

DOWN TO EARTH

City Lacks Basic Amenities

By A. S. M. Nurunnabi

The civic life in the city leaves some basic things to be desired. In such amenities of a modern city as roads, drains and sewerage, lamentable shortcomings exist, due to which a city dweller's life is subject to great suffering and tribulations.

Take for instance the city roads. Except for those in posh areas, roads in other areas, by and large, are subject to neglect. Over the past two years or so there has been little done towards reconstruction, renovation or simple repairs of many roads of the city. In some areas, for example, the Central Road, Zigatola Road, the roads are in such a pitiable condition that passage of vehicular and pedestrian traffic through them becomes a trial physical endurance.

On this subject complaints voiced through the press frequently fail to produce any effective reaction from the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC). The stock excuse advanced by them is financial constraint. To most observers much of the delay in taking up such essential public works seems to be shrouded in mystery.

The same story of indifference

and neglect affects the surface drains of the city. They have been equally dilapidated or in a poor state of repairs for long. Replacement of these main surface drains by storm sewers has been a long felt necessity. The replacement does not appear to have been made any substantial progress is evidenced by the great accumulation of rain water when there are heavy showers, much to the suffering of the residents of the affected areas. Besides, proper maintenance of city drainage and its expansion to include areas where none exists are the city's most urgent needs. According to observers, areas like Dhanmondi, Gulshan, Barishala or newer residential areas now coming up with new housing projects suffer from lack of adequate drainage facilities. It is suggested by affected people that RAJUK should look into the question and do not approve housing plans without suitable provision for drains.

The lack of these facilities has a direct bearing on the maintenance of healthy environment in the local areas. The extent of environmental pollu-

tion resulting from the lack of adequate drainage has reached unbearable proportions, which is compounded by the absence of adequate scavenging service of the City Corporation. The pollution from uncleared garbage has other sinister implications. It has been observed that much of the accumulated garbage is dumped on the sides of lakes and waterways with the resulting ooze polluting the waters. Evidence of the pollution is already there at the Dhanmondi Lake where one can smell bad odours coming from its waters. Fish in large numbers is also seen to die from time to time on account of the pollution.

The state of the city's sewerage is equally at its worst. During the rainy season the city's sewers made life horrible for population.

Now the rainy season is over, yet the problem assumes serious proportion during brief spells of rain. For example, a couple of days ago, a short spell of rain resulted in a small flood with waters four feet high in the area near Bahadur Lane at Faridabad, also submerging the Sishu Park there.

Time and again, the problem was discussed through the media, but the suggestion that the problem should receive top priority in DCC's programme has failed to be treated with any seriousness. It is a strange paradox that every year we hear of plans for fountains and parks, but the basic amenities on which healthy urban existence depends do not feature in the Corporation's budget. We open health clinics for the treatment of diseases. But we do not seem to care about doing anything to rid the city of insanitary conditions which causes these outbreaks.

The general public have come to react to the existing state of affairs with a growing sense of frustration.

The affliction does not appear to be as serious in the new town as in the old. The frequent uproar in the press on this score is shrugged off by the concerned authority as a game which the press loves to play to earn popularity.

Those running the public utilities seem to be very much above the principles of accountability and transparency. These principles can be and need be developed and demonstrated in the above service sectors. Roads, drains and sewer lines are among the elementary amenities of a modern city. The existing state of things in these spheres should not be allowed to continue as it is by the administration.

White Cane safety Day observed

The White Cane Safety Day was observed in the country as elsewhere in the world yesterday, reports UNB.

Different organisations chalked out elaborate programmes including rallies, discussions and cultural functions to mark the day.

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The Day's programmes were aimed at creating mass awareness and motivating people to help the visually impaired people.

A procession of the disabled was brought out from the High Court Mazar maingate that ended at the Jatiya Press Club. Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan led the procession.

Hasina blames BNP for killing Kaliganj AL leader

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina has condemned the killing of her party's Kaliganj thana leader Azizur Rahman Bhuiyan, blaming the ruling BNP for the incident, reports UNB.

Rahman succumbed to his injuries he sustained during Wednesday's police lathicharge and attack by goons on a rally and demonstration of the Awami League.

In a statement, Hasina said being perturbed by people's protests against "corruption and misuse" of the BNP government has resorted to repressive measures to silence the voice of the people and the opposition by using police and muscle power.

