

DOWN TO EARTH

Tale of Unclaimed Death Casualties in City

By A S M Nurunnabi

Every day from the four corners of the country, numerous persons come to the metropolitan city of Dhaka on various business. If any of them meets sudden unnatural death in the city, he is liable to become an unclaimed corpse if he does not bear any identification paper. It has been seen that in such cases where no identification of the victims of accidents is available, they were buried as unclaimed bodies. It is alleged that due to faulty systems at hospital morgues and city graveyards, which preclude effective enquiries subsequently by concerned relatives, the number of unclaimed corpses has been increasing day by day in the city.

According to Anjuman-e-Mafidul Islam sources, their statistics for the last few years show that they receive seven to eight unclaimed bodies every day on average.

The authorities that are associated with the task of recovering and burying unclaimed bodies are the police administration, Anjuman-e-Mafidul Islam and the Azimpur and Jurain graveyards authorities controlled by the Dhaka City Corporation.

The police normally get information about unnatural deaths through the people present at the places of occurrence. Besides, unidentified bodies recovered as a result of accidents from trains, launches, buses or on roads are first recovered by the police of the concerned police stations and then made over to hospital morgues for post-mortem. After the preparation of post-mortem and necessary reports, the police hand over the bodies to Anjuman-e-Mafidul Islam. As a matter of formality, the Detective Branch of the police also take photographs of the bodies, but in case the corpses are mutilated or badly disfigured, no photographs are taken. Unidentified bodies from railway accidents are recovered by the railway police of the concerned area and thereafter the formalities are followed.

Anjuman-e-Mafidul Islam is a well-known social service organization. It came into being back in 1947. From that time, the organization, along with its other social welfare services, has been associated with the

work of carrying and supplying shrouds for the unclaimed dead bodies. Till 1958, the organization used to recover such bodies when informed by local people, and then carried them to the graveyards for burial after necessary formalities. It was, however, learnt that due to some legal complications, Anjuman withdrew from such work about fourteen years ago. At present the unclaimed bodies are received by Anjuman through the police.

As regards corpses belonging to other religions, no problem for their disposal arises in the cases of males. If the body happened to be of a Hindu, the Hindu Cremation Society is approached which claims three to three thousand and five hundred taka for cremation of each body. In many cases, it was seen that, since neither the police nor the morgue was able to provide the required fund, such bodies are disposed of on the basis of death certificate showing the deceased as a Muslim.

The Dhaka City Corporation has under its control four graveyards, namely, Shaheed Biddhijibi graveyard at Mirpur, Banani graveyard, Azimpur graveyard and Jurain graveyard. But only in Azimpur and Jurain graveyards, the unclaimed bodies are allowed to be buried. The shrouds for such bodies are supplied by Anjuman and the balance of the cost of burial is borne by the City Corporation. The cost of each burial is said to be between Tk 400 and 450. It was learnt from City Corporation sources that 600 and 400 unclaimed bodies were buried last year in the Azimpur and Jurain graveyard respectively.

The issue of unclaimed bodies was raised recently in a Bangla daily. It was learnt that in two cases of deaths from accidents, the bodies were buried as unclaimed ones in circumstances which somewhat showed lack of prompt action on the part of the relatives of the deceased in making necessary enquiries. In one case, the person was a retired old man out for a morning stroll. Through carelessness perhaps, he was run over at a railway level crossing at Banani. For two days, his body lay in the morgue of the Dhaka Medical College, but none of his relatives made enquiries

in both these cases, as there was no burial plot number in the records of the graveyard authority for the graves of the unclaimed bodies, their near and dear ones would never know the exact location of the graves of their dead relatives.

There are humane implications in the issue. Since deaths from accidents frequently take place in the city and in order to avoid being labelled as unclaimed corpse, some observers suggest that city dwellers should always carry with them particulars of their own name and address so that relatives of the victims of accidents can be promptly contacted. Where such particulars are wanting, especially in the cases of illiterate persons, the unclaimed bodies might be kept in cold storage of mortuaries for a couple of days and publicity of such deaths given through radio and TV. If, thereafter, no response is received, such unclaimed bodies might be buried through Anjuman-e-Mafidul Islam.

In its deliberations the Standing Committee agreed to finalise trade concessions under the South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) at the next meeting of the Inter-governmental Group (IGG) scheduled to be held in Islamabad in September.

In its deliberations the Standing Committee agreed to finalise trade concessions under the South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) at the next meeting of the Inter-governmental Group (IGG) scheduled to be held in Islamabad in September.

