

DOWN TO EARTH

Epidemic of Road Accidents and Unhappy Bazar Conditions

By A S M Nurunnabi

Road accidents have become so frequent that they cannot be taken as casual or scattered events...

For the observers the conclusion seems inescapable that the roads and highways have turned into death traps...

As a result, the situation has come to such a pass that driving and killing has become free-for-all...

ing on the roads are junk or near-junk with old and derelict engines, weak and faulty brakes...

Some of the factors making for unsafe road conditions are noted below. On the Dhaka-Archa highway which is notorious for frequent accidents...

Another factor is the way manholes are placed on the roads. It has been observed that they are placed six inches or so higher or lower than the road surface...

In our country, many of our problems are sought to be side-tracked on account of our poverty or resource constraints...

plines, there are certain things which can be achieved without much financial implications...

Hence it is widely believed that accidents which have become so frequent are the end result of a system that has ostensibly collapsed...

A lot has already been said through the print media about the poor state of maintenance of the city bazars...

Such careless vendors need to be disciplined by the municipal staff who should also ensure that clearance of garbage is done regularly and promptly...

Ctg Fertiliser

From Page 1 Col 7 The experts said that the proposed DAP project at the CUFL is technically suitable and financially and economically viable...

Meanwhile, The Managing Director of the CUFL, Dr Shafiqur Rahman, expressed his confidence over the success of the DAP plant...

10 hurt

From Page 1 Col 8 Toll collectors allegedly beat up the bus driver and helper with the help of local police...

Later, the agitated transport workers of the route assembled at Tara Bridge, beat up the toll collectors and set fire to the toll collectors' rooms...

The situation was normal but riot police was deployed in the area.

Hasina

From Page 1 Col 7 scope to learn from China", she said. Hasina assured that if voted to power, her party would bring about more reforms to push the country towards rapid economic growth...

Regarding the economic policies pursued by all the post-1975 governments, the opposition leader said: "They all tried to take credit by begging from the donors..."

Replying to reporter, Hasina believed her visit to China would bear a tremendous impact on national politics...



The roads surrounding the National Stadium in the city getting a face lift before the ensuing SAF Games, due to begin Dec 20.

The Midnight File

Nigerians defy ban

LAGOS, Nov 19: Police in Nigeria clashed today with pro-democracy demonstrators defying a tough ban by the General who took power this week...

Order to halt reprisals on Palestinians

JERUSALEM, Nov 19: Army Chief of Staff General Ehud Barak ordered troops Friday to halt reprisals by settlers on Palestinians...

Effective JS: Khaleda

From Page 1 Col 3 She said parliamentary democracy had been achieved after a long nine years' struggle, involving immense sacrifices of the people...

We should make full use of our time during the Parliament sessions for solution of problems being faced by those who elected us, she said.

Referring to successful functioning of the Sangsad, the Prime Minister said different parliamentary committees comprising members from the parties represented in Parliament discuss relevant issues for their people.

In reply to a question as to what extent the present politics is centred around the Sangsad, Begum Khaleda Zia said the sovereign Sangsad is an outcome of the people's struggle...

'Agantuk' wins Shantaram award

BOMBAY, Nov 19: Satyajit Ray's 'Agantuk' and ace director Mani Ratnam have bagged the first 'Shantaram' Award for best film and best director respectively, reports PTI.

The awards, instituted by the V Shantaram Mottion Picture Scientific Research and Cultural Foundation in memory of late V Shantaram, were given away by the Maharashtra Governor, Dr P C Alexander...

The Shantaram gold award for best film carries a cash prize of Rs 40,000 and a trophy, while the gold award for the best director includes Rs 60,000 and a trophy.

The silver award for the best film went to Tamil film 'Roja' (Rs 20,000 and a trophy), while the Bengali film 'Sweet Patharar Thala' got the bronze award (a trophy and Rs 10,000) for the third best film.

Carrying of arms

From Page 1 Col 4 the Green Road crossing, from the Shyamoli Cinema Hall of the Mirpur Road to Road Number 1 (Old-27) of Dhanmondi crossing...