She said the Awami League repeatedly stated that police were not the private force of the ruling party. They are the employees of the Republic. But the government is misusing police to stifle the voice of protest of the people and cover up its failures.

"The BNP has exposed itself as a neo-autocrat by violating democratic norms, rule of law and fundamental human rights," said the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament.

Sounding a note of warning against the autocratic attitude of the BNP, she said people are determined to foil any move of the ruling party against democracy, justice and rule of law. "People must give befitting reply to injustice and misuse of neo-autocratic government of the BNP."

Bangladeshis protest racial attack in London

By Staff Correspondent

Around 2000 anti fascist Asians marched through London's East End on October 3 in protest against the racist attack in September on the Bangladeshi community that left a teenager, Quddus Ali critically wounded, according to a delayed message received in Dhaka.

The marchers, led by the Bangladeshis, observed a 10-minute silence near the spot where Quddus Ali was beaten by eight white youths.

The march was organised by the Youth Connection, an umbrella organisation composed of local youth clubs and people opposed to the racist policy of the British National Party (BNP).

Israel, PLO talks end

TABA (Egypt), Oct 15: Israel and the PLO ended a relaxed two-day session at this Red Sea resort to set up intensive talks on implementing their peace deal, agreeing to keep the agenda secret, reports Reuter.

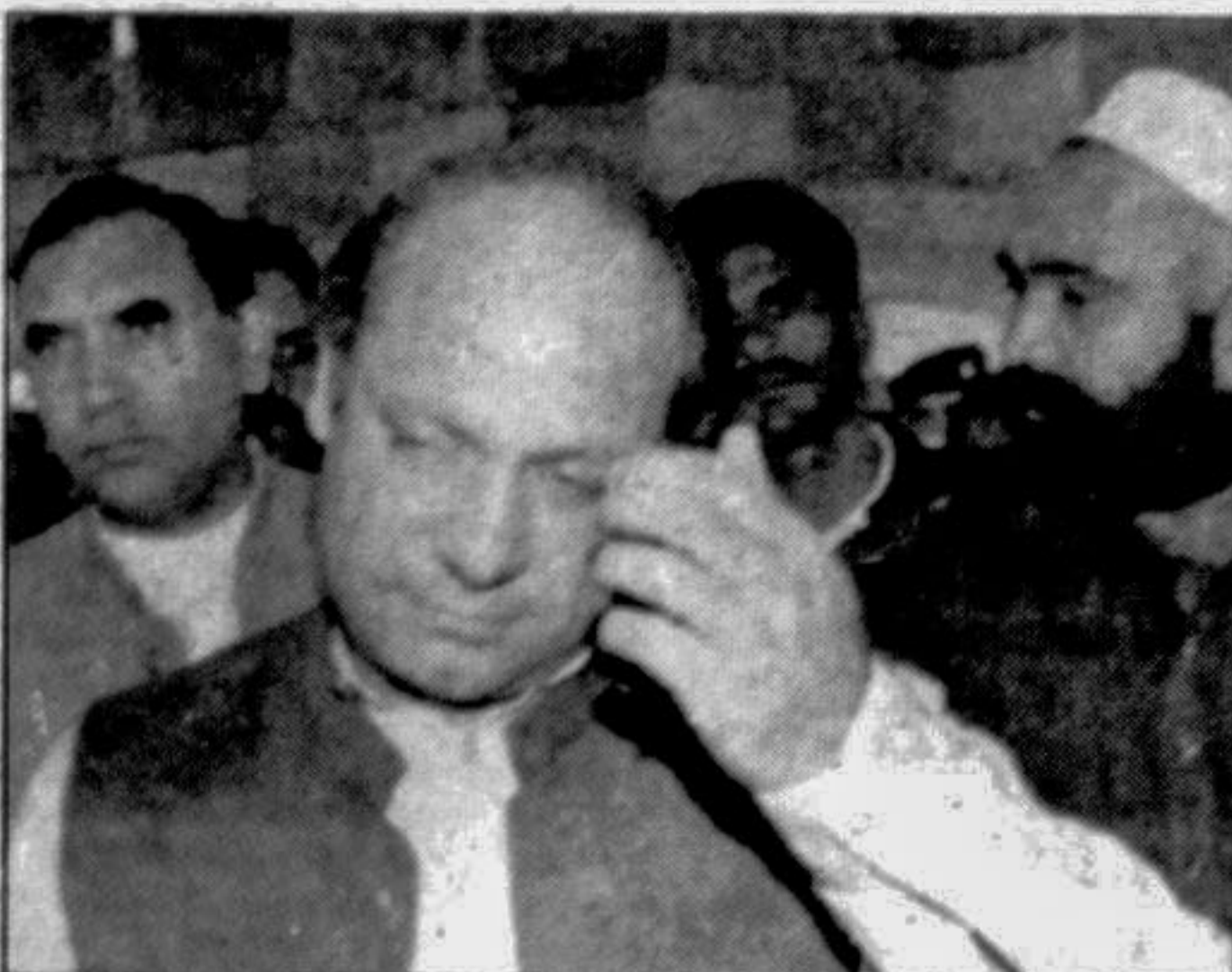
"What we agreed was the agenda, not the issues. We agreed the agenda will not be made public," Uzi Dayan chief of Israeli Military Planning and Deputy Head of the negotiating team told a news conference on Thursday.

