

# DOWN TO EARTH

## WASA upsets city traffic system

By A. S. M. Nurunnabi

Public Utility agencies often seem to develop a behavioural pattern which makes them impervious to public comforts and convenience. The latest example of this tendency is reflected in the Dhaka WASA's embarking on multi-pronged digging in several sectors of the city's road network.

In many offices dealing with public affairs in our country, red tapism plays an important part. Our public utility agencies are expected to be comparatively free of that evil in the interest of efficiency and expeditious disposal of work. That expectation is belied by their choice, apparently prompted as a consequence of red tapism, of the present time as appropriate for road digging when the monsoon is fast approaching.

It will be appreciated on all hands that the Dhaka WASA has given thought to the need for undertaking the vital storm sewerage project for the city. What baffles the public is its timing. Could not the formalities for the project be completed well ahead of the monsoon season so that the road traffic is spared the additional suffering in an already over-congested situation? According to WASA source, they were compelled to undertake the work at this time due to delayed release of funds from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) resulting from the cumbersome process followed by different departments of Government. So here, as we hinted at, the bogey of red tapism was to blame.

The current digging work involves a total of about ten kilometres of road in the thickly populated areas of the city which include Santinagar, Inner Circular Road, DIT Extension Road, New Elephant Road, Mirpur Road, Motijheel, Dikusha, Tejgunjpara and New Market areas. The road digging operation in such a wide area has thrown the road traffic system into utter confusion.

In the early days of the previous regime, an executive order was issued requiring road digging to be coordinated with the development and rehabilitation programmes of other agencies. Such orders may not have much practical value, since the different agencies, when they have any project to execute in any area, may not afford to wait for coordinated action on account of their receiving necessary sanction orders at different times. As a result, the same

area may go under digging a number of times to meet the demands of different agencies. Particularly in the present case of the New Elephant Road, traces are still left of previous road digging by some other agency in connection with their project. The same may be true in other areas also.

In the last couple of days, we had spells of heavy down-pour. If we experience similar rainfall in the coming days, the current project work may be seriously affected, leading to delay in its completion. This will mean prolonged suffering for the road users.

An unsatisfactory feature of road digging operations is that when the work is completed, it has been seen that the affected alignments are seldom restored to their original conditions fully. As a result, depressions, pot holes, uneven road surfaces are allowed to develop much to the chagrin of the road users.

It is alleged by some that it is common practice with the

WASA to start its development work during the monsoon. Besides the present case, we have seen a lot of other small road digging works are taken in hand particularly during this season which occurs towards the end of the financial year. Perhaps at this time, the need is felt for spending the allotted amount for a particular project in a hurry. This inevitably leads to compromising of the quality of the work. It is a sad thing that these are no isolated phenomena but a conspicuous feature of public spending.

In the city where the rick-shaws already create the greatest stumbling block to smooth flow of road traffic, the current road-digging impediments pose additional challenge to the traffic police on account of the horrendous state of traffic jam extending in busy commercial areas like Motijheel Commercial Area, Elephant Road and Jonaki Cinema areas.



রাপ্তা বন্ধ রাখা বর্জ্য স্ক্রিম জয়ার নিরাম কাজ চলিতে ঢাকা ওয়াসা, ঢাকা আপনাদের সাময়িক অসুবিধায় আমরা দুঃখিত

## Frog leg smuggling rampant

From Page 1 Col 3

claims by importers worth thousands of dollars and to loss of markets.

On May 21, a divisional anti-smuggling task force in Khulna raided several fish processing units and confiscated 15,736 master cartons of frog legs packed as shrimp from two of those units and arrested two persons in this connection. The estimated market price of the frog legs was about Taka 8 crore.

It has recently been reported in a Khulna daily that about 20,000 frogs are being sold in the city's Nutun Bazaar on a daily basis openly.

According to one estimate, per container CNF cost of 16,000kg frog legs costs about Taka 17 lakh while the same container is sold as black tiger shrimp for Taka 43 lakh.

Shrimp exporters pointed out that the windfall profit from frog legs smuggling is used by the concerned traders to buy shrimp at exorbitant prices from the local market.

Industry figures for the first week of the current month showed that there was a shortfall of the 20 cents per kilogram of shrimp between the procurement price and the export price after cost of production was added on. This accounts for a loss of about Taka 1,20,000 per container.

This has forced the other shrimp exporters, the BFFEA source said, to shortchange buyers, default on loans, make false insurance claims and, in some cases, close down the factory. "The biggest problem right now is that most exporters are not upholding the commitment of the contract," said A U Ahmed, president of BFFEA.

He said that the association had received numerous claims from overseas shrimp importers totalling nearly a million US dollars during the last few months.

