

DOWN TO EARTH

A Growing Menace To City Life

By A S M Nurunnabi

A growing menace is threatening city life. The menace stems from the steady deterioration of the quality of urban life on account of several factors due to the lack of vigilance and effective control on the part of the City Corporation and the RAJUK.

Among the causative factors may be mentioned the indiscriminate setting up of industries, big or small, in residential areas. The industries which have sprung up, range from plants which produce lathes, shoes, plastic items to printing presses, packaging industries, dyeing and silk factories and numerous other units operated by electricity or manually. Butchers' shops can be found here and there; vegetable markets have come up almost in every locality encroaching on roads and open spaces. Eateries have proliferated recklessly.

The combined effect of all this that it is no longer possible to distinguish a commercial and industrial area from a residential one. To cite some examples, old localities like Bangshal, Nazimuddin Road, Armanitola, Lalbagh have assumed such a medley of characters that it is impossible to identify them either as residential localities or bazars. The evil is gradually spreading to other areas like Eskaton Road, Dhanmandi, Shantinagar, known for their better residential facilities.

The volume of noise that the various industries in residential areas collectively produce, is a constant source of torment to the local inhabitants, who get no respite even at night, when there is no let up in their operation. Rather the comparative quiet of night time heightens the din and bustle caused by these industrial units. With so many of these units operating in the neighbourhood, there is extra pressure on power consumption which sometimes throws out of gear refrigerators, televisions, radios and other domestic electrical appliances.

A great damage to environment is caused by industrial wastes, refuse from vegetable bazars, blood and animal tissues from butchers' shops which go straight into drains and sewers, or lie rotting for hours, sometimes days on end, filling the atmosphere with stench. The poor conservancy services of the City Corporation do very little to alleviate the suffering of the residents on this account.

One particularly irritating practice of the City Corporation may turn the pit of one's stomach. This refers to the obnoxious movement of garbage trucks at peak traffic hours in the morning through the city's road network. This is unthinkable in any modern city, which Dhaka is steadily growing into.

It behoves the City Corporation authority to stop this nauseating practice immediately and ensure that the work of collection and carrying of garbage from different points

in the city is taken up and completed in the small hours of the morning, as is done in many modern cities.

The recurrent shortage of water which now is taken for granted adds to the citizens' misery. There is no present indication of an early solution of the water scarcity.

There is a growing threat from such diseases as invariably result from neglect of sanitation and hygiene. There seems to be no realisation yet that nature may strike back to remind us that there are limits to its tolerance. Are we then waiting for some cataclysm to jolt us into a realisation of the potential dangers of the situation? It may then be too late to save the citizens from the horrors of a catastrophic epidemic.

The affected citizens have grievances against the City Corporation and the WASA. They feel that beyond collection of rates and taxes, these authorities seem to have no responsibility for the health and welfare of the rate payers. It is felt that they fail to enforce the most elementary rules and regulations in the matter of maintenance of public health and utility. Newspaper protests are mostly ignored. Thus the citizens of the capital have been placed in a nightmarish situation which robs them of peace and basic facilities and confront them with the potential threat of decimation through various diseases.

The interview was conducted by Uri Avneri, a liberal Israeli journalist who first talked to Arafat when the PLO was under siege by the Israeli army in Beirut in 1982.

Rabin's spokesman, Gad Ben-Ari, refused comment on the interview Friday.



Communist Party brought out a procession yesterday in city demanding trial of the killers of Ratan Sen. — Star photo

Arafat praises Rabin, wants to meet him

JERUSALEM, July 31: PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat said in a rare interview with an Israeli newspaper published Friday that he is willing to meet with Israel's new prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, reports AP.

Praising Rabin's election has a 'vote for peace,' Arafat asked the Israeli leader to negotiate directly with the Palestine Liberation Organization as the only group that can ensure a peace settlement.

His remarks, published in the respected Israeli daily Haaretz, seemed aimed at softening Israeli public opinion. A conciliatory Arafat declared that Arabs and Jews are 'brothers' and repeatedly said peace was possible with good will by all.

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CPB leader

From Page 1 Col 3

actively participated in the Tebhaga Movement. He was also associated with the movement against shrimp cultivation in the Khulna region for last 12 years.

Sen played a glorious role during the country's struggle for liberation. Until his death, Sen got himself involved in the movement for establishing an exploitation-free society.

Different left political parties including the CPB hurriedly organised rallies and processions in the capital to protest the brutal killing.

The CPB rally held near the party central office at Purana Palta alleged Ratan Sen was killed in a planned manner following directives from the high command of Jamaat-e-Islami. The anti-liberation Jamaat has plans to kill the patriotic politicians cowardly, CPB leader Mujahidul Islam Selim told the rally.