"We may either set up a new institution to deal with the water related problems or set up a network between the existing institutions in the three countries."

Khoiquzzaman added that in the next international conference on eastern Himalayan waters, which would be held in June or July next year...

CHT issue

From Page 1 Col 4 But surprisingly enough, the government had played both the cards at the same time, confounding the issue, analysts said.

Besides, as the present democratic government, from its very inception, made an open announcement of finding out a peaceful solution across the discussion table with the Shantibahini eying their issue from a political angle...

Nayan's death

From Page 1 Col 5 Tania's bedroom at her Tal-labagh residence in the city on Tuesday, their suspicions aroused, police arrested the actress when she went to the police station to inform them about Nayan's death.

Talking to The Daily Star last night, the investigating officer said that they were optimistic about unearthing the mystery very soon.

Police are looking for Rassel Rahman, the second husband of Tania, estranged from her for the past two years.

Police also expect the autopsy report by tomorrow. The CMM placed Tania on three-days' police remand for interrogation.

'Positive' response from Tokyo, says Saifur

Japanese Vice Minister for International Economic Affairs Shoichi Tanaka lauded the economic progress of Bangladesh and assured Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman that Tokyo would send a team to Dhaka soon regarding the co-financing of the Jamuna Bridge project...

The Japanese Vice Minister was discussing with Rahman Thursday in Tokyo, according to a message received here.

Rahman said that the main purpose of his visit was to discuss the Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge Project which is soon expected to go to the implementation stage.

The Chinese Ambassador in Dhaka was also present, during the press briefing. Narrating her dialogue with a leading CCP leader, Hu Jintao, the opposition leader said: "Our discussions were very fruitful and the occasion was covered by Beijing Television."

We [Hasina and Jintao] jointly declared that the relationship between the two parties (CCP and AL) will continue to be strengthened in the days to come," she told the newsmen.

She further said: "We also promised to maintain unity and cooperation in the fields of Politics, socio-economy and cultural affairs."

Reacting to the Prime Minister's recent controversial comment regarding Parliament, the opposition leader said she (PM) is absolutely correct because the Leader of the House and her cabinet colleagues were repeatedly telling lies in the House...

The ruling party members were now and then making false statements, Hasina alleged.

The PM's comment has tarnished the sanctity of Parliament," the opposition leader said, adding that when the Leader of the House herself tells lies then it proves nothing but her ignorance.



Somali Warlord Mohamed Farah Aided (L) seen at his first public appearance since June during a rally Thursday on the 21 October Road in Mogadishu. His speech was interspersed with brief songs by popular female vocalist, Halima Khalif Magol (2nd R).

Kashmiris call off 34-day shutdown Six-day deadline to withdraw troops from around Hazratbal

SRINAGAR, Nov 19: Muslim leaders today called off a 34-day crippling shutdown in the Kashmir valley, but warned they would call for another strike if Indian troops remained deployed around the Hazratbal Mosque, reports AFP.

Senior Kashmiri Muslim clerics also warned the state administration of drastic consequences if security barricades erected outside the mosque, Kashmir's holiest shrine, were not removed within six days.

Moulvi Abbas Ansari told thousands gathered for prayers at the Friday mosque here that the general strike called by the all-party Kashmiri freedom conference to denounce the month-long Hazratbal siege would be lifted from Saturday.

He said the strike would resume on November 24 if the government did not concede to the demands of the conference, an umbrella group of political and militant organisations opposed to Indian rule over Kashmir.

The crowds responded to the announcement with religious slogans and cries of support for the four-year-old Muslim militant campaign for secession of Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state.

Conference Chairman Moulvi Umer Farooq, who also addressed the faithful, lashed out at New Delhi for attempting to crush the Muslim separatist drive.

Rangamati

From Page 1 Col 8

According to sources, the supporters of the Pahari Chhatra Parishad (Hilly Students' Council) plan to organise a rally and stage demonstrations tomorrow at Khagrachharj in protest against the Nantiarchar incident.

