



HAWKER'S HOWL the unofficial soundtrack of Dhaka

JANNATUL BUSHRA

If Dhaka ever commissioned an audio documentary of itself, the soundtrack wouldn't bother with birdsong or anything that implies urban maturity. No, it would open with a long, nasal, soul-stabbing cry: "Murgiiiiiiiiiiiiii!"

Yes, a sound so elastic and so shamelessly dramatic that it slinks through alleyways, somersaults around electric poles, and ricochets off your seventh-floor balcony like it's practising for an audition with a metal band that never got past your garage!

They say every city has its own music. New York gets the subway screech, Istanbul gets the call to prayer, Rome gets scooters humming like caffeinated mosquitoes. Dhaka? We get a man screaming "Murgiiiiiiiiiiii!" (just chicken) as if the entire capital is one giant chicken clearance sale.

Walk through any neighbourhood of Dhaka - Dhanmondi, Shantinagar, Mirpur, take your pick, and you'll see them on the streets with baskets, trolleys, or buckets full of who-knows-what. Their voices are so loud and powerful, scientists could probably run the national grid with them. But Dhaka, being Dhaka, prefers its load-shedding. And yes, I'm only half-joking.

There's an art to the hawker's howl. It takes patience and practice!

First comes the warm-up: a small cough, a throat clear, and then a declaration to the universe that

mattresses can, in fact, be fixed. Then the tempo rises, a melodic cry for old bottles, newspapers, and any other object that has ever existed in your home.

And who are the listeners of these soul-piercing cries?

Us, the half awake, T-shirt-wearing Dhakaites who swear we're tired of the noise, but pause our Netflix episode to see if the daaboti (large sharpener) guy is passing our building today. Of course, we complain and write about

sound pollution while eagerly leaning over the balcony to negotiate the price of a quick umbrella fixation. Because we are nothing if not contradictory!

And it's not just umbrellas. There are hawkers who claim to fix literally anything and everything. "Puraton TV, radio, electronic shomogri thik kora hoy!" they shout with the confidence of surgeons announcing walk-in open-heart procedures. But the moment you take your year-old, obese television, the one rotting in the corner like a forgotten family member -- they will examine it with the solemnity of a judge, shake their head, and declare, "Ei ta aar thik hobe na. Bechhe din." (Translation: We fix everything... except

the thing you actually need fixed.)

Then there's the famous murgi guy, strutting down the street with chickens hanging upside down. And watching those poor birds sway with each step can make even the most carnivorous Dhakaites feel a soft, guilty ache. For a fleeting second, you might even consider becoming vegetarian. But then you will remember morog

polau exists.

However, the city planners are forever suspicious of these roaming entrepreneurs. Hawkers are like Dhaka's stray cats, impossible to regulate, permanently resourceful, and appearing exactly where you don't expect them. The authorities often try to "organise" them, a word Dhaka interprets somewhat like "make it worse." So, they remain!

And God forbid your flat is anywhere near a kacha

bazar. Then you're doomed, not metaphorically, but acoustically. From dawn till dusk, your life becomes a live action soundscape of men yelling "Jharuuuuuuu!" with the emotional intensity of someone offering life-saving medicine. They're just selling brooms. Regular, unremarkable, everyday brooms. But the way they scream it, you'd think civilisation itself depended on your purchase.

The closer you live to the bazar, the more chaotic the soundtrack. One guy is dragging a trolley full of ginger like he's hauling treasure; another is advertising coriander leaves as though they come with a free plot of land.

There is constant shouting, constant movement, constant bargaining -- a relentless, unedited documentary of Dhaka life unfolding right beneath your balcony. It is maddening, yes. It may rattle the brain, of course! But it also anchors you. Because only Dhaka can turn such pure cacophony into something resembling comfort.

