

# DOWN TO EARTH

## Sad Tale Of A Lake

By A S M Nurunnabi

Originally a long canal, the Dhanmandi lake came into being as a result of the development works carried out in connection with the Dhanmandi Residential Area. It covers a total area of 150 bighas or roughly 50 acres. The lake was leased out by the government to the Department of Fisheries in 1958 at a nominal yearly rent of Taka one.

In 1965 the fishing part of the management of the lake was given by the Department of Fisheries to the Amateur Anglers' Association. Ever since, the Association has been continuing with such management. It realises a fee of Taka 700 per year from its members for angling in the lake. In fact, there is a sort of dual management of this water body — by the Department of Fisheries and the Anglers' Association. Both these bodies take measures against unauthorised fishing in the lake by posting guards. Yet there are reports of unauthorised fishing from time to time.

The lake was intended to add to the scenic beauty of the Dhanmandi Residential Area. Such intention has been belied by the present state of the lake. The main problem is large-scale pollution. The stage of pollution appears to be so acute that the water has taken on a greenish colour with bad odors. It is reported that those who come for angling in the lake try to avoid contact with its water as far as possible.

There are 64 nullahs (drains) connecting the adjoining houses with the lake. The

sewage and waste waters coming through these nullahs mainly contribute to the pollution of the water. The waste substances from the nearby Hazaribagh tanneries are also said to be a contributing factor.

During the last 35 years no major work of renovation has been undertaken. The result has been gradual deterioration of the fish resources and the surroundings of the lake. Some perfunctory attempts at improvement were taken up under the on-going Integrated Fisheries Development Scheme, due to expire during the current financial year, but no significant improvement is noticeable. Because of the pollution, the oxygen content of the water gets so depleted on some occasions that the fish come up to the surface gasping for oxygen. On such occasions, some looting of the fishery takes place. Steps are taken occasionally to improve the quality of the water by sprinkling lime and by churning up the water with the help of a speedboat so as to augment the water's oxygen content. These measures do not appear to bring about any substantial improvement in the situation.

Other attempts to improve the lake include a scheme under the auspices of the Asian Development Bank which seeks to block out waste substances from the Hazaribagh tanneries. Under another scheme, sought to be implemented through the agency of the Dhaka City Corporation, division of the lake into segments was proposed for the

purpose of phased improvement. But the scheme reportedly could not make headway.

Steps to develop the fish wealth of the lake also do not seem to be adequate. Every year 1½ to 2 tons of fish fries of various kinds are reportedly released into the lake, but due to the pollution, adverse environmental situation and unauthorised fishing, the return in harvests reportedly suffers substantially.

Lakes form an important element in fostering natural beauty of a city's environment. The possibilities of the Dhanmandi lake from that aspect were immense. Yet, through bad planning and utter neglect, these possibilities seem to have been lost.

In its present state, the lake has almost become a channel of stinking water with numerous sewerage lines aggravating the pollution. The paved pathways along the banks of the lake have become dilapidated.

The trees which were planted to enhance the natural beauty of the area are being neglected. The banks of the lake are overgrown with wild shrubs and plants. Water hyacinth grows profusely in some areas of the lake. Most morning and evening walkers avoid the immediate vicinity of the lake in course of their rounds. Swimming and boating are also avoided.

Now it behoves the authorities concerned to be alive to the critical condition of the lake and take appropriate measures for saving it from total deterioration.



Police breaking up a clash between supporters of the Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh and Nirmul Committee activists at Tophkhana Road in the city yesterday. — Star photo

## SKOP rejects

From Page 1 Col 5

Two previous rounds of talks between the government and the labour leaders failed, triggering a 48-hour labour strike in March and a 72-hour shutdown in May this year.

During yesterday's talks, the trade union leaders reminded the minister that they had to go ahead with their May 11-13 shutdown because the offer of a Tk 950 minimum wage was not acceptable. This time too, they would be compelled to take a similar firm stand unless the government came up with a new proposal.

However, the Labour Minister asked the SKOP leaders to reconsider his offer and abandon the shutdown programme. But the SKOP delegates regretted their inability to honour the request and repeated their demand for full implementation of the July agreement.

The Labour Minister was assisted in the talks by State Minister for Textile Major (Retd) Abdul Mannan, BNP Whip Ashraf Hossain and a joint secretary of the Labour Ministry.

The SKOP delegation included Abdus Salam Khan, Rahmatullah Choudhury, Nazrul Islam Khan, Dr Wajedul Islam Khan, Abdullah Sarkar, Protobuddin Ahmed, Tipu Biswas, Mokhlesur Rahman, Shafiqur Rahman Majumder, Iqbal Majumder, Golam Mohiuddin and others.

