

Five dormitories to be set up for working women

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR

Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) will construct five six-storied female dormitories with a view to addressing the accommodation crisis of working women in the port city.

A 20-storey commercial tower will also be constructed on 119 kanthas of land in the city's Saltgola area alongside the Air Port Road.

The ministry of housing and public works had approved a project estimated at Tk 92 crore last month in this regard. However, final approval to the project cost may be given at a meeting scheduled to be held at the ministry on November 11.

Of the cost, Tk 70 crore will be spent for construction of the dormitories and commercial tower while Tk 22 crore would be for other expenditures, sources said.

The process for appointing

consultant for the project is going on to complete the work within shortest possible time, said an engineer involved in preparing the Development Project Plan (DPP) for the project.

Immediately after the approval CDA will start the project implementation process such as floating tenders, design and pre-qualification inspection.

The construction work is likely to start by February or March next year, said an engineer preferring anonymity.

Sources at the CDA said the dormitories will house 269 rooms for 1,076 women employees from different organisations.

Each of the 176 square-foot rooms will offer accommodation to four persons with a common dining and bathrooms in every floor.

Though the existing accommodation crisis of garment workers prompted CDA to take

the initiative for dormitories and commercial tower, criteria for giving allotment of the rooms and floors to the aspirant organisations are yet to be finalised.

However, Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers' and Exporters' Association (BGMEA) is expected to get priority in this regard, they said.

BGMEA First Vice President MA Salam welcomed the CDA move for setting up the dormitories, saying it is a long-felt demand of women workers.

"It is a praiseworthy move by the CDA and we want its immediate implementation for mitigating the accommodation crisis," Salam said.

"These dormitories are not enough to solve the demand for accommodation. But, it would encourage other organisations to come forward in this regard," he said, assuring all kind of cooperation including financial help, if required, from their side (BGMEA).

CDA Chairman Shah Muhammad Akhteruddin said, "Actually the project might be considered as an effort by CDA as philanthropic work."

He said around one lakh women are working in different factories inside Chittagong Export Processing Zone (CEPZ). They suffer seriously from accommodation crisis, he added.

"Their safety and security are hardly taken care of, which is a common phenomenon in the male-dominated society featured by gender discrimination, said Akhter while talking to The Daily Star on Sunday evening.

CDA took the initiative for the project responding to an appeal by BGMEA in this regard, he said, adding that alongside offering hygienic accommodation the dormitories near their workplace will also help the female workers of CEPZ to save transportation cost.



Dr Fazlul Hazara Women College Road in Kattali area remained dilapidated for long. Locals and students of the college suffer a lot while passing through the road that appears to have turned into a dustbin full of garbage. A renovation work was undertaken 10 months ago only to see the road lie with brickbats spreading on it till date. The photo was taken on Monday.



City service buses pick up passengers from any place at their will ignoring counter system and traffic rules.

City buses ignore counter system

DWAIPAYAN BARUA

The passengers of city service buses suffer as the owners and drivers are reluctant to use counter system to sell tickets.

Under the traffic rule, the drivers of the city service buses were asked to drop or pick passengers from the specific stoppages. Passengers were also requested to buy tickets in advance from the designated counters before boarding the buses.

Traffic department of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) introduced the system on April 14 to ease the passengers' hassle and streamline the bus services in the port city.

A number of makeshift counters were also set up at different stoppages on the 11 routes in the city in this regard.

But from the very beginning

of the move the owners and drivers started non-cooperation to the plan of CMP and threw challenge to the department. A few days after the system was launched the unruly drivers and owners in an organised way withdrew the vehicles from the city roads in a bid to thwart the system.

The system, however, could be implemented later following drastic drives by the traffic department and passengers could avail comfortable travel in the city.

The department filed 675 cases against city service buses and seized 104 others on charge of violating the system during a three-week drive before Ramadan.

But the drivers started violation of traffic rules as the department suspends the drive on the eve of Eid-ul-Fitr. Passengers alleged that coun-

ters have now completely disappeared from most of the routes.

They said only 40 per cent counters could be found only on routes No. 9 and No. 10, the two busy routes, while most of the counters have vanished from other routes.

Abul Kalam, a passenger, said some counters are only kept to puzzle the traffic police in a bid to avoiding fines and cases but in fact no tickets are sold there.

While visiting the busiest Choumuhoni Moor on Monday only two counters were found while buses of four routes cross the area.

Saiful Islam, a staff of route No. 7, was seen sitting at his counter while buses were found stopped far away from the counter. Passengers also were not buying tickets from the counter

before boarding the bus.

When asked Saiful said this counter has been kept only to avoid harassment of the police.

He sold tickets of only Tk 120 on the last day while he is supposed to sell tickets of over Tk 7000 a day, the staff said.

He was worried to get his monthly payment as he was doing nothing but sitting there.

