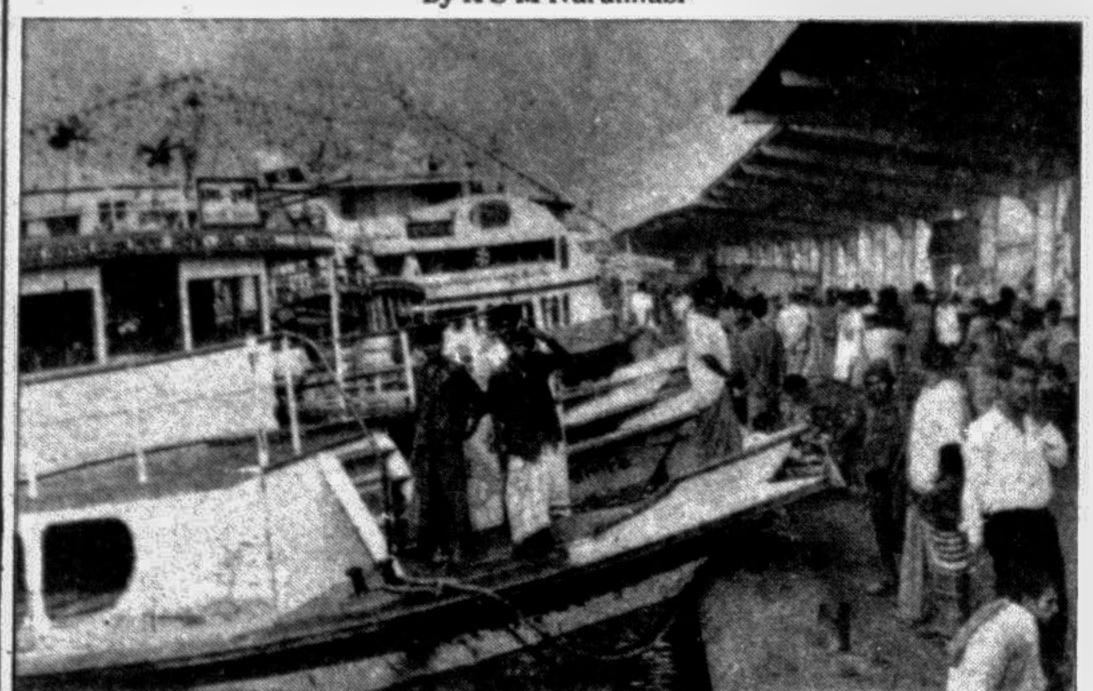
DOWN TO EARTH

A River Port with Many Minuses

By AS M Nurunnabi



Dhaka River Port, popularly known as Dhaka Launch Ghat, on river Buriganga serves as an important link in the inland with heavy loads of luggage river port network. It is an old river port. The growth of the Dhaka city with its trade and commerce based in Sadarghat, Chawkbazar, Badamtali adjoining areas, has centred round this river port. In fact, the history of Old Dhaka in some respects is associated with it. Its location suffers from one serious drawback: access to it is encumbered by a heavily congested area in its immediate neighbourhood. This naturally tells upon easy movement of goods and passengers.

The river port handles a large volume of passenger traffic: each way about 20,000 passengers pass through it daily on an average of 105 incoming and outgoing vessels. These figures rise 3 to 4 times on the occasions of major festivals. Launches of private owners mainly operate from this launch ghat. Big-size steamers of the BIWTA operating on the long-distance route to Khulna also pass through this launch ghat from their terminal at Badamtali.

As one approaches the terminal, it appears that the cleanliness aspect leaves much to be desired. Perhaps the high traffic congestion in the neighbourhood with its impaired atmosphere leaves its impact there.