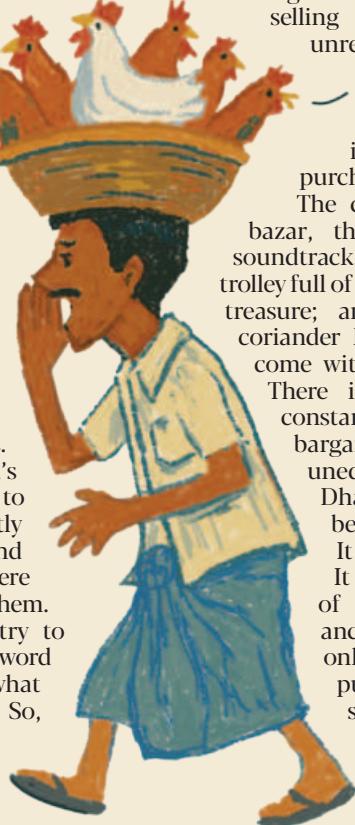


ILLUSTRATION: JAWWAD SAMI NEOGI

Unions applaud EC, govt going full steam ahead

FROM PAGE 1

However, the threshold for union formation could have been calculated as a percentage of workers. For instance, the 20 percent threshold could have been lowered to 10 percent or 12 percent or 15 percent.

So, forming unions with 20 signatories may be challenging for workers in small industrial units, he added.

Towhidur Rahman, president of the Bangladesh Apparels Workers Federation, welcomed allowing an additional eight days for maternity leave. In the amended law, the maternity leave for workers has been increased to 120 days with pay from 112 days.

Bangladesh is not ready to adopt all kinds of standard labour law as the country needs further preparation, said Mohammed Amirul Haque, managing director and chief executive officer of Premier Cement Mills.

The outsiders will be able to instigate the union leaders in factories because of lowering the workers' threshold to 20 workers from 20 percent, he said.

The implementation of the amended labour law will be difficult and is a deterrent for industries, said Anwar Ul-Alam Chowdhury (Parvez), president of Bangladesh Chamber of Industries.

New investors will be worried about investing because of some difficult clauses in the law, he added.

In a joint statement, the leaders of the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association and the Bangladesh Textile Mills Association expressed dissatisfaction as the decisions of the Tripartite Consultative Council (TCC), the highest platform for labour law amendment, were not incorporated.

The definition of a worker, the 20-worker threshold for forming unions and the provision of the provident fund were not agreed upon at the TCC.

"We are rejecting the amended labour law -- our demands are not addressed in the amendment," said BGMEA President Mahmud Hasan Khan.

198 murders

FROM PAGE 1

"Considering Dhaka's population and socio-economic dynamics, the number of incidents is at a manageable level. We are successfully uncovering the motives behind most cases and arresting the perpetrators," the DC said.

Meanwhile, at least three people, including a listed criminal and a Jubo Dal leader, were shot dead in the capital over the last eight days.

Last night, Golam Kibria, member secretary of Jubo Dal's Pallabi unit, was shot dead in the Pallabi area.

Police said they are investigating the killing.

and returned to the returning officer within 16 to 28 days.

Chief Election Commissioner AMM Nasir Uddin, while inaugurating the app at the EC headquarters, said, "Currently, 1.3 crore Bangladeshis are living abroad who were previously deprived of voting rights. This initiative ends their disenfranchisement and strengthens democracy."

PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS

Following meetings of the advisory council committees on economic affairs and government purchase at the Secretariat yesterday, Finance Adviser Salehuddin Ahmed announced that a cultural affairs ministry proposal for a voter awareness campaign had been approved in principle.

According to officials concerned, the government will spend Tk 25 crore on publicity to create a festive atmosphere ahead of the election.

The plan includes producing TVCs, video documentaries and other digital content, and displaying them through LED activation caravans in all 64 districts and 300 upazilas of the country.

In addition to government efforts, the EC has chalked out an extensive awareness campaign to inform people about the voting system, the electoral code, and other guidelines.

ROADMAP, READINESS

The EC unveiled its electoral roadmap in August. As part of the preparation, the government has made amendments to the Representation of the People

Order, 1972, in line with the EC's recommendations. The commission also made changes to the electoral code of conduct for the parties and candidates.