He further alleged that these anti-liberation elements, being patronised by the government, had shown the audacity to kill the patriotic leader in the manner of 1971 genocide.

Selim demanded that the government punish the killers immediately.

Meanwhile, CPB secretariat in a statement expressed deep indignation at the killing of party leader Ratan Sen.

The CPB called upon all communist, progressive, democratic and patriotic forces and the people to resist the fascist forces who have murdered comrade Sen. 'His blood would not go in vain and the people would give a proper reply,' the statement said.

The CPB has decided to hold a rally on August 4 to protest the killing of Sen.

The Patriotic Democratic Front (PDF) in its statement said the cowardly killing of Ratan Sen by the anti-liberation forces made it clear that these forces were conspiring to push the country towards a civil war.

PDF convenor Saifuddin Ahmed Manik in the statement deeply condoled the death and demanded exemplary punishment to the murderers.

Workers' Party leader Rashed Khan Menon, MP, in his statement said the government had failed to provide security even to the life of the politicians.

Holding the fundamentalist killers' circle responsible for the murder of Sen, Menon accused the government of sheltering the killers instead of arresting them.

The Workers' Party brought out a protest procession jointly with the Jatya Krishak Samity in the city yesterday.

CPB-backed Bangladesh Chhatra Union (BCU) at a rally in front of the Jatya Press Club yesterday afternoon demanded exemplary punishment to the killers of Ratan Sen, resignation of the Home Minister and ban on Jamaat-Shibir politics.

Besides, BSD (Khaleq), Ganatantrik Biplobi Jote, Samajtantrik Chhatra Front, National Awami Party, JSD (Inu), Bangladesh Democratic Forum, Ganatantri Party and Udichi Shipli Gosthi issued similar statements condemning the killing and demanding exemplary punishment for the killers of Ratan Sen.

Meanwhile, national coordination body of the committee for implementation of the spirit of liberation war and resistance to the killers and collaborators of '71 will hold a rally and procession at Bangabandhu Avenue at 5 pm today in protest against the killing of Ratan Sen.

The Midnight File

Indo-Pak troops exchange fire

JAMMU, July 31: Indian and Pakistani troops exchanged firing in some areas of Poonch district since last night, official reports said here today. The reports said one Indian soldier was killed in Mandi areas of Poonch district during the exchange of firing. However, it could not be immediately ascertained whether there were any casualties from Pakistani side, reports PTI.

Georgia gets UN membership

UNITED NATIONS, July 31: Georgia, the last of the former Soviet republics to apply for UN membership, was admitted today as the world body's 179th member. The General Assembly acted by acclamation following a recommendation by the Security Council on July 8, reports Reuter.

Australian Senator for sanctions on Myanmar

BANGKOK, July 31: Australian Senator Chris Schacht, who arrived here Thursday from Myanmar, said his and other countries should consider sanctions against Yangon if it failed to live up to promises of transition to democracy, reports AFP.

'For the future, the real issue is whether the SLORC's promise of a national convention to be held at the end of this year or early next year actually takes place in the form suggested,' Schacht said.

SLORC (the State Law and Order Restoration Council) is the official designation of the military junta that seized power after a bloody crackdown on Myanmar's student-led pro-democracy movement in September 1988.

Schacht, speaking at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Thailand, said other governments in the region should monitor SLORC closely to determine whether it would proceed to draft a new constitution paving the way for general elections and the establishment of a democratic rule in Myanmar.

'They have told me privately that they were still committed to that cause, but the details still seem rather vague, and we'll have to watch very closely over the coming few months to see whether they are genuine in that development or whether it is just a cosmetic change,' he said.

The senator said a number of foreign ministers from non-association of Southeast Asian nation countries who attended the regional groupings' recent meeting in Manila had 'raised and speculated about the question of sanctions.'

'I think that's an issue that other countries, including my own, will have to address if

Hasina

From Page 1 Col 8

Rafique of Jahangirnagar University and Dr Ashish Kumar Dev.

Hasina recalled with gratitude the contributions made by Bangladeshi nationals living in Boston to the 1971 liberation war by supplying communications equipment to the Mujibnagar government.

Referring to political and economic scenario in Bangladesh, the Awami League chief said people are frustrated because of what she alleged autocratic attitude of the ruling BNP, violation of its election promises, sharp fall in the law and order, price-hike and repression on the opposition.

State-owned radio and television are engaged in 'imaginary and baseless' propaganda as they had done during the autocratic regime, she said.

'There is no guarantee of livelihood of the general people,' Hasina said alleging that the ruling clique are indulging in bribe, corruption, nepotism and accumulation of illegal wealth.

Sarajevo

From Page 1 Col 7

He reported heavy military activity around the airport.

