

DOWN TO EARTH

City roads for rallies

By Khalilur Rahman

Dhaka has virtually been turned into a city of mass rallies, processions and demonstrations. Since the Mughal rule the Dhaka town, once known as Zahangirnagar after the name of emperor Jahangir, was famous for its mosques, muslin, fortresses and other sites of historical importance. The glory of today's metropolis appears to be a matter of the past. Everyday, the citizens who come out of their homes taste a bitter and agonising experience of almost endless traffic jams, frequent demonstrations and clashes on the streets.

Not long ago the city had two big open fields for holding public meetings or other mass gatherings. Both the places, Paltan Maidan and Suhrawardy Udyan have been closed for ever for such activities. The

municipal authorities and public meetings or any other open functions were held with the prior permission of the district administration as per rule.

As the Paltan Maidan ceased to exist, the venue of public gatherings was shifted to roads or other vacant places causing anarchy in the movement of traffic.

The Suhrawardy Udyan, previously race course maidan, was also a good place for organising big public meetings. After the liberation horse race in this ground was stopped. Political parties found it convenient to hold meetings. Over 12 years ago, a vast tract of land of Suhrawardy Udyan was developed into children's park. Before that, another big portion of the udyan was occupied for the police control room. As

Mantik Mia Avenue at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Panthapath near Sonargaon Hotel, the wide road, in front of National Press Club, the road crossing in front of the General Post Office (GPO) popularly known as Zero Point and at Gulistan square. Besides, there are two other places where meetings are held occasionally. One is at Nawabpur and another at Fulbaria. All these places are parts of busy public thoroughfares.

Assembly of people on roads is prohibited under law. Meetings and processions on the streets which have become a regular feature in the metropolis contribute largely to the acute traffic congestions, an official of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) told the Daily Star. Rapid growth of population, consid-



Paltan Maidan as it looks now.

historic Paltan Maidan which had served as an ideal place for the people to voice protest against all sorts of misrule and injustices since the British rule was annexed to the Dhaka Stadium about a decade ago. In addition to the development of a sizeable portion of the Paltan Maidan into volleyball and hockey stadiums, a vast shopping complex has been set up here. Even, it is difficult for an old visitor to the Paltan Maidan to visualise now that any such open place had ever existed here.

The closure of Paltan Maidan as a place for holding public meetings and cultural gatherings was a big mistake committed by the previous government, an official of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) stated. The maidan was although maintained by the

result public gatherings cannot be held here.

Before the emergence of Bangladesh another ground, Armanitola Maidan, in the old part of the city was regularly used for holding meetings. The ground is still there but meetings are not held. The maidan is surrounded almost on all sides by trucks and other transports. The roads around the maidan serve the purpose of parking place for the vehicles. Children play at the maidan and there is a pump house on its southern side for maintaining water supply under the management of the WASA (Water Supply and Sewerage Authority).

During the last few years the organisers of public meetings have found five important sites in the metropolis to hold the gatherings. The venues are

erable increase in the number of transports, faulty alignment and encroachment on roads are some other factors responsible for the chaotic condition prevailing in the movement of traffic in the city, he added. But the root cause of traffic jam is the holding of unauthorised meetings and processions, the DMP official stated.

Creation of vacant places for holding gatherings is therefore a must for maintaining a healthy atmosphere in the fast-expanding metropolis, a DCC official said. People in a democratic society have the right to ventilate their grievances through holding gatherings and the administration is under obligation to provide them suitable places for the purpose, he asserted.

Jatiya Party meeting foiled

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Chase and counter-chase by leading groups continued for about half an hour on the road from Purana Paltan crossing to NSC building corner.

The meeting organised by JP to observe 'Ershad Release Day', began at 4 pm and continued till 5 pm when the clash started after some crackers were exploded near Purana Paltan crossing. The progress of meeting was also hampered when the dais erected on the road collapsed at about 4-15 pm. Some JP leaders including Moudud Ahmed and Shah Moazzem Hossain sustained minor injuries in the incident. However, meeting resumed after a short break and the leaders addressed from the shattered stage.

Abdus Salam, city convener of JP presided over the meeting which was addressed by Iqbal Hussain Raju, Shah Mustain Billah, Tawfiq Karim, Saifur Rahman, Shah Mohammad Abu Zafar and JP Secretary General Shah Moazzem Hussain. Other JP leaders including Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and Moudud Ahmed were on the dais. Shah Moazzem was addressing the meeting when it met its abrupt end.

