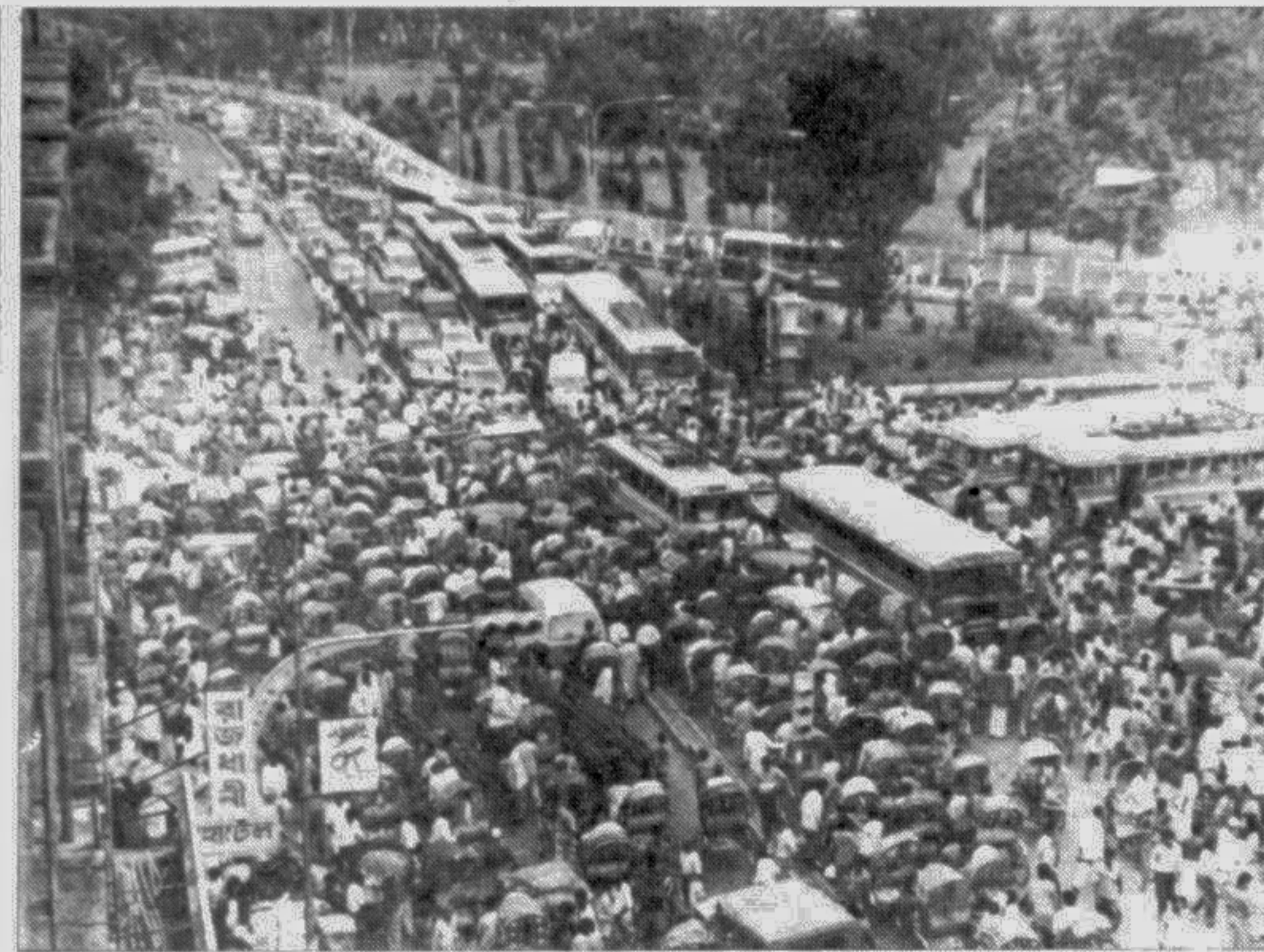


Down to Earth

Traffic Mismanagement in City

By A.S.M. Nurunnabi



Traffic mismanagement in city seems to have several aspects: reckless driving, lack of control of speed by traffic authority, road unworthy vehicles, overloading, ill-trained drivers, haphazard parking, traffic jam, etc. With the increase in population, the traffic problem in the metropolitan city of Dhaka is getting from bad to worse.

