

Swedish PM phones Hasina

Seeks support for UNSC membership

BSS, Dhaka

Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven yesterday sought Bangladesh's support for the Swedish candidature in the election to non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council for 2017-18.

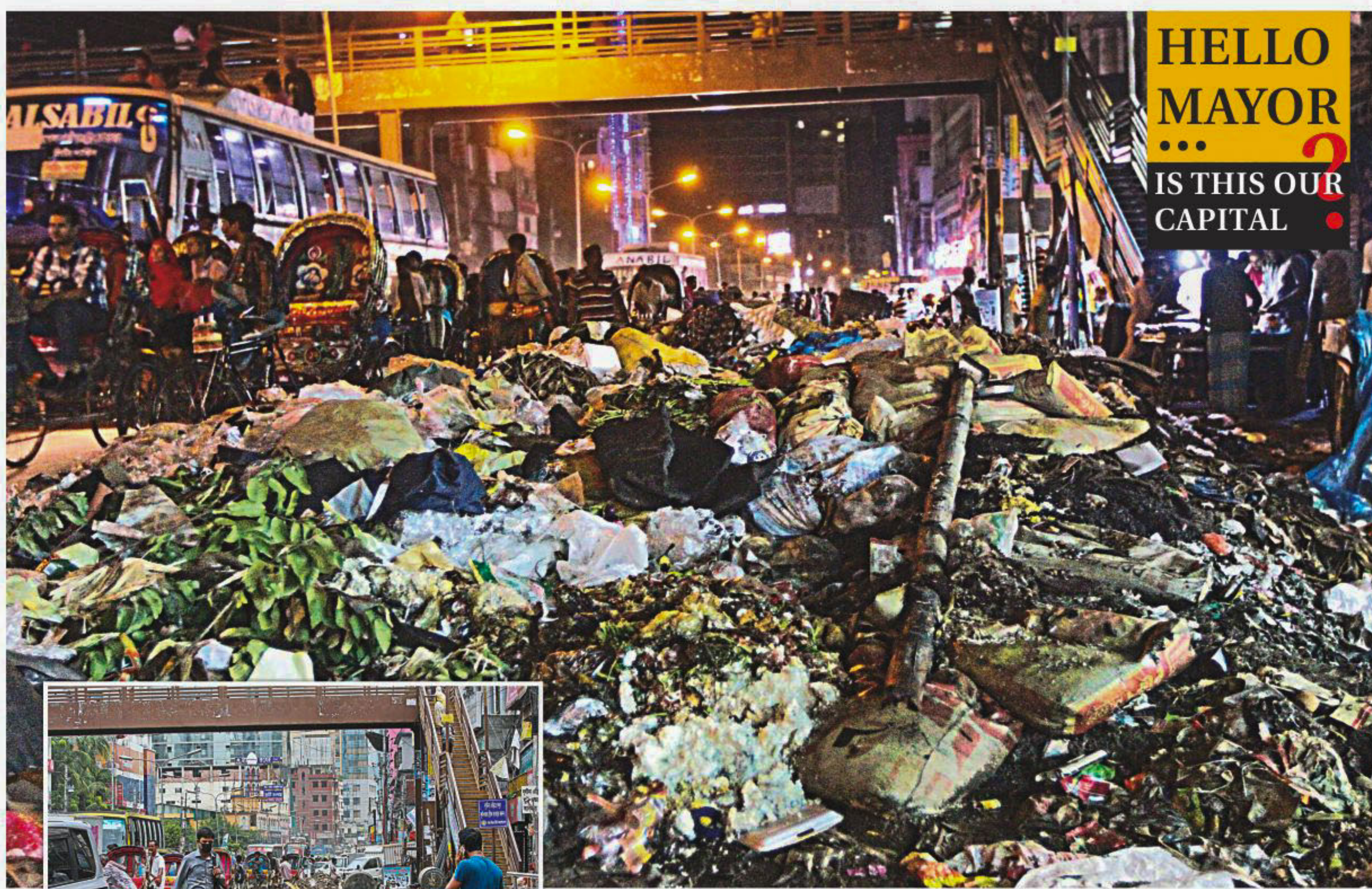
"The Swedish premier made the request when he talked to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina over the phone this [yesterday] evening," PM's Press Secretary Ihsanul Karim told BSS.

The press secretary said during about 10-minute telephonic conversation, both the prime ministers exchanged greetings.

The Swedish PM invited his Bangladeshi counterpart to visit Sweden. Hasina also extended an invitation to Löfven to visit Bangladesh.