Wednesday's incidents occurred when police swung into action to disperse two clashing groups in front of Nantiarchar Bazar and attempted to remove a road barricade put up by the supporters of the Pahari Chhatra Parishad, the body of tribal students who were demanding the withdrawal of a security (army) outpost, sources said.

The trouble began Wednesday morning when the tribal students' procession was confronted by the Pahari Gana Parishad — formed by the non-tribals of the area.

The government has formed a one-man judicial enquiry to probe the incident.

government to remove the BSF (Border Security Force) from Hazratbal, failing which (a protest) programme would be given to the people, the 20-year-old Farooq told the congregation.

If the government resisted, drastic consequences might emerge, he said. Today's announcement set the stage for the return of normalcy, at least for a week, in the Kashmir valley, which has remained paralysed since troops ringed the Hazratbal shrine on the night of October 15 to flush out armed militants.

The Hazratbal siege ended Tuesday when 65 Muslim gunmen and pilgrims gave themselves up to authorities.

But the strike continued, with Muslim leaders demanding the dismantling of security bunkers set up outside each of

the eight entry points to the Hazratbal mosque, located on the outskirts of Srinagar.

Earlier, thousands of Muslims flocked to Friday prayers at Kashmir's biggest mosque for the first time since the start of a month-long army siege at the nearby Hazratbal shrine.

At least 15,000 people poured into Srinagar's central Jamia Masjid for the first Friday prayers since October 15, when troops trapped about 80 civilians and armed Kashmiri militants inside the Hazratbal shrine.

Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao denied any deal had been done to end the standoff. But militant and official sources said some compromise had probably been reached which would ensure freedom for most of the militants.

KNM has incurred loss of Tk 92cr since '75

KHULNA, Nov 19: Government policy was blamed for heavy losses in the country's lone newsprint manufacturing plant and rendering its operation uneconomic.

Since the Khulna Newsprint Mills (KNM) was given to the BCIC in 1975, its accumulated losses have mounted to Tk 92 crore, including Tk 14.82 crore incurred in the last financial year (1992-93).

"We are made to pay Tk 7,693 for a ton of furnace oil when it is sold to private mills and factories at Tk 4,779 per ton and exported at Tk 2,500 to 3,500," Abdur Rashid, General Manager for quality control of the KNM, told UNB.

He said the KNM annually consumes 55,000 tons of furnace oil which constitutes more than 40 per cent of the production cost. "We could easily wipe out the losses if we get furnace oil at the price paid by the private mills."

"Besides, royalty for geva wood has been raised manifold over the years — from six paise per cubic feet in June 1991 to Tk 12 now — by the Forest Ministry," said the General Manager.

Procured from the Sundarbans where it grows in abundance without any effort, geva wood constitutes 82 per cent of the basic raw materials for making pulp. Geva is unfit for any other use, not even for fuel, as it emits poisonous smoke.

"You are raising prices of basic raw materials available at

home but not allowing us to proportionately raise the price of newsprint fearing it will evoke sharp reaction from the press which is the main consumer," said the General Manager who was in-charge of the mills last week.

Asked how he would run the mills if he were given its ownership, the General Manager smiled, "I'll certainly not sell my product below the cost price. Secondly, I'll endeavour to bring down the per unit cost by enforcing discipline among the workers and employees," said Abdur Rashid, a chemist who started his career in the Security Printing Press in Karachi in the early 50s.

The KNM, built in 1958 by the Canadians at Khalishpur at a cost of Tk 74.47 crore, still maintains the initial production capacity of about 50 lakh tons of newsprint, mechanical print, book print, blue match paper and coloured paper. It is manned by 2,227 people — 182 officers, 588 employees and 1,457 workers — to operate round the clock.

"I organise meetings and look after the welfare of the workers," replied a CBA leader of the mills without any hesitation. He never attends his duties as a mechanic. More than 50 labour leaders of the past and the present CBA go in his house, said an officer.

Labour leaders, usually backed by political parties, are almost immune to any disciplinary action and wield powers almost like those of a director of the mills.

"Labour laws must be changed to restore discipline among the workers, not only for the sake of the existing mills but for promoting rapid growth of industry in the country," the official emphasised.