Tourism Month

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During the Tourism Month, different organisations including the Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation will organise special programmes. The special attractions during the period include traditional boat race, swimming competition, food festivals, cycle race, stick plays, kite flying and food preparation competitions.

In observance of the Tourism Month Sonargaon Hotel will hold various events within the Hotel. These include Bangladesh Food Festival from October 16-22 at the Cafe Bazar. During the festival there will be live music playing traditional Bangladeshi songs. On October 23 a Children's Painting Competition has been arranged in the Ballroom Foyer. On November 11, a Fashion Show, Dinner Dance has also been scheduled. From November 7-8 there will also be a Jamdani Exhibition in the Ballroom.



Benazir Bhutto (R), co-chairman of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), along with her mother Nusrat Bhutto (top) and the Pakistan Muslim League leader Nawaz Sharif (C) (below) arrive in Islamabad yesterday to attend the first session of the National Assembly. — AFP photo

Benazir, Sharif reject

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for the consolidation of the democratic system. Asked if he would welcome any mediation by the army, which brokered a settlement of the political crisis during his government, Sharif said it was for the politicians to sort out all matters among themselves.

He accused the PPP of indulging in immoral tactics to garner support in the Provincial Assembly in the key Punjab province, where a government is to be formed after the completion of the process at the Centre.

Though PML has emerged as the single largest party in the 248-member Punjab Assembly with 10 seats, the PPP and its ally, a splinter group of PML, have together secured 112 seats.

Control over Punjab, dominant in Pakistan politics, is considered vital for stability of the federal government, as both Bhutto and Sharif suffered from hostile administrations in the region during their rule.

A total of 18 deputies took oath at the first sitting of the 217-member assembly, the third elected in the past five years.

Several members from PPP and PML who were elected for both national and provincial assemblies did not turn up, signifying indecision on whether

they would choose to sit in the parliament or in the provincial house.

They included Sharif's younger brother Shahbaz Sharif, former Punjab Chief Minister Ghulam Mustafa Khar and PML-Junejo faction chief Hamid Nasir Chhattha.

Bhutto and Sharif were greeted with prolonged thumping of desks by party members as they entered the parliament, which was heavily guarded by police and security personnel.

PTI adds: Benazir Bhutto was today nominated as a candidate for premiership by a parliamentary party meeting of the Pakistan Democratic Front (PDF), comprising the PPP and its ally the PML-Junejo.

The decision to nominate her as the leader of the house was taken at the meeting which was attended by about 100 members elect including some independents and minority members in parliament house, just before the commencement of the National Assembly session.

Among those who attended the meeting were Hamid Nasir Chhattha, the PML (Junejo) chief, Begum Nusrat Bhutto and the former care-taker prime minister, Balakh Sher Mazari.

Bhutto, who looked cheerful after her nomination, invited the members who attended the meeting, to the posh Islamabad Club for dinner tomorrow.

Congress govt in Assam survives no-confidence

GUWAHATI, Oct 15: The no-confidence motion against the 27-month old Congress-I government in Assam jointly sponsored by all major opposition parties, was defeated in the assembly by 18 votes through both sides received their share of rude shocks, reports PTI.

