

TANGENTS

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Premature baby at the ICU.

PHOTO:  
IHTISHAM KABIR

# Unsung Heroes

In the midst of the constant barrage of news about bad people doing bad things in this country, it is easy to forget about the dedicated people here doing good work. This is the story of one such effort.

In the paediatric Intensive Care Unit at the Dhaka's Shishu (Children's) Hospital, the first such unit established in the country, a team of doctors saves the lives of seriously ill children who would otherwise have no hope. They have been doing this every day for twenty years.

The ICU was established in 1992 with Japanese assistance. It started with eight beds and now has twelve. It provides monitoring, ventilation, and other life-saving services for children who are in serious trouble due to premature birth, pneumonia, encephalitis, birth asphyxia, meningitis and other diseases. Approximately forty five children arrive through its doors every month. Most are saved. The unit is served by six to eight doctors and a dozen nurses.

I met up with Dr. Abdul Qader who has worked here since 1993. "What changes have you seen in twenty years?" I ask.

"Back then, most parents had no notion of children's intensive-care. Treatment at the ward was the last resort. But now parents know that if the child is too critical to be in the ward, they can be sent here. Over the years, our doctors have also become skilled and confident about ICU treatment. Thus, many childrens' lives are saved."

Indeed, Bangladesh recently won a UN award for dramatic reduction in child mortality.

Inside the ICU, I meet two doctors, Fahmida Islam and Afrin Jahan, who

work here on an honorary basis to gain experience. In addition to the senior doctors who work here full-time, 25-30 younger doctors do shorter stints every year for exposure in children's ICU treatment.

Afrin and Fahmida point me to a bed which I had not noticed before, and when I look closely, I catch my breath, for inside the incubator is the tiniest human I have ever seen, perhaps a foot long. He weighs 820 grams. Here he will get all the support and nourishment to grow and, hopefully, survive in the world.

I ask Qader how patients are admitted.

"They are referred. There are two groups: those already in the hospital, and those who are referred from outside. Since most patients are neonatal, we require mothers to stay in the hospital," he says. The ICU costs Taka 2500 per day; if the stay exceeds seven days, needy families can apply for free treatment.

For operating costs, the hospital relies on its own earnings, government subsidies, and donations from foreign and local sources.

Since demand for the ICU is high, I ask about future expansion. "It would be good to add more beds, but that is complex because you must furnish the entire support system around each bed. You start with space - each bed requires eight square feet of floor space - and add expensive equipment for each bed. You must add the skilled doctors, nurses and support personnel," says Qader.

I left filled with hope and convinced that the good work of this institution is worthy of our sustained support.

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## CTG RAILWAY STATION

# Tickets still end up in touts' hands

SHAHADAT HOSSAIN, Ctg

Despite the transfer of all 14 staff of Chittagong Railway Station's ticket counters and a team of Railway Nirapatta Bahini (RNB) of Chittagong, tickets are still ending up in the hands of touts.

Many train passengers harassed by these touts blamed a nexus among the railway staff of the security and commercial departments and touts for the continuation of the malpractice.

On a surprise visit to the station on July 21, Obaidul Quader, at that time the communications and railways minister, ordered the immediate transfer, stating that Chittagong had the worst record of such malpractice.

However, according to newspaper reports in the last two months, law enforcers, aided by railway authorities, arrested 12 touts with some 100 Dhaka-Chittagong inter-city train tickets from in and outside the station.

"The touts are still there," said Md Hafiz, a Chittagong University student who regularly travels the route. "You just have to stand in the station and in no time the touts approach you with tickets," he said.

The touts usually demand at least two to three times the usual price, said some of the affected passengers, adding that ticket tout-ing would not be possible without the assistance of booking clerks and RNB personnel.

On September 24, Detective Branch of Police

arrested two men, including an RNB member, with 64 tickets from before the station.

The RNB member, Md Lutfor Rahman alias Jewel, possessing 59 tickets and Tk 25,910, proceeds from the ticket sale, confessed during interrogation of the nexus, said Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police Tareq Ahmed.