Ahmed pointed out that underweight and underweight consignments had caused Bangladesh's reputation in the international shrimp market to nosedive in recent months. Many buyers are avoiding the purchase of Bangladeshi shrimp and Japan, which imported Taka 90 crore worth of shrimp during 1989-90 as the second largest buyer, has almost stopped buying from Bangladesh now, he added.

The price of Bangladeshi shrimp in the international market has also become lower by between one and two dollars per kilogram compared with shrimp from Thailand, Indonesia and even India, he said.

Ahmed alleged that Bangladeshi frog legs are being smuggled to Thailand and Singapore in shrimp cartons and are being re-exported from there to the Western markets along with forged CITE certificates from Indonesia.

He also alleged that many officials including bankers are involved in this illegal trade. "Suddenly, Thailand and Singapore have started importing huge quantities of shrimp from Bangladesh in the last few months," he noted.

According to Export Promotion Bureau figures, Thailand did not purchase any shrimp from Bangladesh in 1988-89 while it imported Taka 69 lakh worth of shrimp during 1989-90. EPB figures for the 1990-91 period was not available.

The president of BFFEA called upon the government to

take urgent steps to rescue the frozen foods export sector. "Our main demand is that the government should either withdraw the ban to allow everybody to be in the business or take serious action to curb smuggling and protect the environment as well as the national image," Ahmed said.

The president of BFFEA also called upon the government to take urgent action to stop the illegal trading of frog legs and rescue Bangladesh's reputation in the international shrimp market. "Quality control is the name of the game which we have lost in recent months," he pointed out. He suggested that a system of back-to-back letters of credit (LC) be initiated for exporting shrimp similar to that in Thailand and Indonesia. This would enable importers to send any consignment back if the contract is not fully met.

He also suggested that a task force should be formed to check the quality at the production stage to ensure international standards and specifications. He added that under the current method employed by the government it is impossible to check the shipment on board the ship.

Tax cut on textile

From Page 1 Col 5

loans taken by the small scale textile units and the dying and printing mills and suggested that they should be given time to repay their overdrafts.

The press conference called upon the government to withdraw all certificate cases filed against the sick textile units and implement the recommendations of the body on sick industries.

It also stressed the need for increasing cooperation and coordination between the ministries of the government, and suggested that a 'one step textile cell' should be set up under the leadership of the Prime Minister.

The press conference was attended among others by Manzur Morshed, Sharif M Abul Hossain, Taher Sobhan, Nazir Hossain, Golam Rahman, Shamsul Alam, Abdul Muhiit and Bazul Huda.

Editor: S. M. Ali  
Executive Editor: Mahfuz Anam

Published by S. M. Ali on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 and printed by him at Offset Printing Dialogue Publications Ltd., 19 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: 28/1, Toyneeb Circular Road, Dhaka-1000. Tel: PABX- 246023-4, 245061-2. Advertisement: 245063 & Ext. 20. Fax No. 88-02-863035. GPO Box No. 3257. GRAM: DAILY STAR, DHAKA.

## Mystery over Dalia's death deepens

By Staff Correspondent

As days passed, mystery surrounding the death of the noted drama artiste, Dalia Ferdous, deepened.

Major Akter Ferdous Rana, a playwright, husband of Dalia refused to talk to the press for what his relatives said his sickness till Friday, the third day of his wife's death.

Cantonment police declined to comment on the death as they did not receive the autopsy report from the Forensic Department of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) till yesterday.

A DMCH source, however, said that the doctors who performed the autopsy commented on the report that the death was accidental. The doctors in the report might suggest police to investigation in to the matter, the source added.

The source also said, the report was likely to be sent to the Cantonment police by Sunday.

Dalia Ferdous reportedly committed suicide by burning herself last Tuesday night after a row over her husband's extramarital relationship with another television drama artiste, Konkon.

Meanwhile, Konkon's family members said Konkon left the country for Riyadh Tuesday afternoon.

The maid servant, who was the lone person in the house except Dalia's husband to witness the incident, was interrogated several times in Rana's Kachukhet residence, by Cantonment police.

But another police officer who preferred anonymity commented that the maid servant should have been brought to the Cantonment police custody so that she could not be influenced by others to make any statement.

Meanwhile qulkhwari of Dalia was held at the Kachukhet residence yesterday afternoon. But only the brother-in-law of Dalia, AKM Noor Hossain attended it representing Dalia's family, family members said.

## 110 killed in fresh Lankan violence

COLOMBO, May 29: Tamil guerrillas killed 23 soldiers in an ambush and lost several of their own men today as the death toll in fresh violence in Sri Lanka's northeast rose to 110, official said, reports AFP.

Heavily-armed Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) guerrillas stormed an army picket in Batticaloa district after trapping the troops on three sides at the Vakancri-Meeyankulam road junction, officials said.