Passengers are often found involved in altercation with the staffs and drivers over the matter. Harassment of commuters and realisation of additional fare in the city buses has been a routine picture.

Sultana Azad, a college student, said the counter system is really comfortable for the passengers especially for the women as it ensured them to get seat.

Accepting the allegations Golum Rasul Babul, general

secretary of Chittagong Transport Owners' Association, said there is no body to control 840 buses plying the city.

He said his association can only monitor some activities but is not able to control the owners.

He, however, said the counter service could be introduced for the newly imported buses.

But, there are many old vehicles that always try to violate the system in a bid to carry much passenger for higher profit.

He said they have already lodged a written complaint to the traffic department over the violation of traffic rules by a section of drivers.

Assistant Commissioner (AC) Mostafizur Rahman of CMP (traffic) said they will launch a fresh drive in this regard soon.

School bags for indigenous children

Bangladesh Institute of Theatre Arts (Bita) at a function at Amtoli of Sualok Union in Bandarban distributed 92 school bags to the indigenous children under a motivation programme to help continue their education.

Anupam Barua, Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) of Bandarban Sadar Upazila, was present as the chief guest at the function presided over by Shishir Dutta, executive director of Bita.

Bita project coordinator Swagata Dhar, UP Member Badi Kumar Tanchangya, local primary school headmaster Jahidul Islam, local Child Rights Monitoring Committee General

Secretary Joy Ram Tanchangya, and Siddhartha Tanchangya, a children of Amtoli, also spoke.

Children from Po Aishya Bel Children Space presented a children theatre in Tanchangya language.

Diwali celebrated

The Diwali, a religious festival of Hindus, was celebrated here on Friday amid enthusiasm.

Assistant High Commission of India, Chittagong organised a function on the occasion at its office at Khulshi with a view to giving a glimpse of the celebration to the Bangladeshi friends in Chittagong, said a press release.

Activists of different cultural organisations, many Indians living in the port city and local journalists attended the programme.

Devotees especially children and young girls decorated the commission premises with lighting candles and fireworks.

Indian Assistant High Commissioner Subrata Bhattacharjee and his wife Soma Bhattacharjee welcomed the guests and exchanged pleasantries and wished them a happy and prosperous future.

Workshop on HIV/AIDS held

Speakers emphasised on creating awareness among the grassroots level people to fight the deadly disease AIDS.

They said drivers of different motor vehicles are the most vulnerable section to the disease and they should

be made conscious on prevention of the disease.

They were addressing a workshop on 'Sensitisation for prevention of HIV, STI and AIDS' held on Saturday with a view to creating awareness among the drivers of CNG-run autorickshaws.

Bangladesh Integrated Social Advancement Program (BISAP), a non-government organisation, organised the workshop in Segunbagan area under Pahartali.

Secretary of CNG Autorickshaw Drivers' Federation Abu Taher Khan was the chief guest while BISAP Programme Manager Majibur Rahman, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer Enamul Haq and Training Officer Shanta Bhattacharyya spoke at the workshop.

A total of 170 drivers of CNG-run autorickshaws participated in the workshop.

Farewell reception held

Speakers underscored the need for better care of the students at school level to enrich their basic knowledge so that they can compete in the modern world.