The first feeling of unpleasantness that a passenger with some luggage experiences, arises from his encounter with the porters. There are prescribed rates of porterage, but for the most part, they are not

From Page 1 Col 7

considering the fact that to-

bacco consumption is injurious

to health, took steps to dis-

did not chalk out any annual

plan for tobacco production

while the authorities started

discouraging the growth of any

new tobacco industry, increas-

ing taxes and putting restric-

tion on advertisements of to-

in these years resulted in the

closure of over 10 tobacco ex-

porting firms from 16 and the

closure and inactivity of 10 to

12 cigarette manufacturing

55,738 acres of land while in

'92 it increased to 93,530.75

acres. Tobacco is being culti

vated in Rangpur, Jhenidah,

On adopting the policy in

'88, the government got initial

results in favour of its objec-

tive. In '89-90, production and

acreage went down to 15,127

metric tons and 38,667 acres

respectively. But tobacco re-

took its old position the next

Kushtia, Manikganj,

Lalmonirhat and Dinajpur.

The government policy had

The Ministry of Agriculture

courage its production.

bacco products.

Tobacco production

followed, as at bus terminals and railway stations. The passengers - particularly those thus become helpless hostages to the arbitrary demands of the porters. Some passenger facilities, however, were noted. For example, for common passengers, some rows of plastic bucket seats have been provided, which is a definite improvement on the previous wooden benches. The condition of the toilets, however, appeared to be extremely de-

Sources close to the private launch owners mentioned a number of difficulties in the proper functioning of the launch ghat. First, considering the high volume of passenger traffic and the large number of launches using this ghat, the existing number of pontoons and gangways are said to be insufficient, with the result that there is constant pressure and congestion of the available facilities. There is also no adequate provision of berths for waiting launches, which poses a threat to them particularly in times of storms.

It was pointed out that frequent overloading of passengers and goods is a factor for causing accidents and loss of life. When asked what remedial steps are taken by the launch owners in this behalf, it was stated by the sources that the question of operating costs of the launches is closely associated with the issue. The sources maintained that on the ground of rise of oil prices and nccessary spare parts, owners sometimes resort to overloading as a means of offsetting loss. They, however, affirmed

year. Again in '90-91, produc-

tion and acreage were 23,661

metric tons and 57,474 acres

from the tobacco sector had

tripled in '92 of compared to

that of 1988. In '88, the coun-

try earned Tk 7.32 crore by

exporting 13011.7 metrics

earned Tk 22.12 crore in '91-

92 by exporting 3167.66 met-

ric tons during June to

December last year. Tobacco

exports fetched some 4.11

bacco leaf to USA, UK, Holland

ported to make high quality

tobacco, cigarettes have been

the most resourceful to the

tax collectors. The 91-92 fig-

ures showed that cigarette

provided a revenue of Tk

65.57 crore while bidi Tk

industries in the country while

there are not more than 10

There are over 1,000 bidi

Of the revenue earned from

blends of cigarettes.

eigarette industries.

87.90 crore.

and Shri Lanka.

The country exports to-

tons of tobacco while

Meanwhile, export earning

respectively.

that under the supervision of the authorities, the incidence of overloading is being controlled to a large extent.

The sources pointed out certain operational difficulties. particularly the silting of channels on the routes of launches. This, in some cases necessitates long detour or suspension of services, involving loss to the launch owners In such a situation, the sources urged adoption of a programme for dredging of silted areas on an emergency basis. At present supply of pure

drinking water is not available on launches for passengers except those in upper classes. Sources maintained that the general passengers can be provided with this facility if the ghat authority arrange supply lines to individual launches from the terminal building. The sources also stressed the necessity of setting up a dispensary at the terminal for meeting emergency medical needs of the passengers.

This river port at present plays a somewhat subsidiary role because of the existence nearby of the larger river port of Narayanganj. But it has its own importance, because it serves as a river outlet in the heart of the capital. It, however, seems that with the future growth of the city, the question of further expansion of this river port may not be an easy one because of the heavily congested neighbouring areas. The river Buriganga may also pose problems in the operation of the port, particularly in lean season in view of the evergrowing volume of river craft on its narrow expanse.

Orthopaedic

From Page 1 Col 7

Secretary Syed Ahmed, BOS general secretary Dr Faruque Reza Aolad, Dr Adbus Samad Shaikh and Dr Amjad Hossain.