It is sometimes said that road accidents in our country do not happen; rather they are made to happen. Perhaps there is some element of truth in this statement. When the aforesaid aspects of mismanagement are overlooked by concerned quarters, it seems natural to think that accidents are made to happen. The frequent rate at which accidents occur has turned them into a commonplace of our public transportation.

The problem of road accidents in the city is different from that in the district regions only in their setting; anatomically it is the same. In most of them, reckless driving, violation of traffic rules, failure of concerned authority to enforce traffic discipline emerge as predominant features.

Other aspects of traffic indiscipline include indiscriminate and haphazard parking of buses, halage at prescribed bus stops in rows of three to four, maintenance work in busy and crowded public roads which pose serious traffic problems. They cause serious suffering to the people, especially those living in the southeastern

part of the city at Jurain, Jatrabari, Ganderia, Narinda and Wari.

In particular, the dwellers of the old part of the city suffer bitterly from traffic jam. Being stuck up on the road for indefinite period due to traffic jam in Oulistan, Nawabpur, Islampur, Sadarghat, etc is a regular affair. It is also a regular feature at important junctions around Mouchak, Maghbazar, Tikatooly, Motijheel, etc.

The hawkers alone are not responsible for traffic jam. The haphazard car parking in the commercial areas as well as on the busy thoroughfares is one of the major factors of traffic jam. In most cases, rickshaws, bus, minibus, tempo, etc., do not use the appropriate stoppage, rather they are always seen taking and off loading passengers wherever and whenever they found them, ignoring all traffic rules.

Some decades ago, Dhaka Railway Station was shifted to its present site from Fulbaria. The object was to ease the heavy traffic jam at such areas as Nawabpur-Gulistan, Kawranbazar, etc. The same problem of traffic jam has now arisen from the present alignment of the railway line. The present traffic jam affects people for journeys from the eastern side of the railway line to the western side and vice versa. Since further shifting of the railway station will be a costly project, which we seem ill-afford at present, observers suggest

construction of as many over-bridges and subways as possible. The problem of traffic jam is compounded by political parties when they hold their meetings frequently on public roads causing serious public inconvenience. Traffic management in modern cities is a pretty sophisticated technique. As in many things discipline does not come easily. It is only through persistent application of rules and regulations that we can hope for possible restoration of traffic discipline. Some even suggest the idea of employing expert coaches for training in traffic management in the city. Investment in such training programmes will be rewarded by more lives saved and fewer vehicles damaged. Sometime ago, government set up a committee to suggest suitable sites for public meetings. The committee's recommendations and government's thereon have not yet been announced. Meanwhile, it is suggested by observers that the political parties which claim themselves to be public representatives, may eschew the practice of holding meetings on public roads and instead hold their meetings in public interest on other open available spaces. Actually the issue of traffic mismanagement is a national one. Considering its magnitude and complexities, it behoves the high levels of administration to adopt remedial measures on an urgent basis.

NGOs renamed PVDOs

From page 1 col 7 of these funds to the government, and to the public," the Code adds.

In relation to the donors who support the PVDOs, the Code of Ethics advises understanding of the realities that influence the work the donors want to support in Bangladesh, and how — while at the same time clarifying what was needed and what help was sought.

The PVDOs should reduce inefficiency and incompetence, the Code says, promote highest standards of honesty and professionalise their work. It encourages dialogue, sharing of resources, information, expertise and experience among the PVDOs.

The Code of Ethics also calls for broader solidarity and removal of factionalism and avoiding attempt by one organisation to dominate others.

According to an estimate of the NGO Affairs Bureau, some 20,000 voluntary social welfare organisations are working in the country, including 638 PVDOs registered with the government.

PVDO sources said the Code of Ethics and revised Definition and Statement of Purpose came in the backdrop of often bitter relationship between the voluntary organisations and the government, accusations like over-head cost and meddling of the PVDOs in the local government affairs and national politics.

