

# DOWN TO EARTH

## Environmental Perils in City Life

By A S M Nurunnabi

Of late environmental issues have assumed great importance the world over. One aspect of environmental degradation relates to big cities. Around the world more than one billion people live in cities where the air quality does not meet the World Health Organisation (WHO) standards. Mexico City, Bangkok, Calcutta, New Delhi and Tehran — all have reportedly pollution levels higher than WHO standards. According to a World Bank report, the level of environmental degradation in East and South Asia rapidly approaching thresholds of unacceptably high social and economic costs.

In a poor developing country like ours, there is a compulsive need to adopt policies which encourage dependence on mechanical transports resulting in gradual but certain environmental degradation. According to a recent study, if the air quality in cities was brought within standards, between 300,000 and 70,000 premature deaths could be avoided, but in a developing country the city's transportation system will remain a top priority of government with its pollution, and there is no escape from it on account of development needs.

The pollution caused by the Dhaka city's transportation system is a cause of great concern for us at the moment. With the steady growth of motor traffic on the roads in the city, the threat from pollution keeps on increasing at an alarming rate.

A recent survey conducted with Asian Development Bank's help of 900 vehicles is understood to have shown that about 86 per cent buses, 90 per cent trucks, 80 per cent auto tempos, 93 per cent jeeps and 82 per cent microbuses emit poisonous exhausts. According to another survey conducted by the Department of Environment, commercial vehicles are the worst offenders in this

respect. The vast numbers of these vehicles which in many cases possess no fitness certificate regarding poisonous exhausts give a clue to the enormity of the problem of smoke pollution facing the city.

Strangely enough, the rickshaw is being seen today as one of the most environmentally kindest vehicles on the road and it is understood that similar forms of transport are being encouraged in several countries around the world, the emphasis being more on developing a sustainable form of transportation which will not pollute the atmosphere. In this perspective, some suggest that we shy away from policies which encourage additional motorised vehicles with billowing black smoke.

But this will not be realistic

for a developing country inasmuch as it may look like cutting the head to cure the headache. The practicable steps in the present situation appear to be the necessity for the concerned authorities to be punctilious, while giving fitness certificate to a vehicle, in ensuring that its exhaust system is in order. The prime of the hour is the constant vigilance and commitment of the concerned authorities to tackle smoke pollution for the betterment of environment and the preservation of public health.

The problem of smoke pollution from the source of industries has not reached an alarming state in general except in some isolated pockets, as opined by knowledgeable sources.

Another aspect of environmental degradation is noise pollution. Among the factors responsible are: lack of proper planning in urban growth, existence of noise creating industries and enterprises in areas mostly residential and recreational in character within city limits and absence

We have thus the city environmental problems which appear to be growing steadily. The extent of urban decay on this account is so widespread that none with a minimum power of observation can miss it.

From Page 1 Col 5

shad stormed into the milieu, chanting 'Ershad... Ershad'. They laid wreaths on behalf of the Jatiya Party at around 10 am.

Leaders of different political parties including JSD (Inu), Gano Forum, 10 left-leaning parties, Ganotantri Party, BSD (Khaleque), BSD (Mahbub), Workers Party, Jatiya Janata Party, CPB, NAP (Mozaffar), NAP (Bhashani), JSD (Rabi), Krishak Sramik Shamyabadi Dal, Gano Azadi League, NDP, Jagpa, Rupantorito Communist Party, Janata Dal, Ganatantrik Biplobi Jote, Islamic Biplobi Andolon and others also placed wreaths at the national mausoleum.

The Vice Chancellors of Dhaka and Jahangirnagar universities and BUET paid homage to the martyrs on behalf of their respective universities. The teachers' associations of the three universities also paid tributes to the war heroes.

The other organisations which placed wreaths at the memorial were: Mukti Joddha Sangsads and its different chapters, DUCSU, EUCSU, Projanma '71, Ghatak Dal, Nirmul Committee, all the hall student unions of the universities of Dhaka, Jahangirnagar and BUET, JASAS, Zia Sangskritik and BUST. JASAS, Zia Sangskritik and BUST.

He left behind his wife, two sons, three daughters and a host of friends and relatives to mourn his death.

His namaz-e-janaza was held at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque after Asr prayers and was buried at the Banani graveyard.

His qul khawani will be held on tomorrow (Sunday) after Asr prayers at his Eskatani residence.

**City BNP holds V-Day rally**

By Staff Correspondent

The Dhaka city BNP held a rally and brought out a procession to mark the Victory Day Thursday.

The speakers at the rally urged the nationalist forces to resist united all conspirators against democracy.

