

DOWN TO EARTH

Wasted Milk Products in City

By A S M Nurunnabi

Nowadays a great deal of suspicion prevails amongst consumers about the quality of milk and milk products on sale in city markets. The suspicion is caused, mainly, by recent reports of seizure of a good quantity of contaminated milk powder in the port city of Chittagong and from some godowns and stores in the capital. The detection of such large quantities of wasted milk powder makes some people apprehensive that there may be more contaminated milk powder on sale in the city and elsewhere. In some cases publicity is given of some brands of milk powder originally packed in tins in the countries of their origin. Such brands may be qualitatively better than those imported in bulk and packed in Bangladesh. But the consumers, by and large, have no easy means of making sure which brands are locally packed and which are not.

The need for importing milk and milk products from various countries has arisen because milk, locally produced, do not seem to be adequate for the demands. In spite of the considerable strides being made by private entrepreneurs in the field of commercial production of milk, the demands for the product is on such a high scale that many entrepreneurs have joined the ranks of importers and distributors of milk of foreign origin.

Currently milk powder is imported from Norway and Holland in the North and from Australia and New Zealand in the South. Of late milk products are reportedly coming from France and the American con-

tinents. In such circumstances, the question arises whether necessary quality control is exercised in this country on the imported milk products. There is another aspect which also needs to be kept in view — the aspect of ensuring reasonable price structure for the social benefits. Some observers feel that benefits should at least be commensurate with the profit derived by importers and distributors in this country.

The most important question is that of importing milk products the quality of which should be above any suspicion, because the import of low quality or contaminated items may be extremely harmful at large and milk-fed children in particular.

Yet we find reports that some importers, stockists and distributors of milk and milk products do not display any sense of accountability in the conduct of the business. Some of them are so much guided by considerations of quick profit that they care little for the quality and the effect on the consumers.

On this ground the law enforcing and official agencies should remain ever vigilant that the quality of milk products is maintained at all costs and vigorous actions are taken against anyone involved in the mismanagement of the milk powder trade.

Public toilets have been a crying need in the city for years — yet there is a strange indifference of the City Corporation in this regard. The lack of this essential civic amenity is re-

sponsible for unhygienic conditions in most areas of the old town as well as in some areas of the new. There are, of course, a few public toilets in some isolated areas. But they are so limited in number that they do not actually meet the greater need. As a result, we frequently come across unseemly sights when not only children but also adults are found using drains and open spaces, finding no access to public toilets.

There is urgent need for provision of toilets, preferably free, in the interest of civic sanitation and as a precaution against the spread of diseases which insanitary conditions breed. Some of the existing toilets in isolated areas charge a small fee for their use. It is, however, felt that because of the principle of payment, few would be ready to pay. The case for a free civic service is made because our masses would ill-afford to pay any charge, however minimal it may be. Advocates think that if the public can use parks, without a fee, — the maintenance of parks costs money — they can also expect a free service for use of toilets.

In all modern cities, there is ample provision for public conveniences. Some are coin-operated, but the charge is very small.

The burgeoning growth of the city makes the issue of public toilets very much urgent, because the random use of any available use as a public convenience has the potentialities of exposing the city to insanitary conditions and the risk of outbreak of disease.



The Nirmul bodies' Samannaya Committee brought out a torch procession in the city yesterday to drum up support for its half-day hartal called for today. — Star photo

Politics of hartals

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Begum Zia said the people had started getting the benefits of the politics of production and development initiated by the BNP.

There should now be development, not slogans, she said and asked the leaders and workers of the BNP to strengthen the party to help the government carry out its socio-economic development programmes.

The Prime Minister said her government had laid emphasis on the development of agriculture and the welfare of the farmers by taking a number of realistic measures for them. She asked the farmers to cultivate other crops along with rice.

Begum Zia said crop diversification would help the country reduce its imports and strengthen its economy. She asked the local BNP leaders, people's representatives, chairman and members to encourage the farmers in diversifying their crops.

