DOWN TO EARTH

Road Indiscipline in City

By ASM Nurunnabi

Dhaka's road indiscipline has lately assumed terrifying proportions. The extraordinary traffic situation is to be seen to be believed. In all major cities, traffic congestion is experienced but not on the scale in Dhaka. The daily commuters. businessmen, ordinary users of buses and private vehicles have literally to break through the near-impossible conditions created daily on the roads. Movement in the capital city is therefore a regular odyssey.

The most disappointing part of this urban problem is that it not only leads to heavy fatalities caused by the rapidly disappearing discipline on the roads, but many other problems caused by uncontrolled movement of all types of vehicles, the inaction of the traffic police and almost a total lack of enforcement of any rule whatever to deal with road offences and offenders or any step whatever taken to improve the standard of mobility on the roads. In short, road discipline has completely col-

Some of the notorious spots for traffic tams in new Dhaka include Gulistan area. North-South Road at Purana Paltan crossing, Gausia market area, Farm Gate area. Mouchak area. Eastern Plaza area on Sonargaon Road. In old Dhaka, vehicular traffic is subject to constant jams at Tipu Sultan Road, English Road crossing. junction near Narinda Police Outpost, Islampur Road and its several lanes and by-lanes, Moulvi Bazar area, etc. In these traffic tams, harrowing scenes in which buses, trucks, private cars, motor cycles, tempos. baby taxis rickshaw vans, push carts and pedestrians are stuck up for long hours are unthinkable anywhere outside Bangladesh

The huge number of rickshaws is held to be the main causative factor for the traffic anarchy. They outnumber cars and other vehicles by 25/30 times. Rickshaws are Dhaka's speciality. They have reached a point where they are becoming the causes of our nightmare. They take "U" turn at any point they like without any regard for the fast moving vehicles. stop their contraptions at will in front of fast moving vehicles thereby creating chances of sudden accidents. The behaviour of the public buses is also erratic. They stop in the middle of the road for as long as they wish for collecting passengers and thereby causing blockade for others, while the trucks, when they are not immobilised by traffic jams, run at a breakneck speed on busy

From Page 1 Col 4

the area over the past two days

Begum Zia promised increased

development activities. On the

other hand Hasina repeatedly

referred to the failures of the

BNP government and called it

"corrupt and a breaker of

election promises to be a very

keenly fought contest among

the ruling party candidate Kazi

Salimul Haque Kamal and his

AL rival Shafiquzzaman

Bachchu. The latter is the son

The AL has had a strangle-

hold on the seat for the past

two decades — barring a short

interregnum when the JP's

Nitai Roy Chowdhury won the

seat in the 1988 elections un-

der the autocratic Ershad

which were boycotted by both

the BNP and the AL as well as

the Jamaat. In the 1991 par-

liamentary elections the AL

had recaptured the seat with a

However, observers closely

following the campaigning in

PM's gift to

new bride

From Our Correspondent

Minister Begum Khaleda Zia

gave Tk 2000 to Iti, a newly

married bride at the bride-

Mohammadpur thana today.

groom's house in Kaikobad of

campaign, the Prime Minister

entered the house of one Aktar

and learnt that he had married

only yesterday. Iti, the wife,

came forward and sponta-

neously touched the Prime

Minister's feet to offer her re-

spects. Begum Khaleda Zia

immediately congratulated the

new couple and offered Tk

2000 as gift to the new bride.

While on a door-to-door

MAGURA, Mar 18: Prime

the area, told our correspon-

handsome majority.

of late Asaduzzaman:

According to observers, the

pledges.

roads to make up for lost time.

Another factor causing traffic mess is the holding of meetings and rallies on the roads. In some areas, particular thoroughfares have become favourite venues for the meetings. It appears that such favourite spots are those in front of the Press Club, the road north of Baitul Mukarram, the Shapla Square and the Bangabandhu Avenue. The organisers of such meetings seem to care very little about the suffering caused to the public on account of traffic jams at these places.