Prof RJ Garst who is known as the father of Orthopaedic surgery in Bangladesh also spoke on the occasion.

The speakers said orthopacdic patients were increasing alarmingly in the country due to unskilled workers in transport sector, unrest in socio-political life, terrorism and natural disasters.

Expressing cancer at the lack of experts on Orthopaedies in hospitals and health centres in the country, they demanded appointment of orthopaedic and trauma experts in every emergency sections of all hospitals and health centres to save people from dangerous diseases and to ensure health for all by the year

Faruque Reza Aolad called upon the government to take effective steps to ensure supply of equipment, infra-structural facilities and adequate number of orthopaedists to make treatment easily available to common people.

"A large number of patients go abroad for better treatment, if we get necessary support we will be able to ensure modern treatment at home," he said.

Dr Abdus Samad Shaikh said Orthopaedic subject should be included in the un dergraduate teaching curriculum in line with the recommendations of Bangladesh Medical and Dental Curricu-

The Baily Star Sarbahara party

From Page 1 Col 5 young men to side with one of many factions of Sarbahara Party, he said.

However, the activist, who would not name himself, admitted that most of these recruits had little or no political motivation because they had to join the party to get away from poverty or to gain a sense of belonging.

Our correspondent in Jessore said that many of these young men had good schooling. Those living at the bordering hamlets also gang up with the local smugglers.

Sarbahara Party was formed as Purbo Banglar Sarbahara Party (Proletariat Party) on January 3, 1971 by Straj Sikdar, a hard core Maoist.

The party split into two factions following the death of Sikdar in police custody on January 1, 1975. The party reunited on January 16, 1975 and Kamal Haider headed the party's Highest Revolutionary Council.

During the congress on November 5, 1983, the party was re-named Bangladesher Sarbahara Party. On February 17, 1987, the organisation again split into two groups known as Zia faction and Kangul faction

The organisation continued to divide as its workers fought each other. Kamrul was killed th August, 1990

Meanwhile, as the hope of a normal life after surrender diminished, many distillusioned Sarbahara Party members were forced to return to their previous life.

government on December 25. 1991

The Midnight File nounced a general amnesty to the SP activists and urged them to surrender in one month, the date later extended until February 25,

Enthusiastic party, members, mostly from the splintered Kamrul faction. responded to the offer and surrendered in groups with their

But the government failed to materialise its pledge to rehabilitate the SP men and as a result those who had laid down arms were forced to return to the hideouts.

Some of the surrendered SI' cadres said that they were feeling insecure as threats from their rival SP factions still remained.

Barisal district administration sources indicated that presently they had no plan to rehabilitate those who surren-

Sonali Bank employee shot dead

By DMCH Correspondent

An employee of Sonali Bank Head Office Mohammad Mos tafa alias Rafiq was shot dead at Malibagh bazar late Friday

Mostafa received bullets on his thigh and abdomen and died after admission to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) at around 11:15 pm Friday. Mostafa was shot at follow-

ing an altercation with some local people. He was in a shop in the market.

Iran ready to help end clashes in Afghanistan

NICOSIA, Feb 12: Iran said today it was ready to help end clashes between Alghan government forces and dissident guerillas. Tehran radio said Foreign Minister Alt Akbar Velayati made the mediation offer in a message to President Burhanuddin Rabbani, two days after an Afghan envoy delivcred a message from Rabbani to President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani in Tehran, reports Reuter.

Ex-Mali president Traore to die

BAMAKO, Feb 12: Former Mali President Moussa Traore was condemned to death today for his role in the killing of 106 people during anti-government riots in 1991. The High Court also sentenced to death three former colleagues of Traore: Ex-Defence Minister Mamadour Coulibaly, ex-Interior Minister Sekou Ly and ex-Chief of the Staff Colonel Ousmane Coulibay, reports AFP.