The SAPTA agreement is an umbrella framework of rules providing for step-by-step liberalisation of inter-regional trade. It envisages periodic rounds of negotiations for ex-



Seen from left, Sri Lankan Foreign Minister ACS Hameed, the Tourism & Civil Aviation Minister of Nepal Ram Hari Joshi and Indian Minister of State for External Affairs R L Bhatia who arrived in the city yesterday to attend the 14th SAARC Council of Ministers meeting beginning today.

— PID photo

SAARC FMs meet begins today

From Page 1 Col 4

to fix the date for the next summit, originally slated to be held in New Delhi by next December. The hosts later proposed to hold the summit sometime in April '95. This would require the unanimous approval of the Council of Ministers.

The two-day meeting will review the progress made in the 12 areas of cooperation now existing under the umbrella of SAARC. The areas so far identified are: agriculture, communications, education and culture, environment, health and population, meteorology, prevention of drug trafficking and drug abuse, rural development, science and technology, tourism, transport and women in development.

The Council of Ministers will review poverty alleviation programmes, and also consider the feasibility of setting up a South Asian Development Fund (SADF).

The ministers will also endorse the proposals of the recent Dhaka SAARC Finance and Planning Ministers' conference.

Meanwhile, the Standing Committee comprising the Foreign Secretaries concluded their three-day deliberations in the city yesterday. After reviewing the entire gamut of the association's activities the Committee has prepared a 20-point agenda.

In its deliberations the Standing Committee agreed to finalise trade concessions under the South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) at the next meeting of the Inter-governmental Group (IGG) scheduled to be held in Islamabad in September.

The SAPTA agreement is an umbrella framework of rules providing for step-by-step liberalisation of inter-regional trade. It envisages periodic rounds of negotiations for ex-



Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman received at the Zia airport Pakistani Foreign Minister Sardar Aseff Ahmad Ali (R) who arrived yesterday to attend the 14th SAARC Council of Ministers meeting beginning in the capital today.

— PID photo

change of trade concessions on tariff, para-tariff and non-tariff lines. The SAPTA agreement is due to be implemented by the end of 1995 after ratification by the seven member states.

The Foreign Secretaries also discussed matters relating to the welfare of children and decided that national committees should be set up for the preparation of country reports on the state of children.

The press release issued at the end of the Standing Committee meeting said the Committee had accorded recognition to SAARC Law, an association for persons of the legal communities of the member countries as the regional apex body like the SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

The Standing Committee also endorsed the project proposal for promotion of bio-villages in the region.

The Committee, while approving the recommendations of some technical committees under the integrated pro-

gramme of action, welcomed the proposals under the agriculture sector entitled "Reaching the Millions — Training of Farmers and Farm Women in the SAARC region by 2000 AD."

Foreign Minister Mostafizur Rahman as chairman of the council is also expected to place a report on his consultations with two other regional groups, the ASEAN and the European Union (EU) relating to common matters of cooperation.

The visiting delegates will also be taken for a river cruise on board the MV Ostrich on July 31 during which they will hold informal consultations.

The Council of Ministers will adopt the final report on its proceedings the same day in the evening.

Mostafizur Rahman is scheduled to brief the press on the outcome of the conference on July 31 at 8 pm at the Sheraton Hotel.

The Midnight File

US recognises new Rwandan govt

WASHINGTON, July 29: The United States has recognised the new government in Rwanda and will now work with it to carry out humanitarian aid efforts, the State Department announced today, reports Reuter.

DPRK has no N-arms : Russia

MOSCOW, July 29: North Korea "has no nuclear weapons," a Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman said Thursday quoted by the news agency Itar-Tass. "According to our information, North Korea has no nuclear weapons in place," Mikhail Demirin said, reacting to a statement on Wednesday made by the North Korean Prime Minister's son-in-law, a refugee in South Korea since the end of May, claiming Pyongyang had five nuclear bombs, reports AFP.

Jamaat slams govt's policy

From Page 1 Col 3
icised India for patronising Taslima Nasreen for her comments against the national sovereignty.

Referring to the demand for national elections under a caretaker administration, he warned of a mass agitation to unseat the government if it failed to concede the demand.

This government can very well take pride by setting up a new, healthy trend in the country's democratic development by arranging elections under a non-party caretaker administration, he believed.

Azam also urged his followers to strengthen the campaign for establishing Islamic laws in the country and rule by honest and Allah-fearing people, and to work relentlessly for the revival of Islam.