Meanwhile, leaders of the SKOP, in a statement last night, accused the government of creating new problems and obstructing a solution regarding the standoff over labour demands. They expressed their surprise over the Jute Minister's agreement Thursday with the so-called Chaktal Dabee Aday Parishad which has

## Nirmul hartal

From Page 1 Col 8

protest the government's policy of 'sheltering fundamentalist forces' including the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Islami Chhatra Shibir. The hartal call also coincides with the first day of the two-day labour shutdown called by the SKOP for July 19-20.

Speakers at the Nirmul rally, organised by its city unit, urged the people to support the hartal to press the government for implementing the March 26, 1992 'verdict' passed by the so-called 'people's court'.

Presided over by Sadek Ahmed Khan, the rally was addressed by the unit convener Col (ret'd) Kazi Nuruzzaman, Abdullah Sarkar, Nayem Jahangir, Abul Basher and Khairul Alam Swapan.

Col Nuruzzaman in his speech, said that Golam Azam should be tried not under the existing laws, but in a special tribunal for his war-time atrocities. Later a procession was brought out.

Meanwhile, the steering committee of the Chatak Dalal Nirmul Samannay Committee yesterday accused the government of bypassing the people's demand for Azam's trial in a special tribunal.

The steering committee, at a meeting, said that the government's studied silence over the demand of Golam Azam's trial for his 'war crimes' could push the country towards a greater confrontation.

Committee members Abdur Razzak, MP, Kazi Aref Ahmed, Nurul Islam Nahid, Syed Hasan Imam, Prof Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, Principal Ahad Chowdhury and Shahriar Kabir attended the meeting, chaired by Jahannara Imam.

In a statement, the Samannay Committee said that Golam Azam's citizenship was not the issue of his agitation. Rather, the committee demands his trial under a special tribunal for his 'war crimes', it said.

The statement warned that the government would have to bear all responsibilities for any attempt at delaying the trial.

called off the coming strike.

The statement said this was a very old and rejected tactic of misleading the people.

## Press conference today

Meanwhile, Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Jute Minister A S M Hannan Shah, State Minister for Textiles Major (Retd) Abdul Mannan and BNP Whip Mohammad Ashraf Hossain, all parties to the government-labour bodies accords, have jointly called a press conference at 5 pm today at the conference room of the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training.

The ministers are expected to clarify the government stance on the labour issues and the impending labour strike.

The alliance of four trade union federations in the jute-textile-sugar-steel mills sectors have also convened a news conference at the Workers' Party office at 3 this afternoon.

## 'Terrorist' list

## India shocked at US decision

NEW DELHI, July 16: India on Thursday expressed surprise at a US decision not to put Pakistan on a list of countries that it says sponsor international terrorism, reports Reuter.

A State Department spokesman said on Wednesday Pakistan would not be placed on the US list despite reports of official Pakistani support for separatist militants in India-ruled Jammu and Kashmir state.

"We find it very strange that the statement has been made in spite of incontrovertible evidence that has been given time and again that Pakistan is a state that sponsors terrorism," Indian Foreign Ministry spokesman Shiv Mukherjee told reporters.

## PM's call

From page 1 col 7

ernment in different sectors, including education, health, agriculture and industry, the Prime Minister said the united efforts of all quarters, irrespective of opinion, was imperative to implement the uplift efforts.

The notable leaders who joined the BNP yesterday include Jahangir Alam of the Awami League, Elahi Baksh Mandal of the NAP, Insar Ali of the Muslim League, Mursheed Kurashi Sennal of the Communist Party.

The function was addressed, among others, by Mizanur Rahman Minu, Mayor of Rajshahi City Corporation and some of the newly joined leaders. A representative of eight college students' unions of Rajshahi also spoke on the occasion.

State Minister for Land Kabir Hossain, State Minister for Establishment Aminul Huq and Lutfunnesa Hossain, MP were present.

## Attack on Nepali Congress rally: 25 injured

KATHMANDU, July 16: Unidentified attackers carrying black flags hurled stones today at a demonstration of more than 40,000 ruling Nepali Congress (NC) activists, injuring at least 25 people including an MP, reports AFP.

Police said 12 people had been arrested, but that others got away, while witnesses said NC parliamentarian Krishna Singh Pariyar was among those hurt.

The NC rally participants, who had poured into the capital from outlying districts in response to a call for a "democracy protection" rally, were shouting slogans against vandalism when the attackers hit.