The Congress (I), with an effective strength of 61, was jolted when former chief minister and prominent dissident leader Keshab Gogoi refrained from voting in defiance of the party whip though he was present in the house.

However, despite reverse speculations, five expelled Congress (I) members, three independents and the lone Janata Dal MLA in the house voted in favour of the government.

To the utter surprise of the Assam Gana Parishad led opposition, two Bodo Land Legislature Party (BLP) MLAs, two Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC) MLAs and two Suci MLAs abstained from voting.

World Food Day

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Noman and Food Minister Meer Shaukat Ali will be the special guests.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia yesterday said the collection and diversified use of non-traditional plant and animal foodstuff could ensure food security in our country.

In a message on the eve of the World Food Day she called upon the agriculture and food scientists to popularise the non-traditional foodstuff. "This will help in implementing the crop diversification programme," she said.

The objectives of the World Food Day is to create awareness, among the people to alleviate poverty, remove hunger and provide food security, the Prime Minister said.

The Midnight File

UN may withdraw peace mission from Haiti

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Oct 15: The UN peace mission has been told to prepare for a possible withdrawal from Haiti because of the growing violence, a UN spokesman said today. The spokesman, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the prospect of the mission's imminent departure "is quite high." He said the mission was awaiting a final decision by UN officials in New York.

Fresh fighting in Liberia

MONROVIA, Oct 15: Fighting broke out Friday in the eastern port of Harper, putting in jeopardy the first shipment of food aid in a year to southeast Liberia, charity workers said. Relief officials in Monrovia said that Harper, 250 miles (470 kms) east of the capital, had been populated mostly by patrols of Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front before street skirmishing began Friday morning with members of a new armed faction, the Liberia Peace Council, reports AP.

Euro-parliament's views

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not floods, were main threats to the Bangladeshi people.

"While the cyclone comes in like a meteor and disappears after the destruction, the floods ravage the country's economy over a long period," it said.

The events like those of 1988 were infrequent, the letter admitted, adding that even the normal annual flood cripples the economy that thrives on agriculture.

The European Parliament, in its resolution, observed that the main threats to the Bangladeshi people were cyclones in the coasts of the Bay of Bengal.

The highest priority should be given to increasing the capacity of the country to cope with cyclone disasters—building shelters, coastal afforestation and improved warning and evacuation programme, the resolution suggested.

The FAP which is aimed at formulating an integrated national water management policy by permanently controlling floods, is under fire as it might cause irrevocable environmental degradation, displace an unspecified number of people and above all, remove lives of people living on the floodplains.

The government's letter containing the reaction pointed out that the Euro-Parliament's resolution on the FAP blew both hot and cold in the same breath in censuring the failure of the past flood control embankments while criticising lack of infrastructure as the cause of frequent floodings in the North East Bangladesh.

Khasbulatov

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into force the moment the referendum results are published, said the presidential press service quoted by Itar-Tass news agency.

The draft itself will be published on November 10, a week after being submitted to Yeltsin by a constitutional conference which began work Friday.

The new constitution is expected to give greater power to an executive presidency.

Voters will have to reply 'yes' or 'no' to a single question: "Do you accept the constitution of the Russian federation?"

Terming as vague, the letter brushed aside such statements that experts considered the FAP management lacked inter-disciplinary approach.

"The FAP is a multi-disciplinary approach to water resources development taking into consideration technical, economic, environment and social acceptability," the letter pointed out.

The government said that it had no prior information of the Euro-parliament's conference on the FAP.

But according to reliable sources, the officials of the Flood Plan Coordination Organisation (FPCO) were quite aware of the conference and some of the experts were also invited to the meet.

Privatisation

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units should be written off and only the expenditure on capital development should be included in the prices of the units.

However, sources pointed out that when estimating the prices of the units, these two types of liabilities had not been segregated.

Although the loan liabilities and low prices quoted by the buyers have become the major factor in of loading the units, this has virtually got little attention of the authorities, sources said.

They cited that Bangladesh Cycle Industries which was valued at Tk 2.5 crore had been quoted at Tk 2.3 crore. The quotation did not mention anything about the Tk 11 crore outstanding liabilities of the unit. Although the quoted price is considered to be fair enough to dispose of the unit, the government till now, could not take any decision because of the liabilities. On the other hand, the unit, closed since one and a half years, is incurring current account expenditure because of continued payment of salary to the workers.