Police intercepted the vehicle bearing number Dhaka Metro Bha-5146, arrested its six passengers and recovered iron rods from it, police said.

The arrested persons were detained at the Ramma Police station and a case was lodged against them.

Quake damages Delhi Jama Mosque

KUALA LUMPUR, July 29: Six Indonesians and a Bangladeshi were burnt to death in a fire at a factory manufacturing doors on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur Friday, reports AP.

Police identified the Indonesians as Sariman, Waman, Mulia, Sikan, Mismat and Ashaji and the Bangladeshi as Mansur Ali.

Assistant Commissioner of Police Arthur Edmunds told reporters that two other Indonesians were injured.

The victims, believed to be workers, were asleep in the Lien Hup Glass Door Industries factory when it caught fire at 4:45 am.

The cause of the fire was not known.

Prokrichi

From Page 1 Col 8
daily work abstention by nearly 70 thousand professionals belonging to the Prokrichi follows a week-long token strike that ended on Thursday.

The future programmes of the Prokrichi include a three-hour strike daily from September 17 until September 22, a four-hour strike from October 15 to October 18 and a full-day strike on October 19.

Last month, the doctors, engineers, agriculturists and 26 non-administrative cadre members of the Bangladeshi Civil Service observed a 72-hour strike.

Maldives Foreign Minister Fatullah Jameel said he was enthusiastic about the meeting as "We are a small country but we have been working very hard with the partners to maintain the momentum of SAARC."

We have a good chairman (of council of ministers). We have total confidence in him and we are going to have a productive session putting things in the right perspective, he told newsmen.

Aseff Ali

From Page 1 Col 5
High Commissioner to Sri Lanka Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury and Sri Lankan High Commissioner in Dhaka Dr A N Hanifa were also present.

I am happy to be back here to pursue the goals of SAARC," Sri Lankan Foreign Minister A C S Hameed told newsmen at the Zia International Airport on arrival.

He appreciated the role played by Bangladesh in promoting the cause of SAARC.

Replying to a question with regard to holding SAARC summit timely as prescribed in its charter, Hameed said "This is a coalition of states. We are not rigid or dogmatic and the matter can be considered as and when necessary" to maintain the schedule.

Maldives Foreign Minister Fatullah Jameel said he was enthusiastic about the meeting as "We are a small country but we have been working very hard with the partners to maintain the momentum of SAARC."

We have a good chairman (of council of ministers). We have total confidence in him and we are going to have a productive session putting things in the right perspective, he told newsmen.

Aseff Ali
From Page 1 Col 5
Nazimuddin A Sheikh who is already in the capital in connection with the SAARC meeting was present.

Aseff told a questioner that during his stay in Dhaka he would try to seize the opportunity of having a bilateral parley with Indian State Minister of External Affairs R L Bhatia who will represent his country at the SAARC Ministers meeting.