## Jamaat-Nirmul

From Page 1 Col 5

Azam Thursday, the Nirmul activists were assembled for a counter rally demanding trial of Azam for his war crimes.

UNB adds: Activists of the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Chatak Dalal Nirmul Committee clashed at Hajiganj Bazar in Chandpur yesterday, leaving at least 12 people injured.

Police said the clash began after some activists of Nirmul Committee hurled bricks on a procession of Jamaat, brought out in the afternoon as part of the party's thanksgiving day.

Seriously injured Hajiganj Thana Jamaat Ameer Maulana Hafiz Meer Hossain and activist Mhammad Sagor were admitted to the Hajiganj Health Complex.

The Chandpur town unit of the Jamaat also brought out a big procession in the afternoon in observance of the day. No untoward incident was reported in the town.

## Jamaat rally

From Page 1 Col 5

Termining the release of Golam Azam through a court verdict as a victory for Islam," the Jamaat leaders said, "It has been proved that we are on the right path."

Jamaat Secretary General Matur Rahman Nazam, MP, described Golam Azam as "a great leader" and said that his arrest was part of a "blueprint of imperialism, Zionism and Brahminism."

Continuing, Nazam said imperialists and Zionists have joined together to destroy Islam and have engaged Muslims against Muslims in order to create disunity.

The Secretary General said his party would intensify the movement to establish the teachings of Islam in the country and added that "We will not rest till the rule of Allah was established in this land."

The meeting, presided over by City Ameer A K M Azharul Islam, was also addressed, among others, by the long-time acting Ameer Abbas Ali Khan, Secretary General and leader of the Jamaat Parliamentary Party Maulana Matur Rahman Nazami, Maulana Abul Kalam Mohammad Yusuf, Abdul Kader Mollah, Shamsur Rahman, Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mujahid and Advocate Jasimuddin Sarkar. Prof Golam Azam, who was released yesterday, was, however, not present.

Abbas Ali Khan, acting Ameer of the Jamaat, urged the political parties of the country to abandon the path of hatred and work unitedly to eliminate poverty, hunger and corruption. He also stressed the need for unity for establishing Islamic values in the country.

"Peace and welfare of mankind, as well as the people of the country, could only be achieved by following the edicts of Allah," Abbas Ali Khan stated.

Later Abbas Ali Khan conducted a munajat expressing gratitude to the Almighty Allah for the release of Golam Azam.

## Chhatak Pulp Mills stops production

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, July 16: Production in the Chhatak Paper and Pulp Mills has been stopped for the last five days due to stockpiling of pulp in the mills godown.

According to a source here, the sudden fall in the sale of pulp is responsible for the situation. The Chandraghona Paper Mills and the Paksey Paper Mills, which are the main buyers of the product, have reportedly stopped buying pulp from the mills.

The Chhatak Paper and Pulp Mills, an enterprise of the Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC), has been incurring a loss of Tk five lakh everyday, the source added.

## The Midnight File

### Emergency in Congo

BRAZZAVILLE, July 16: Congolese President Pascal Lissouba today declared a nationwide state of emergency to "re-establish law and order" Prime Minister Joseph Yombi Opango announced on radio. The state of emergency will remain in force for a fortnight, the premier said. A crisis cabinet, chaired by General Opango, has been set up to coordinate all necessary measures. Opango said the measures would enable the government to put an end to the "armed rebellion" which he said had been launched by the opposition, reports AFP.

### Presidential polls in Nigeria Aug 14

LAGOS, July 16: Nigeria will hold a new presidential election on August 14, the national electoral commission said today. Results will be released on August 17 and the winner sworn in on August 27 as promised by military President Ibrahim Babangida, it said. The military government annulled an election held last month on the grounds of malpractice, reports Reuter.

### UN suspends aid flights to Angola again

JOHANNESBURG, July 16: The United Nations has again suspended Angolan aid flights after UNITA rebels fired on a UN chartered aircraft carrying supplies in the northwest of the country. There will be no more flights until we get guarantees (of safe passage) from UNITA, a World Food Programme (WFP) official in Johannesburg told Reuters today.

## Pak elections in Oct

From Page 1 Col 4

terim government, made up of politically neutral figures.

The compromise formula is to be officially announced within the next few days, or even sooner, the reports said.

The name most frequently put forward to take over as head of the interim government is that of Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, a retired general, former Foreign Minister and currently representative of the UN Secretary General for Western Sahara, whose name is well known in the international diplomatic arena.

The chief protagonists in the issue are saying nothing.