Road congestion is reportedly a common problem of important urban areas of Asia. Intolerable road congestions have prompted governments from the Philippines to Indonesia to go for mass transit systems. Likewise many megacities like Calcutta, Tokyo and Hong Kong, because of space limitation, have pushed upwards from street level or downward below ground to set up light railway systems. All this is because their road net work and booming populations have made commuting for both motorists and pedestrians almost impossible.

Similar situation is fast developing in Dhaka city. For the chronic traffic congestion in Dhaka streets, rickshaws are held as already noted, mainly responsible. In a megacity which Dhaka is poised to be, it is absurd to think of a primitive vehicle like rickshaw operating in its traffic system. The crucial question now is what should be done with the rising tide of rickshaws in the city. The stern reality is that they provide far too many jobs and support too many families. So no hasty decision can be contemplated without creating more viable alternatives. But a decision to remove them seems inevitable sooner and later. Otherwise, Dhaka traffic will come to a standstill in the not distant future.

Some observers have suggested that for a start we may put a ceiling on how many rickshaws our roads can hold. Given the area-wise distribution of road capacity, it may be possible to issue area-specific

Some other observers are of the opinion that since rickshaws are a major factor of disorder, they may be put in a single line particularly on those roads where such a regulated movement of rickshaws is feasible. The roads, where crowding and congestion is chronic, could be divided into three parts, each earmarked

dent that this time around it's

likely to be a much closer race.

although the AL's

Shafiquzzaman Bachchu will no

doubt enjoy a certain advan-

tage given the sympathy among

the voters for his late father,

yet he may lose out on the mi-

nority vote which has in the

past always tended to go in

Elaborating one observer,

requesting anonymity, told

The Daily Star that the candi-

dacy of Nitai Roy has threat-

ened the monopoly of the AL

regarding the minority vote.

40 per cent of the electorate.

Hindu voters comprise nearly

On the other hand, of the

five candidates, four are from

Mohammadpur thana. In con-

trast, the BNP's Kazi Kamal is

the sole candidate from

Shalikha thana, which was

never had a man in the JS to

date. This has given the BNP

Jamaat and Mahbubur Rahman

of the Islami Oikya Jote are the

other two candidates in the

There are a total of 2,06624

Some 1281 election offi-

cials will be deployed for con-

ducting the voting at 102

polling stations. Chief Election

Commissioner Justice

Mohammad Abdur Rouf, who

leaves Dhaka today, will stay at

Magura on the election day to

Bangladesh Rifles has been

sent to Magura to assist police

and ansars in maintaining peace during the voting.

foreign missions and organisa-

tions in Dhaka are also ex-

pected to visit Magura to

monitor the by-election, being

seen by many as politically very

significant, especially since the

results of the city corporation

polls in January.

Observers from different

paramilitary

ensure free and fair polling.

Prof Golam Akbar of the

nominee an extra advantage.

favour of the AL.

They point out that

Magura by-election

for slow-moving and speedy vehicles of different types. Most of the roads, they feel can be easily so divided at least into two sections. Once the movement of rickshaws is regulated, about 50 per cent of the order needed on the roads would be achieved.

There are other suggestions for extension and upgrading of the city's public transport system. According to one suggestion, a scheme may be drawn up and integrated with the phasing out of rickshaws. Cooperatives of these vehicle owners can be formed under government auspices and financed through government schemes. These cooperative can own the new fleet of buses and mini coaches to replace the rickshaw. The members of the cooperatives could be involved in the new transport system, driving and conducting the bus services and maintaining the vehicles. This type of personal involvement would ensure, among other things, efficient organisation, improve the tenor of life of the participants and ease them out of back-breaking work.

In a recent study conducted for integrated transport system for greater Dhaka with the financial assistance of the UNDP, the lack of co-ordination in traffic management in the activities of police, RAJUK. city corporation and road transport authorities has been noted. Among the remedial measures suggested in the study for improving traffic management are the establishment of a Transport Action Plan office, formation of a Task Force of the police, preparation of a Traffic Plan and constitution of a joint team with BRTA and police. The study also recommended formation of a Traffic Cadre exclusively for traffic management, since the existing traffic police has been found to be inadequate and lacking in competence. Since traffic jams mainly occur at important road intersections and spread into nearby thoroughfares, the study had recommended that licences may be granted to rickshaws on area basis so that they keep clear of the busy road intersections.

