

# DOWN TO EARTH

## Post-Eid scenario and mosquito menace in city

By A S M Nurunnabi

Five days have elapsed since the Eid day, yet the city scenario has not resumed its former look. It seems that, after enjoying the short euphoria that the spirit of Eid created, we feel hesitant to throw ourselves into the realities of life with its challenges and rebuffs.

For many of those who left the city to meet their near and dear ones in the villages, it is now overdue to return to the city to resume their various duties. The still forlorn look of some of the offices gives this impression. Their return to the city will not be marked by that kind of overcrowding and rush in various kinds of trans-



ports which characterised their outward journey from the city before Eid.

For many it may not be easy to shake off that trail of nostalgia left by Eid. Many shops on thoroughfares still remain shuttered, as their employees remain on extended holidays. With the road traffic still thin and much less congestion in street scenes, it is soothing to the urban eye normally used to the hectic pace of city life. In many offices, public and

## Diarrhoea claims over 100 in southern dists

By Staff Correspondent

Diarrhoea epidemic which already claimed more than 100 lives in southern districts, is now spreading to the remote areas, official sources said Friday.

According to the official figures 105 people died of the disease since it broke out late March in five southern districts. Unofficial toll is more than 150.

Nearly 10,000 people fell sick since then but about 5,500 have been registered so far.

Barisal is the worst affected district where 55 people have died so far.

The eight was died in Barisal on Friday were identified as Abdul Jalil (8), Ranu Begum (22), Mohammad Amir (12), Jahangir Bayati (15) and Alinoor Begum (5) of Medhaniganj Upazila, Jalal Sikdar (55) and Shahera Khatun (20) of Sadar Upazila and Ruhul Amin (5) of Udzirpur Upazila. Barisal diarrhoea control room source said by telephone.

All the eight upazilas of the district are affected and 94 medical teams are working round the clock.

The Situation in Patuakhali, Bhola, Barguna and Pirojpur was also deteriorating.

Official sources said 26 people died and nearly 1,000 others were affected since March 21 in Patuakhali district followed by Bhola where 20 people died and several hundred affected.

One death was reported from Barguna on Friday but none died in Pirojpur, according to the official source.

Reports of diarrhoea were also received by the Dhaka control room at the office of Director General (Health), from Jessore, Kushtia, Khulna and Manikganj districts but no death was reported.

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private, the normal tempo of work has not been attained yet. There are some disturbing developments during the Eid holidays. On account of temporary disruption in normal channels of supplies, prices of vegetables, meat and fish registered a sharp rise. The other distress-aspect was the absence of municipal cleaning service. People most affected by the piled garbage complain that the municipal authorities should have made some ad-hoc arrangement for garbage clearance during the holidays. They urge that this shortcoming on the part of the municipal authorities should be made good in future.

Two kinds of insecticides are used: Sticofly as adulticide and pyrofox as larvicide. A bottleneck in speedy procurement of these insecticides was initially created last year, as told by a well informed source, when the Institute of Epidemic and Disease Control Research (IEDCR), whose approval was necessary, refused to test the insecticides. When their refusal was later overcome, the situation already deteriorated in the middle of January last. The DCC, according to the same source, could build up a new stock of 20,000 litres of larvicide and 5000 litres of adulticide to start a massive eradication programme and though they were well-equipped for the job with some 300 sprayers, 340 field staff, 600 power and hand sprayers, three vehicle mounted and 20 fogger sprayers, they failed to spray insecticides ahead of the high breeding season.

As a result, the mosquito menace could not be effectively checked and the city dwellers have to suffer helplessly from the mosquito bites. The present situation has turned out so bad that some old timers use to recall with nostalgia the unique example set by late Habbibullah Bahar, a Muslim League Minister in pre-independence East Pakistan, when the newly established capital city was made completely free of mosquitos by means of extensive ground spray.

## US relief official in city

By Staff Correspondent

Dr Sara E. Moten, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Assistance arrived here yesterday on a five-day official visit, reports BSS.

During her stay in Bangladesh, Dr Moten will visit different camps in Cox's Bazar to see the condition of Rohingya Muslim refugees there. She will also hold talks with relief officials in Cox's Bazar.

Besides, she will call on officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs and Relief Ministry.

## Afghanistan

From Page 1 Col 7

took power in Kabul, there would be a cessation of hostilities, a declaration of general amnesty and guarantees of safety and security for all Afghans.

But the formal statement left little doubt that some Afghan guerrilla groups had not accepted the agreement.

I am satisfied that the proposal for convening an Afghan gathering has received the support of the vast majority of Afghans consulted, the statement said, suggesting that some rebel groups may not have accepted the agreement.

At this most critical stage of Afghan history, I appeal to all Afghans to put aside their differences and let the wounds heal, it declared.