The army has recovered 23 bodies of their men. At least 10 Tiger bodies are also lying in the area," an official said by telephone from the region.

(Earlier story on Page 5)

## AL presidium

From Page 1 Col 7

Daily Star last night. According to the proposed amendments to the party constitution, AL would also go for expanding the party Working Committee by creating some new post of assistant secretaries and increasing the number of the members of the committee, sources say.

Presently 59-member Working Committee would be expanded to a 69-member one especially to accommodate leaders who have joined the Awami League from different political parties including Abdur Razzak's BAKSAL, sources added.

Formation of divisional party committees is also likely to be discussed in today's meeting.

One of the most sensitive issues arising out of the suspension of Mostafa Mohsin Mantu, chairman of the AL's youth front, is also expected to come up for discussion today.

Meanwhile, yesterday's meeting of the Working Committee with the Party Chief Sheikh Hasina in the chair approved 40 out of a total of 78 district committees formed through the recent local level party councils.

More committees are likely to be approved today while about a dozen of disputed district committees are expected to be sent to the 'party tribunal' for hearing.

A five member party tribunal headed by Zillur Rahman has been formed to suggest steps to solve disputes of the district level units of the party.

Yesterday's meeting held discussion, along with other issues, on the draft report of the party general secretary to be placed in the forthcoming council session.

Adjourned at 11 last night the meeting will resume 10 this morning at the Minto Road residence of the AL Chief Sheikh Hasina.



Begum Sufia Kamal planting sapling at Ramna Park yesterday marking World Environment Day. Star photo

## For a fair environment

By Staff Correspondent

Several thousand people vowed on Friday to protect the environment as well as the earth ahead of the Earth Summit and World Environment Day.

"We the people of Bangladesh, are taking oath that we will do our best to protect the environment for a safe earth for our posterity," the motley crowd voiced with poet Shamsur Rahman under the banyan tree on the Ramna restaurant premises.

The Earth Summit is set to start on Wednesday June 3 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and World Environment Day will be observed on June 5.

Begum Sufia Kamal planted a sapling in the park amid cheers and applause from those present to mark the day while a number of cultural groups performed a soiree.

"Nirmal Poribesher Jonnye Amra" (we are for a fair environment), a conglomerate of the country's NGOs and cultural groups, organised the Friday's special assembly.

Drama artistes Golam Mustafa, Abul Hayat, Ali Zaker, Sarah Zaker and Nima Anam, and a number of NGO officials were present on the occasion.

## Alternative summit

From Page 1 Col 7

But much of the flavour of the alternative summit, called the Global Forum, will be given by smaller groups campaigning for the rights of women, children, ethnic minorities, religious beliefs and animals.

Nor have fringe groups been excluded from the gathering, which opens on Monday, two days earlier than the official summit.

Meetings are planned on interests as diverse as yoga, meditation, solar energy and esperanto speaking as well as subjects described as planetary synthesis and cosmobiology.

The main purpose is to start a big interchange (of ideas and information) at a global level, Noleto Filno said.

The alternative summit will be held in Tentsin, a central Rio park, about 35 km (22 miles) from the official conference centre.

Cultural events are scheduled at night and many of the day time meetings will be open to the public.

Organisers have arranged a series of eye-catching events to focus attention on environmental issues.

A replica of a 10th century Viking ship is scheduled to arrive in Rio for the opening of the Global Forum, carrying letters for heads of state from children around the world appealing to them to save the planet.

Children will also use a special section of the alternative summit venue to discuss issues such as homelessness, poverty and the environment. Adults will only be allowed in as guests.

Organisers expect blanket news coverage of the alternative summit. Some 3,500 journalists, photographers and camera crews have already registered and many more are expected.

To add sparkle, celebrities from the world of arts and politics will join in.

Prince Charles, heir to the British throne, will be there as a member of an environmental group. Film stars such as Liv Ullmann and Shirley Maclaine, Singer John Denver, Jane Fonda and her husband Ted Turner, owner of the US Cable News Network, will also take part.

Norway's Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, a prime mover for the Earth Summit, will be a regular participant, along with Tibet's spiritual leader the Dalai Lama.

Others expected to be seen during the two-week event include, singers Olivia Newton-John, Elton John, actress

Meryl Streep, globe-trotting environmentalist Jacques Cousteau and Brazilian folk hero Pele.

But organising the event has not been without its problems. Global Forum organisers had to call on Brazilian and European governments to help cover the 11 million dollars cost.

Other events are also scheduled to coincide with Global Forum, including cultural ones.

## The Midnight File

### Serb forces bomb Sarajevo

BELGRADE, May 29: Serb forces bombed the Bosnian capital Sarajevo and Croatia's picturesque port of Dubrovnik today in defiance of looming UN sanctions intended to curb Serbia's alleged involvement in Yugoslavia's civil war, reports Reuters.