Trade tops talks agenda

From Page | Col 5 cials of the Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI) today. The agreement aims to better ties and cooperation in

FBCCI sources said that Bangladeshi businessmen would discuss expansion of two-way trade with Mahathir and seek support for joint ventures. They listed medicine, cement, fertilizer as some of the major prospects for collab-

private sector.

The Prime Minister will also officiate at the opening of the trade centre set up by recently formed private company Malaysia Bangladesh Venture Ltd. The Centre at Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue will house a show

room for Proton Saga cars, offices of some Malaysian firms and provide information to the willing entrepreneurs.

According to various sources, Malaysian entrepreneurs are keen to invest in Bangladesh but they are still not very confident about the investment climate in the

At the official talks, one of the major thrusts on part of the Bangladesh side would be the employment of Bangladeshi manpower in Malaysia, especially more jobs for professionals such as doctors and providing more opportunities for skilled and unskilled labour in manufacturing and plantation sectors.

Some 20,000 Bangladeshis are now working in the rich south east Asian country.

The other issues to be discussed include renewal of the cultural agreement, amendment to the existing civil aviation accord, assistance in the field of sports and cooperation in agriculture.

According to officials, Bangladesh is expected to receive Malaysian help in four projects under the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Programme (MTCP) that include coconut plantation in coastal areas under the so-called Green Belt project, Dhaka zoo development and an increase in scholarships both in quality and quantity.

SAARC Secy Gen holds talks with Indian FM

NEW DELHI, Feb 12: The External Affairs Minister, SAARC summit would be held

Zaki in particular tackled the areas on which a final decision was yet to be taken. These were the South Asian preserential trade arrangement, the South Asian Development Fund and the

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Hijacked plane From Page 1 Col 8 the Return trip to Germany The others remained in New

- PID photo

York. The plane, scheduled to go from Frankfurt to Addis Ababa via Cairo, was hijacked by a 20year-old Gunman. Authorities from the Federal Bureau of Investigation in New York said he was an Ethiopian student living in Morocco named Nebiu Zezolde Demeke.

AP adds: The man who smuggled a gun aboard a Lufthansa jet and forced the plane to land in New York in the first trans-Atlantic hijacking in 16 years was wielding a starter's pistol that fired only blanks, authorities said.

No one was injured during the 11-hour ordeal, which began over Austria about 40 minutes into Thursday's flight. It ended when the Airbus 310 with 104 people aboard landed safely at Kennedy Airport and the hijacker surrendered.

In Bonn, the German Interior Ministry said late Thursday the hijacker was a 31-year-old Somalian though the ministry could not immediately be reached for comment following the FBI state-

EFFECTIVE FROM

SALE PRICE

D-107

SAARC Secretary-General Ibrahim Hussain Zaki, today held discussions with the Dinesh Singh, amid indications that the postponed Dhaka either next month-end or early April, reports PTI.

South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation.

He informed Dinesh Singh about the different areas of ongoing cooperation under the technical committees.

The intention was to ensure that all decisions which had been taken up to the last Dhaka council of ministers meeting in December were in the process of implementation.

Zaki has already visited Nepal, Shri Lanka and the Maldives. He will now go to Bangladesh, Bhutan and Pakistan as part of a process of regular consultations between the SAARC and heads of government of member-states.

Interestingly, the import of companies of a total of 22. tobacco has also doubled since dressed, among others, by Dr sources said. singing a Malaysian song. '88. In '88, the country im-Rashid Haider and Dr Idris Ali. Road sides at different The acreage of tobacco pro-Besides, reputed dancers ported 800 metric tons and in places were also illuminated in duction has also almost dou-A total of 125 autographs of namely Shamim Ara Nipa, '92, 1700 metric tons of tonoted intellectuals including bled against all odds. In '88, the evening on this occasion. Shibli Mohammad, Dipa, Rupa Mahila Sangstha. bacco were imported. It is imtobacco was cultivated on

month-long Ekushey programme, Bangla Academy organised a discussion on Tagore songs in Bangladesh in its premises in the afternoon.

Daily Star Wahidul Huq, Dr Sanjida Khatun of Dhaka University took part in the discussion. A musical soiree followed the discussion.