The Prime Minister also said stern actions would be taken against those found responsible for blackmarketing of fertiliser. Referring to the highest budgetary allocation for education, Begum Zia said her government had given emphasis on this sector to make the nation an edu-

cated one.

Begum Zia also asked all concerned to make the recently introduced 'food-for-education' programme a success to provide education for the poor children.

The Prime Minister said her government wanted to create an atmosphere in which the children of the farmers would also get opportunities of becoming ministers, MPs, political leaders, high officials and teachers.

Begum Zia also asked the villagers to go for tree plantation, dairy and poultry farming and small and cottage industries.

She also said the government would strengthen the local institutions so that those could ensure welfare of the people.

Law and Justice Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz, Khurshid Jahan Huq, MP, president of the Thakurgaon district BNP Mirza Alamgir, chairman of the Pirganj Pourashabha Prof Abdul Gaffar, elderly politician Dr Abdul Malek, president of the Thakurgaon district Chhatra Union Mamunur Rashid and Taimur Rahman also spoke on the occasion.

Dr Abdul Malek said there was now a 'hostile' opposition in the country and its attitude was to say 'no' to everything.

Nirmul body

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dressed by the committee's member-secretary Prof Abdul Mannan Chowdhury, Syed Hassan Imam and political leaders including Abdul Razzak, MP, of the AL, Kazi Aref Ahmed of the JSD (Inu) and Nurul Islam Nahid of the Gano Forum.

Addressing the rally, Prof Mannan Chowdhury demanded withdrawal of the Prime Minister's recent remarks opposing the planned hartal.

"We will give up hartals only when the government fulfils our demands".

The eight-hour hartal will be followed by a public meeting at the Bangabandhu Avenue at four in the afternoon.

Meanwhile, a meeting of the Nirmul bodies' steering committee met last night to discuss final preparations for the hartal. Held at the Taher Auditorium of JSD (Inu) office, the meeting reiterated the call for making today's hartal a success.

Different political parties and their front organisations also issued separate statements in favour of the hartal.

The Nirmul Samannaya Committee will announce a series of fresh programmes at a public meeting in the city today, a senior leader said.

The new agitational programmes will include a march towards the Jatiya Sangsad on the first day of parliament's winter session — expected in late November and a 'Demonstration Week' Nov 2-8.

According to the leader, the Samannaya Committee would carry out an 'Organisational Week' Nov 9 to 15, to be followed by a 'Bijoy Utsab' (victory festival) and resistance programmes December 1-16.

Road mishaps

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were injured in separate road accidents in the city yesterday.

A minibus helper Abul Kalam, 20, died on the spot when a truck ran over him while overtaking the minibus near the Gabtali bus terminal in the morning.

Mirpur police arrested the truck driver, Moslem, from the scene of the accident.

In another mishaps a seven-year-old boy, Masum, was crushed under the wheels of a speeding minibus near the Working Women's Hostel at Nilkhet while he was crossing the road in the morning.

Motijheel police recovered the body of a middle-aged unidentified man near the General Post Office (GPO) at Gulistan in the afternoon. Police suspect the victim died in a road accident.

Four patrol policemen and a tampo driver were injured when a minibus knocked their three-wheeled vehicle on the Mirpur Road near Dhanmondi, Road No-6.

Of the policemen, sub-inspector Mohammad Mujibur Rahman, 40, was admitted to the Chest Diseases Hospital at Mohakhali while three constables — Abul Kasem, 38, Sheikh Harun, 48, and Delwar Hossain, 45 — and the tampo driver Belayet Hossain were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

The Midnight File

British parliament okays plan to ordain women priests

LONDON, Oct 29: The House of Commons approved Friday the Church of England's plan to ordain women priests. "We shall live to see the day when a woman Archbishop of Canterbury greets a pope in a church that has ordained women," Labour Party lawmaker Tony Benn told lawmakers who voted 215 to 21 in favour of the plan. If the House of Lords, Parliament's unelected chamber, votes Tuesday to approve the plan and Queen Elizabeth II agrees, 1,350 women deacons will become eligible for ordination probably in 1994, reports AP.