Everyday we are witnesses to the sad wastage of many valuable workhours as citizens are stuck up in mammoth traffic jams for long hours, helpless, exhausted and restless. It is the urgent need of the hour to deal effectively with the traffic anarchy by suitably reorganising and revitalising the traffic system.

Indian SC quashes ban on Jamaat

NEW DELHI, Mar 18: The Supreme Court today struck down the centre's December 1992 ban on the Jamaate-e-Islami Hind (JEIH) under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, reports PTI.

A division bench comprising Justice P B Sawant and Justice S Mohan in a 19-page judgement held that the government notification of December 10,1992 imposing an immediate ban on the JEIH on grounds that it had been disclaiming and questioning the sovereignty and territorial integrity in relation to Kashmir was "bad in law and had to be struck down".

While expressing no validity on the rest of the notification which is the subject matter of adjudication before the unlawful activities tribunal, the court however set aside the Patna High Court order upholding the government ban.

The court held as far as the first two reasons that the Amir and Naib Amir of the Jamaat in public meetings in 1990 and 1991 had advocated separation of Kashmir from India were concerned, the grounds "were absolutely stale and cannot justify immediacy on December 10, 1992 when the impugned notification was is-

Iran has no intention to kill Rushdie

PARIS, Mar 18: Iran does not plan to send a hit squad to kill writer Salman Rushdie, sentenced to death by the late Ayatollah Khomeini for allegedly blaspheming Islam, Iran's ambassador to France said Friday, reports AP.

"The government is not looking to eliminate Mr Rushdie," Ambassador Hamidreza Assefi said at a news conference.

The British writer has been in hiding since 1989, when the Iranian spiritual leader issued a fatwa, or holy order, shortly before his death urging Muslims to kill Rushdie as punishment for his novel. "The Satanic Verses."

Shantibahini, securitymen trade fire

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Mar 18: A gunbattle between the armed Shantibahini men and the security personnel took place for two hours at an interior place of Banderban hill district on Thursday afternoon.

No casualty from either side was reported. The encounter, second in two days time, began when a group of armed tribal rebels in olive-green uniform opened fire indiscriminately on a security patrol at Mahendrapara area of Banderban district, official sources said.

But in the face of counter fire the rebels fled into deep hilly forests. Earlier, the security patrol faced such an attack on March 15 at Kaptai and a similar encounter also took place 15 days ago at Matiranga of Khagrachhari hill district.

'Honeytrapped' From Page 1 Col 4

Butcher of Baghdad' through an alleged close relationship with a cousin of the Iraqi dictator," The Daily Mirror said.

Sir Peter Harding, 60, quit on Sunday as chief of Britain's Defence Staff after his two-year adulterous liaison with the self-described Spanish society hostess hit British press head-

Newspapers said Buck daughter of a hospital cleaner and a bricklayer, had lured ex fighter pilot Harding, married with four children, into a 'honeytrap" to help sell her story of their now finished af fair to the top-selling News of The World newspaper for more than 80,000 pounds (120,000 dollars).

Defence Secretary Malcolm Rifkind told an opposition Labour Party spokesman in a letter on Thursday that inquiries were under way to see whether Harding's affair with the ex-wife of a former Conservative defence minister had compromised security.

Government officials said they believed there had been no security risk, despite an earlier news report that the MI 5 domestic security service intercepted love letters to see if they contained breaches of security.

"When the Ministry of Defence found out that Sir Peter was consorting with a woman who had Arab friends, the intelligence services were called in to read their letters. The Guardian said of the alleged Iraq link today.

"Lady Buck's previous love life, particularly as an escort for Iragi businessmen, including a cousin of President Saddam, is said to have worried officials, the newspaper added.

The affair has invited parallels with the 1963 resignation of War Minister John Profumo after he admitted lying to parliament over his affair with call-girl Christine Keeler, who also slept with a Soviet military

Holiday reporter Amalesh dead



Amalesh Sarker, a senior staff reporter of The Weekly Holiday, died of brain haemorrhage early yesterday morning at the Holy Family Hospital in Dhaka. He was 38, reports BSS.

