modern skill

development centre for the poor children in Chittagong.

Telecom Malaysia Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Christian D Pharia made the assurance of cooperation while addressing as the chief guest a function at AK Khan UCEP School at Mohora under Boalkhali in the district on Friday.

He said that as a part of its continued support to educational activities carried on by UCEP for the poor children and adolescents, Telecom Malaysia (TM) would help set up the centre in the shape of Penang Skill Development Centre of Malaysia. A high-powered Malaysian delegation would visit Chittagong soon in this connection, Pharia said.

Industrialist Salahuddin Kashem Khan chaired the function held on the occasion of handing over of some computers to the school (AK Khan UCEP School) by TM International Limited.

Pharia during his visit to UCEP IT Centre said that Telecom Malaysia would provide the centre with ten printers.