The booking clerks, RNB members and touts are an organised syndicate selling tickets on the black market for a long time, he said.

However, Chittagong Railway Station Manager AA Shamsul Alam refuted the allegations of the involvement of booking clerks and RNB members in selling tickets on the black market.

The touts probably buy tickets from the counters at the station, he said, adding that the September 24 arrest was an isolated incident and they had increased monitoring to stop tout-ing of tickets.

Chief Commercial Manager of Bangladesh Railway (East) Md Habibur Rahman also refuted the allegations of the involvement of booking clerks and RNB members in tout-ing tickets.

He, however, hoped that the malpractice would stop after ticket prices were increased from October 1 as the black market tickets would be pricier and hence passengers would find it viable to travel by bus instead.

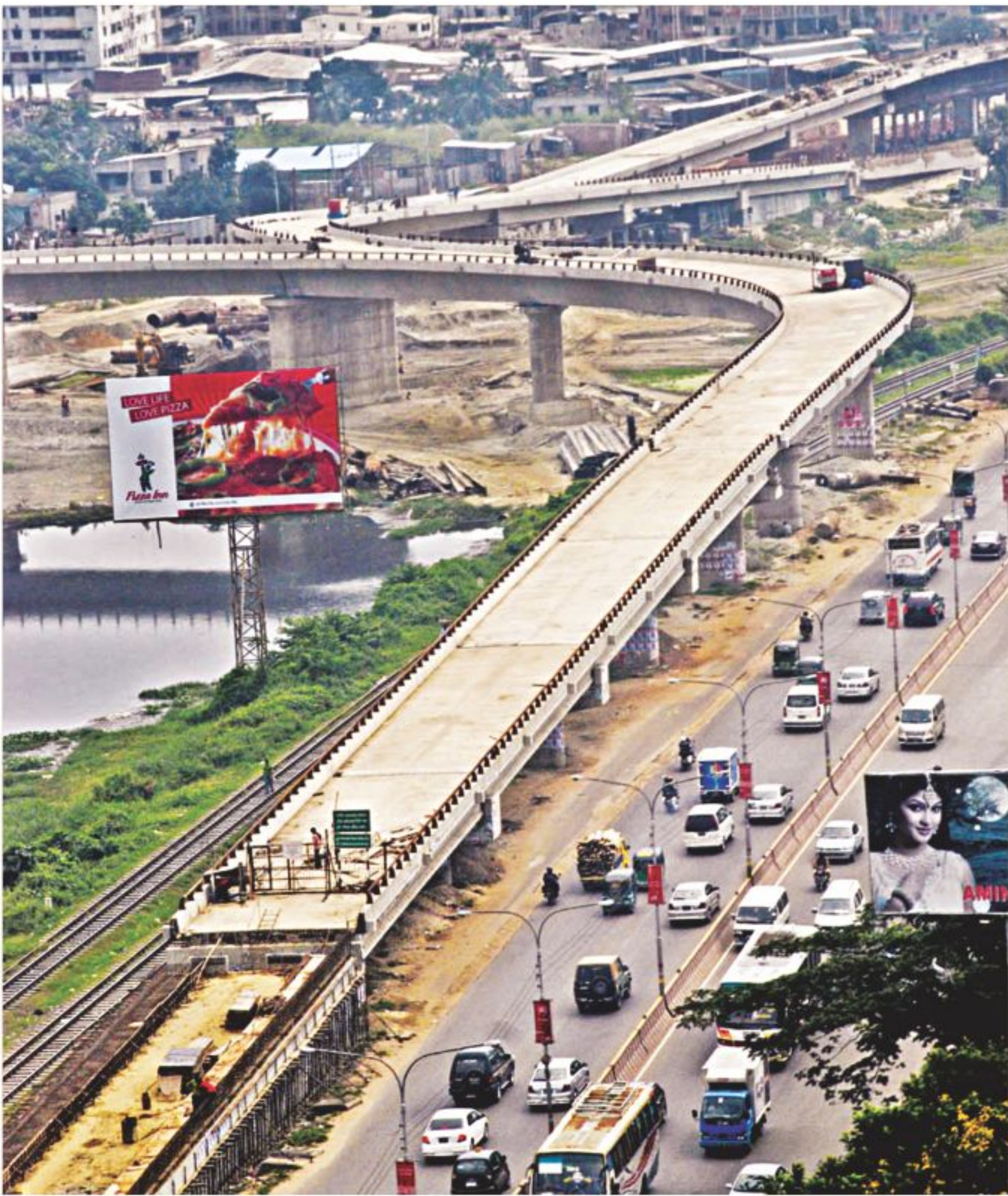


PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Vehicles face risks of accidents due to an absence of warning signs and instructions in Kuril area of the capital as full-on construction work of Kuril flyover is under way. The photo was taken yesterday.

## GIRL LASHED IN ARBITRATION

# Govt to take action against journo attackers: Inu

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu yesterday assured two of seven journalists, attacked by some villagers led by an arbitrator's son, and Manikganj Press Club president that legal action would be taken against the attackers.

Journalists will form a human chain on the press club premises tomorrow at 11:00am protesting the attack and demanding exemplary punishment for the attackers.

The attack took place on Thursday when the seven journalists went to Manikganj's Naogaon village to collect news about a schoolgirl being subjected to 101 lashes and realisation of a Tk 40,000 "fine" from her family.

The arbitrator, Razzak, a local union

parishad member, handed down the "punishment" on Wednesday on grounds that the girl, despite being a Muslim, fled to get married with a Hindu youth a month back.

The attackers led by Razzak's son Shiblu confined the journalists for one and a half hours to a nearby house after snatching their cameras.

Inu assured the two journalists, Prothom Alo and Independent Television correspondents, Abdul Momin and RS Monjur Rahman, over phone that the Manikganj superintendent of police and Satoria Police Station officer-in-charge have been directed to take necessary steps.

Police filed a case against the accused, none of whom were arrested.