Former Prime Minister Bhutto, 40, has merely said that the "long march" has been postponed "in the national interest" and at the request of the military.

Sharif said he would always put the interests of Pakistan and democracy ahead of his "ego".

If early elections are announced, Sharif, who has said many times he wanted to stay in office until his term ends in 1995, would be making an important concession. "He would be the loser", one diplomat said.

However, Sharif would not lose face entirely as the agreement also calls for the departure of his opponent Ishaq Khan, who would resign or "take a rest" until his term ends in December.

Bhutto, who has unceasingly called for new elections on the grounds that the preceding balloting in October 1990 was

null and fraught with vote-rigging, would be vindicated.

But Bhutto, whose leadership is contested within her own party, courts the risk of having been fooled. Some leaders of her Pakistan People's Party openly groused after the postponement of the long march.

With an agreement yet to be officially announced, Sharif could still seek to modify terms of the "horsetrading" to his advantage now that the immediate threat to his authority has been lifted.

The opposition, meanwhile, has emphasised that the protest march had been postponed, not cancelled.

But the spectre of open military intervention has receded and soldiers were not in sight Friday morning in the centre of the capital.

"For us, any solution that averts martial law is a good solution," a Western diplomat said.

Xinhua adds: Nawaz Sharif said today that his government will fulfil its responsibility towards strengthening national security, integrity and democracy.

Sharif returned to Islamabad from Lahore this afternoon after consulting his close aides and a long meeting with Lahore Corps Commander Banghish.

In another development, Benazir Bhutto had a two-hour long meeting with President Ghulam Ishaq Khan today, but the contents of their meeting are not available.

## IDB strategic agenda

From Page 1 Col 4

the Finance Ministry.

During his stay here, he said, he discussed various ongoing IDB-assisted projects in Bangladesh. The bank is financing several projects like construction of feeder-roads, schools, health centres and other social infrastructures, worth about 50 million US dollars. It has so far provided over 700 million dollars of project loans to Bangladesh.

The IDB is keenly interested, Chaudhury pointed out, in funding a motorised-rickshaw project in Dhaka, which is in its final stages of development.

The bank would set up a revolving fund with the local Islamic Bank to finance purchase of the vehicles, he said.

The IDB is also considering opening up a resident office in Dhaka in the near future. A decision has already been taken to open resident offices in Kuala Lumpur and Rabat, Morocco, he noted, and the next phase would involve setting up IDB offices in Dhaka, Dakar, Senegal and probably a city in Central Asia.

On the recruitment of Bangladesh nationals for IDB jobs, Chaudhury pointed out that until recently Bangladeshis were not being considered for openings because of a prevailing notion that they cannot work well where English is the official language.

The situation has been rectified recently and Bangladeshis have been deemed eligible for recruitment, he said, adding that recent government steps in emphasising English language education in the country had helped in this direction.

With Bahrain becoming a powerful financial centre in the Middle East, is the IDB contemplating shifting its headquarters from Jeddah?

The bank, he said, has no plans to move its headquarters as a new 24-storey building, the tallest in Jeddah, costing 330 million dollars is under construction and is nearing completion.

Chaudhury acknowledged that there was general notion that the IDB's performance has not been quite up to the expectations of its members, but pointed out that any shortcomings were primarily related to the limited resources of the bank.

"One can certainly say that the IDB's performance has not been as extensive as many member countries would like it to be, but until recently the paid up capital of the bank was only Islamic Dinar (ID) two billion and with this limited resource it has done relatively well," he said.

The capital fund was recently increased to ID six billion. An Islamic Dinar is equivalent to one SDR or Special Drawing Right of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

With the increase in capital and the possible involvement in the private sector, he added, the IDB's activities are likely to increase manifold in the foreseeable future.

"The IDB's resources are not as big as those of the World Bank or the Asian Development Bank but one good thing about the bank is that it does not impose irrelevant and far-fetched conditionalities on the recipients," Chaudhury noted.

Asked to elaborate, he added that when the WB and ADB talk about human rights violations in denying a particular country funds, they often conveniently overlook similar violations in some other country.

Furthermore, he added, when Western donors impose conditions against environmental degradation they fail to understand that it is the direct result of poverty and natural calamities.

"Moreover, it is totally unacceptable to put such difficult conditions on developing countries since the causes of the degradation are not in their hands. In fact, the responsibility lies with the rich and industrial countries who have contributed so much to threats to the environment."

## Rocket deal at delicate stage, admits Rao

NEW DELHI, July 16: Indian Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao said today that efforts to salvage of crucial rocket deal with Russia had reached a "delicate stage," as the United States exerted continued pressure to alter the contract, reports AFP.