City BNP president and Food Minister Mir Shawkat Ali led the procession which started from the Naya Paltan BNP central office and ended at the Jatiya Press Club.

BNP joint secretary general and Energy Minister Khandker Mosharraf Hossain, State Minister for Shipping Harun Al-Rashid, Mayor Mirza Abbas, Salauddin Ahmed, MP and city BNP leaders were present on the occasion.

The Energy Minister addressing the post-processional rally in front of the Press Club warned of a particular quarter conspiring against the stability of the country.

He also recalled the contributions of the late President Ziaur Rahman to the Liberation War and the sacrifices of the martyrs.

## Five murdered in 2 days

From Page 1 Col 5

Akther, who was reportedly doused with kerosene and burned by her neighbours at Bhashantek, Cantonment, on Tuesday, died in the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) early Thursday.

The victim's mother Gulnur Begum blamed her neighbour Minu Roy and her daughter Rita for the killing, said police adding that Yesmin had an affair with Minu's son Poresh.

In another incident, a 14-year-old girl Sameema who was repeatedly raped and tortured at Demra died in the DMCH early Thursday.

Sameema's father Shamsul Malik told Demra police that her daughter was missing for the last two weeks.

A 16-year-old boy was stabbed to death at Hazaribagh following dispute over a badminton match yesterday afternoon.

**US pullout from Somalia begins**

MOGADISHU, Dec 17: The United States began pulling combat troops out of Somalia today as a step towards total withdrawal by the end of next March, reports Reuter.

## AL V-Day procession

From Page 1 Col 5

and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, led her party's march standing on a bedecked lorry. Several central party leaders were flanked her.

The procession started 3:45 pm from the Bangabandhu Avenue and culminated at Bangabandhu Bhaban, at the Jammondi Residential Area.

A smiling Hasina waved at the curious onlookers and conveyed Victory Day greetings to hundreds of men and women standing on both sides of the streets. Several thousands AL activists and supporters, a large number of them on trucks and buses, took part in the procession.

The marchers carried miniature national flags, party flags and portraits of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Sheikh Hasina. They also chanted slogans against the government and the Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh.

The processionists enacted scenes of both the Pakistan army's atrocities against the people and the capture of small groups of occupation soldiers by the freedom fighters during the Liberation War.

In one mobile show, a woman was seen thrashing a

The victim, Hossain Ahmed Shameem, was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) at 3:30 pm and died after an hour.

Bellal, 35, was murdered at Jagannath Saha Road at Lalbagh last Thursday night. Relatives said that some people called him out from his residence at around 10:30 pm on the same night but he did not return home. Later he was found dead, they added.

Lalbagh police said that one Majuddin — a grocer — was stabbed Tuesday night who died at the DMCH on the morning of December 16.

Police arrested one Manik for his alleged involvement in the murder.

## BCL-JCD clash in Ctg: 15 hurt

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Dec 17: At least 15 persons were reportedly injured on Wednesday midnight in Lalkhan Bazar area of the city during a clash between two groups of BCL and JCD activists over the placing of wreaths at the Shaheed Minar.

Police resorted to lathicharges to disperse them and brought the situation under control.

**AL V-Day procession**

From Page 1 Col 5

and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, led her party's march standing on a bedecked lorry. Several central party leaders were flanked her.

The procession started 3:45 pm from the Bangabandhu Avenue and culminated at Bangabandhu Bhaban, at the Jammondi Residential Area.

A smiling Hasina waved at the curious onlookers and conveyed Victory Day greetings to hundreds of men and women standing on both sides of the streets. Several thousands AL activists and supporters, a large number of them on trucks and buses, took part in the procession.

The marchers carried miniature national flags, party flags and portraits of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Sheikh Hasina. They also chanted slogans against the government and the Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh.

The processionists enacted scenes of both the Pakistan army's atrocities against the people and the capture of small groups of occupation soldiers by the freedom fighters during the Liberation War.

In one mobile show, a woman was seen thrashing a

Ahsan Ahmed Ashak, honorary treasurer of the Diabetic Association of Bangladesh and former Managing Editor and General Manager of the New Nation and the Dainik Bangla, died of a heart attack here yesterday morning. He was 75. reports BSS.

He was son of late Khan Bahadur Abdul Muktadir of Bantkhali under Chittagong district.

He left behind his wife, two sons, three daughters and a host of friends and relatives to mourn his death.

His namaz-e-janaza was held at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque after Asr prayers and was buried at the Banani graveyard.

His qul khawani will be held on tomorrow (Sunday) after Asr prayers at his Eskatani residence.

