

DOWN TO EARTH

On Lack of Civic Sense

By A.S.M. Nurunnabi

In the vast panorama of our city life, we come across numerous instances of want of civic virtues. Such phenomena leave a deleterious effect on the quality of our life. Sociologists may say that the question of existence of civic sense in a society is closely linked with its level of educational, cultural and economic development. When we look at the developed countries we find that their peoples possess a high degree of civic sense.

Even in the backdrop of our comparative backwardness, the people of the metropolises are supposed to be open to greater elevating influence. Yet in many aspects of their life, they fail to give a good account of their civic sense.

In its wider context, the want of civic virtues leaves its mark even on the policies of the City Corporation and the RAJUK. Take for instance, the setting up of industries, big or small, in residential areas.



Subsidised credit for cattlerearing

SONARGAON, Feb 19: Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman today said the government is going to launch a programme from tomorrow to provide subsidised credit to entrepreneurs engaged in cattle rearing, reports BSS.

He was addressing a function organised in connection with a cattle cum poultry exhibition '93 held under the auspices at Sonargaon thana administration and the Department of Livestocks. Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury and local MP M Rezaul Karim also addressed the function.

The Finance Minister said that although the livestock and fisheries sector had tremendous potential in our country it has not been given due importance in the past. The government is thus embarking on a massive credit programme from tomorrow for rapid development of the cattle subsector and this programme will last upto June, 1995. Under the programme cattle-entrepreneurs will receive 30 per cent subsidy on loans used for purchasing 5 cows and 25 per cent for the next five cows.

The government also intends to launch a similar credit programme for poultry-rearing, the Finance Minister added.

riage or other functions are held in any locality, they are found to indulge in long spells of playing high-pitched music on loudspeakers even after midnight hours. They do not spare a thought that the disturbance they are creating can be a source of extreme mental agony to other people living around, particularly patients, students preparing for examinations or persons needing rest after a hard day's work.

Not that the City Corporation has legal provisions made by the Metropolitan Police for control of the use of loudspeakers for public meetings or other functions. Under such provisions, permission of the Metropolitan Police Deputy Commissioners is necessary for use of loudspeakers for such purposes. But the sad part of the situation is said to be that such permission is seldom sought in most cases and the Police are not found very particular in enforcing the law. In fact the provisions are followed more in their violation than in their observance.

Another frequent instance of the lack of civic sense may be seen in the piling of bricks, sands, rods and other building materials on thoroughfares adjacent to under-construction buildings. The owners of such buildings spare no thought for the extreme inconvenience such illegal piling of materials cause to road traffic. Occasionally we find notices published in newspapers warning against such encroachments on roads. But such notices do not seem to be effective, judging from the ways such encroachments continue with impunity.

Normally the City Corporation authorities are not very attentive to clearing roadside dustbins regularly. The job of

clearing is rendered difficult by the behaviour of some citizens who adopt indifferent ways of dumping their garbage at odd places with no sense of timing. Even where dustbins are provided some citizens get peculiar joy from dumping their garbage not within the dustbins but all over the place outside them.

One particularly distressing practice of the City Corporation is the obnoxious movement of open 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 completed in the small hours of the morning, as is done in many modern cities.

Another distressing aspect of the lack of civic sense is reflected in the abominable disfiguration of the city's walls and buildings with various slogans and graffiti painted on them. Attempts are made from time to time to cover them up, but those writings on the walls never cease to reappear. Since this has become a constant eye-sore to the city dwellers, it is felt that the City Corporation authorities should think of ways of tackling the situation with suitable rules and regulations.

Optimists suggest that with the march of education and social and economic well-being, the civic sense values are expected to gain greater appreciation among the people, by and large. In the meantime, sustained efforts, both at the personal and public levels, seem to be called for to set the tempo for progress.



Leaders of the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industries called on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at her Sugandha office yesterday. —PID photo

Tigers plotted to kill Yeltsin?

MOSCOW, Feb 19: Indian and Russian security forces thwarted a plot by Tamil separatists to kill Russian President Boris Yeltsin in India last month, the head of Russia's protection services said today, reports AFP.

General Mikhail Barsukov said the Tamil plot, thwarted by Russian security forces and Indian secret service agents during Yeltsin's visit to India at the end of January, was aimed at drawing world attention to the rebels' ongoing conflict with government forces in Sri Lanka.

He said the bid was foiled at the same time that a former Soviet officer, Ivan Kislov, was arrested in Moscow.

AP adds: Russian security agents foiled eight attempts on Yeltsin's life in the past 14 months by groups ranging from north Caucasian militants to separatists in India, a newspaper reported Friday.

Barsukov said one would-be assassin was detained after saying he wanted to "punish" Yeltsin for Russia's economic crisis.

The newspaper Nezavisimaya Gazeta quoted Barsukov as saying that after "lengthy conversations" with security officers the man dropped his plans and was released.

Authorities on January 27 arrested a disgruntled army major who was accused of plotting to kill Yeltsin with a pen-knife. Ivan Kislov told investigators he stalked Yeltsin with homemade explosives but opted for a knife after the explosives got soaked in the rain.

Barsukov said our particular concern are criminal communities from Russia's trouble spots. One such group in the northern Caucasus last year hired 13 militants to kill Yeltsin, but they were stopped before they could even leave for Moscow, he said.

Authorities also blocked plans by another group from the Caucasus. In three other cases, would-be assassins were seized at Moscow railway stations.

"Those who were assigned to 'liquidate' our president had undergone special training and had had combat experience in Lebanon," Barsukov said.

Yeltsin is not the only target of potential assassins, he said. "Homegrown terrorists have already explored approaches to deputy prime ministers Georgy Khizha and Sergei Shakhrai. Russian Defense Minister Pavel Grachev was also threatened with an attack," he said.

BJP: Showdown

Minister S B Chavan warned overnight that he would not allow the BJP to defy the prohibitory orders.

Newspapers Thursday warned that a confrontation here could trigger violence elsewhere in the country, already plagued by bloody Hindu-Muslim rioting since the demolition of the Babri Mosque by Hindu fanatics on December 6.

The BJP called the rally in a bid to force Rao's 19-month-old government to hold mid-term elections and to press for the construction of a Hindu temple on the Mosque's ruins in the town of Ayodhya.

The newspapers said BJP's regional chapters in Bihar and Rajasthan had mobilised 100,000 people each for the banned rally.

"Some one million activists are expected from Uttar Pradesh alone the Indian Express said quoting Kairaj Misra, chief of the BJP's regional chapter in the northern state, where Ayodhya is situated.

"They will come on trains, buses and by private vehicles," Misra said amid speculation that New Delhi would suspend rail and bus services and barricade the national capital on February 25.

AP from Varanasi adds: Heavily armed police commandos sealed off a Muslim mosque that Hindu militants want to tear down, as thou-

sands of people celebrated a major Hindu festival Friday in a temple next door.

But as the festivities began, the Hindu crowds seemed more bent on prayer than on militancy.

Hindu leaders, who say they want to eventually destroy the Gyanvapi Mosque in Varanasi, have not called for any action on Friday. But authorities are not taking any chances.

Our instruction are to ensure the safety of the mosque at any cost... including shooting people, said P C Sabharwal, the city police chief.

Many Hindus believe that the Gyanvapi Mosque, like the shrine in Ayodhya, was built by Muslim invaders hundreds of years ago from the rubble of Hindu temples they had destroyed.

By 10 am Friday, about 100,000 Hindus had filed through the Kashi Vishwanath Temple for prayers to celebrate the festival of Shivaratri, or the night of Lord Shiva. The temple's built back-to-back with the Gyanvapi Mosque.

Thousands more chanting the god's praise waited outside a 12-foot (4-metre) high barbed wire fence around the temple-mosque complex, awaiting their turn to enter.

About 6,000 policemen kept order, sending in the pilgrims in batches of 2,500. About 200 policemen trained in urban guerrilla warfare guarded the mosque with stun guns, grenades and rubber bullets.

Kohl gets Nehru award

NEW DELHI, Feb 19: Chancellor Helmut Kohl on Friday was honoured for his role in the peaceful unification of Germany, a country which he said was "tackling a problem with no precedent," reports AP.