Mita Huq, Tapan Mahmud, Fahim Hossain Chowdhury and Rokayia Hasina Lily sang Tagore songs in the function. Udichi Shilpi Goshthi per-

formed dance in the Central Shaheed Minar compound in the afternoon as part of the Ekushey programme organised by the Sammilita Sangskritik

Today's programme of Bangla Academy: Discussion on Eminent artistes will sing

"Nazrul Songs in Bangladesh" at 4 pm at the Academy. Nazrul songs after the discus-

Mahathir: Close ties From Page 1 Col 5 when his motorcade drove from airport to Bangabhaban.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia along with Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad and Madam Mahathir at

and Industry Minister Rafidah Aziz, Deputy Minister th Prime Minister's Department Abdul Hamid Othman and high officials. A group of Malaysian businessmen also included in Prime Minister's entourage.

From, airport, the distinguished guests drove to Bangabhaban in a ceremonial motorcade where Dr Mahathir and his wife were formally received by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

A guard of honour by a smart contingent from three scrvices was given to Malaysian Premier at Bangabhaban.

Later, he was introduced to ministers, high civil and military officials and members of the diplomatic corps.

To greet the Malaysian leader, the city wore a festive look yesterday. The airport, major thoroughfares, road islands were decorated with national flags of two countries and colourful banners welcoming the guests. Portraits of Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti were put up at different points in the

Thousands of people assembled at the road sides to greet the Malaysian leader

He will also call on President Abdur Rahman Biswas. In the afternoon, Dr Mahathir will attend a civic reception at the North Plaza of

Dr Mahathir and other

Dr Mahathir will have for-

Malaysian guests witnessed a

cultural programme at Osmany

mal talks with his Bangladesh

counterpart Begum Khaleda

Zia at the International Con-

ference Centre today (Sa-

turday). The talks will cover

bilateral relation as well as re-

gional and international issues

Minister will visit the National

Memorial at Savar this morn-

ing to pay respect to the mar-

tyrs of the Liberation War.

The Malaysian Prime

of common concern.

Jatiya Sangsad.

Memorial Hall in the evening.

He will open the Malaysian Trade Centre in Dhaka today and visit the Export Processing Zone (EPZ) in Chittagong, tomorrow. The wife of Malaysian Prime

Minister, Dr Hasmah will have special programmes, including visits to historic Ahsan Manzil and projects of the Jatiya Dr Mahathir is scheduled to

leave for Pakistan on Sunday, from Chittagong.

Hasina at Rajshahi

From Page 1 Col 7 Rajshahi University took place following an understanding between BNP and Jamaat, Hasina

Presided over by Rajshahi city AL President Maniruzzaman, the meeting was also addressed by Dr Alauddin Ahmed, Abdul Jalil, Begum Matia Chowdhury, MP, Abul Hasnat Abdullah, MP, Abdul Mannan. Abdul Quddus, MP, Shahiduzzaman, MP, Khairuzzaman Liton, Mohammad Mohsin, Tajul Islam Faruq, MP. Mir Iqbal and Rafiquddin.

Earlier, Hasina visited the Rajshahi Medical College Hospital to see the students wounded in the February 6 incident in Rajshahi University. Relatives of the injured students burst into tears as ilasina went to the hospital at

Our Rajshahi Correspondent adds: A memorandum with seven-point demands was handed over to Sheikh Hasina on behalf of the injured stu-

arrived here today on the 50th UN mission to destroy Iraq's weapons of mass destruction The students demanded under Gulf War ceasefire Rajshahi dismissal of Metropolitan terms, reports AFP. Police

Commissioner Rafigul Alam Khan and Deputy Police Commissioner Bazlul Huda.

The demands also included resignation of Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury. In their memorandum the

students urged the Leader of the Opposition in parliament to boycott the parliament session for two days and to go for a mass hunger strike in protest against the violence created by Jamaat-Shibir workers.