Anglers at the Dhanmandi Lake. — Star photo

## Saifur arrives in Riyadh

RIYADH, July 16: Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman arrived here today on a five-day official visit to Saudi Arabia, reports BSS.

He was received at the King Khaled International Airport here by Saudi Minister for Finance and National Economy Abu Al-Khail. Bangladesh ambassador to Saudi Arabia Abdul Momen Chowdhury and other officials of the Saudi Finance Ministry and Bangladesh embassy were also present.

## Kuwaiti envoy to meet FM today

A special envoy of First Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmed, who is in charge of the Foreign Affairs Ministry of the oil-rich Gulf state, is scheduled to call on the Foreign Minister today at his office at the Ministry, reports UNB.

The special envoy, Kuwaiti Ambassador in New Delhi Dharar Al-Rajouqi, who flew in here Thursday, is expected to hand over to Mostafiz a message from Sheikh Sabah.

Ambassador Rajouqi will undertake similar missions to Singapore, Hong Kong and South Korea after his three-day visit to Bangladesh, the source said.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti Foreign Secretary Sulaiman Majeed Al-Shaheen is expected to arrive in Dhaka on Sunday on a two-day visit, official sources said yesterday.

Shaheen is carrying another message from the First Deputy Prime Minister of his country for the Foreign Minister.

Diplomatic sources say the messages may contain technical aspects of the Kuwait-Iraq border which is to be demarcated under the terms of the UN Commission set up after the 1991 Gulf War.

## Professionals

From Page 1 Col 8

steps were not taken to fulfil their demands.

It has also called for two-hour taken work stoppage on September 18-19.

The action committee yesterday reiterated at the conference that the government stop addressing the Deputy Commissioners as 'Zila Prashashak' and call them 'Upa-Commissioner' or Deputy Commissioner — a demand included in its 17-point charter of demands.

Chairman of the Prochichi-BCS central action committee Dr M A Majed told newsmen after the conference at the Institution of Engineers that they would boycott any meeting of the district development coordination committee under the chairmanship of DC from August 17 if people's representatives are not entrusted with coordinating development works at the district level. This programme will also be applicable for TNOs at the thana level.

It also demanded dissolution of 'appointment committees' headed by DC or TNO under all ministries save the Land Ministry. Members of 26 cadres and professionals will not attend any meeting if these committees are not headed by officials of the respective ministries.

The action committee will hold a grand rally at the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka on October 19 at 10:00 am to announce its next course of action if the demands were not met by then.

Dr Majed said all divisional heads and chiefs of autonomous corporations will be accountable to the ministers for their works, not to the secretaries of the ministries.

The representatives' conference also demanded withdrawal of all members of the BCS (admi) cadre from the posts of other cadres by October 19.

## Bangabandhu Parishad forms body to observe August 15

The Bangabandhu Parishad yesterday constituted a steering committee to observe 'National Mourning Day' on August 15, reports UNB.

The committee was formed at a meeting at Bangabandhu Shaban, Dhanmondi, with poet Sufia Kamal in the chair. Representatives of different socio-cultural organisations attended.

The meeting was addressed, among others, by Dr S A Malek, Dr Mohammad Selim, Sontosh Gupta, Prof Panna Kaisar, Col (ret'd) Shawkat Ali, MP, Sayed Ahmed, Golam Akbar Chowdhury and Monayem Sarkar.

The speakers expressed concern at the revival of communal and fundamentalist forces under the patronisation of the government.

They said the process of rehabilitating the anti-Liberation forces began through the assassination of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The meeting also formed a committee for observing the 'National Mourning Day' with poet Sufia Kamal as convener and S A Malek as member-secretary.

## Classes in Sylhet Medical College resume today

From Our Correspondent

SYLHET, July 16: Classes in the M A G Osmany Medical College here will resume from tomorrow after two and a half months.

The college was closed since die on May 3 following a series of armed clashes between activists of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and the Islami Chhatra Shibir.

Meanwhile, the Academic Council of the college, in its meeting last week, imposed restrictions on all political activities on the campus until August 31.

Editor: S. M. Ali

Executive Editor: Mahfuz Anam

Published by the Editor on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd., 52 Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 and printed by him at The Sangbad Ltd., 36 Purana Paltan, Dhaka. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No. 11, Road No. 3, Dhanmondi R/A., Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4. Advertisement: 500091 (Direct) Fax No. 88-02-863035. GPO Box No. 3257. GRAM: DAILY STAR DHAKA.