### Ozal for military action against Bosnia-Herzegovina

ANKARA, May 29: Turkish President Turgut Ozal called on the United Nations or NATO today to intervene militarily to stop the fighting in the former Yugoslav republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In a statement released here, he said Turkey "was ready" to participate in military units formed within the framework of the UN or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), reports AFP.

### Honecker to be expelled from Chilean embassy in July

HAMBURG, May 29: Former East German Communist leader Erich will be expelled from the Chilean embassy in Moscow in mid-July, a newspaper reported Friday. Honecker, 79, sought refuge in the Chilean embassy December 11 to avoid extradition to Germany. Germany has indicted Honecker on manslaughter charges for ordering his border guards to shoot at East Germans trying to flee to the West during his years in power, reports AP.

### India testfires Agni

NEW DELHI, May 29: India on Friday test fired a medium range surface-to-surface ballistic missile, the showpiece of the country's integrated missile development programme, the defense ministry said, reports AP.

The Agni missile with a maximum range of 2,500-kilometer (1,550 miles) was launched from a military range in Chandipur in the eastern state of Orissa, a defense ministry spokesman said.

The Agni's launch was the latest sign that India intends to go ahead with its missile programme despite pressures from the United States.

Agni's range is sufficient to hit targets as far away as Iran in the west, Hong Kong in the east, China in the north and islands around the equator in the south. It can also hit any city in neighbouring Pakistan, with whom India has fought three wars. China went to war with India in 1962.

On Thursday, Defense Minister Sharad Pawar said Agni's success will exhibit to the world the nation's progress in missile technology.

"India will not give up the pursuit of advanced space and missile technologies even if the developed countries," Pawar said.

Three weeks ago, Washington imposed a two-year ban on export of all rocket technologies to the state-owned Indian Space Research Organization and Glavkosmos, a Russian company contracted to supply engines for launching Indian rockets into orbit.

India said the engine was for its civilian satellite programmes, but the United States says it also could be applied to defense.

The United States has often expressed concern at India's missile development programme, which has so far successfully tested five missiles including surface-to-surface, surface-to-air, air-to-surface and an antitank missile.

Foreign nationals

From Page 1 Col 7

while 188 are still under trial. Eight others have been detained on various charges.

The foreign nationals, who have been given death sentence and are now living in the condemned cells in the Dhaka Central Jail, are five Pakistanis, two Sri Lankans and a Nigerian.

Of the prisoners, 18 Pakistanis, 67 Indians, 89 Myanmar nationals, 50 Thais, a Briton, a German and five Somalian women have been sentenced to various other terms.

Recently, a Special Tribunal convicted David Anthony Chocker, a Briton, and German national Bernhard Rudiger to suffer life terms in prison as the judge found them guilty of smuggling 38 kilograms of gold into the country.

The prisoners who are still under trial and living in the custody of different jails are eight Pakistanis, 83 Indians, including three women, 69 Myanmar Nationals, including a woman, 20 Thais, an Indonesian, five Filipinos and two Sri Lankans.

Eight other prisoners of whom four are Pakistanis, one Indian, one American girl, and two South Africans, have been detained in the Dhaka Central Jail and Chittagong District Jail.

Of them, Prof Golam Azam, a Pakistani passport holder, has been detained in the Dhaka Central Jail for violating the country's Foreigners Act.

Three other detainees, an American teenager girl, Eli-adah, McCord, and two South Africans, Robert Blankson and Okyndo Goddy, are accused of smuggling 3.27 kilograms of heroin into the country.

Khaleda

From Page 1 Col 7

reliant.

She said the misrule of nine years of autocracy had made the restructuring of the economy difficult for the present democratic government. "We have to work hard together to accomplish this difficult task for the emancipation of the teeming millions."

She said no one would be spared from being punished if he wanted to create indiscipline and chaos in the name of the party.

The Prime Minister said the leaders and workers of BNP had to devote themselves in making the present community more conscious so that production in the fields could be increased to the desired level.

Begum Zia said alongwith the development of agricultural sector the industrial sector had to be revamped to solve a great national problem of unemployment.

She expressed her firm belief that the BNP, which believed in the politics of development, could resist any conspiracy or destructive activity to hinder production with united efforts.

Begum Zia said the nation which had great history, of sacrifice in its War of Liberation and Language Movement had very potentials for attaining desired development.

The function was also addressed by Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman, Syeda Nargis Ali MP, DUCSU leader Rafiqul Islam Jagu and convener of Bagerhat district BNP Monwar Hossain. Commerce Minister M K Anwar and State Minister for Finance Mujibur Rahman were present on the occasion.

Editorial on page 4