Mike Aitchinson, air coordinator for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Zagreb, Croatia, said the suspension last only a few hours until a new relief plane landed in the afternoon.

Three killed in road accidents

By DMCH Correspondent

At least three people were killed and another one was injured in two separate road accidents in the city during last two days.

Mokhter Hossain (30) and Mohammad Shah Alam (40) were killed and Abul Khayer (42) was seriously injured as a speeding minibus/knocked down the rickshaw they were travelling by in Dikusha area near the Bangabhaban at around 10 am yesterday.

Of the victims, Mokhter Hossain was identified as the rickshaw puller while the two others were rickshaw-passengers.

They were immediately rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctor on duty declared Mokhter and Shah Alam dead. Critically injured Khayer was admitted to the hospital.

Police seized the minibus (Dhaka Metro Cha-7176). However the minibus driver managed to escape.

In another road accident Ahsanullah, 35, died when a truck ran over him on the weight-bridge at Gabtolt at around 7:30 pm Thursday.

Fatally injured Ahsanullah was rushed to the DMCH where he succumbed to his injuries at around midnight on the same day.

Rocket launcher

From Page 1 Col 5

Hall were strongholds of ICS activists.

Witnesses said that the clash began at Sher-e-Bangla hall at about 9-45 pm Thursday following an altercation between the ICS and the GCO activists.

ICS workers joined by people from the villages neighbouring the university broke the campus boundary wall and attacked Sher-e-Bangla Hall in a bid to settle the issue, they said.

The ICS activists were armed with automatic weapons, axes, bows and arrows, crude bombs and walkie talkies, witnesses said.

A total of 45 rooms including those of the Vice President and General Secretary of the Sher-e-Bangla Hall Students Union were ransacked in the attack, they said.

The clash later spread to Shahi Makhdum Hall, Lattif Hall and Zoha Hall of the university.

A panicky situation gripped the campus as the raiders started shooting and blasting bombs indiscriminately. The rage continued till the police arrived.

Many resident students were injured when they jumped off the multistoried dormitories for life.

The ICS activists later seized the Zoha Hall and remained there, according to RU students.

Immediately before the attack an all-party meeting was held at the Rajshahi Circuit House with Mayor Mizanur Rahman in the chair. The leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami and

its student front, ICS, were absent at the meeting.

The all-party meeting expressed its concern over the deteriorating situation at Rajshahi University and decided to step up efforts to eliminate campus terrorism.

Rajshahi University Syndicate at an emergency meeting Friday evening banned rallies, processions and meetings on the campus for three days.

It also decided to continue with the third year Honours examinations scheduled to begin from August 10. RU Vice Chancellor Dr Anisur Rahman chaired the emergency meeting of the Syndicate.

Campus residents said that most of the students, barring the hard-core activists of different student organisations, had left the campus.

UNB adds: All classes of the Rajshahi University will remain suspended today (Saturday) as tension was prevailing in the campus.

The classes will, however, resume from Sunday, university officials said last night.

The RU Syndicate also condemned Thursday's incident on the campus and formed a five-member inquiry committee, headed by Prof Kaiser Rahman Chowdhury, to probe the incident, identify those responsible and submit recommendation within 15 days.

Other members of the committee are: Prof Abdul Kader Bhuiyan, Abdur Razzak, Rafiqul Islam and A T M Obaidullah.

Contraband goods seized

By Staff Correspondent

Contraband sarees, cloths and medicine worth Taka 40 lakh were recovered from Narasingdi and Zia International Airport in two separate operations Friday.

A Customs intelligence team with the help of Bangladesh Rifle (BDR) members and police raided several houses at Beparipara in Narasingdi Friday morning and recovered cotton and katan sarees, lungis, cloths and yarns worth Taka 35,41,800.

The recovered goods included 1327 pieces of sarees, 507 pieces of lungis, 241 metres cloths and 4070 pounds of yarns, a Customs source said. No arrest was made in this connection, Customs officials said.

In another incident, Customs surveillance team led by Deputy Collector Shahabuddin Nagri recovered contraband medicine including Neurobin and Buscopan injections worth Taka 4 lakh hidden in a basket full of mangoes at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) early Friday.

A Pakistani passport holder Hafiz Abul Kalam brought the medicine from Karachi by the aircraft-BG 032 which landed at ZIA at 3:48 am Friday, Customs sources said.

A departmental case was lodged but no arrest was made in this connection, Customs officials said.

Rohingya

From Page 1 Col 8

involved with the relief camps on the Cox's Bazar-Teknaf Highway.

A half day hartal would be observed on the Cox's Bazar-Teknaf Highway on August 10 to press home its demands. The leaders in the rally said, if the government failed to take the expected moves the committee would announce further programmes of greater movement.