Hasina invited the Swedish prime minister to the Dhaka Global Forum for Migration and Development to be held on December 9.

The press secretary said both the prime ministers agreed to co-chair a UN high-level summit on Addressing the Large Movement of Refugees and Migrant slated for September 19 next at the United Nations in New York.



HELLO MAYOR... IS THIS OUR CAPITAL



Piles of garbage left on the Bir Uttam Rafiqul Islam Avenue at Madya Badda in the capital, leading to public disgust. The photo was taken at 9:55pm yesterday. On June 23, The Daily Star published a photo of this spot, inset. However, the authorities are yet to take any step to remove them from the busy street.

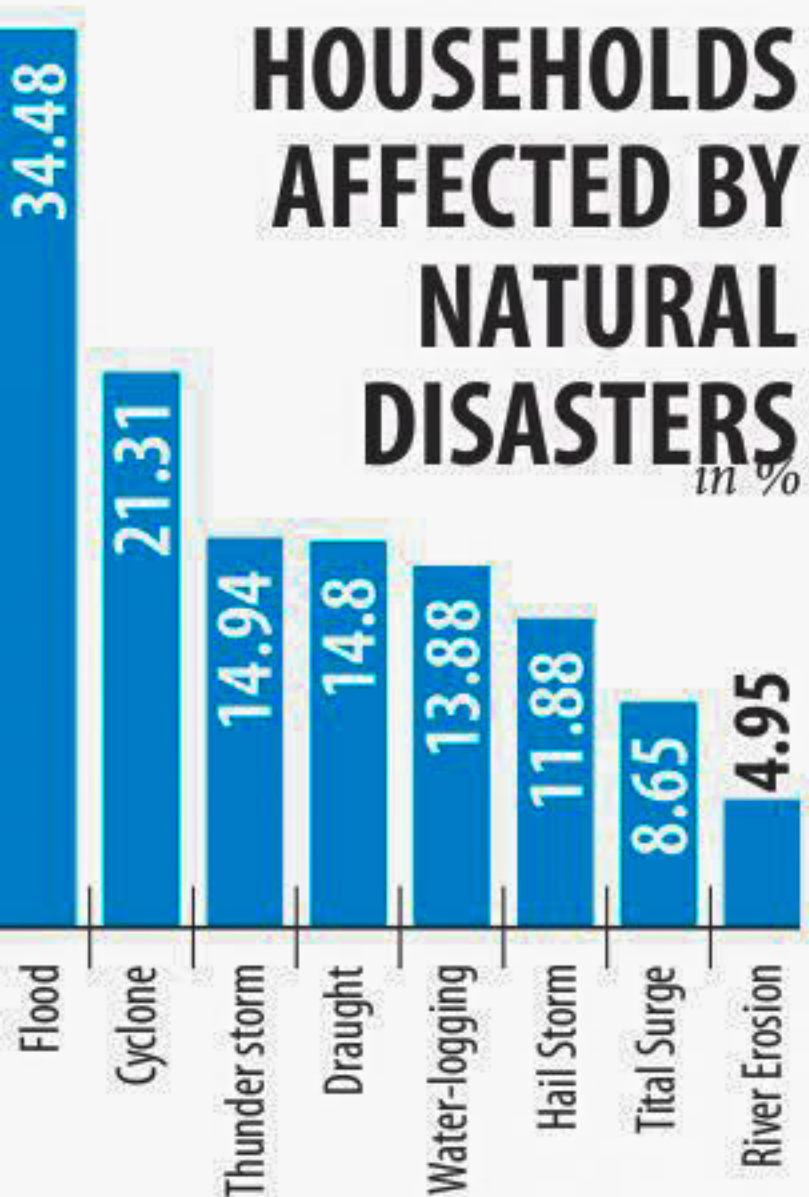
PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

18,424cr loss

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He said the other components were infrastructure, health, the ecosystem loss and income.

The internationally acclaimed environmentalist suggested calculating the total damages caused by the



natural disasters. "So, it has to be complete for any serious decision making," he told The Daily Star over phone.

The environmentalist said the survey should be widened, carried out every five years and made complete, as annual data does not give the actual picture.

He said Bangladesh's disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation have to be integrated, instead of dealing with them separately. "And disasters will only increase, and the cost of future damages will also increase."

Brexit sparks Labour revolt

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any leadership election and McDonnell said he would chair his campaign again.

WHATEVER IT TAKES

Meanwhile, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon yesterday said Scotland will do whatever it takes to remain in the European Union, including potentially blocking legislation on a British exit from the bloc.