During the Pandemonium, the leaders were moved to the Baitul Mukarram mosque premises and later taken away in a car. The crowd became panicky after cracker explosions at Purana Paltan crossing and started running for safety. JP leaders alleged their meeting was attacked by BNP supporters who came in processions from western side. A group of JP activists were found rushing to Purana Paltan crossing with bamboo sticks after the explosions. More cracker explosions

along with gunshots were heard and brickbats were thrown the rival groups ensued. After about ten minutes, police started lobbing tear gas shells towards different corners of the meeting venue. The whole area was engulfed with smoke for which football matches in the stadium could not be held smoothly.

Police action continued till the situation came under control. Police said that 10 policemen sustained injuries during the clash. JP leaders also alleged that their processions in other city areas including Muhammadpur, Farm Gate, Tikatul and Sabujbagh were attacked by BNP supporters the same day.

Earlier, in the public meeting, JP leaders demanded unconditional release of party chairman Ershad and vowed to go for a bigger movement to secure his release.

Shah Moazzem bitterly attacked the BNP government and said during the rule of the present government prices of essentials increased manifold.

He criticised BNP for nominating Abdur Rahman Biswas for presidency and alleged that he collaborated with Pakistanis during the Liberation War. 'Nation will not forgive BNP for this act', Moazzem said.

The JP alleged that Thursday's attack on the party's public meeting at Baitul Mukarram was pre-planned and called for nationwide observance of 'protest day' tomorrow (Saturday).

"Some BNP workers wearing masks attacked our rally with streams under police cover and our Secretary General narrowly escaped when a gunman fired on him while he was addressing the meeting," Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, Acting Chairman

of Jatiya Party, told a hurriedly called press conference at his Gulshan residence Thursday evening.

He alleged that they were fired upon from buildings near the meeting venue and cock-tails were also thrown on the rally by ruling party supporters. Police lobbed teargas shells on the meeting instead of arresting armed BNP workers, he added.

"We sought permission to hold meeting at the South Gate, but the authorities intentionally gave permission for the North Gate. At the same time the ruling party convened a rally in front of National Press Club to organised attack on us," he added.

He said at least 60 JP workers including five women were injured.

JP Vice-Chairman Moudud Ahmed said that the ruling party leaders have lost confidence on themselves and consider JP as their arch-opponent.

Secretary General Shah Moazzem Hossain said that Allah saved him from a bullet. He claimed that no such incident were allowed to take place during the JP rule.

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Some youngmen trying to set ablaze the collapsed dais of the Jatiya Party on the north gate of Baitul Mukarram in the city yesterday.

Three aides of Honasan surrender

Filipino army nearing deal to end coups

MANILA, Oct 10 : Three aides of rebel Colonel Gregorio Honasan surrendered today and a leading politician said the military was close to a deal that could spell the end of coups that have plagued the Philippines, reports Reuter.

The three officers said they gave up after the Armed Forces in a bid to convince Honasan to open talks with military chief General Lisandro Abadía, eased restrictions on soldiers who took part in past coup attempts.

Abadía told a Senate Defence Committee hearing on Tuesday that he hoped to conclude an agreement for the rebels to surrender 'before the end of October'.

House Speaker Ramon Mitra told reporters a deal would require mutinous troops to 'recognise the constitution and pledge not to get involved in any way with any destabilisation effort' against the government.

"I think they are prepared to accept this," said Mitra, who held four hours of talks last month with Honasan.

"(There are) just a few areas where we need to iron out the

details and then I am confident that we would come to terms."

Abadía told the committee: "They (have) agreed to re-surface, but would like me to bring to higher authorities social and political concerns, such as electoral reforms."

"President Corazon Aquino had ordered the military to wind up negotiations by the end of the month because she did not want them to drag on indefinitely," Abadía added.

The military chief has been holding talks with Honasan and recently met rebel General Jose Zamal, who heads a military rebel faction loyal to the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

Military officials said successful negotiations to end the threat of right-wing coups would allow Aquino's government to reap a 'peace dividend' in its last eight months in power.

It would also enable the government to concentrate on reviving and economy ravaged by a string of natural disasters, including last June's eruption of Mount Pinatubo volcano, they said.

Parliament session

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All the 10 ordinances promulgated after the third session of the Fifth Parliament will be laid before the House on the opening day.

According to the tentative order of the day, the Deputy Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali will preside over the opening session at 4 pm.

After the election of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker the House will be adjourned for sometime facilitating the new Speaker and the Deputy Speaker to take oath of offices.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas is expected to administer oath at Bangabhaban.

The Parliament Secretariat has so far received 3,563 questions and 1,838 notices for private members' resolutions.