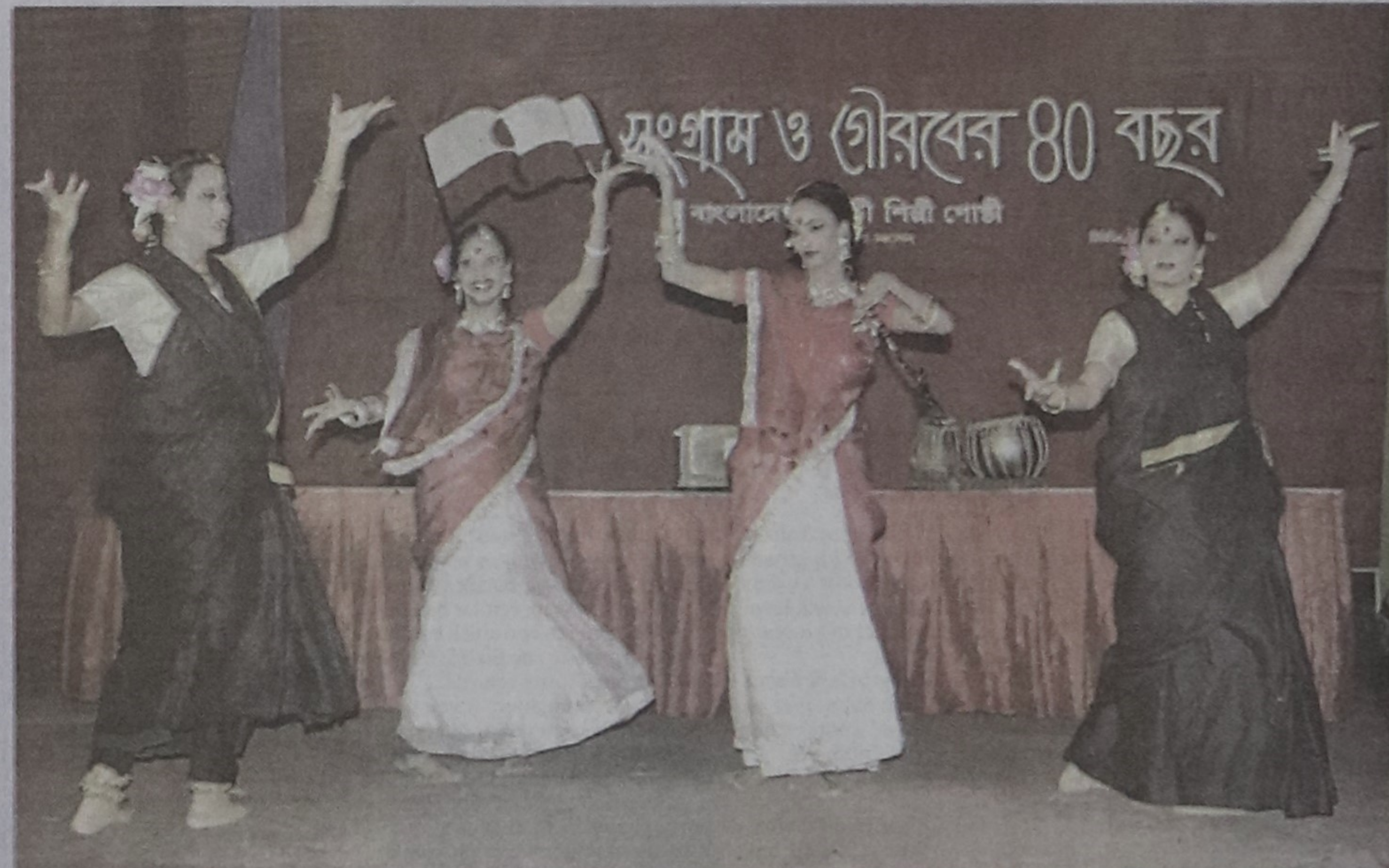
They were speaking at a farewell reception of the 5th batch of A-level and 7th batch of O-level of the Mastermind International School held on the school premises on Monday.

Prof Tapan Jyoti Barua of English department of Chittagong University (CU) was the chief guest at the ceremony with Principal Golum Abu Mohammad in the chair.

Vice-principal Homa Zaman and Director Akbar Hossain also spoke.

Speakers emphasised better learning of English language from the very beginning. They said it would help the students in building their career.

They urged the students and teachers of the school to keep its reputation through hard work and perseverance.



Artists perform dance at a function on the occasion of the 40th founding anniversary of Udichi on the DC Hill premises on Thursday.

AKM Abdul Wahid and Rahnuma Taranum addressed on behalf of outgoing students.

Dialogue on sanitation

Speakers at a dialogue underscored the need for combined efforts by the government and non-government organisations to achieve the target of sanitation for all by 2010.

They said creating awareness among the people of slum areas and availability of sufficient water in all areas

are very necessary to attain the goal.

They were addressing the "Sanitation dialogue for the grassroots level People '08" organised by Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council-Bangladesh at a city hotel on Sunday.

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Acting Chief Executive Officer Mohammad Shamsuddoha was the key speaker in the dialogue with the grassroots level people's representative Mohammad Dulal Hossain in the chair.

Chittagong Wasa Superintendent Engineer Mustak Uddin Akhter, CCC Councillor Shahidul Alam Shahid, Arju Shahabuddin, Afroza Kalam and Aslam

Khan, Shirin Ara Begum and Mohammad Shahril Ullah took part in the dialogue.

Dhaka Bank capital market services launched

Dhaka Bank Limited launched the activities of its 5th Capital Market Services at Chamber House in the port city on Thursday.

Through new branch the bank would offer specialised customer

services to accelerate the share business of people of this region.

Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) President Nasir Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury inaugurated the branch as the chief guest.

CSE Chief Executive Officer Abu Bakar Siddiqi, the bank former director and sponsor, shareholder Tahidul Hossain Chowdhury, Director Jasim Uddin, Acting Managing Director Mohammad Abu Musa, Deputy Managing Director Tanvir Rahim, Head of Operations Sirajul Haque and Company Secretary Arham Masudul Haque were present at the inaugural function.



Dr Hayat Mahmud hands over a crest to Dr Mahbulul Alam, second from left, at a reception at Chittagong Press Club auditorium on Monday. Chittagong Academy Chairman Dr Anupam Sen, is also seen, middle. Chittagong Academy organised the reception on the occasion of 60th birth anniversary of Dr Mahbulul Alam.