Besides, there were allegations of violation of the government rules, secretive accounts of the PVDOs and profit-making attitude.

However, leaders of the PVDO community refuting the allegation of meddling in the local government affairs said, that those accusations are brought because their programme aims at raising overall social consciousness of the people, promote secularism and human rights.

Leaders of the NGO community as well as concerned gov-

ernment officials have suggested that a well-thought-out NGO policy was required for developing these voluntary organisations as real partners in sustainable development.

The bitterness between the PVDOs and the government reached its height in August last year with the government cancelling registration of ADAB and confiscating all its property.

Before 1980s there were no PVDOs as such in the country. These organisations began working after the cataclysmic cyclone of 1970 with emergency relief and rehabilitation programme for the cyclone affected people.

After the country's war of independence in 1971, increased number of PVDOs, both foreign and foreign-aided, responded with poverty alleviation and rural development programme.

After 1970s, the PVDOs, became effective associates of the government in rehabilitation and rural development. PVDO officials say that an estimated 1.5 crore people benefit from various development approaches and strategies adopted by them.

Gen Asif Nawaz

From page 1 col 7 tions an "election stunt." Benazir Bhutto said she believes the general was murdered and has promised a full investigation if she is elected.

During a recent interview at her home in the eastern city of Lahore, Mrs. Nawaz said her husband was killed because he was army chief, a powerful position in a country ruled by the military for more than half of its 47 years.

The army has overthrown successive civilian governments, charging they were corrupt and incompetent.

Ms. Bhutto's father, Zulfiar Ali Bhutto, was removed by the army in 1977 and hung two years later for allegedly killing a political foe.

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Khmer Rouge supports Prince Sihanouk

PHNOM PENH (Cambodia), Oct 1: The president of the Khmer Rouge announced his guerrilla group's support for Cambodia's new king Friday as fighting between the guerrillas and government forces was reported in the countryside, reports AP.

President Khieu Samphan read a short statement after arriving in Phnom Penh saying he had come to pay homage to King Norodom Sihanouk.

He also declared his group's support for the country's new constitution, ratified last week, which allowed Sihanouk to return to the throne 38 years after abdicating to enter politics.

The government has demanded that the guerrilla group recognize the new constitution and government and give up the territory it controls. Khieu Samphan's statement of support stopped short of recognition, and did not deal with the question of territorial control.

Khieu Samphan's visit to Phnom Penh Friday was his first since the new government was formed.

A half-dozen guards from the Royal Palace, armed with machine guns, kept journalists back from the Khmer Rouge leader and prevented them from

asking questions by kicking them with their boots.

But as Khieu Samphan was making his way to a waiting palace car, he denied his group was still attacking the government's armed forces.

"We are not fighting anyone," he said before ducking into the car. "We are defending ourselves."

Maldivians vote in referendum

MALE, Maldives, Oct 1: The Maldivians voted in a referendum today to decide whether president Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, ruler of the Indian ocean islands for the last 15 years, should stay in office for a fourth successive five-year term, reports Reuter.

Gayoom, 56, is the sole candidate in the referendum, after his selection by the 48-member citizen's majlis (parliament) in a three-way contest last month. Voting was slow in the morning but picked up later in the day before the polls closed at 5:30 pm (1230 GMT). "More people voted in the evening," an information department official said.

US withdrawal to rekindle civil war in Somalia: Ghali

WASHINGTON, Oct 1: UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali has warned in a letter to the United States that its withdrawal from Somalia would undermine the UN mission and rekindle the civil war with all its horrors, reports AFP.

In a recent letter to US Secretary of State Warren Christopher, the UN chief said there was 'no practical alternative' to the current United Nations mission in Somalia, adding that without US support 'our efforts will not succeed.'

Sent on September 25, two days before US President Bill Clinton criticised UN peace-keeping operations in a speech before the UN General Assembly, the contents of Boutros-Ghali's note were disclosed Thursday by diplomatic sources.

