



Shaymoli, a northern place in Dhaka, was so named as the area was covered with greenery by Abdul Gani haider, a social worker of Becharam Douri who came here and built his own house in 1957. The local people at a meeting lead by Gani decided on the name. Former Minister Hafizuddin was present in the meeting where the name Shayamoli was proposed and accepted by the participants.

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Faulty lights cause traffic havoc

Manpower constraint traffic division is finding it increasingly difficult to control traffic as half of the traffic signalling units break down regularly

RAIHAN SABUKTAGIN

Random malfunctioning of automatic traffic signal lights is causing havoc in the traffic management system of the capital.

Traffic division of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) is having difficulties providing sufficient number of personnel to maintain smooth flow of traffic as almost half of the 68 units of traffic signalling units in the city remain out of order everyday.

Morshedul Anwar, head of a sub committee of Regional Transport Committee told Star City that the automatic traffic signalling equipment are installed and maintained by Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) to help the traffic division of DMP.

According to the traffic division organogram, less police personnel are supposed to be deployed at intersections with automatic traffic signals. But in reality, the DMP ends up deploying more personnel at those intersections due to frequent failure of the automatic signals, added Anwar.

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Sadequr Rahman, passenger of a taxicab, expressed his frustration as the traffic police was manually controlling the traffic overriding the automatic signal.

Sadeq complained that manual controlling of traffic at the intersection was making him wait longer than usual and thus compelling him to count more in taxi fare as waiting charge. "Since the delay is caused by the police, why should I pay more?"

A police sergeant working at the intersection told Star City that due to unforeseen and unavoidable occurrences on the roads, the police sometimes have to step in and override the automatic traffic signals.

During the rush hours, volume of traffic is different on different directions of the road. When a particular side of a road gets heavily congested, the pre-timed green signal for that direction is not long enough to

"The problem we have is that

the signals are not repaired timely even after informing the DCC, said the official.

DCC installed 68 electronic traffic signalling units on 59 points in the city. Traffic Engineering Department of DCC is responsible for the maintenance of the signals.

Faruk Aziz, head of the DCC Traffic Engineering Department, told this correspondent that the department repairs a defective traffic signal soon after a malfunction is reported.

After a survey last week, the department found all traffic signalling units operational in the city except two -- one at Golapbagh of Gulistan and the other at Malibagh intersection, he added.

Aziz blamed frequent power outages for the malfunctioning of the traffic signalling equipment.

The instant power supply devices installed with the signals can provide a power backup for up to two hours provided that the batteries in the devices would be recharged for five hours. Battery life of the devices are gradually wearing out as the batteries cannot be recharged for the specified length of time due to prolonged power cuts in the city, he explained.

Soon after Aziz made the claim that all but two traffic signalling units in the city were found operational by his department, this correspondent spotted another out of order signalling unit at Phulbaria intersection near Nagar Bhaban (the DCC headquarters).



A faulty traffic signal at Russell Square-Mirpur Road intersection.

"It is very difficult for us to spare extra personnel [to handle the traffic at intersections where traffic signals do not work] since we are understaffed to manage traffic on the over-loaded city roads where traffic violations are widespread," he said.

"How many tasks can I assign to a sergeant or a constable?" Anwar questioned.

At Bijay Sarani intersection on a Sunday morning,

Rehab's bid to restore prestige

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (Rehab) in a press statement said that the association did not intend to justify any illegal activities of real estate sector in the advertisements they issued last month.

The statement came following sharp reaction to the Rehab's advertisements published in several newspapers on April 3, 25 and 26 in which the association preached against the wetland and environment conservation acts and Private Housing Land Development Rules of 2004 to justify land development in the sub-flood zones.

The statement, jointly signed by Rehab President Abdul Awal

and General Secretary Tanveerul Hoque Probal, said that they had no intention in the memorandum addressed to the chief adviser to justify illegal activities of any kind in the real estate sector.

"Rehab would welcome any move of any person or organisation to rectify mistakes and wrong information, if any, mentioned in the advertisements and memorandum," said the Rehab statement issued on May 2, following two reports carried in The Daily Star on April 29 and 30 relating to Rehab's advertisements.

Rehab leaders clarified that they did not mean to back any illegal activities in the real estate sector against public interest. Rehab is respectful to all the personalities who have

expressed their opinions in the reports published in The Daily Star, they said.

"Rehab supports and will support any step against any person or organisation engaged in illegal activities against public interests," the statement reads.

One of the two stories of The Daily Star was on Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakha's (Rajuk) move to publicise a list of approved private housing projects to make people aware of illegal projects and stop fraudulence by a section of developers.

The other story reported sharp reaction of the environmentalists and urban experts over the real estate association's advertisements advocating for accommodating unauthorised housing projects in the Detailed

Area Plan (DAP).

Meanwhile, a group of urban experts and activists at a press conference on May 2 decried Rehab's propaganda move.