## City BNP holds V-Day rally

By Staff Correspondent

The Dhaka city BNP held a rally and brought out a procession to mark the Victory Day Thursday.

The speakers at the rally urged the nationalist forces to resist united all conspirators against democracy.

City BNP president and Food Minister Mir Shawkat Ali led the procession which started from the Naya Paltan BNP central office and ended at the Jatiya Press Club.

BNP joint secretary general and Energy Minister Khandker Mosharraf Hossain, State Minister for Shipping Harun Al-Rashid, Mayor Mirza Abbas, Salauddin Ahmed, MP and city BNP leaders were present on the occasion.

The Energy Minister addressing the post-processional rally in front of the Press Club warned of a particular quarter conspiring against the stability of the country.

He also recalled the contributions of the late President Ziaur Rahman to the Liberation War and the sacrifices of the martyrs.

## Editor : Mahfuz Anam

Published by Mediaworld Ltd, 52, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000 and printed at City Publishing House Ltd, 90-Kakrail, Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4. Advertisement: 500091 (Direct). FAX No: 88-2-863035. GPO Box No: 3257. Cable: DAILYSTAR DHAKA.



Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina leading a procession in the city Thursday on the occasion of the Victory Day (top), and the BNP Dhaka city unit procession on the Victory Day (above)

— Star photo

## Spirit of Liberation War

From Page 1 Col 5

Sangstha Mahila Parishad, Bangladesh Chhatra League (M), Bangla Academy, Shilpakala Academy, Awami Mahila League, Awami Juba League, Uddhi Shilpi Goshthi, Khejlaghar Asar, Bangladesh Medical Medical Association, ADAB, Dhaka Medical College Teachers' Association and Students' Union, Aijibi Samannaya Parishad, BCS (adm) Association, Employees Associations of BRTC, BIWTC, BIWTA, and different banks, Sandhita Palli Biddu Samity, Jahangirnagar Theatre, Nazrul Institute, Caritas and others.

In observance of the Victory Day, the Dhaka City BNP and the Bangladesh Awami League brought out colourful processions in the city.

The BNP rally, led by its city president and Food Minister Mir Shawkat Ali, started from the party office and ended before the National Press Club.

Energy Minister Khandker Mosharraf Hossain, City Mayor Mirza Abbas, Shipping Minister M K Anwar also participated in the rally.

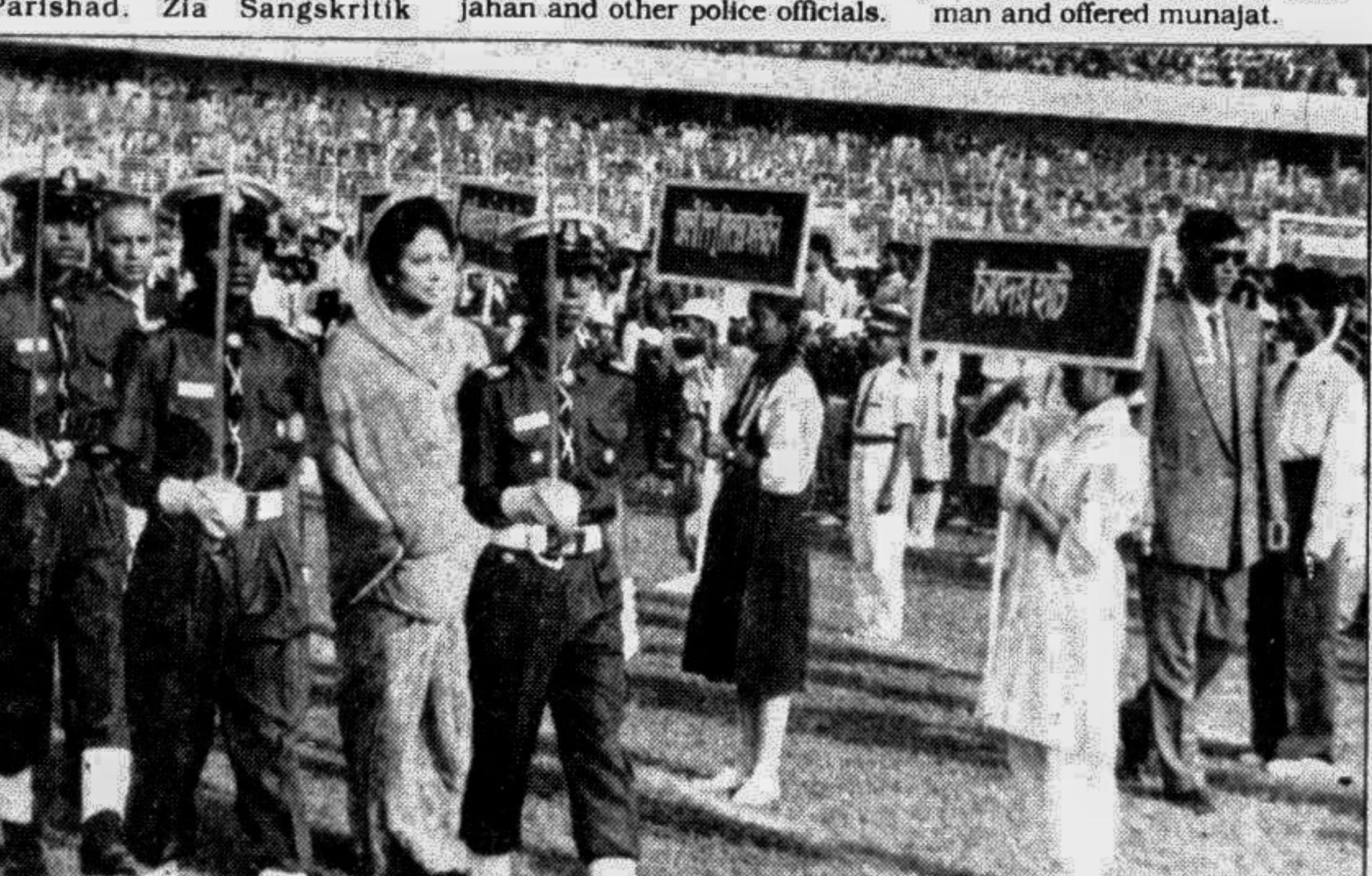
In a special acrobatic display held at the Mirpur National Stadium, Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia told a jubilant crowd that elimination of poverty could make the Victory Day meaningful.