It speculates on the consequences of a US pullout from

BTV news

From Page 1 Col 5 IMF Board (already published in the major national dailies yesterday), and several other such items got precedence in the BTV's news bulletin, over the story of the earthquake in India that buried 21,000 alive (till 11 pm Friday) and the death toll is likely to go up much higher.

The BTV's lead 'news' at 10 pm yesterday was about something that had not even occurred. It read "Prime Minister will address the UNGA in a few hours." The second, third, fourth and many others that followed all had to do with ended footage of what the PM did at the UN, the news already published in yesterday's dailies.

We definitely want to know what the PM did at the UN. But by God, will not the precedence in news presentation change when such a calamity occurs especially in a neighbouring country? In news treatment human lives get most importance. Is this treatment of the BTV an example?

In the home front, President Abdur Rahman Biswas's news of addressing a seminar came after the news of all ministers, including that of Nazmul Huda's visit to his home constituency. Is this the new line of precedence for the President?

Pakistani beheaded in S Arabia

DUBAI, Oct 1: A convicted Pakistani drug smuggler was beheaded in the Saudi capital Riyadh today, an Interior Ministry statement said, reports Reuter.

The statement, published by the official Saudi Press Agency, said Jamal Shah Al-Karim Shah was caught while smuggling heroin into the Kingdom.

Saudi Arabia, home to Islam's two holiest mosques at Mecca and Medina, enforces strict Sharia (Islamic law) convicted murderers, drug smugglers and rapists are usually beheaded in a public square

Body of kidnapped boy recovered

From Our Correspondent GOPALGANI, Oct 1: Police yesterday recovered the body of the kidnapped school boy Belal from a ditch near the village Urphi of Sadar thana of the district.

Police came to know about the body from the confession of one Sabur who was arrested yesterday.

According to police, one of the main accused in the kidnapping case — Mishkat demanded Tk 1,20,000 as ransom from the parents of Belal. Sabur is the younger brother of another accused Hemayet, who is absconding.

Meanwhile, the school students of the district brought out a procession in the town protesting the killing of Belal and demanding punishment of the killers. They also wore black badges.

Two killed by lightning

From Our Correspondent MYMENSINGH, Oct 1: Two persons including an Assistant Director of the Swedish Association (SARA) were killed by lightning near a pond of the Anjuman Eidgah ground here today.

Mokhlesur Rahman Mukul, 45, of SARA was fishing in the pond at around 11:30 am when the lightning struck him. Another victim was a 15-year-old boy who could not be identified.

2 absconding accused held

Police arrested two absconding accused, wanted in connection with separate murder cases, from Kuratoli and West Kafilul in Cantonment thana of the city yesterday, reports UNB.

Zakir Hossain, son of Harun (Mirpur No. 14, Tin Shed Colony), was arrested by Cantonment thana police from Kuratoli for his alleged involvement in a murder.

Police sources said Zakir and his associate, Shahid, stabbed the owner of a tea stall at Road No. 14 of the Navy Colony in Cantonment thana on April 23. Earlier, tea stall owner Babul refused to pay Tk 1,000 demanded by his attackers as toll.

Babul succumbed to his injuries at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital on May 21.

In another drive in West Kafilul the same thana police nabbed one Mohammad Harun Khan, an absconding accused, wanted in connection with several murders cases.

Police said Harun, son of Zayed Khan of village Kayeria in Sadar thana of Madaripur district, was an active member of outlawed Sharbahara Party.

Sramik Front to stage sit-in near Secretariat

By Staff Correspondent

The Samajtantrik Sramik Front will stage a sit-in near the Secretariat on October 16 to force the government implement its accord with the Sramik-Karmachari Oikya Parishad.

Speaking at a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club Friday, leaders of the Front demanded that the government immediately translate the agreement signed on July 6, 1992, re-open all the mills and factories and announce a minimum wage scale for the workers.

Presided over by Golam Mahmud, the Samajtantrik Sramik Front General Secretary Abdur Razzak, Mostafa Faruq and Mustafa Kamal spoke at the rally.

Astrologers' predictions come true

NEW DELHI, Oct 1: As scientists studied the causes of the devastating earthquake in southern India, two astrologers from this land of soothsayers claimed the stars had foretold it all, reports AP.