Jordanian army officer, 3 gunmen killed in shootout

AMMAN, Oct 29: A Jordanian army officer and three gunmen were killed in a shootout near the Israeli border today, the state news agency Petra said. The unidentified gunmen opened fire on a military post near the Jordan valley town of Karama, killing an officer and wounding an unspecified number of soldiers before the attackers shot dead, Petra said, reports Reuters.

US unloads heavy arms in Somalia

MOGADISHU, Oct 29: The United States unloaded heavy military equipment including tanks and artillery in Somalia today, and loud explosions shook Mogadishu as the UN blew up warheads and ammunition seized from gunmen, reports Reuters.

US military officials said the equipment delivered by US ships to the port of Mogadishu, including M-1 tanks, Bradley armoured personnel carriers and self-propelled howitzers, would be used to protect American and UN forces.

They said it would not be used to pursue fugitive warlord Mohamed Farah Aided, blamed for the killing of 24 Pakistani peacekeepers on June 5. But nervous Somalia said

US : Kashmir

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Kashmir's accession to India, reports AFP.

A ministry spokesman said a summit was sent to US Charge d' Affaires Kenneth Brill in connection with the statement made at a news conference Thursday organised by the US Information Agency in Washington.

"We have seen the reports and are trying to determine their authenticity," the spokesman said. "I do not want to say anything further than that."

The Press Trust of India quoted the US official, who spoke on condition of anonymity as saying that the whole of Kashmir, held in part by India and Pakistan, was a disputed territory whose status needed to be resolved.

"We do not recognise the instrument of accession as meaning that Kashmir is forever an integral part of India," the official was quoted as saying.

The officials also reportedly said that Washington was pushing New Delhi "very hard to clean up their act" over alleged human rights violations by Indian troops battling Muslim secessionist guerrillas in Kashmir.

Meanwhile, PTI adds: A senior Clinton administration official today urged Pakistan "not to further provoke the situation, (in Kashmir) by any kind of inflammatory statements" on the Hazratbal issue.

The official said the United States had urged all parties, the Indian government as well as the Pakistan government, to exercise restraint.

"We have been encouraged by the statements on the part of the Indian government and various Indian government officials that they do not wish to resolve this militarily," the officials said while referring to the stand-off at the shrine in Srinagar.

BADC staff

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was based on recommendations made by a government-appointed committee headed by Dr Iqbal Mahmud, which had submitted its report in March this year.

The report recommended retaining the corporate status of the BADC on a smaller-scale with core functions to meet some of the strategic agricultural development needs.

Informed sources claimed that the Iqbal Mahmud Committee Report had recommended that the responsibility for irrigation service be vested in the BADC upto a certain extent for promotional purpose. Fresh assignments for the reorganised body were also suggested. These include seed development, maintaining a buffer stock of fertiliser, training the farmers, transfer of technology, development of the private sector and other functions.

The sources said that the proposal put forward by the Agriculture Ministry to the Cabinet did not mention the irrigation aspect in the suggested core functions of the BADC.

"Exclusion of irrigation from the BADC's activities will affect about 10,000 employees who are involved in this sector," said an official of the corporation, adding that the government will also have to decide the fate of these people.

they were worried that once in position the equipment could be used against militia accused of attacking UN blue helmets.

"Why all this a rumour when we are now talking peace," said one Somali worker in the port of Mogadishu.

At a news conference on Wednesday held at a secret location, Aided warned that the equipment and troops pouring into Mogadishu could raise tension.

US drug admn chief resigns

WASHINGTON, Oct 29: Robert C Bonner, head of the US Drug Enforcement Administration, resigned Friday to return to a private law practice in Los Angeles, reports AP.

Stephen H Greene, his deputy, was named acting administrator by Attorney General Janet Reno.