## Ancient relics

From Page 1 Col 5

acres of land. The dig was excavated thousands of years ago for the use of people living on the banks of the river Tulshidanga.

A total of seven statues including one of Lord Buddha, four Shiva Lingas, seven different sizes of earthen pots, one base of Shiva Linga were discovered during the re-excavation of the beel.



Hindu devotees taking holy dip in the river Brahmaputra at Langalbandh on Friday morning. — Star photo

## Six killed, 34 hurt in road accidents

By Staff Correspondent

Six people were killed and 34 others injured in four separate road mishaps in the country yesterday.

Two of the accidents occurred in the city, one at Manikganj and the other in Jessore.

In the city, a 78-year-old rickshaw passenger, Dula Mia, was killed when a minibus (Dhaka Metro Cha-8084) knocked down a rickshaw at Abdul Gani Road at 8:30 am. Another rickshaw passenger, Asaf Uddin (60), and the rickshaw puller, Altaf (20), sustained severe injuries and were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, police sources said.

An unidentified rickshaw van pulled over on the spot when a minibus, bearing number Dhaka Cha-6284, ran over the van at Shantirakha, Demra, at about 5:15 pm.

Demra police said they rushed to the spot immediately afterwards, but the minibus driver managed to escape.

## Barapukuria pit project

From Page 1 Col 4

Local experts attribute the UK firm's estimation of low rate of return to the costly civil engineering construction works. They say that about one-third of the net investment cost has been earmarked for housing and other facilities for the staff and employees in the project area.

These experts — both Government and private — also say the construction costs for civil works, as shown in the British firm's report, are double the prevailing rate for super quality construction charges in the country.

The coal recovery rate as seen by the Chinese experts is 35 to 40 per cent with an estimated total recovery of 102 million metric tons over a span of 73 years, while the WA report speaks of an eight per cent recovery rate with a total recovery of 23 million metric tons in 25 years.

With interest rate accumulation, the cost of production per metric ton, according to the Chinese report, is US\$ 41 whereas the WA projection shows it at US\$ 51.

Investment pay back period, in relation to that of mine construction, is 78 months, the CSMI report says. The WA experts say it is 96 months.

The CSMI submitted its findings to the Government in December last year. Later in February this year, it also presented its report to the Petrobangla, the implementation agency of the project.

Apart from CSMI, the WA report has also been reviewed by other foreign experts and consultants — from China, Germany and India. Shijazhuang Coal Mine Design and Research Institute of China and China National Machinery Import Export

## Mahastami celebrated

By Staff Correspondent

Thousands of Hindu devotees had holy dip in the river Brahmaputra at different selected places all over the country to celebrate the holy Mahastami, the birth day of Lord Krishna amid great religious fervour, reports BSS.

Devotees — males, females and children — thronged at selected places for bath in the river Brahmaputra for self-purification. Devotees from India and Nepal also participated in the celebration.

Fairs were held with display of indigenous wares and a country-made cakes.

The biggest congregation was held at Langalbandh under Bandar upazila of Narayanganj, 35 kms (20 miles) from Dhaka. Thousands of devotees assembled at Langalbandh, a day ahead of the festival and bathed in the river Brahmaputra at Ghandhi Ghat and Rajhat in the early hours of this morning.

## Sangsad discussion

From Page 1 Col 5

The other opposition members of the committee, Abdus Samad Azad and Mohiuddin Ahmed of Awami League, Mantrul Haque Chowdhury of Jatiya Party and Shamsuddoha of the Communist Party were present. Jamaat sources disclosed the party will try to table an adjournment or call attention motion on the detention of Golam Azam while, other sources said, the opposition will press for implementation of the judgement given by the 'peoples court' for which Rashed Khan Menon has already given a notice.

Authoritative sources said, if the opposition succeeds in tabling a motion on Golam Azam, then, according to rules, the Speaker is obliged to give a decision.

Sangsad sources said, four issues — Golam Azam, Rohingyaas, drought in the northern districts, shortage of wheat delaying implementation of projects under Food for Works Programme and price hike — will dominate the deliberations of the House.

Meanwhile, parliamentary parties of the parties having representation in the Sangsad are holding meetings today to decide their individual strategies on the issues.

An informal meeting of a group of MPs belonging to Awami League, Communist Party of Bangladesh, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (Siraj) and Workers Party was held yesterday afternoon with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad in the chair.

The meeting discussed the role of the opposition during the forthcoming session and Rashed Khan Menon, MP of the workers Party told The Daily Star that they had identified four issues to be raised for discussion. The issues, according to Menon, in order of precedence are Golam Azam, Rohingyaas, law and order and price hike.

# The Midnight File

## Four Russian diplomats ordered to leave Belgium

BRUSSELS, Apr 10: Four member of Russia's diplomatic mission to Belgium were accused of espionage Friday and given 24 hours to leave the country, the Foreign Ministry said. "High level technological information of military use was supplied to a foreign power," a spokesman for the Belgian Attorney General's Office said, reports AP.