Lachhman Das, who writes a popular astrological column for several newspapers, said he had predicted on August 14 that thousands of people will die in a major quake in India in October.

"Unlike other astrologers who claim after the event that they had predicted it, I put everything down in print in my magazine (Om Babaji)," he said in an interview.

Another astrologer, N K Aggarwal, said he had predicted months ago that there could be an earthquake on October 1 by using a combination of astrology and Hindu scriptures.

Aggarwal, who is a structural engineer in the northern city of Kanpur, told The Associated Press in January that there could be natural calamities in October and November.

Many Indians routinely consult astrologers and other soothsayers for a variety of reasons, ranging from when to get married to whether they will win elections.

Indians believe all events are controlled by the movement of stars and planets.

Two million palmists and 100,000 astrologers live on the craze for predictions. Many roadside soothsayers catering to the poorest people use trained parrots and mynas to pick up envelopes containing different predictions.

Death toll may cross 28,000

From Page 1 Col 4

Sahib Rao Patil, a 20-year-old farmer, was one of only a few survivors in Tarnai, a village that had 5,000 residents. Under a gray dawn sky Friday, he wiped his eyes as he watched the cremation of his father, and knew he would be back in the evening with the bodies of his wife, two daughters and two sisters-in-law.

"All my family is gone. Who will I talk to now?" he said. Bodies were brought to hospitals in jeeps, buses and bullock carts. Others were burned near the homes where they died. In some cases, bodies were stacked on top of each because of scarcity of firewood for the cremation.

Meanwhile, expressions of sympathy and offers of help poured in from around the world today. Among early donors were Australia, which offered 500,000 dollars in relief aid, and Japan, which gave 25,000 dollars, while the United Nations also vowed its support.

The earthquake in the state of Maharashtra is one of the worst international disaster in decades, Australian Develop-

ment Cooperation Minister Gordon Bilney said in Sydney.

In Tokyo, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said it was placing at India's disposal the Japan disaster relief team, a highly-trained rescue unit that

KHILARI, Oct 1: A cyclone loomed near quake-hit western India and rains lashed flattened villages and towns today. The Indian government meanwhile cancelled all state celebrations today for a week to mourn the victims of the massive quake, national television said, reports AFP.

BANGKOK, Oct 1: An earthquake measuring 5.2 on the open-ended Richter Scale has hit northeast Myanmar, state-run radio Rangoon reported today, but there were not reports of death or injuries, reports AFP.

had already been to earthquake zones in Nicaragua, Egypt and Indonesia.

UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said the quake resulted in appalling loss of life and offered UN help in

rescue and relief, a message received in Delhi said.

Queen Elizabeth II and her husband, Prince Philip, expressed their 'great concern and distress' at the heavy loss of life in the Indian earthquake in a message of condolence to the country's president, Buckingham Palace said Friday.

Prime Minister John Major of Britain and Edouard Balladur of France, and caretaker Premier Moeen Qureshi of Pakistan, expressed their sorrow in condolence messages, to Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Khaleda Zia said in a condolence letter that Bangladesh felt 'deep shock and grief.'

King Birendra of Nepal extended sincere condolences to Indian President Shankar Dayal Sharma at the heavy loss of life and property, state radio in Nepal reported today.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and several world volunteer organisations, including the French Medicines Sans Frontiers, said they were preparing humanitarian missions.

The Midnight File

Militant leader held in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, Oct 1: The security forces achieved a major breakthrough Thursday when they captured 'Amir-e-Allah' (chief) of pro-Pakistan Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen, while seven persons, including four militants, were killed in the Kashmir valley since Wednesday evening. Masrui Abdul Haq, chief of Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen, which came into being after the first split of Hizbul Mujahideen over the issue of patronage of banned Jamaat-e-Islami in 1990, was arrested along with his two bodyguards when the security forces raided his hideout at Saidkadal in downtown Srinagar today, official sources said here, reports PTI.