On September 4, the EC finalised the delimitation of 300 constituencies, redrawing the boundaries of 46 parliamentary seats in 16 different districts across the country. Disputes over the redrawing in some constituencies led to writ petitions being filed with the High Court. The commission is, however, hopeful that these petitions will be resolved within this month.

At the end of September, the EC launched a series of dialogues with stakeholders, including former election officials, observers, civil society representatives, university teachers, and journalists.

The commission has updated guidelines for journalists, observers, and polling station setup. Trainers are now being readied to guide election officials. Final selection and training will begin after the election schedule is declared.

The EC also met law enforcement and intelligence agencies on October 20 and top government officials on October 30.

Home Adviser Lt Gen (retd) Jahangir Alam Chowdhury, while meeting with German ambassador Rüdiger Lutz yesterday, said law enforcers were fully prepared to perform election duties.

The EC also met law enforcement and intelligence agencies on October 20 and top government officials on October 30.

Now, as Hasina has been convicted, the prosecution at the ICT is modifying its earlier application and will soon submit a fresh request seeking Interpol notices based on the conviction warrants, ICT Prosecutor Gazi Monawar Hossain Tamim told journalists on the ICT premises yesterday.

"The work on this process has already begun," he said.

After the ICT delivered judgment on Monday, the foreign ministry called upon India to immediately hand over convicted Hasina and Asaduzzaman.

In a statement, the ministry said, "Under the existing extradition treaty between the two countries, this is also an obligatory responsibility for India to hand over her to Bangladesh."

The interim government revoked the diplomatic passport of Hasina, putting her at risk of extradition. Her extradition falls within the legal framework of the extradition treaty signed between Bangladesh and India in 2013.

According to the treaty that was amended in 2016, "Extradition may be refused if the offence for which it is requested is an offence of a political character."

It also says that certain offences -- like murder -- "shall not be regarded as offences of a political character" for the purposes of the treaty.

However, one of the grounds for refusal of extradition is if the charges being pressed have not been "made in good faith, in the interest of justice".

A former Indian high commissioner to Bangladesh, seeking anonymity, told this newspaper that regardless of the law, the decision of Hasina's extradition will ultimately be a "political call".

According to Prof Sreeradha

Dhaka to seek Interpol help in getting Hasina, Kamal back

FROM PAGE 1

Talking to reporters at the foreign ministry yesterday evening, Foreign Adviser Touhid Hossain said Dhaka has not yet sent the letter. "The letter is being prepared. It may be sent today [yesterday]."

The ministry will not send the copy of the ICT verdict, but a note verbal to India.

After cases were filed against Hasina, Asaduzzaman, and others in connection with crimes against humanity, the National Central Bureau (NCB) of the Bangladesh Police had formally requested Interpol's help in issuing red notices against 12 people, including Hasina, who have been declared "absconding" and are living abroad.

Red notice is a global alert declared by Interpol to find a person and to provisionally arrest them pending extradition, surrender, or equivalent legal measures.

Now, as Hasina has been convicted, the prosecution at the ICT is modifying its earlier application and will soon submit a fresh request seeking Interpol notices based on the conviction warrants, ICT Prosecutor Gazi Monawar Hossain Tamim told journalists on the ICT premises yesterday.

"The work on this process has already begun," he said.

After the ICT delivered judgment on Monday, the foreign ministry called upon India to immediately hand over convicted Hasina and Asaduzzaman.

In a statement, the ministry said, "Under the existing extradition treaty between the two countries, this is also an obligatory responsibility for India to hand over her to Bangladesh."

The interim government revoked the diplomatic passport of Hasina, putting her at risk of extradition. Her extradition falls within the legal framework of the extradition treaty signed between Bangladesh and India in 2013.

According to the treaty that was amended in 2016, "Extradition may be refused if the offence for which it is requested is an offence of a political character."

It also says that certain offences -- like murder -- "shall not be regarded as offences of a political character" for the purposes of the treaty.

However, one of the grounds for refusal of extradition is if the charges being pressed have not been "made in good faith, in the interest of justice".