He left behind his parents, wife, brothers, sisters and a large number of colleagues and wellwishers to mourn his

His body was brought to the National Press Club at 10 am where the grieved colleagues had the last glimpse of their beloved Amalesh who had earned love and respect of all for his professional integrity.

BFUJ and DUJ condoled the premature death of Amalesh Sarker. Amalesh Sarker started his

career as a journalist with The Daily Azad during his student life. He also worked with the news department of Bangladesh Television. He joined The Daily Sangbad in 1981 as a subeditor and continued there till 1988. He attended a training course titled "journalist in Europe" for one year in 1988. On return he joined The Weekly Holiday where he worked with proficiency and skill till his death.

During his professional career, Amalesh Sarker visited France, Italy, Britain, Spain, Belgium, Hungary, India and Nepal.

The body of Amalesh Sarker was taken to Mymensingh town yesterday and was cremated at the Kiwatkhali crematorium.



Fidel Castro, speaking to reporters during a press conference in Washington Thursday. Revuelta defected to the US last December, greatly embarrassing her father, whom she has called a 'tyrant'. - AFP photo

Israel dismantling bases in Gaza to meet deadline

GAZA, Mar 18: The Israeli army is dismantling parts of a military bases in the occupied Gaza Strip ready to meet an April 13 deadline to pull out. despite suspension of Israeli-PLO peace talks after the Hebron mosque massacre, reports Reuter.

Palestinians and Israelis said today that troops had accelerated the dismantling of permanent structures in the bases in areas slated to come under limited Palestinian selfrule according to the peace accord signed last September. Some facilities had already

been completely evacuated they said. Palestinian witnesses said they saw soldiers dismantle at least two military outposts in Gaza City and in the southern town of Rafah over the past few

days. "They are taking down observation towers and moving out mobile homes from some of the biggest military bases in Gaza City," said one witness.

A senior Arab official in the Israeli civil administration said authorities had already set up alternative offices near the Erez crossing point to Israel and installed computer net works and communications facilities.

The official said some em ployees were scheduled to start work from the new offices on Sunday.

"Israel is speeding up the evacuation of its governing bodies from the Gaza Strip, he said.

The Israeli army had been slowly dismantling certain military installations and preparing alternative locations for soldiers and its civilian employees since the signing of

SAARC ministers From Page 1 Col 4 the club and officials of the

Foreign Ministry.

Silwal lauded the idea of the South Asian Press Club Conference as something unique and said this would go a long way in furthering understanding among the mediamen in the region.

"Dhaka is the birth place of the SAARC. First SAARC summit took place here, second cycle of the summits began here and the conference of the press clubs - an unofficial event is also taking place here," he said in a fitting tribute to the National Press Club, which has initiated the event— first of its kind in the region.

Silwal said, the conference beginning here today is another testimony of the eagerness of the people of this region to forge closer cooperation and understanding at different levels.

The SAARC Secretary General said he would avail himself of the opportunity to discuss SAARC matters with persons concerned here. "Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia is deeply committed to the SAARC and Bangladesh is always very responsive to talks on SAARC issues," he said. Asked about the SAPTA.

Silwal said the concept was making good progress after the heads of government approved it in the last summit. He said the next inter-government meeting in Pakistan on the issue would take up more brass tacks matters involved.

the peace deal in September. Put Israeli security sources confirmed that preparations

were under way to meet an

April 13 deadline for withdrawal - should the government order the army to do so. "The moves are to make it easier for the redeployment (of forces) as quickly as possible We are moving unessential

equipment," one source said. He said the moves had not affected the army deployment in the Gaza Strip. Troops whose quarters had been dismantled, for instance, were now housed in tents.

Israeli military officials said nothing out of the ordinary was happening.

Lalbagh murder One more suspect arrested

By Staff Correspondent Police vesterday arrested another suspect in the city's post-polls Lalbagh carnage in which six people were gunned

The suspect, Abul Hossain was arrested from Baligaon village under Tongibari thana of Munshigani district early yesterday morning. He was detained in the city's Detective Branch office at Minto Road for questioning.