No plans to resume Bosnian peace talks soon

GENEVA, Oct 1: International mediators said Friday they had no immediate plans to resume the Bosnian peace conference. "At the moment we feel the best thing is to let the political dust settle and encourage bilateral discussions between the parties," said Lord Owen, the European Community envoy. In brief remarks to journalists, the mediators made it clear they had no alternative to a plan that was rejected Wednesday by the Muslim-dominated Bosnian parliament. The plan, drawn up by the Serbs and Croats, would have divided the former Yugoslav republic into three ethnic ministates, reports AP.

Abiola's supporters teargassed

LAGOS (Nigeria), Oct 1: Police firing tear gas broke up a pro-democracy protest on Friday as Nigerians embroiled in a political impasse solemnly marked their 33rd anniversary of independence, reports AP.

Ernest Shonekan, the military-backed interim leader, promised 'a brighter tomorrow' in a nationwide broadcast, but there were none of the traditional fireworks, banners or street parades. Instead, politicians discussed a new constitution drafted

by easterners from the former breakaway nation of Biafra, whose attempt a quarter century ago plunged Nigeria into one of the world's worst civil wars.

About 1,500 people rallied in Lagos to demand that Shonekan resign in favour of Moshod Abiola, the publishing magnate who apparently won June 12 presidential elections that were to end a decade of military rule.

Anti-riot police fired tear gas into the crowd, then attacked them with truncheons. They arrested about 15 people, including Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti, head of the coalition Campaign for Democracy that organized the demonstration.

Sino-US ties

From Page 1 Col 8 proclamation of the People's Republic in 1949.

"We are firmly opposed to all acts of interfering in China's internal affairs and acts of violating China's sovereignty," he said.

Relations between Beijing and the United States have taken a battering in recent months following a series of disputes over human rights and weapons sales.

Addressing the United Nations General Assembly in New York on Wednesday, Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen denounced "the hegemonic conduct" of the United States, which he described as behaving like a 'self-styled' world cop.

Qian was referring to last month's incident when Washington demanded a search of a Chinese cargo vessel it suspected of carrying chemical weapons precursors. The ship was later found to be carrying an innocuous cargo.

US State Dept

From Page 1 Col 5 mass literacy in Bangladesh. The State Department official said South Asia is important in US context and added "this needs to be highlighted".

Raphel also said "We are very pleased with the state of bilateral relations between Bangladesh and the United States and Bangladesh's progress towards democracy".

The US official praised Bangladesh government's success in family planning programme and said "Bangladesh has set an example in the South Asian region".

Raphel said she would visit Bangladesh very soon as the head of the South Asian Bureau of US State Department.

Begum Zia said her government would welcome her and extend all cooperation when she would pay a visit to Bangladesh.

About the Rohingya refugee problem, Raphel said that the United States was happy the way Bangladesh was handling the issue.

Another report says: James P Grant, UNICEF executive director, called on Begum Zia at her hotel suite of UN Plaza yesterday.

Grant lauded the leadership and personal initiative of Begum Khaleda Zia in carrying out programmes for the development of children and women in Bangladesh. The Prime Minister appreciated Grant's long and dedicated services for children and women's development around the world.

She sought more assistance from UNICEF to implement the programmes for children and women for Bangladesh successfully.

Russian crisis

From Page 1 Col 4 tipersonnel mines as well as enough other weaponry "to repel any assault".

After the deputies rejected the overnight accord however, the parliament mandated Deputy Speaker Yuri Voronin to represent them in talks with two top Kremlin officials.

Those talks were mediated personally by the head of the Orthodox church, Patriarch Aleksey II, and were being held at the seat of the church in Moscow's historic Danilov.

Road mishaps

From Page 1 Col 4

Students groups clashed in different educational institutions including the Jagannath University College, Str Salmullah Medical College, Dhaka Medical College hostel and Suhrawardy College. Hawkers and shopkeepers clashed with police in the New Market area and at Dhanmondi Hawkers' Market.

However, different law enforcing agencies conducted special drives and recovered standard and spurious medicines from the Mitford drug market. They also recovered huge quantities of 'contaminated' milk-powder.

Last month, the DMP opened its 15th police station and two more divisions — East and West in the city.