Scotland, a nation of five million people, voted to stay in the EU by 62 to 38 percent in Thursday's referendum, putting it at odds with the United Kingdom as a whole.

Sturgeon has said a new Scottish referendum on independence from the rest of the UK was "highly likely" if that were the best option to keep Scotland in the European bloc.

"There are going to be deeply damaging and painful consequences of the process of trying to extricate the UK from the EU. I want to try and protect Scotland from that," Sturgeon told BBC television.

Scots voted against independence by 55 to 45 percent in a 2014 referendum, after a campaign during which remaining in the EU was presented as a key reason to stick with the UK.

Scottish newspaper the Sunday Post published a poll by research firm ScotPulse, taken on Friday, that suggested support for independence had surged to 59 percent after the Brexit vote.

Sturgeon said the Brexit vote was a game-changer that made it legitimate for Scotland to revisit the issue of independence.

"The context and the circumstances have changed dramatically. The UK that Scotland voted to remain within in 2014 doesn't exist anymore," she

said. A vote for independence would end the 300-year-old union between Scotland and England, its far more populous southern neighbour, dealing a body blow to the UK at a time when it is likely to still be dealing with the fallout from Brexit.

That could lead to border controls being set up between the two countries. "I certainly don't want to see in any circumstances a border between Scotland and England," Sturgeon said. "Whatever happens here England is our nearest neighbour and will always I hope be our best friend but these are circumstances in which Scotland has n't chosen to be."

SCOTTISH VETO Sturgeon said she would seek a way of negotiating directly with the EU on the best way to achieve Scotland's aim of staying in the bloc.

She said it would be "completely unacceptable" for whoever succeeds Cameron as British prime minister to try and stop Scotland from holding a second independence referendum on the basis that the issue had been settled in 2014.

Under the UK's complex arrangements to devolve some powers to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, legislation generated in London to give effect to the vote to leave the EU may have to gain consent from the three devolved parliaments.

Asked whether she would consider asking the Scottish parliament to block a motion of legislative consent, Sturgeon said: "Of course."

"If the Scottish parliament was judging this on the basis of what's right for Scotland then the option of saying that we're not going to vote for some-

thing that is against Scotland's interest, of course that's going to be on the table."

Sturgeon's pro-independence Scottish National Party holds 56 of the 59 seats representing Scotland in the national parliament in London, while in the devolved parliament in Edinburgh it has 63 seats out of 129.

Asked if she could imagine the fury of British voters who had made the choice to leave the EU if the Scottish parliament blocked Brexit, Sturgeon said:

"I can, but it's perhaps similar to the fury of many people in Scotland right now as we face the prospect of being taken out of the European Union against our will."

Meanwhile, union members on Labour's National Executive are to call for unity and will support Corbyn's leadership.

And more than 175,000 people have signed an online petition backing the Labour leader, who was elected last September in a landslide victory.

But one shadow cabinet member told the BBC: "I imagine that there'll be a leadership election and Jeremy will win. But this is a total distraction."

Benn was sacked by Corbyn overnight after he told him he had "lost confidence" in his leadership.

Speaking yesterday's Andrew Marr Show, Benn, who has ruled out any Labour leadership bid, said Corbyn "is a good and decent man but he is not a leader".

Asked if he thought Corbyn should resign, he said he did but added "that is a matter for him".

Hours after Benn's sacking, shadow health secretary Alexander, who joined

Corbyn's shadow cabinet last year, tweeted: "It is with a heavy heart that I have this morning resigned from the shadow cabinet."

In a letter to the Labour leader, she wrote: "As much as I respect you as a man of principle, I do not believe you have the capacity to shape the answers our country is demanding and I believe that if we are to form the next government, a change of leadership is essential."

But McDonnell, speaking on Radio 5 Live's Pienaar's Politics, was defiant, saying: "Jeremy is not going anywhere and will continue on."

But shadow international development secretary Diane Abbott played down the prospect of a no confidence vote.

Shadow defence secretary Emily Thornberry also stood by Corbyn, saying she would not be stepping down and that she was "bewildered" by those who were.

But others in the party calling for a change of leadership include Labour MP Ivan Lewis, who is running to be Labour's candidate for the Greater Manchester mayoralty and who has written to Corbyn calling on him to resign.

Other MPs have spoken out against Corbyn's input in Labour's EU referendum campaign, with MP Stephen Kinnock saying it "was not Labour's finest hour". Meanwhile, former Labour cabinet member Ben Bradshaw said Labour faced being "wiped out" at the next general election under Corbyn.