A former Indian high commissioner to Bangladesh, seeking anonymity, told this newspaper that regardless of the law, the decision of Hasina's extradition will ultimately be a "political call".

Mentioning the fundamental rights enshrined in the constitution, he added that the constitution is the supreme law, and it will prevail over any laws of the land that curtail fundamental rights.

Ex-president Hamid's house attacked after ICT verdict against Hasina

A CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

Former president Md Abdul Hamid's house in Kishoreganj's Mithamoin upazila was attacked and vandalised on Monday night, police said.

A group broke into the residence around 11:00pm, damaging furniture, doors, windows and several framed photos, Mithamoin Police Station Officer-in-Charge Alamgir Kabir told The Daily Star yesterday.

No casualties were reported, he said, adding that police and army personnel later visited the spot and security has since been tightened.

No arrests had been made at the time of filing the report last night.

According to local sources, a procession was brought out in Mithamoin Bazar after the International Crimes Tribunal handed down death sentences to deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina and former home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal. A faction of 20-30 individuals separated from the procession near Kamalpur village and broke into the former president's house before carrying out the vandalism.

Witness Kamrul Islam said the procession, reportedly joined by around 100 people and led by local BNP activists, began around 10:30pm, though he could not confirm who was involved in the subsequent attack.

Attempts to contact Upazila BNP President Md Jahidul Islam were unsuccessful, as his mobile phone was found switched off.

Police said legal procedures are underway and the situation in the area is currently under control.

NCP member, youth held for holding 'gun' against schoolboy's head

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Police have arrested a National Citizen Party member and another youth in connection with holding a "pistol" against a schoolboy's head during an altercation in Rangpur's Park intersection on Monday.

Ragib Hasnain, 30, NCP Rangpur Metropolitan Coordination Committee member, and Rakibul Islam, alias Tushar, 28, were detained by locals and handed to police around 8:00pm.

Dutta of international affairs at the OP Jindal Global University in India, extradition will neither be an easy nor a quick process.

"Bangladesh can request extradition, but I believe it will become a long-drawn judicial process. Even if Bangladesh revokes her passport, that might have no implication for India. India will question the decision and its legitimacy," Prof Dutta earlier told The Daily Star.

"Since a government politically opposed to Sheikh Hasina is the one prosecuting her, it might be perceived that she is fleeing political persecution and a threat to life. We have a history of looking after our friends."

PROSECUTOR'S STATEMENT

ICT Prosecutor Tamim said if Hasina and Asaduzzaman do not file their appeals within 30 days of the verdict delivery, they will lose the opportunity to appeal as they have been convicted under a special law.

Tamim was replying to reporters' queries.

He, however, said the Appellate Division has the authority to allow it for the sake of "complete justice, if nothing regarding this is mentioned in the law. But if a timeframe is mentioned in any special law, once the time is up, no appeal for condonation will be accepted."

Responding to another query regarding Hasina's comment that the verdict is politically motivated, and she did not get the opportunity to defend herself, Tamim said, "We welcome her remarks, as now the lawful path is open."

"She must surrender within 30 days, file an appeal, and present all her arguments before the Appellate Division.

He argued that the Appellate Division has the authority to allow it for the sake of "complete justice, if nothing regarding this is mentioned in the law. But if a timeframe is mentioned in any special law, once the time is up, no appeal for condonation will be accepted."

Tamim said, "Let there be no misunderstanding, we categorically reject the claim that the trial was politically driven. The tribunal's proceedings were transparent to a standard that can withstand scrutiny before any court in the world. The documents and evidence we submitted would survive any legal challenge, anywhere. The punishment delivered there would be delivered there as well..."

Supreme Court lawyer Azizur Rahman Dulu, however, said that under the jurisdiction of complete justice provided by article 104 of the constitution, the Appellate Division has the authority to allow the application even after 30 days.

Mentioning the fundamental rights enshrined in the constitution, he added that the constitution is the supreme law, and it will prevail over any laws of the land that curtail fundamental rights.