## Three Turkish Kurds killed in clashes with security forces

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey, Apr 10: Three Turkish Kurdish guerrillas were killed in two separate clashes with security forces in the southeast, the regional governor's office announced here on Friday. The clashes occurred on Thursday in the town of Dicle and outside Yestikaya village, the statement said, reports AP.

## Arafat arrives in Tunis

TUNIS, Apr 10: PLO leader Yasser Arafat arrived home in Tunis Friday, walking unassisted off a Libyan Arab Airlines jet onto a red carpet and into a crowd of school children waving Palestinian and Tunisian flags. Arafat's eye was swollen shut and a huge red bruise marked his face. He was greeted and helped into a chair by Tunisian President Zine al Abidine Ben Ali, reports AP.

## Tories win 4th term

From Page 1 Col 7

the election defeat and would make a statement Monday.

In Washington, President Bush hailed Major's victory. "It was substantial, it was wonderful," he said.

Major, who succeeded Mrs Thatcher 16 months ago, has pursued a less rigorous version of her tight-money, free-market policies. She resigned in November 1990 after a new tax alienated many Britons.

Major told supporters Friday he was "delighted to have my own mandate."

"I think it is very important... the country have elected me in my own right to become Prime Minister. I am immensely proud of that," he told cheering supporters outside 10 Downing St.

Mrs Thatcher, who led the Conservatives to power in 1979 and also won the 1983 and 1987 elections, said: "Everything we have done in the last 13 years will now be conserved and built on."

Labour predicted the nation's economic woes would intensify with the Conservative win. "Now the Conservatives will continue with the decline," Kinnoek said.

The main election issues were the recession, taxation and the state-run National Health Service.

Investors had feared that a Labour victory would depress the pound and force an increase in interest rates, or perhaps even a devaluation of sterling against the other currencies in Europe's exchange rate mechanism.

Following the Tory victory, the Financial Times' Stock Exchange 100-share index surged 119.8 points, or 4.9 per cent, to 2,556.2 by 10.00 am. In a stroke, the index nearly recouped the 138.4 points it lost in the hand-wringing during the four-week

campaign, which began March 11. The pound rose about a cent against the dollar.

Even though almost all the opinion polls and many political pundits had predicted a Conservative defeat, fear of the Labour party proved stronger than anger over the economy.

"There are just an awful lot of people out there who are mistrustful or even frightened of the possibility of a Labour government," said Anthony King, professor of government at Essex University.

Kinnoek had moved his party from the far left to the centre in eight years as Britain's longest-serving opposition leader in a bid to win power. Labour had said it would raise taxes paid by wealthier people to help fund increased state spending on health, education and welfare.

The Conservatives promised to work toward cutting the basic rate of income tax from 25 per cent to 20 per cent.

Scotland remained a Labour party stronghold, but the Conservatives gained two seats there. The pro-autonomy Scottish National Party, which had aimed at winning a majority of the region's 72 seats, wound up with three — a loss of two.

Northern Ireland Protestant parties captured 13 seats and the moderate Catholic Social Democratic and Labour party won three seats, including one held by Gerry Adams, leader of the Irish Republican Army's political wing Sinn Fein.

The pro-independence Welsh party Plaid Cymru got four seats.

Actress Glenda Jackson, winner of two Academy Awards, won the north London seat of Hampstead and Highgate for Labour. Olympic gold medalist Sebastian Coe won as a Conservative in Falmouth.

## Khaleda greets Major

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia Friday congratulated British Prime Minister John Major on the election victory of his Conservative Party, reports BSS.

In a message Prime Minister Begum Zia said, "I am truly happy to learn of your victory in the closely contested general elections."

Begum Zia expressed her confidence that the close friendly relations existing between the two countries would be further strengthened and consolidated in the days to come under his dynamic leadership.

## Noriega

From Page 1 Col 8

on eight of the 10 counts he faced.

He was equally expressionless when called to the bench by Judge William Hoeweler for the formal explanation of the jury's decision.

Moments earlier, the 58-year-old Noriega received a kiss from his wife and greeted his three daughters.

## Trial body

From Page 1 Col 5

dence of Salam Talukder and later shifted to the parliament office of Delwar Hossain where it ended at around 5-30 pm.

A trial committee source said the ruling party members raised the question if it was an Awami League movement. To which the trial committee members responded saying "It is in no way a movement of AL. It is a demand of common people."

"We explained our position and stand on Golam Azam to the ruling party members," the source said adding that "we requested them to convey it to the government."

When contacted over telephone Abdus Salam Talukder said, "the talks were informal and we did not try to reach any consensus."

No date for further meeting was fixed, committee sources said.