They also demanded ban on polities of Jamant-Shibit and called for a referendum on the issue if required. Sheikh Hasina assured the

students that she would launch a vigorous movement to resist Jamaat-Shibir forces in the

in Baghdad

BAGHDAD, Feb 12: A team of ballistic weapons experts

UN arms experts

8, DIT AVENUE (13TH FLOOR) DHAKA-1000.

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SIRAJGANJ, Feb 12: At least 31 people were injured, 11 seriously, in a clash between local people and workers of a project under Food for Work Programme at village Kazipur in Ullapara thana of the dis-

the inhabitants of Bannakandi and Kazipur villages attacked the workers and chairman of Bannakandi-Kazipur road construction project for their alleged misappropriation of wheat sanctioned for the pro-

31 hurt as local people clash with CARE men in Sirajganj

trict this morning, reports The trouble erupted when

BCL activists clash at Iswardi PABNA, Feb 12: At least 12

students were injured as ac tivists of two rival student groups clashed in Iswardi on Thursday and today (Friday), reports UNB.

sued when activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) allegedly hurled crackers on an anti-terrorism procession of Awamt League backed Chhatra League at Iswardi Government College on Thursday morning.

12 hurt as JCD,

Witnesses said the clash en-

Supporters of BCL counterattacked the JCD activists who also took out a procession on the college campus protesting terrorism. At least six people were injured in the clash.

Ekushey

From Page 1 Col 8 autograph show organised at

the gallery of the Institute of

Fine Art of Dhaka University in the afternoon. Sufia Kamal said the new generations were being con fused about the history of the nation in the face of continued

propaganda by the anti-liberation elements. A section of people often makes confusing and irresponsible comments about the intellectuals who uphold the Spirit of the Liberation War, she said, adding that the fu-

ture generations would certainly evaluate their role. The inaugural ceremony of the autograph show presided by Prof Mansur Musa, was ad-

Sawgat Editor Nasir Uddin, Poct Sufia Kamal, Jahanara Imam, Abu Hena Mostafa Kamal, Dr Nilima Ibrahim, Gaziul Hug and Dr Anisuzzaman, were put on display. Bakshi Habibur Rahman collected the autographs and organised the show which will remain open to public everybody from 3 to 7

On the twelfth day of the

pm till February 17.

The Joint Editor of The

Cultural evening at Osmany Memorial Hall

a cultural function at Osmany Memorial Hall in city yesterday.

The visiting Malaysian Prime Minister, Dato Seri Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad and his wife Dato Seri Paduka Dr Siti Hasmah Binti Haji Mohamad Ali attended a cultural function at the Osmany Memorial Hal here in the evening, reports

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda was present on the occasion. Earlier, the Minister of State for Cultural Affairs. Prof. Jahanara Begum received the visiting dignitaries on the

arrival at the Osmany Memorial Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad Shaikh Razzak Ali, cabinet ministers, Jatiya Sangsad members, chiefs of three services and high civil

and military officials also at tended the function. Noted singers like Runa Laila, Shahanaz Rahmatullah, Papia Sarwar and Baby Naznin performed on the occasion and charmed the audience. Fatematuzzohra earned appreciation from the audience by

Mitu, Parveen, Kankon, Eli Kanta, Ripa, Munmun, Sarwar Shafique and Shampa participated in the dance numbers.

The distinguished guests were visibly moved by the performances of the Bangladeshi artistes. In recognition of their performances, the Malaysian Prime Minister and Dr. Siti Hasmah presented bouquets to the participants. States Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof. Jahanara Begum and Director General of Bangladesh Shipla Kala Academy, Mr. Mobarak llossain Khan received the bouquets on behalf of the

Submit statements on RU incident by Feb 18' RAJSHAHI, Feb 12: K M

Nurul Islam, Additional

District Magistrate of Rajshahi and Secretary of the Enquiry Commission formed to probe into the incident of Rajshahi University campus on February 6 has requested all aware of the incident to submit their statements to the Commission by February 18. Earlier all persons aware of the incident either directly or

indirectly were asked to sub-

mit their written statements

between February 17 and

February 24 during office

hours, a PID handout said.