Meanwhile, former shadow chancellor Ed Balls, who lost his seat as an MP at the 2015 general election, also backed calls for a change of leader.

From BBC and Reuters

Dhaka-Ctg

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queries, he expressed his hope that the project would be implemented within the time following a detailed feasibility study and other required processes.

Earlier in 2015, the then energy and mineral resources secretary Abubakar Siddique had said the project -- costing Tk 1,200 crore -- would end by 2017.

"We have taken the project to save Tk 130 crore annually and ensure fuel security," he said.

Imported fuel and crude oil would be supplied directly to the capital through the pipeline, sources said, adding that Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation would implement the project.

The consultant for the project was being appointed, said the sources.

Replying to another query, Nasrul told parliament that some 10 lakh metric tonnes of coal are extracted a year from the country's lone coal mine in Barapukuria.

Some 60 to 65 percent of the extracted coal is supplied to the 250-megawatt Barapukuria thermal power plant, he added.

Another 275-megawatt unit was being set up in the power plant, he said, adding that an initiative had also been taken to enhance coal production from the mine.

"It'll be possible to produce 525 megawatts of electricity with the extracted coal," said the state minister.



President goes to Bhutan on July 1

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

President Abdul Hamid is going to Bhutan on July 1 on a four-day visit.

The trip is expected to take the excellent bilateral relations and age-old friendship between the two countries to a new height.

Diplomatic sources said this is completely a bilateral visit and the president will be visiting the Himalayan nation at the invitation of its King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck.

On his arrival at Paro International Airport, Bhutan's Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay will accord a warm welcome to the Bangladesh president.

Sources also said during the visit, Hamid would hold official talks with the Bhutanese king, while Bhutan's PM and important dignitaries, including speaker of the Bhutanese parliament, foreign minister and some other cabinet members would call on the Bangladesh president.

The Bhutanese parliament will have

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Selfless love for the helpless

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works at a private bank in the capital. One of his colleagues, Ali Sabbir, helps him in this endeavour.

The girl he found at Paltan is Joba whom he adoringly calls Aduri (meaning adoring). But she is not the first one Shamim helped.

In March last year, he helped another such girl, Sheuli Rani Sarkar, to find her family.

Shamim first saw Joba at Paltan when he was returning to his Adabar home from his office in Dainik Bangla area. After seeing her for some days, he tried to talk to her one day. He gave her a packet of biscuit and Tk 10 and the girl walked away taking those. Shamim kept doing that for three months, and decided to arrange for her treatment.

Shamim and his colleague, along with their families, took her to the National Institute of Mental Health, with permission from Paltan police.

"At the hospital, she could not say anything clearly. That's why we named her Aduri," said Shamim, father of two daughters aged ten and six.

There, he appointed Jarina Begum, a domestic help, for her care. Joba was recovering gradually and began to speak more clearly.

"Her accent suggested that she was from Noakhali," said Shamim, who used to visit the girl at the hospital almost daily.

After she was released from the hospital one and a half months later, Shamim kept her at Jarina's house.

"One day she told us that her home is at Narayanpur in Maizdee of Noakhali," he said.

The two colleagues sent a man to the area to paste some posters with

Joba's photo in them. While sticking the posters on walls and trees in the area, the man found Joba's family in Laxminarayanpur.

Her father came to Dhaka the next day to take her home.

"We finally came to know her real name. She got lost around six years ago while working as a domestic help in her village," Shamim said.

Shamim kept her at Jarina's house for three months in case she needed further treatment. Then on March 9 this year, they handed over Joba to her family.

"We have a plan to give her a sewing machine," he said.

Joba's father said her daughter's condition was better now, but she needed to take medicine, which Shamim sends regularly.

"It is difficult to find a man like Shamim. He is the reason why I got back my daughter after so many years. I pray for him," said Joba's father.

"He is a very good man," said Joba.

The story of Sheuli is even more encouraging.

The 25-year-old from Sarail upazila of Brahmanbaria went missing around seven years ago. After giving birth to her third child, she developed a mental problem, Shamim said, citing family members.

One day, she left home.

During a trip to Bandarban in December in 2014, Shamim and his colleagues saw her sitting under a tree in Thanchi. Two days later while heading back to Dhaka, they saw the girl in the same area.

"I felt for her. I thought of doing something for her," Shamim said.

In Dhaka, he spoke with his colleagues but did not get much response, except from Ali Sabbir. They decided to bring her to Dhaka for treatment.

After facing a volley of questions from the local authorities, they managed to bring her to Dhaka and have her admitted to the National Institute of Mental Health in March last year.