Sources further said that the privatisation programme has also faced the problem of demarcation of the units' property. They said some of the units have been found to possess either more or less property than assessed earlier.



Nobel Peace Prize

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But Desmond Tutu, the Anglican archbishop of Cape Town who won the peace prize in 1984, said the joint award was appropriate.

"I hope that it will work to weld us together as a people, to say that here are two leaders from two opposite ends of the racial and political spectrum who have tried to work together for the end of this vicious system, and that therefore, we, too, as a people should stand together," he told Norwegian radio.

De Klerk and Mandela clinched the prize when the government and the ANC agreed last month to create a multiracial council to govern the nation until the April 1994 elections. Sejersted said, The black majority will, for the first time, vote in a national election along with other races.

"From their different points of departure, Mandela and de Klerk have reached agreement on the principles for a transition to a new political order based on the tenet of 'one man-one vote,'" the committee said in its citation.

In comments to Norwegian radio, de Klerk said the prize "will bring a message to all South Africans that the world will want us to succeed, to achieve lasting peace in South Africa."

"It will serve for us as an inspiration," he said.

In South Africa, ANC spokesman Carl Niehaus said, "It is recognition of the efforts of Mandela has made throughout his life to work for peace and democracy in South Africa."

"It also conveys a message from the world community that the people of South Africa should come together and work together for peace," he said.

De Klerk and Mandela are the third and fourth winners of the Nobel Peace prize from South Africa.

Albert Luthuli, then president of the ANC, won the prize in 1960, the year Mandela organised a military wing of the ANC to carry out a sabotage campaign.

A faux pas

Some telephones in the city were dead Thursday night. When restored yesterday, the telephone numbers were quite different. But the subscribers did not know about the change, reports UNB.

A gentlemen from Japan phoned his house but to his utter surprise found it was the Associated Press (AP) office. AP telephone 833717 was changed to 831523 without informing the subscriber. It was not known who was given the AP number.

Similar changes were made without informing the subscribers causing inconveniences to many.

In the process of unwanted and unnoticed changes, all the telephone and ticker lines of United News of Bangladesh (UNB) were suddenly disrupted at 9-30 Thursday night putting the news agency to a dead stop. UNB could not transmit news to the national dailies, Radio, TV and government departments for about 3 hours.

Fred US pilot leaves Somalia

MOGADISHU, Oct 15: Freed US helicopter pilot Michael Durant left Somalia's embattled capital Mogadishu today for Germany, where he is to be treated for a broken back and other wounds, reports AFP.

UN spokesman Dawn Kirkpatrick said chief warrant officer Durant, 31, was bound for Ramstein, Germany aboard a US C-141 starliner military transport plane.

Hearing of Chanpa Murder Case begins today

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Oct 15: The hearing of the sensational Chanpa Murder Case will begin from tomorrow after 1044 days of its suspension by court order, at the court of District and Sessions Judge here.

Fauzia Rahman Chanpa was found dead in her bedroom at her father-in-law's residence in the Barisal town on October 18, 1989. The CID Police had lodged a case against six members of her father-in-law's family after a month's investigation at that time.

Following an appeal by the defendants and an order issued by the High Court on June 16, 1990 — the hearing of the case was adjourned for 1044 days. The hearing beginning from tomorrow will continue for five days. The court had ordered 45 witnesses to appear at the hearing.

3 oil depots sealed in Khulna

KHULNA, Oct 15: Authorities sealed three depots of Padma, Meghna, and Jamuna oil companies here today following several incidents of kerosene lamp explosion, reports UNB.

Twenty-one people were killed and 50 others injured in kerosene lamp explosions in different places of the division in the last week, police and fire brigade sources said.

Hani killers sentenced to death

JOHANNESBURG, Oct 15: A pro-apartheid politician and an immigrant gunman were sentenced to death Friday for assassinating ANC activist Chris Hani, but it will be left to the African National Congress to decide their fates, reports AP.

News that Clive Derby-Lewis and Janusz Wulski had received the death penalty brought cheers from about 500 people waiting outside the courthouse. But Hani's widow, Limpho, was subdued.

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