A defeated ward commissioner candidate, Alhaj Abdul Aziz, allegedly led an armed attack on the supporters of his rival Humayun Kabir on January 31, a day after the polls. Six supporters of Kabir were killed in the armed attack at Nawabganj, Lalbagh. The main suspect in the

murder - Abdul Aziz - is still at large. Police have raided all possible hide-outs to nab Aziz and his accomplices but so far failed to arrest many of them. Abul Hossain left his house

at 8, Abdul Aziz Lane, Nawabgani, soon after the murder and took shelter in Baligaon village. The sixteen other accused

in the case, who have been named in first information report (FIR) of police, are also absconding. Police believe some of the

accused may have left the country.

Bhutanese princess jailed in Taiwan

TAIPEI, Mar 18: A Taiwan court sentenced a Bhutanese princess to 10 months in prison today for attempting to smuggle 22 rhino horns into Taiwan last year, state television said, reports Reuter.

Princess Dekly Wangchack, 43, who is free on bail, did not show up at the district court in the northern country of Taoyuan for the sentencing. It was not immediately known if she would appeal against the verdict.

She could have been sentenced to upto one year in prison for violating the islands conservation laws.

Wangchuck was arrested last September while trying to smuggle 14 kg (31 lb) of rhino horn and nine bears' gallbladders into the island from Hong Kong in her luggage. The rhino horn is estimated to be worth at least US dollar 758,000.

As a member of Bhutan's royal family, she has a diplomatic passport, but Taiwan and Bhutan do not have formal diplomatic relations.

The Midnight File

Columbia returns to earth

CAPE CANAVERAL, Mar 18: Five astronauts returned to earth aboard the space shuttle Columbia today, touching down in Florida after a near-record two-week science and technology research mission. Columbia touched down at the Kennedy Space Centre at 8:10 am EST (1310 GMT) after a 13 day 23 hour voyage just 50 minutes short of the duration record set on its previous mission in September. The astronauts, four men and one woman, had a diverse schedule of secondary assignments while automated furnaces and sensors carried out 11 major materials experiments in the open cargo bay, reports Reuter.

Security forces on alert in Pak cities

ISLAMABAD, Mar 18: Security forces were on alert in major Pakistani cities following a bus bomb blast overnight that killed six people and wounded 25, police said today. The blast occurred in the industrial city of Gujrat, Punjab province, the bus was packed when the bomb exploded. Four people were killed instantly and another two died in hospital. reports AFP.

Rabin, Arafat talk over phone

JERUSALEM, Mar 18: Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO leader Yasser Arafat spoke by telephone today about renewing peace talks, Israel radio said. A senior Israeli official confirmed that the conversation had taken place but would not say who initiated the call or what was discussed. "The conversation went on for a few minutes," said the official, who asked not to be identified, reports Reuter.

Elect BNP nominee

From Page 1 Col 3

During her mass-contact campaign the BNP chairperson stopped at over 100 places as thousands of villagers came out of their houses to greet her

She also launched door-todoor campaign villages and advised the villagers to start dairy and poultry farmings, fish cultivation and tree plantation and sought votes for sheaf of paddy' the BNP's election sym-

At the Banagram public rally Advocate Lutfur Rahman, a leader of Magura district Awami League and a brother of late Awami League MP Asaduzzaman, announced his joining in the BNP.

Agriculture Minister Majid ul Hug. Post and Telecommunications Minister Tariqui Islam, Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, State Minister for Civil Aviation Abdul Mannan, whips Ashraf Hossain and Abdul Karim and BNP Nominee Kazi Salimul Hug accompanied the BNP chairperson during the campaign.

The Prime Minister dwelt at length on various development programmes undertaken by her government.

Major visits troops in Bosnia

GORNJI VAKUF (Bosnia). Mar 18: British Prime Minister John Major, visiting British troops in Bosnia, said today the chances for real peace in the country had improved, reports Reuter.

Major arrived in Gorni Vakuf, central Bosnia, on a one-day tour of Bosnia that will also take him to Sarejevo and several bases of British UN troops. They make up the second-largest contingent in the international peacekeeping force in the country.