Chhatra Samaj observes hartal in Jhenidah

JHENIDAH, Oct 29: A six-hour hartal was observed in Kaliganj town here today protesting the killing of a local leader of the JP-backed Jatiya Chhatra Samaj and demanding arrest and trial of those responsible, reports UNB.

Misceants attack village

MANIKGANJ, Oct 29: At least 25 people were injured, seven seriously, in an armed attack by a group of miscreants at a village in sadar thana today, reports UNB.

Police said the miscreants led by one Khelu attacked the house of Kisu Khan at Ranadia village at about 6 am over previous enmity, blasted crackers and beat up its inmates and neighbours.

Foreign aid

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and cost-cutting. The government has stepped aside from involving itself in the manufacturing sector, which has resulted in less investment in public agencies.

But most financial experts now generally agree that if the current government policy could be continued, the country's dependence on external resources could be cut down substantially over the next five years.

Biharis

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Khaleda Zia during her visit to Islamabad last year.

A second batch of an unspecified number of stranded Pakistanis was expected to fly in May after construction of their houses in Punjab, home province of Nawaz Sharif. The repatriation could not take place as construction of the houses was disrupted by heavy rains followed by floods in Punjab.

A move to resume the return of the Pakistanis scheduled for July was again postponed due to Pakistan's internal political strife.

Leaders of the Stranded Pakistanis General Repatriation Committee (SPGRC) said they would launch a vigorous movement after November 7 to press for their return.

"If the repatriation is postponed or cancelled again, we'll do whatever necessary. We may start a long march towards Pakistan, stage hunger strikes or even go for self-immolation," said Abdul Jabbar Khan, Joint Secretary of the SPGRC.

Foreign Ministry officials expressed the hope that Benazir Bhutto might be 'a little softer' this time on the issue because of backing from the Mohajir Quami Movement (MQM) party for the PPP government in Sindh.

Bangladeshi leaders might remind their Pakistani counterparts about the promised repatriation of refugees during the December meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers in Dhaka, a Foreign Ministry official, on condition of anonymity, said.



Hartals have no public support: Huda

ZINJIRA, Oct 29: Information Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda today said that the hartals being called by the opposition against the democratically elected government had no public support, reports BSS.

The hartals against an elected and popular government were not the reflection of the will of the people, he said; rather, hartals were normally called against those who had no public support.

The minister was speaking as chief guest at a public meeting arranged in connection with the celebrations of the founding anniversary of the Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal, the youth wing of the BNP.

Organised by the Keraniganj unit of the Jubo Dal, the meeting was also addressed by Parliament members Amanullah Aman and Niamatullah Sabu, Dhaka District BNP general secretary Prof. Mohiuddin Ahmed, Jubo Dal convenor Baduzzaman Babul, Keraniganj thana BNP president Nazimuddin, general secretary Wahiduzzaman and Keraniganj Jubo Dal convenor Golam Mostafa.

The minister said that the people had given their mandate to the BNP for running the government for five years and for implementing the election manifesto of the party. The Information Minister said hartals bring no good to the people but create hindrance to development and economic progress.

He said that the people became the ultimate victims of hartals. If such a trend continued, the day would come when the people would resist such hartals unaided for their own benefit, he added.

Huda said that all the initiatives of the present government were launched aiming at the welfare of the people. For this, he added, the people had voted BNP to power for a third

Zillur rules out polls under BNP

Awami League General Secretary Zillur Rahman yesterday said his party will not participate in any election under the present government in future as "fair polls cannot be expected from BNP," reports UNB.

Addressing a public meeting at Kaliganj Primary School premises in Keraniganj thana, he urged the people to build up a movement under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina to get rid of "misrule" of the BNP regime.

The AL General Secretary said the present government is ruling the country in an autocratic style by patronising corruption, terrorism and political killings.

"Corruption and terrorism have engulfed the entire society... the government of Begum Zia has lost the moral right to rule the country," he said.