She too could not tell her name so they named her Antar. As she got better after two months' treatment, Shamim kept her with Jarina, the house help. During her stay there, she often said, "Chandura Bazar".

It's a place in Brahmanbaria, Shamim found out.

Two days after pasting posters in the area, they found the family. When her husband Falan Sarkar, the kids and other family members came to Dhaka, she recognised them all. They went home, where Shamim still sends medicines for Sheuli.

"Both Aduri and Sheuli call me father. It gives me immense pleasure and peace."

Ali Sabbir said they would continue to help the distress.

Why does Shamim do this? First, his parents always encouraged him to do social work. Secondly, there is hardly any organisation that works for the mentally distressed people who live on the streets.

"We should do something for these people because our little effort can change their lives for the better," he said, adding that he has full support of his family in his endeavour.

PM opens work on metro, BRT

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Motijheel.

The Tk 21,985.07 crore (\$2.5 billion) ambitious metro rail project is expected to provide an improved, safe, faster and affordable but modern means of urban public transport service significantly reducing the perennial traffic congestion in the capital and prevent environmental pollution, said eminent transport engineering expert Prof Shamsul Hoque.

With every metro rail train comprising six air-conditioned spacious cars, a city commuter will travel between Motijheel and Uttara North in 38 minutes, and there will be a train in every four minutes at each of the 16 stations on the way in both directions. Twenty four trains will together transport 60,000 passengers every hour on both directions.

A 10km metro rail service, including 5km from the depot to Pallabi and another 5km from Pallabi to Agargaon, will be ready for operation by the end of 2019, and the following year, the entire 20km metro system will be ready for use.

The entire project is being implemented under eight separate contracts, including four for building the 20km elevated overpass. The 16 stations would be in Uttara North, Pallabi, Mirpur, Kazipara, Shewrapara, Agargaon, Rokeya Sharani, Bijoy Sharani, Farmgate, Karwan Bazar, Shahbagh, Dhaka University, Bangladesh Secretariat and Motijheel.

The fifth part will be on the construction of a viaduct and stations from Agargaon to Karwan Bazar and the sixth on similar construction from Karwan Bazar to Motijheel.

The seventh will be electrical and mechanical work, and the eighth procurement of 144 metro rail cars. Procurement of 24 locomotives and the cars will go on simultaneously and be delivered by the second half of 2019.

The project is being implemented by government-owned Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd while Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority is supervising.

A consortium of consultants, led by Nippon Koei Ltd of Japan and including Nippon Koei India Ltd, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Ltd, Mott MacDonald Ltd India, Mott MacDonald Ltd UK and Development Design Consultants Ltd Bangladesh, was hired in November 2013 for general consultancy. They are taking care of the project's design, construction supervision, procurement support and management of work.

Of the estimated total project cost of Tk 21,985.07 crore, the Japanese government through JICA will provide Tk 16,594.59 crore of the project's total cost as soft loan, while the Bangladesh government will provide the rest of Tk 5,390.48 crore.

Meanwhile, the Road Transport and Highways Division will implement the Greater Dhaka Sustainable Urban Transport Project (BRT, Gazipur-Airport) by December 2018 with an estimated cost of Tk 2039.85 crore.

Of the total project cost, Tk 389.15 crore will come from the national exchequer while the rest of Tk 1650.70 crore will come from the project assistance from the Asian Development Bank, French Development Agency and Global Environment Facility

Fund.

There will be 25 stations, six flyovers, 4.50km elevated BRT lane from Uttara to Tongi and 16km flat grade on the route.

Besides, an 18-metre-long 100 articulated buses will run on the route. There will be an electronic smart card system for collecting bus fare.

Once the project is completed, it would take only 50 minutes to travel from Gazipur to airport with the frequency of buses between 2 and 5 minutes. Some 25,000 passengers will be able to travel from both sides of the route in an hour.

Fencing

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Bengal, Assam and Meghalaya earlier.

"Wherever fencing is required, it would be constructed and where riverine stretches are present, no fencing would be constructed because it worked as natural barrier," he said.

Kumar said local problems would be sorted out through discussions and where fencing is required on the zero point of the border would be taken up with the Bangladesh government and the matters would be sorted out through negotiation.

India constructed border fencing 100 yards away from the international border leaving a large tract of agricultural and homestead land outside the fencing to adhere to Border Management agreement signed in 1975.

India has 4,096 km border with Bangladesh and Tripura which is girded by the neighbouring countries in three sides, has 856 km long border.