Asked how he rated the chances for peace in Bosnia. Major told reporters: "From what I have gathered, there is certainly a much better chance for peace than there was three weeks ago."

Left front

From Page 1 Col 7 bution of cultivable land to the real farmers, encouraging cooperative farming and distribution of agricultural loan among the marginal farmers. Explaining the industrial

policy, the draft says the LDF would develop the public sector by eliminating corruption and inefficiency. Side by side, the honest, initiatives of the private sector would be encouraged by the state. The economic policy of the

LDF calls for expansion of the local market for locally-produced commodities by increasing the purchasing power of the people protection to the Jocal products by controlling the import of foreign goods, expenditure cut in the unproductive sectors, including defence and administration and effective measures for flood control in the country.

The Left alliance, according to its programme, will also na tionalise the education sector and ensure free education for all up to the Secondary level. remove discrimination in the wages of male and female workers, adopt effective measures for population control and protection of the environment.

About the organisational structure of the proposed front, the draft says a 24member central steering committee, with three representatives from each of the eight component parties would be formed to look after the policy implementation of the alliance.

Each component party of the alliance would have the right to direct its own activities but would not be allowed to do anything contrary to the

spirit of the front. The proposed front will be formally announced at a press conferences in the city

She said her government had rejuvenated the raw and economy and taken welfare. ' oriented programmes for the Begum Zia assured the peo-

ple that steps would be taken to free the peasants from the clutches of the unscrupulous fertilizer traders, who were out to sell fertiliser in exorbitant prices. She said in future alternative method would be adopted so that the farmers could get the fertilizers at fair prices.

She asked the rural women to avail the credit facilities being provided by the government and other self-employment programmes to stand on their own feet.

The BNP Chairperson urged the voters irrespective of party affiliations, caste and creed not to pay heed to the oppositions' untrue and false anti-government propaganda and instead elect Kazi Kamal for involving themselves in the ongoing development programmes.

Muslims, Croats

From Page 1 Col 7 first major step toward peace. adding: "It is the hope of all present today that the Serbs will join in this process as

Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic also took part along with Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic and Bosnian Croat representative

Kresimir Zubac. Izetbegovic called the signing "a great day" for Bosnia but reminded the audience that the fighting still raged in sev-

eral parts of his country. This means that our efforts for peace must continue without hesitation," he said. "Our people want only two things: peace and justice, or, as they say, 'fair peace.'

He said "fair peace" means that "our country will keep its borders and the villages and cities from which our people have been expelled will be able to resettle the refugees.

"Those who are responsible for war crimes will have to be brought to justice," he said. Tudjman said: "We hope

that this agreement will help create the conditions for lasting peace and the return of stability to our people."

The federation agreement involving two of the three warring factions followed last month's US-led NATO military. intervention in which a Serb artillery bombardment of Sarajevo, the Muslim-dominated Bosnian capital, was essentially halted under threat of NATO air raids.

FAP authorities From Page 1 Col 7

Encompassing Tangail Sadar, Pusail, Delduar and Kalihati thanas of the district, the Tangail CPP started back in 1990 and is scheduled to be finished by the end of this

Environmentalists as well as a section of pro-environment NGOs fear that the civil engineering structures proposed by the FAP would seriously damage the country's environment, agriculture and fish resources The embankments and

other structures, as suggested by the FAP, would also displace a huge number of people, they say, entailing even greater hazards than the recurring floods, they say. They argue that such pro-

grammes should be planned after thorough consultation with the people at the grassroots level. However, the FAP authori-

ties say the programme will

bring about long-term solution to the flood problem as well as economic benefits by scientific use of the land, its waters and other resources Meanwhile, the Dutch par-

liament, at a recent session observed that the FAP-20 project should go ahead because of the greater national interest of Bangladesh.

Printed & Published by A. S. Mahmud, Managing Director, on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd, 52, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, from City Publishing House Ltd, 90 Kakrail, Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhanmandi R/A, Dhaka-1205, PABX: 500092-4, Commercial: 500091 (Direct), Fax No: 88-02-863035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam