

# DOWN TO EARTH

## Aspects of Decay in City Life

By A S M Nurunnabi

In most of the areas outside the posh and semi-posh ones in the new part of the Dhaka city, the conditions of life and living are most pitiable. Particularly in old Dhaka, there is a good number of enclaves of poverty and squalor. Little attention is given by any organ of the administration — particularly the Dhaka City Corporation — to the problems that beset them.

Except for some of the main roads in new Dhaka which are carpeted and re-carpeted often enough, most of the other roads, lanes and by-lanes in old Dhaka are in a bad shape. Some of them are in such an advanced state of disrepair that movement by vehicular and non-vehicular traffic becomes hazardous.

The growing slums and semi-slums are another aspect of urban decay. With regard to them, one feels like asking the Dhaka City Corporation, Rajuk and the Housing and Settlement Department what plans do they have for improving them or solving the prob-

lem of hovels and shanties, of which colonies have sprung up by either side of the highways, and around railway stations and so on.

Recently we have heard of shanty towns being bulldozed. The regrettable thing is that little or nothing is done to settle or resettlement. Observers wonder if such could be the proper answer to the problems created by these unauthorised settlement.

It is generally felt that morally or from civil rights points of view, these unfortunate human beings cannot be evicted with their families without providing them with alternative accommodation. Many feel that demolition or mass eviction in a ruthless manner is a direct infringement of the civil rights of these people.

There are other aspects. Industries, big and small, are being set up indiscriminately in residential areas. Such industries range from plants which produce lathes, shoes, plastic items to printing

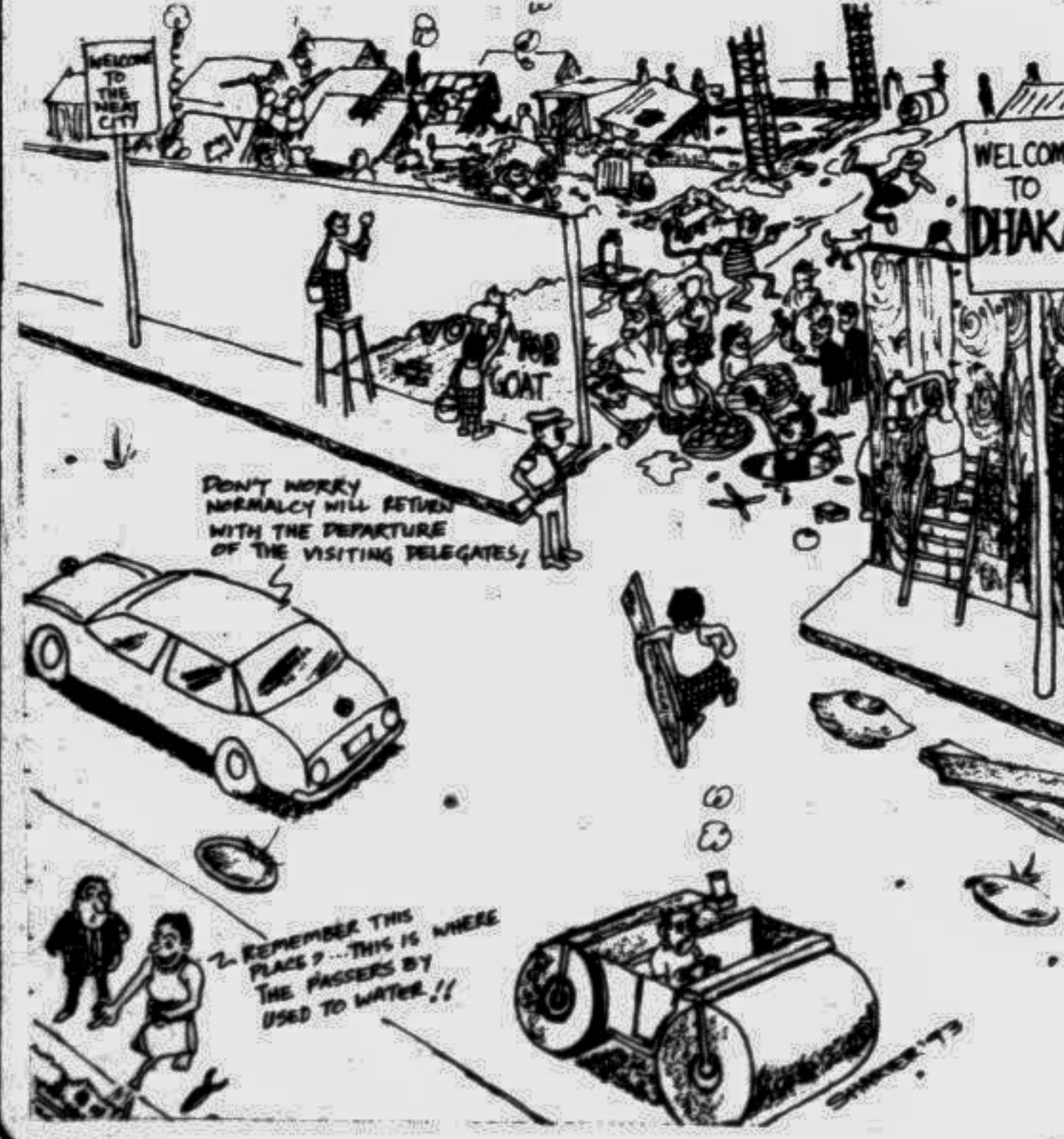
presses, packaging industries, dyeing and silk factories and numerous other units. Butchers' shops can be found here and there; vegetable markets have come up almost in every locality encroaching on roads and open spaces. Eateries have proliferated recklessly.

The combined effect of all this is 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 areas or bazars. The evil is gradually spreading to other areas like Eskaton Road, Dhanmondi, Shantinarag, known for their better residential facilities.

The volume of noise that the various industries produce is a constant source of torment to the local inhabitants. With so many of the units operating even at night, there is extra pressure on power consumption which sometimes throws out of gear refrigerators, radios, televisions 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 or sewers or lie rotting for hours filling the atmosphere with stench. The conservancy services of the City Corporation do very little to alleviate the suffering of the residents on this account.

We have thus in the city a residential problem that affects nearly two-thirds of its population. The authorities concerned starting with the Dhaka City Corporation in collaboration with sister agencies like Rajuk, WASA, Roads and Highways Department and others seem to have allowed the city problems literally to fester. The extent of urban decay is so widespread that none with a minimum power of observation can miss it.



## Gen Stackpole at BIIS

### US forces in state of high alert even in peacetime

By Staff Correspondent

Visiting Commander of the United States Marine Forces Pacific Lt. General Henry C Stackpole yesterday said the US forces were in a state of high alert even in peacetime.

Lt. General Stackpole, who arrived in Bangladesh Wednesday on a four-day goodwill visit, was giving a talk on the theme, 'The US Military in the Nineties: Peacekeepers and Providers' at the auditorium of the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BIIS) yesterday afternoon.

The US commander, who conducted the Operation Sea Angel in Bangladesh in the aftermath of the April, 1991 cyclone, stated that US troops could reach out virtually every nation in the Asia-Pacific region and were prepared for meeting any crisis or for peacekeeping efforts.

US Ambassador to Bangladesh William B Milam introduced the US General at the lecture-discussion while Brigadier Mustafa Kamaluddin, Director General of BIIS delivered the welcome address. Barrister A K H Morshed, Chairman, Board of Governors of the BIIS, presided over the function.

Stackpole defined the current military strategy as one of 'forward deploy forces' and said the policy of having forces forward has its benefits in engagement, deterrence, influence and rapid reaction. He said the US forces in the Asia-Pacific region were prepared for a wide variety of military activities 'with our allies' ranging from major operations to modest exercises. These included specialised medical or communications teams, construction projects, port visits, training programmes, senior-level exchange visits and security assistance programmes, he stated.

The US General said 'We have reached a point where we are in a transition role from peacekeeping to peace-making.' Explaining, he said, 'Our goal in any crisis is to prevent it from deteriorating into a conflict, not only by deterring aggression through the force of US arms, but by cooperating with friends and allies as well.'

General Stackpole said the US believed in a nation being assisted in a coalition effort. He went on to add 'History shows that coalitions coalesce around winners, and cooperative engagements enable to provide a quick, decisive response that

lets friends and foes alike know that we mean business.'

Speaking about the concept of Joint Task Force for cooperation in times of crises he said it worked effectively in Bangladesh after the cyclone. He recalled that on short notice, the US activated a Marine Corps General and his staff from Okinawa, assigned an air force special operations team and provided forces from all services to include army helicopters from Hawaii and more than 7000 marines from the Seventh Fleet. He said Operation Sea Angel provided some basis for other operations, including that of Somalia and, more recently, during the typhoon Omar in Guam and the hurricane Iniki on the island of Kauai.

After finishing his speech, General Stackpole answered questions from the audience. Several questions were asked as to why the United States had not lifted the arms embargo against the Bosnian people or gone for airstrikes against the Serbs in the face of immense brutality. The General replied that he shared the sentiments and the emotions displayed but that he had no answers to these questions as a military commander.

'I cannot speak about subjects of the State Department,' he said.

General Stackpole congratulated the efforts of the Bangladesh Army in de-mining Kuwait and also appreciated its role during Operation Sea Angel. (See also Page 3)

## Floods worsen in Sylhet

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, June, 18 : The flood situation has worsened further in different areas of greater Sylhet with intermittent rains for the last two days. Balaganj thana has become the worst-hit area where more than one lakh people have become marooned. More than 80 per cent of the villages have been inundated. All the offices and commercial establishments there are now under knee-deep water. There is hardly a dry place at the thana headquarters. The rivers Surma and Kushiara are now flowing above danger-levels. The road-links of Beanibazar, Fenchuganj, Balaganj and Zakiganj (thanas are still snapped.

## Police yet to trace Sylhet rape victim

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, June 18: Police could not yet trace out the young housewife who had been missing since being allegedly violated by a medical officer in the Sylhet MAG Osmany Medical College Hospital Wednesday.

The medical officer, Golam Mostafa, an Assistant Registrar Gynaecology of Ward No. 1 has been put under suspension and arrested Thursday.

Golam Mostafa allegedly took Aha Begum, 22, into his office chamber Wednesday afternoon for a check-up and raped her, according to hospital sources.

Soon afterwards a group of agitating people gheraoed the hospital and ransacked furniture resulting in suspension of normal work in the hospital for nearly six hours, Wednesday.

The hospital authorities held an emergency meeting and suspended the doctor. The authorities also reported the matter to the police.

Accordingly, police from Kotwali thana arrested Dr Golam Mostafa from a house at the Kajalshah area where he was hiding, police said.

## Budget lacks

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54 countries of the world, he added.

He alleged that the government had leased out the jute sector, which involved three crore people, to the World Bank.

The government also refused to sit with the opposition to discuss the issue, he regretted.

The market economy had turned the country into a free market for foreign goods instead of freeing the consumers, the solitary Workers' Party MP said.

He termed the withdrawal of subsidies from agriculture as a betrayal with the farmers, who did not get fair prices for their crops despite a bumper production of rice.

Amir Khasru Mahmud, MP said at least some local industrial products should be given protection despite the demands of a free market economy.

The BNP MP said private investment was not increasing because of a lack of confidence among the real investors. Political instability was mostly responsible for this, he added.

SB Chaudhuri said the people had no clear-cut idea about the reform measures adopted by the government. They did not know whether these were good for them or not, he added.



Prime Minister and BNP chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia addressing party leaders and MPs at her Sugandha office yesterday evening. BNP Secy General Abdus Salam Talukdar is on her left. —PID photo

## Accord on power sharing in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH, June 18: The leaders of Cambodia's two main parties reached agreement today on how to share power in an interim administration to run the country until a constitution can be written, a government spokesman said, reports Reuters.

"It was very good, very good," incumbent Phnom Penh Prime Minister Hun Sen told reporters upon leaving two and half hour meeting with his foe through civil war and a bitter election campaign poll-winner Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

"It is historic that we came to an agreement on how to share power," Sok An, a spokesman for Hun Sen's ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPI) told reporters.

Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Ranariddh's father but a neutral head of state, will serve as the commander-in-chief of the armed forces during the up-to-three months it will take the newly elected National Assembly to draft a constitution.

## Three killed in separate incidents

By Staff Correspondent

Three persons were killed in the city in separate incidents yesterday.

Kazal, 4 and his cousin Shamim, 5, were killed in a road accident near the Sheorapara Bazar in the city at 3.15 pm.

Police said, a truck (No. Tangail TA 282) hit the children and crushed them under the wheels while they were crossing the road.

In another incident, the Sutrapur police recovered the body of Maksuda Khatun, 55, from 21 BCC Road at 7 am yesterday.

The local people informed the police that Maksuda's son Rabi, 35, who was reported to be deranged killed his mother. Police arrested Rabi and filed an unnatural death (UD) case in this connection.

## Miyazawa defeated

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opposition and hand Miyazawa a crushing defeat amid cheers of "Banzai" in the chamber.

Socialist Party chief Sadao Yamahana, thundering out the no-confidence motion in the wood-paneled Lower House, charged Miyazawa with betraying the trust of the people.

"He has betrayed the people by promising political reform and then refusing to allow parliament to debate the issue."

"The Prime Minister is a liar."

The loss is an important mark in the decline of the LDP, founded in 1955 as a coalition of conservative parties and in unbroken power ever since. It could herald the development of a true multi-party democracy in Japan.

"It's like the Berlin Wall coming down for Japan," said Morihiro Hosokawa, who left the LDP last year to found the pro-reform Japan New Party (JNP).

"Politics will change because of what happened today."

LDP Executive Council member Rokuro Kato said the party would face elections in late July in a state of disarray.

"What this means is that the party is split as it heads into elections," said the former state minister. "We're going to fight divided."

The setback casts a shadow over Japan's preparations to host the Group of Seven (G7) summit in Tokyo on July 7-9.

Only the fourth Prime Minister to lose a confidence vote, Miyazawa will now greet his summit peers as a lame duck at a time when Japan's allies are looking to it to play a weightier global role.

"There is no doubt this will affect the summit as well as trade talks with the United States," Kato said.

Business leader Gaishi Hiraiwa, head of the Japan Federation of Economic Organisations, pointed the finger of blame at the ruling party.

"The ruling party has responsibility for failing to achieve promised political reforms," he said on television. "I'm very concerned and hope that political stability will be restored."

The champions of reform are expected to reap the electoral benefits at a time of widespread

## Launch, bus services suspended for bad weather

Rough weather yesterday forced suspension of launch services between the capital and most of the southern districts, official sources said, reports UNB.

The authorities also instructed the Gabtali Bus Terminal to suspend the bus services between the capital and northern and southern districts in view of the bad weather.

Reports from Aricha said thousands of people along with several hundred vehicles remained stranded at the ferry ghat where only a handful of Ro-Ro ferries were plying across the river.

The Sadarghat Launch Owners' Association told UNB that launch services between Dhaka and Barisal remained suspended from Friday evening because of bad weather.

## More rain

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Many low-lying parts of the city were water-logged.

The Met Office recorded 65 mm rainfall from 6 am to 6 pm yesterday. The total amount of rainfall recorded from 6 am Thursday to 6 pm yesterday was 117 mm.

The Met Office said, almost all the regions of the country experienced rainfall yesterday. The highest fall, of 112 mm, in 12 hours during the day, was recorded in Chittagong.

Most parts of the country will continue to experience heavy rainfall today as a low crosses over the country.

The Met Office also warned of heavy to very heavy rainfall at a few places over the divisions of Chittagong, Barisal and Dhaka.

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## SKOP

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held in the divisional headquarters between June 19-22. An announcement of the SKOP's fresh action programme is likely later this month.

A countrywide 72-hour shutdown was enforced by the industrial workers May 11-13 last to force implementation of the accords signed by the government with the SKOP regarding different demands.

These include announcement of the Wages and Productivity Commission report and a national minimum wages for industrial workers.

public disgust with the scandal-tainted ruling party.

Miyazawa refused to say whether he thought the LDP would be able to build on to its Lower House majority. He did indicate that the rebels who voted against him would be expelled.

"They're a big problem," he said.

Hosokawa's fledgling JNP, which won an unexpected four seats in Upper House polls last year, was expected to pick up many more in the coming Lower House election. Kyodo news agency predicted, Hosokawa said he would field up to 60 candidates.

Other winners would include followers of former Finance Minister Tautomu Hata, head of the rebel LDP faction which swung the vote against Miyazawa. Kyodo added.

It was not clear if the 40-plus Hata faction lawmakers were ready to leave the LDP immediately to form a new party. Senior ruling party barons warned members before Friday's vote that those voting against Miyazawa would be expelled.

This party has outlived its usefulness," said one of the rebels in a televised news conference. "We're ready to join a new force."

News of Japan's political turmoil caused jitters on overseas markets. The yen fell sharply against the dollar during European trading to 109 yen at 1515 GMT, compared to the Tokyo close of 107.40.

## Ishaq offers

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National Assembly was restored," Ishaq Khan added.

The president, whose five-year term expires by the end of the current year, said he did not desire re-election nor "have I tried to replace the Prime Minister by myself or anybody else."

"There is no room for conflict and clash between myself and the Prime Minister," he added.

Ishaq Khan also indicated he would not stand in the way of an amendment in the constitution to restructure the balance of power between the centres of power.

# The Midnight File

## EC FMs meet Sunday to discuss Bosnia issue

COPENHAGEN, June 18 : Denmark, current EC president, today called an emergency meeting of European Community foreign ministers for Sunday to discuss the Bosnian civil war. "The presidency finds it necessary to summon the 12 EC foreign ministers to an extraordinary meeting on Sunday evening to discuss the situation in former Yugoslavia before the EC summit starts," Foreign Ministry spokesman Koud Ploughmann said, reports Reuter.

## Aideed starts clandestine radio broadcasts

MOGADISHU, June 18: Fugitive warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed has started clandestine radio broadcasts after United Nations attacks drove him from his headquarters, Somali sources said today. General Aideed, wanted by the UN for allegedly masterminding the killings of 23 Pakistani peacekeepers, went on the air late Thursday after the latest and biggest UN attack, in which ground forces were used for the first time, reports AFP.

## Move to check smuggling of aliens into US

WASHINGTON, June 18 : President Bill Clinton today launched an effort to combat the smuggling of aliens into the United States by organised crime syndicates and nominated a new commissioner in charge of immigration control, reports Reuter.

Speaking after a spate of dramatic incidents involving hundreds of mainly illegal Chinese immigrants, Clinton said, "With this plan, the United States signals its abhorrence of the trafficking in human beings for profit and its determination to combat this illegal activity," according to a White House statement.

Reports from Aricha said thousands of people along with several hundred vehicles remained stranded at the ferry ghat where only a handful of Ro-Ro ferries were plying across the river.

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## Ctg landslide

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thana at 4 am today, police added, saying that the hut of the victims on the slope of the hill collapsed.

After the incident police rushed to the spot and recovered the bodies.

Meanwhile, the Chittagong Met Office here recorded 212 mm rainfall in the past 24 hours from 6 pm Thursday. The rainfall, accompanied with squally wind, continued unabated when this report was being filed.

Rainwater inundated the low-lying areas of the port city including Chawkbazar, Katalgong, Bakalia, Chaktal and Agrabad, causing sufferings to the people, witnesses said.

The rainfall today totally paralysed normal life in the city. Barring just one arrival from Dhaka, flights remained suspended at the airport.

The movement of ships at Chittagong Port also remained suspended today due to the heavy rainfall, officials said.

## Azeri President flees capital

BAKU, June 18: Azerbaijan's embattled President Abulfaz Elchibey fled the capital of Baku overnight before an ultimatum from rebel forces for his resignation ran out. Azerbaijan television reported today, reports AFP.

The television report said that Elchibey had not presented his resignation before travelling to Nakichevan, an Azeri enclave sandwiched between Armenia, Turkey and Iran.

Elchibey left out of concern for his personal safety and those of civilians in Baku, the report said quoting the Presidential press service.

## MCCI chief

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demands for industrial goods."

He also said that the budget had proposed to reduce duties on 2870 items, but these items have not been identified, thus creating some confusion among the industrialists. He said if duties are reduced on finished products rather than on raw materials, this would hit the local industries.

"Local industries must get some reasonable advantages," the MCCI chief said.

He said the new budget is also silent on refixation of tariff values of imports, another matter on concern.

Rahman hailed the budget's proposal for reducing corporate tax by five per cent and said more reduction was needed to attract foreign investments.

He, however, praised the government's decision to increase the ceiling of the lower slab of income tax from Tk 40,000 to Tk 50,000 and the reduction of the rate by five per cent on the upper slab of income tax.

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