The 10 ordinances to be laid before the House are: Comptroller General (Remuneration and Privilege) (Amendment) Ordinance, 1991, The President's (Remuneration and Privileges) (Amendment) Ordinance, 1991, The Prime Minister's (Remuneration and Privileges) (Amendment) Ordinance, 1991, The Speaker and Deputy Speaker (Remuneration and Privileges) (Amendment) Ordinance, 1991, The Ministers, Ministers of State and Deputy Ministers (Remuneration and Privileges) (Amendment) Ordinance, 1991, The Supreme Court Judges (Remuneration and Privileges) (Amendment) Ordinance, 1991, President Election (Amendment) Ordinance, 1991, The Members of the Bangladesh Public Service Commissions (Terms and Conditions of Service) (Amendment) Ordinance, 1991, The Comptroller and Auditor General

(Remuneration and Privileges) (Second Amendment) Ordinance, 1991, and President Election (Second Amendment) Ordinance, 1991.

UNB adds: Opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim said Awami League will raise discussion in the House on campus situation, law and order, widespread violence in the September 11 by-elections as well as attempt on party chief Sheikh Hasina.

They will mount pressure on the government party to pass the Indemnity Ordinance (Repeal) Bill which was sent to a parliamentary committee during the last session for scrutiny.

The 15-member committee, formed on August 8 to submit its report within a month, so far held one meeting with its Chairman Law Minister Mirza Gohar Hossain in the chair before the propagation of the last session.

Nasim said the date for the next meeting of the committee was not yet been fixed and requested the Law Minister to hold the meeting in a day or two to finalise the report on the bill.

Shahabuddin

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President, who became the Acting President, following the resignation of former president Hussain Muhammad Ershad on December 6 last year.

The Constitution amendment also approved his return to the office of the Chief Justice of Bangladesh, from where he was chosen unanimously by the political alliances to head the interim government.

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Students tributes to martyrs

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that observed the day included the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the Chhatra League (S-A), the Democratic Students Unity (DSU), the Chhatra Union (BCU) and the Chhatra League (L-A).

The JCD rally held in the DUCSU building premises blamed the Awami League student front the BCL (S-A) of betraying Jihad's sacrifice by providing shelter to the alleged killers of Dr Shamsul Alam Khan Milton.

It also alleged that the BCL (S-A) was creating terrorism on campus with the help of the killers. Speakers at the rally pledged not to bow their heads to terrorism and asked the Awami League to control its

student front.

The rally presided over by Fazlul Huq Milton was addressed by Khairul Kabir Khokon, Nazimuddin Alam, Mantruzzaman Manir, Elias Ali, Quamruzzaman Ratan, Habibunnabi Sohel, Abul Kahir Bhuiyan, Abdul Malak and others.

The BCL (S-A) rally held at the Aparajeo Bangla alleged that the BNP government was not fulfilling the 10-points of the students. Rather it was behaving like an autocratic government by resorting to repressive measures against the demonstrating students, it added.

The rally said that its movement was not against a person but against a system,

and that the BNP must understand this.

It pledged to continue its movement to realise the 10-points.

The DSU rally held at the Central Shaheed Minar vowed to continue its movement unless autocratic rules and regulations were removed.

It alleged that autocratic acts were still being practised. The rally was addressed by Nasir-ud-Doza.

The Chhatra Union DU Unit and the Chhatra League (L-A) also held separate rallies at the Shaheed Minar and Madhu's Canteen premises Thursday morning.

The BCU rally was addressed by Sunil Das while the other by Asadur Rahman and Iqbal Hossain Pradhan.

The Midnight File

Germany tightens asylum process

BONN, Oct 10: Germany's main political parties on Thursday agreed to a plan to place newly arriving foreigners seeking asylum into large refugee camps. The plan would be the first step in tightening Germany's asylum process, now among the most liberal in the world, reports AP.

Fresh fighting in Croatia

BELGRADE, Oct 10: Fresh fighting broke out early Thursday in several areas of Croatia despite the latest ceasefire, drawing unusually sharp European Community criticism of both warring sides. Belgrade radio said army positions inside and around the eastern Croatian towns of Osijek and Yuhovar, two Croatian strongholds, came under fierce mortar and sniper attack during the night, reports AP.

Saudi aid for USSR

RIYADH, Oct 10: Saudi Arabia has agreed to provide the Soviet Union with aid worth one billion dollars. The Saudi Ambassador to the United States, Prince Bandar bin Sultan, informed Soviet leaders of his government's decision during a visit to Moscow September 20. Former Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Politsakov asked for the aid when he met King Fahd here on September 13, reports AFP.

Kuwait to borrow \$ 5 billion

LONDON, Oct 10: Kuwait is to borrow five billion dollars from international banks to finance the reconstruction of its civil infrastructure. The loan, which will be a medium-term facility, was announced by the US JP Morgan Bank which will lead-manage the banking syndicate, reports AFP.