Kohl received the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding. He said he would donate the prize of 1.5 million rupees (dhs 50,000) to a non-governmental health care center for the poor in Calcutta.

The centre is cosponsored by the German group, Doctors for the Third World, which arranges for German doctors to work for free in developing countries during their vacations.

Calcutta, a city of 10 million people in eastern India, has sprawling slums where Mother Teresa began her humanitarian mission for the world's destitute.

The Nehru award, named after India's first prime minister, is this country's most prestigious international prize. It is given for contributing to "international understanding, goodwill and friendship."

The award citation, printed on silk cloth handed to Kohl, said he "strived for and achieved German reunification, which transformed the dream of the peoples of Germany into reality."

Kohl, in his acceptance speech, said the reunification of Germany in 1990 has posed both financial and psychological strains.

"It will be even more difficult to overcome the psychological burden of the Communist dictatorship on human relations than it will be to solve the economic problems," he said.

Kohl arrived in India on Thursday, on the first leg of a two-week Asian tour that next week will take him to Singapore, Indonesia, Japan and South Korea.

The focus of the trip is on expanding economic ties between Germany and the booming Asian markets. The German leader arrived late Thursday and received a ceremonial reception by Rao at the forecourt of the Presidential Palace on Friday morning.

The Midnight File

Ghali orders UNHCR to resume aid work in Bosnia

UNITED NATIONS, Feb 19: Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali said Friday that he has ordered the resumption of the Bosnia relief operation, which was suspended two days ago by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, suspended aid on Wednesday out of frustration that Serbs were not allowing convoys into eastern Bosnia, and that Muslims were boycotting aid in Sarajevo to force the United Nations to help starving towns in the east. "I already sent a message to Mrs. Ogata asking her to resume it," he said.

Congress forms govt in Meghalaya

GUWAHATI, India, Feb 19: India's ruling Congress Party formed a government in the northeastern state of Meghalaya today with the help of independents, party officials said. The Congress won 24 seats in the 60-member state assembly in elections on Monday and later enlisted the support of nine independents to claim a simple majority. Salseng Marak, a teacher-turned politician, was sworn in as the state's Chief Minister along with a five-member cabinet, reports Reuter.

20 killed as two buses collide in Karachi

KARACHI, Feb 19: At least 20 people were killed and 50 injured when a passenger bus collided with a minibus today on the national highway, the official Associated Press of Pakistan said. It said the passenger bus was en route from Karachi to the North-West Frontier Province while the minibus was travelling from Nawabshah to Hyderabad in the southern province of Sindh, reports AFP.

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The sales of books at the stalls were highest yesterday according to stall-keepers, as the book fair opened at 11 am instead of the usual time at 4 pm.

Meanwhile, in the Bangladesh National Museum premises, about 3000 children took part in a Bangla handwriting.

The programme attended by Works Minister Rafiqul Islam Mia as chief guest, Secretary of Cultural Affairs Ministry Islamuddin Malik as special guest and addressed by Director General of the museum Sheikh Akram Ali.

Awards of the competition will be distributed on February 22 at 4 pm in the museum auditorium.

Today's programme: A seminar on "Folklore Practices in Bangladesh" will be held in the Academy premises at 4 pm. Presided over by Principal Tolaj Ahmed, the key-note paper will be presented by Professor Abul Hasan Chowdhury while Prof Abdul Hafiz, Shamsuzzaman Khan, Dr Shah Jalal, Haobur Rahman and Prof Niaz Jaman will participate as discussants.

The programme will be followed by announcement of the Bangla Academy literature awards for the year 1992 and a programme on Kabigan.

Shurovi will hold children's Bangla writing competition 'drawing and poetry recital' at its central office in Dhanmondi Road 5, House 16 today at 9:30 am.

Kranti, a cultural organisation will bring out an anti-communal peace procession at 4 pm from the Shaheed Minar premises.

As the clock strikes 12.01 on Sunday people from all walks of life will throng the Central Shaheed Minar to pay homage to the language martyrs.

A coordination committee headed by Prof Saifur Rahman of Dhaka University has been formed to maintain sanctity of the day and to allow people from all walks of life to visit the Shaheed Minar.

The committee has urged upon all not to hang any portrait, poster or banner at the Shaheed Minar and not to bring out processions and hold rallies in the areas of Shaheed

Minar, Doyel Chattar, Cankharpu TSC and Plashey.

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is likely to place wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar first at 12.01 am tomorrow. She will be followed by DUCSU and other student groups.

The Shaheed Minar Chattar will be opened for the public from 12.30pm.

Programmes chalked out by BNP and its front organisations to mark the occasion include hoisting black flag and lowering the national flag and party flag, offering fataha and wreaths at the mazars of martyrs at 7 am, visiting the Central Shaheed Minar, discussion and cultural function by JASSAS at Ramna at 4 pm. All district and thana committees have been asked to observe the day befittingly. The JASSAS will place wreath at the Central Shaheed Minar at 00-01 am on February 21.

Awami League's programmes on the day will be hoisting of black flags and national flag at half mast at party office and Bangabandhu Bhavan at 5 am.

Workers and leaders of Awami League will assemble in front of Bangabandhu Avenue and wear of black badges at 6 pm and march towards at Central Shaheed Minar for placing wreaths there at 7 am.

Two-day programme include discussion at the party office premises today at 4 pm. Leader of the Opposition in parliament and AL chief Sheikh Hasina will chair the function while Prof. Zillur Rahman Siddique, Dr Anisuzaman, Poet Shamsur Rahman, Advocate Gazul Huq, and Syed Shamsul Huq will take part in the discussion. The programme will be followed by a colourful cultural function.

The Bangabandhu Society will start a mourning procession from the national museum premises at 8 am Sunday to place wreaths at the Shaheed Minar.

Bangladesh Communist Party will hoist black flag at its office at 6 am Sunday and place wreath at the minar at 6.30am.

The National Coordination Committee for Ekattor Ghatotak Dalal Nirmul Committee and MuktiJuddher Chetana Bastabayan Committee will hold a rally in front of the National Museum at 4 pm.

shocked by what they heard from the refugees, most of them from Myanmar's Karen ethnic minority.

"The world has got to take action on what is happening in this part of our globe," said northern Ireland peace campaigner Mairead Maguire.

Tutu, awarded the peace prize in 1984 for his opposition to apartheid in his homeland, said the visit to the refugee camps had filled him with a sense of 'Deja Vu'.

But, he added, "the experience of South Africa and what the international community seems to have accomplished there in exerting pressure on the apartheid regime fills me with hope."

Dr Kamal

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consensus to introduce a 'third force' in the political arena.

Other than the prominent members of the forum, the meeting was also attended by some leaders of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), NAP(M), Ganatantri Party, JSD(Siraj) and other parties, said the source.

The leaders decided to meet again on February 26 to form a preparatory committee for finalising the date of the national convention.

However, he said deputies felt the proceedings should be open since that case did not involve national security or defence.

In a speech at the Lahore Press Club on February 4, Beg said he influenced the Supreme Court to reverse a decision in 1988 that would have restored Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo after his dismissal by then military ruler General Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq.

Beg became Pakistan's most powerful man when he was appointed Chief of Army Staff after Zia died in a mysterious plane crash in August 1988, ending 11 years of military rule.

Beg's statement created a storm of controversy, including calls to charge him with contempt of court for alleged misuse of his office to influence the court.

Chairing by the Samannaya Committee Convenor Jahanara Imam, the council was inaugurated by Begum Sufia Kamal.

Leaders at the district and thana-level presented their reports proposing fresh course of actions and stating organisational situation of their respective areas.

In the concluding part of the council, Abdur Razzak, MP, Kazi Aref Ahmed, Nural Islam Nahtid, Syed Hasan Imam, Principal Ahad Choudhury and Shahrier Kabir, all steering committee members, discussed on new programmes and matters relating to organisational activities.

All concerned have been urged to inform the body of such acts, according to a resolution.

The council, after day-long deliberations by the committee's representatives from across the country, also decided to form a national investigation body on Jamaat-Shibir atrocities since the Liberation War in 1971. The probe body would compile all acts of genocide, rape, arson and looting and conspiracies against the country's independence and sovereignty by the Jamaat-Shibir axis and publish a report by December 15 this year.

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