Meanwhile, police said three dacoits were arrested Wednesday in Baischhari village under Naikhangchhari thana, of whom one named Sayed Alam, was a Rohingya.

Syed Alam, admitted that he had been working as an informer of the Lunthin, the Myanmar border force, police said.

Over 200 feared killed

From Page 1 Col 3

The soldiers had been heading along the road through rugged Himalayan foothills when they spotted the wreckage, said the official, who asked not to be named.

He said there was no immediate word on how badly the plane was damaged.

Police sources in the Nepal capital said earlier they had received reports from villagers of a loud explosion in the area.

Kathmandu air controllers said they had told the pilots to divert flight TG-311, which originated in Bangkok, because visibility was too poor for landing during monsoon rains.

Thai Airways International in Bangkok released a list of the nationalities of 80 of the passengers on board. They included 23 Nepalis, 17 Japanese and 11 Americans.

An airline spokesman said there were also five Belgians, five Finns, four Germans, three Spaniards, two Israelis, two Britons, two Canadians, two Koreans, two Thais, a New Zealander and an Australian aboard.

She said the other 19 boarded on connecting flights and details of their nationalities were not immediately available. Fourteen crew were on board, all Thai except one Japanese.

The Thai 310-300 airbus left Bangkok at 10:49 am (0349 GMT) and the Kathmandu controllers said they told the pilots to divert on a southwest course towards India.

They said their last contact with the plane was around 1 pm, Nepal time (0715 GMT), when they told the pilots to divert.

In Bangkok, Thai Airways said the plane went missing shortly before it was due to land in Nepal.

It said the airbus made its last contact with the ground at 0657 GMT, when the captain announced he was making a change in position shortly after

TWA jet

From Page 1 Col 4

from the plane's rear four exits, but passengers were able to escape from the front four by sliding down emergency chutes, said Bob Fulton, a spokesman for the Federal Aviation Administration.

'The stewardess opened the rear exit ... and a ball of flame came into the cabin,' said passenger Julia Elhaug, 31, of Berkeley, Calif.

'The evacuation went extremely well. The pilot really knew what he was doing,' said Frank Huever, chief supervisor of operations for the Port Authority, which operates the airport.

Two of the L-1011's engines are mounted on the wings, and the third is in the tail.

Gunfire, blasts rock DU campus: One injured

By DU Correspondent

One person received bullet injury near the TSC area of the Dhaka University yesterday (Friday) evening.

Akhtaruzzaman Shahin, 25, a passerby received two bullets in his left leg while he was passing the road in front of the Rokeya Hall of the University at about 8:30 pm, according to the source.

Shahin was taken to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Campus sources said that two crackers were blasted and a few rounds of gunshots were fired near the Arts Building area of the university.

The sounds of the blasts created panic among the general students and the usual evening gathering at the TSC was dispersed following the firing incident, sources added.

All the main entry points to the university area were closed for a couple of hours, sources said.

Tense situation was prevailing at the TSC and its surrounding areas, sources added.

Rousing cheers for Ben

From Page 1 Col 7

Americans Leroy Burrell and Dennis Mitchell.

American champion Mitchell was really pumped up. The gears are rolling, the gasoline's firing, he said.

As 'Big Ben' returned to the Olympic fold, 'Baby Ben' pleaded his innocence.

Jason Livingston, the British sprinter nicknamed Baby Ben because he looked like and worshipped the Canadian, was sent home along with two weightlifters after drugs tests proved positive.

Livingston, back in London a broken man on the day he should have been competing in the 100 metres, said, 'I abhor the use of drugs in sport ... I have never, never used steroids.'

Now all those who tagged me 'Baby Ben' are going to have a field day, he told a British newspaper.

'They'll say that because they thought I was obsessed with Ben Johnson and his success, it is a case of me naturally following in his footsteps all the way to taking drugs. How stupid can you get?'

On the last day of the swimming, Kristina Egerszegi swept superbly towards her third Barcelona gold when she destroyed her own Olympic record in 200 metres backstroke heats. The Hungarian won the final heat by over four seconds.

American swimmer Ron Karanough's father died of a heart attack last Saturday while watching his son parade in the Olympic opening ceremony.

On Friday, he fulfilled his father's wish and qualified for the 200 individual medley final.

Tragedy struck in the Olympic village, Wilson Malo, a 61-year-old official with Ecuador's shooting team, died of a heart attack.

Temperatures have climbed to as high as 41 degrees centigrade in the first week of the Games, but after all the sunshine for settled on Lake Banyoles on Friday and the rowing events had to be put back two hours.

(More Stories on Pages 8,9,10.)

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