Presided over by Kaliganj AL leader Helauddin, the meeting was addressed, among others, by party's central leaders Dr. Alauddin, AEM Taleb Ali and Dhaka district and City leaders Mohammad Hanif, Benzir Ahad, Haji Mohd, Sellim Ahmad, Mohd. Shahjahan, Glasuddin Ahmad, Fazlur Rahman, Abdul Baten Mia, Obaidur Rahman, Nirmal Guha, Shaheen Ahmad and Dr. Delwar Hossain.

Aristide for total UN blockade of Haiti

UNITED NATIONS, Oct 29: Exiled Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide urged the United Nations Thursday to impose a "total and complete" blockade on his country but said it would take a complete about-face by a defiant military for him to return home this weekend, reports Reuters.

"If... those who are saying no, now say yes, then I am ready," he told a small group of reporters in an evening news conference, adding with a chuckle, "why not this weekend?"

"I am not pushing for that date," he said, adding that realistically his best chance to return would be for a total blockade to bring Haiti's defiant military leader, Lieutenant-General Raoul Cedras, to his knees.

Probarana Purnima celebrated

Probarana Purnima, a sacred Buddhist festival, was celebrated yesterday with due religious solemnity by the Buddhist community all over the country, reports BSS.

The Purnima marks the conclusion of three-month Lent period of the Bhikkhu Sangha with monks residing in the seclusion of the monasteries for meditation and observance of religious practices.

The Purnima is followed by a month-long festival of *Kathin Cibar Dan* (offering of yellow robes to monks) until the next *Kartik Purnima* in the monasteries of Buddhist-populated regions of the country.

EC leaders pick up Frankfurt as bank site

BRUSSELS, Oct 29: European Community leaders met Friday to lay the groundwork for a common foreign policy and single currency by 1999, and tentatively selected Germany as the future home for the central bank, reports AP.

Leaders of the dozen nations provisionally agreed to pick Frankfurt as the site of the European Monetary Institute, a forerunner to the central bank, which is to issue a common European currency by 1999.

But a final decision was delayed because of a fight between Spain and Denmark for the community's new environment agency, which would bring jobs and prestige to their capitals.

Britain, according to delegation sources, dropped its objection to placement of the central bank in Frankfurt. It had opposed that city, fearing it would

become a rival to its own financial centre in London.

Eleven nations agreed to give a new environment agency to the Danish capital of Copenhagen, but Spain demanded the bureau for itself, turning down an offer to host a new trademark office, sources said.

The new agencies, nearly a dozen in all, are part of the community's push to create a European Union, with a common foreign and security policy and a single currency by the end of the century.

In a draft statement, the leaders confirmed the goal of a economic and monetary union, with a single currency, by the end of the century. British Prime Minister John Major, whose nation has opted out of a single currency, recently dismissed the timetable as highly unlikely.

The statement, which must still be approved by the leaders, names Alexander Lamfalussy, a Belgian who heads an international bank in Switzerland, as president of the new monetary institute.

The leaders drive to united Europe was overshadowed by recession and rising unemployment.

"The cruel economic reality that concerns most people are jobs and growth," said British Prime Minister John Major.

The draft statement echoed his worries: "A situation in which the community has 20 million unemployed... is intolerable. All efforts must be made to remedy it."

Major, in the opening session, told the others they must find ways to create new jobs and put millions back to work.

Since their last summit in June, he said, 250,000 more people have been added to the jobless rolls.

He urged the nations to pare labour costs, ease burdensome rules on employers and clamp down on costly benefits to job holders.

EC chief executive Jacques Delors gave a preview of his economic revival plan, due at a December summit. He called for greater investment in transportation, telecommunications and other high-tech fields.

Short on cash, the leaders made no move to add to a dirr 45 billion growth package adopted last year. Indeed, officials say they have spent less than half of a special dirr 9 billion loan programme for railroads, bridges and other public works projects.