Executive Director of Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) Sultana Kamal, Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), advocate Iqbal Kabir of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela), Prof Nazrul Islam of Centre for Urban Studies (CUS) and President of Institute of Architects of Bangladesh (IAB) architect Mubasshar Hussain spoke at the press conference.

The Rehab advertisement on April 3 argued for accommodating whatever geographical and topographical changes have

taken place over past 11 years causing serious blow to the city's landscape and planned development in preparing the DAP.

Instead of preparing the DAP on the basis of CS map, Rehab demands delineation of the present state of geography and topography with many designated wetlands, low-lying areas, rivers, canals, retention ponds and flood plains earth-filled and destroyed by land developers.

In another advertisement on April 25, Rehab alleged that Wetland Conservation Act of 2000, Environment Conservation Act of 1995, Building Construction Act of 1952, Private Housing Land Development Rules of 2004 are flawed and cause harassment to the housing developers," he said.

"Rehab is now making attempts to justify unauthorised activities in the real estate sector... There are innumerable instances of land grabbing by the housing developers," he said.

Reacting to the advertisement, a top environmentalist, Professor Muzaffar Ahmad, earlier told Star City that it is clear with the latest move to establish onslaught on environment and justify detriments to city's development plan that Rehab has no transparency and accountability as an organisation.

The whole argument of Rehab in the advertisement is that their business is above everything, he said. "But the question is which one is greater: business of the housing developers or interest of the country."

"Rehab is now making attempts to justify unauthorised activities in the real estate sector... There are innumerable instances of land grabbing by the housing developers," he said.

"Now you [Nobel Laureate Dr Muhammad Yunus] have run away as you have realised what politics is"

-- Shah Moazzem Hossain

BNP leader

Said in a meeting to commemorate late BNP leader KM Obaidur Rahman at the Institute of Diploma Engineers at Kakrail, on Saturday.

Source: The Daily Star

"I have the answer but I cannot tell you"

-- Sayeed Iskander

Newly appointed vice president of BNP

Told reporters when asked why Khaleda did not attend the chehram of late BNP leader KM Obaidur Rahman at his Banani residence where many party leaders and workers gathered to meet her, on Sunday.

Source: The Daily Star

Compiled by Durdana Ghias

A little push opens doors to success

Success stories of people who were given opportunities and forged forward

SHAHNAZ PARVEEN

When Toslima was a little girl 28 years ago, it was uncertain that she would be able to go to school as her family at that time was facing serious financial crisis. Now Toslima herself runs a school, which is dedicated to the destitute children.

Toslima could not imagine in her childhood that one day she would have a school of her own and provide poor children with free education. But everything was possible because of an organisation, which helped her study up to master's level.

Born in 1973, Toslima Akter Toma saw her family struggling as her freedom fighter father was wounded in the War of Liberation and her elder brother was the only breadwinner of her large family of nine members.

Toslima's family however was not ready to give up on education for the younger members. "In

1979 my family found a ray of hope. We heard about Ucep (Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs). The organisation endowed me with education, along with a life I have never imagined," said Toslima.

Toslima learned embroidery, tailoring and received education up to class eight at the Lalmatia branch of Ucep. She was keen to pursue higher education. Ucep provided assistance until she finished her master's from Dhaka University.

Today Toslima is in a different kind of struggle. After a few years of teaching at Ucep and a private college, she founded Rajdhani Preparatory School and College with her very last penny in 1999, which is dedicated to the destitute children and female students of Ucep who finish SSC and cannot make it to any college.

Rajdhani Preparatory with its two sections, one in Lalmatia



Toslima Akter at work.

and another near the third Buriganga Bridge, is now providing free education to the poor students. Toslima wishes to expand the institution and is in need of financial backing.

Ucep is a leading international non-governmental organisation proving non-formal education to urban working children. Lindsay Allan Cheyne of New Zealand in a humanitarian move founded it in 1972 with only 60 students.

It received encouraging response from the poor students and gradually began to expand. Today with its endeavours to develop marketable skills among the destitute children, Ucep has 32 general schools, 8 Para trade centres and 5 technical schools all over Bangladesh proving training in 31 areas of skill.

After receiving class eight level education in the general schools, students are trained at

Para trade centres and technical schools with various skills for two years. In Dhaka city Ucep has 14 general schools, 3 Para trade centres and 2 technical schools.

training in electronics at Ucep. Today only at the age of 19 she has become head technician at an IPS and UPS manufacturing company and she is the only breadwinner of her family.

"Ucep gave me a boost at the right moment. The organisation gave me a different outlook on life. It helped me become what I am today," Maksuda said.

Abul Hashem Mia used to work as a hawker at Rayerbazar kitchen market to help his day labourer father to run the family. His story is similar to Maksuda.

Hashem was a student of Rayerbazar branch of Ucep for eight years. Later he received garment machine repairing training. At the age of 22, Hashem became head machine mechanic in a leading garment factory in Dhaka.

Hashem has fulfilled his father's dream. He bought lands for his landless father.