## Tortoises, eels seized

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Police yesterday seized 31 tortoises and two drums filled with eels from a Dhaka-bound passenger bus and arrested one Moniruzzaman from a toll booth on Patuakhali bridge.

A team of fisheries officials stopped the bus, Sugandha, at the toll collection plaza and searched it for Hilsa fish but instead they found eels and tortoises in it.

They informed police who arrested supervisor of the bus, Moniruzzaman.

A case was filed in this connection and Moniruzzaman was sent to jail.



PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

Police seize 31 tortoises of a rare species and two drums full of eels, not in picture, raiding a Dhaka-bound bus at the toll booth of Patuakhali bridge yesterday.

## NEWS IN brief

### Railway staff jailed for selling tickets on black market

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A mobile court on Thursday night imprisoned a railway employee for one year for his involvement in selling railway tickets on black market at Rajshahi Railway Station.

The convict was Ezaz Hossain Ujir, 32, a forth class staff under Western Zone of Bangladesh Railway (BR). Executive Magistrate Sujauddoula gave the verdict after a summary trial on the station premises around 8.30pm.

Earlier, Ezaz Hossain was arrested with 21 tickets

### DU BCL factions clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two fractions of pro-Awami League Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) of Dhaka University unit engaged in a clash over a trifling matter last night.

Some four to five activists received minor injuries in the clash.

Witnesses said the clash ensued when a BCL leader of Ziaur Rahman Hall protested an altercation between two activists of BCL Surjo Sen Hall unit and a small shop owner in front of the under construction

### Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital to give free breast cancer counselling

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ahsania Mission Cancer and General Hospital (AMCGH) will provide free counseling services to poor women who are at risk of breast cancer throughout October marking the International Breast Cancer Awareness month.

A panel of three doctors will provide the services from 9:00am to 5:00pm at the eastern side of NAM quarters in the capital.

Experienced surgeons will also do breast tumor operation at 30 percent concession, said a press release.

Women can do ultrasonogram, mammography and FNAC including breast cleaning with the special concession.