She extended her greetings to the children saying the Liberation War was waged to establish our rights.

Today we have got the right to speak independently and express ourselves freely," the Prime Minister said.

"We had to fight for it (independence), we had to sacrifice a lot and lose many of our near and dear ones," she said hoping the children would learn more about the glorious war when they grew up.

Earlier, the Prime Minister, along with her party colleagues, went to the mazar of the late President Ziaur Rahman and offered munajat.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia inspecting the juvenile rally at the Mirpur Stadium on the Victory Day Thursday.

— Star photo

## PM : Investment

From Page 1 Col 8

Ishkandar Ali and general secretary Nazrul Islam Khan were also present.

Begum Zia said that the present government had been putting in relentless efforts to further improve the investment climate in the country.

The Energy Minister addressing the post-processional rally in front of the Press Club warned of a particular quarter conspiring against the stability of the country.

He also recalled the contributions of the late President Ziaur Rahman to the Liberation War and the sacrifices of the martyrs.

## Varsity officers

From Page 1 Col 3

structure and inclusion of officers' representatives to the university Senate, Syndicate, Finance Committee and Academic Council in all universities of the country.

The leaders of Bangladesh Inter University Officers' Federation at a press conference yesterday said that a high-powered committee of the government had already recommended implementation of its demands.

But the demands have not yet been fulfilled, the leaders of the federations stated at the conference held at the Teachers Students Centre (TSC) of the Dhaka University yesterday afternoon.

Begum Zia sharply criticised the ousted Ershad regime for ruining the country's industries and the banks

## Ahmadiyyas

From Page 1 Col 8

against the Quadianis and demanding the government ban their activities.

A poster printed and distributed by the Majlis said that President Abdur Rahman Biswas would inaugurate the congregation, to be attended by religious leaders from the Islamic countries.

When contacted, a reliable source in the President's Secretariat, however, said that there was no such programme in the President's schedule in the coming week.

Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury told the Daily Star that he would look into the matter.

## The Midnight File

### Two US planes crash in midair collision

TOKYO, Dec 17: Two US Marine Corps FA-18 jet fighters crashed into the Pacific Ocean after colliding in midair off Okinawa in southwestern Japan, US military authorities said Friday. The accident occurred at 10:25 am (0125 GMT) between 130 and 160 miles (200 and 240 kilometers) southeast of Kadena Air Base on Okinawa while the aircraft from Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 115 were on a routine training mission, the air base said. reports AP.

**Anura Bandaranaike sworn in as Minister**

COLOMBO, Dec 17: The son of Sri Lanka's parliamentary opposition leader was sworn in as a government minister today. A statement from the president's office said. Anura Bandaranaike, whose mother Sirima heads the Sri