Judiciary

From Page 1 Col. 4

easily reach district headquarters to get the shelter of law. A 'chowki' will comprise an Assistant Judge's Court and other related facilities. Law and Justice Minister Mirza Gohar Hossain said that during the British rule some such 'chowkis' functioned very well.

The judicial system of Bangladesh has, as a legacy of the British rule, two sets of Judges: a) Judges belonging to the judicial service under the control of the Supreme Court, and b) Magistrates controlled by the executive branch of government.

While Judges belonging to the judicial service are engaged exclusively for judicial functions, the Magistrates are employed to carry out both judicial functions (hear criminal cases) and administrative functions.

The posting, transfer and promotion of Judges are controlled by the Supreme Court and those of Magistrates by the Ministry of Establishment. For all practical purposes the Magistrates are, in the field, under the administrative control of the district administrations.

The Deputy Commissioners of the districts have quasi-judicial powers and have provisions to hear cases as and when necessary. In erstwhile subdivisions, subdivisional officers used to hear cases as subdivisional Magistrates.

Law Minister Mirza Gohar Hossain told the Daily Star that the separation of the judiciary from the executive, a demand voiced by politicians for a long time, calls for amendment to a good number of laws and the Criminal Procedure Code which give quasi-judicial power to administrative officials.

Biswas

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Mohammad Ashraf Hossain and Secretary of the Parliament Secretariat Abul Hashem.

President Biswas said, 'We shall work together with the common objective of promoting the welfare of the people to help raise their standard of life and ensure the basic needs of all citizens'.

He said the office of the President was impartial and all irrespective of caste and creed were equal to the president.

President Biswas said under the parliamentary form of government the office of the President was the symbol of national unity.

President Biswas recalled his days as the Speaker of the present parliament and said that during his tenure he had always performed his task with complete neutrality.

He said while as Speaker he had treated all members of the Sangsad as honourable leaders irrespective of party affiliations.

President Biswas said despite his being elected as the head of state on a party nomination, he would maintain complete neutrality.

He thanked the officials and employees of the Parliament Secretariat for extending their sincere cooperation to him while he was the Speaker.

Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury lauded the role played by Biswas as the Speaker in achieving the great success of democracy.

Sheikh Razzak Ali expressed the hope that the new President through his wisdom and experience would inspire the nation's onward march on the path of democracy. Whips of the Jatiya Sangsad Mahbulul Alam Tara, Prof Shahjahan Ali Mia and Abdul Karim were present.

However, once this is done steps will be needed to ensure that the courts are well developed and capable of filling the vacuum that will be created once administrative officials give up their quasi-judicial functions.

Senior administrative officials are of the opinion that the separation of the judiciary is a good concept. But they pose a question as to whether the society is developed well enough to be upto that. What for instance will be the mechanism to put trouble-mongers under control as and when it will be needed on an urgent basis to ensure peace and tranquility in the society, they ask.

They point out that even in India, having an uninterrupted democratic rule for over forty years, separation of the judiciary from the executive has not yet been possible. Only in some states the concept has been put into practice on an experimental basis.

Law Minister Mirza Gohar Hossain said that steps are being contemplated to strengthen supervision of the District Judges' Courts by the Supreme Court, and other lower courts by the district judges to remove people's sufferings.

He said that judiciary was the most neglected during nine years of autocratic rule. As there was no recruitment of Judges for a long time, an acute shortage of senior Judges was being felt now. Murder, dacoity, and cruelty to women cases involving capital punishment, normally heard by senior Judges, were now being dealt with by junior Judges. There was no supervision of courts. Again due to interference the courts could not function independently.

Khaleda-Rao

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Meanwhile, the Indian government has put up a new plea that Bangladesh, Pakistan and China are training and providing other facilities to the ULFA guerrillas.

Bangladesh has already refuted the Indian charge.

However, the issue will also be discussed in the meeting of the two prime ministers of Bangladesh and India.

Besides, pending issues like sharing of the waters of the common rivers particularly of the Ganges maritime boundary, return of the Chakma refugees and economic relations will also come up.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's meeting with the Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao will be followed by another summit-level meeting during the SAARC next to be held in Colombo next month.

Foreign ministry sources said that a scheduled visit of Khaleda Zia to India by the end of the year depended on the outcome of the two meetings in Harare and Colombo.

If there were positive indications that the issues would be solved, the visit would go ahead as scheduled. Otherwise time would be needed to work out details on solving the issues, the foreign office sources added.

They further said that Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will also hold talks with the British Prime Minister John Major and the President of Zimbabwe Robert Mugabe.

The Prime Minister is also scheduled to meet Australian Prime Minister and the Canadian Prime Minister in Harare.

Battlefield

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tion two days ahead of the schedule.

The injured were identified as Iqbal Huq Swapon (22) and Rouf (27), both members of the pro-Awami League Chhatra League.

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