Open discussions on prevention of breast cancer

### Man dies from electrocution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man was killed and another injured after being electrocuted in the capital's Darus Salam area yesterday.

The deceased was Kanchan Mia, 35, son of Abul Kashem, a resident of Lal Kuthi area.

Kanchan's wife Jabin Aktar said her elder brother, Mostofa, got an electric shock in their house while he was hanging wet clothes on the clothes-line which came in contact with an electric wire around 8:00am.

To save Mostofa, Kanchan went there and was electrocuted as he somehow touched the clothes-line, she added.

Kanchan was declared dead at Dhaka Medical College Hospital while Mostofa was admitted to a



#### Human chain

Nagorik Oikya will form a human chain; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 11:00am.

#### Free treatment

Bangladesh Probin Hitoishi Sangha and Jara Bigyan Protishthan will organise a free medical treatment; Venue: Probin Haspatal outdoor, Agargaon; Time: the hospital morning shift.

#### Carnival

All clubs of North South University (NSU) will organise a carnival; Venue: NSU campus; Time: 11:00am.

#### Fruits' exhibition

Dhakabasi will arrange a fruits' exhibition; Venue: Hazaribagh Park

Community Centre; Time: 12:00 noon.

#### Farmers' convention

Jatiya Krishak Samity will organise a farmers' convention; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 11:00am.

#### Views exchange meeting

Voice will arrange a views exchange meeting; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 10:00am.

#### Rally

Bangladesh Jubo Union will stage a rally; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 4:00pm.

#### Discussion

Jatiya Charneta Smriti Rakkha Parishad will hold a discussion; Venue: Dhaka Reporters' Unity; Time: 11:00am. Roundtable MBA Association of Bangladesh (MAB)



### Change in temperature unlikely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy falls are also likely at places, Met Office said.

Day and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The sun sets in the capital today at 5:48pm and rises tomorrow at 5:50am.

Country's highest temperature 36.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and lowest 25.0 degrees at Rangamati.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max:	Min:	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	34.6	26.3	69	84
Chittagong	33.0	26.0	96	81
Rajshahi	36.0	26.5	81	76
Rangpur	34.3	27.0	75	73
Khulna	35.6	27.6	77	84
Barisal	35.0	26.5	76	87

## 4-lane Dhaka-Ctg highway by Dec

### Says Obaidul Quader

UNB, Dhaka

The upgrading of 32 kilometers of the Dhaka-Chittagong highway into four lanes will be completed by next December, said Communications Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday.

"The Dhaka-Chittagong Highway is the lifeline of the country's economy. Upgrading of its 32 kilometers into four lanes will be completed by next December," he told journalists during a surprise visit of the highway in Feni.

During the visit, Obaidul Quader asked the authorities concerned to complete the repair work of the highway from Bariarhat to Barabkunda within next 15 days, said a press release.

While at Bariarhat, the minister also met with the consultants and engineers of the Dhaka-Chittagong highway upgrading project and directed them to ensure quality work of the project and accelerate its implementation.

## DEMAND FOR BONUS BEFORE EID Hotel workers to stage demo Oct 20

UNB, Dhaka

Hotel and restaurant workers yesterday declared a country-wide protest programme on October 20, demanding minimum wage and full bonus before the upcoming Eid-ul-Azha.

Representatives from 40 district units of Action Council to Implement Minimum Wages and Labour Law in Hotel sector took the decision at a meeting in the city, council's coordinator Rafiqul Islam told the news agency.

"The largest demonstration will be held in Dhaka. We've planned a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club and a procession after that," he said.

President of Bangladesh Hotel, Restaurant, Sweetmeat and Bakery Workers' Union Akhtaruzzaman Khan said, "We'll declare a fresh programme to press for our minimum wage from the grand rally in Dhaka on October 20."

Joint coordinator of the action council Anwar Hossain said, "The hotel owners are systematically exploiting the workers by not implementing the minimum wage award fixed by the government back in 2009, let alone the Eid bonus."