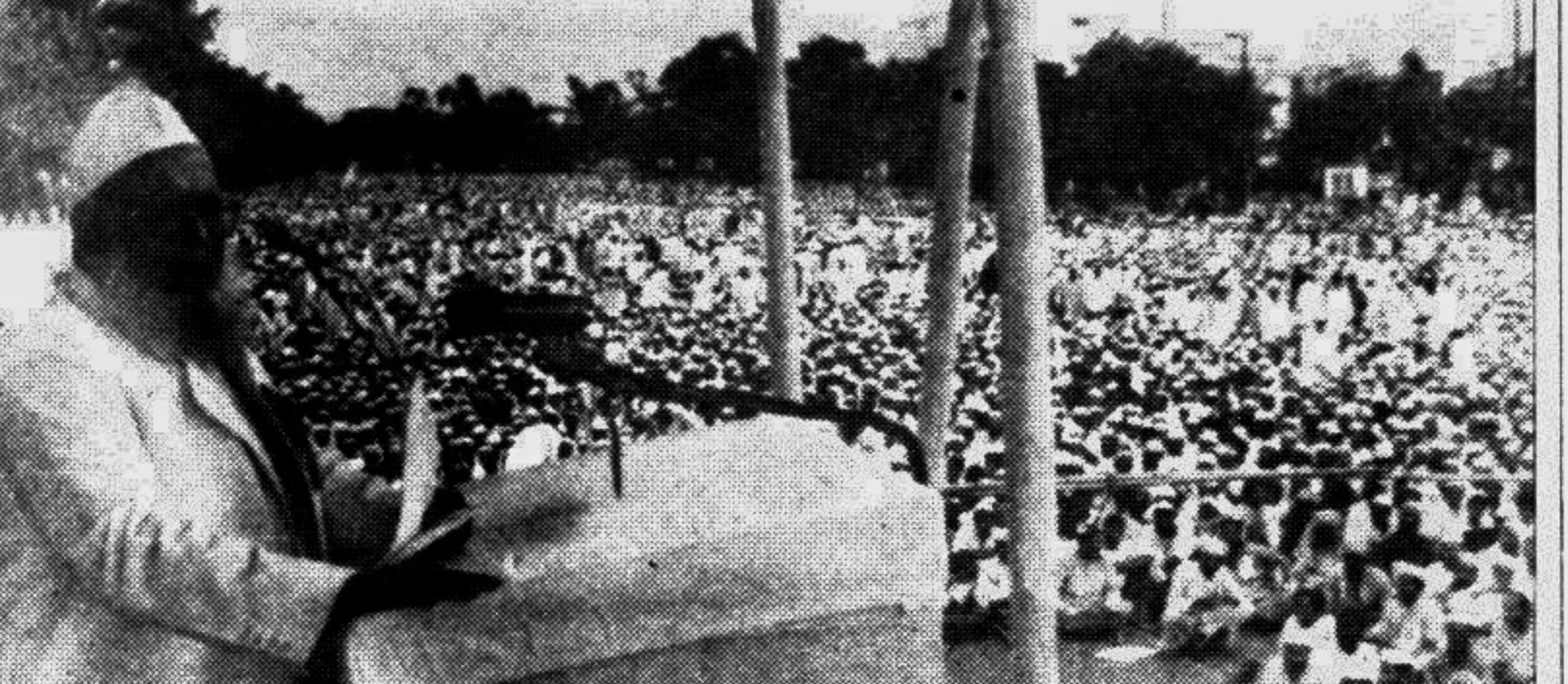
Earlier, the Pakistan Foreign Minister in his opening statement described the Saturday's SAARC Minister's meeting as important, as it will be their last meeting before the next summit.

"Our expectation is always optimistic on the future of the SAARC," he observed, responding to a question.

Asked if the Jordan-Israel peace treaty will undermine the OIC's stand on the holy city of Jerusalem, Pakistan Minister said "Jordan can protect its interest in its own way. Every sovereign country has got their rights to safeguard its interest".

He replied in the negative when asked if his country was considering to accord diplomatic recognition to Israel. In view of the changing circumstances.

The OIC has yet to take any collective decision on the issue, he added.



Maulana Obaidul Huq, Khatib of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque addressing the Quran Day rally organised by the United Action Council at Manik Mia Avenue in the city yesterday.

— Star photo

Islamic groups vow

From Page 1 Col 7
tion but to fight for their existence as Muslims. The enemies of Islam have no power to destroy the Holy Quran and Islam, but the enemies can destroy the Muslims of the country," Zahid observed.

He said another long march would be organised to make Bangladesh an Islamic state and called for continuing a united struggle until an "Islamic Hukumat" was established.

Maulana Azizul Haq alleged that the NGOs working here were taking advantage of the poverty of the Muslims and converting them to Christianity by giving them money, food and land.

Sources said the students stoned the buses near the campus on the Dhaka-Aricha road when the activists were returning home after attending the rally.

There was no report of any injury.

Later the students brought out a procession in support of today's hartal.

Bhatia came to Dhaka to attend the 14th meeting of SAARC council of ministers, which begins today.

Bhatia told a questioner that he would seize an opportunity of meeting with the Pakistani Foreign Minister in Dhaka when he said, "Kashmir issue might come up."

Describing the two-day meeting of the SAARC council of ministers as important, Bhatia said the collective well-being of the SAARC countries depends on unanimous decisions and their implementation.

In this context, he underscored the need for implementation of SAPTA (South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement) by the SAARC states.

Kinnock was replaced as European Commissioner in Brussels, informed sources said here, reports AFP.

Kinnock will take up his new job in Brussels alongside Sir Leon Brittan, a former Conservative Minister.

His wife, Glensy, has been elected to serve as a Euro-MP in Strasbourg.

In this context, he underscored the need for implementation of SAPTA (South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement) by the SAARC states.

Kinnock will take up his new job in Brussels alongside Sir Leon Brittan, a former Conservative Minister.

His wife, Glensy, has been elected to serve as a Euro-MP in Strasbourg.

In this context, he underscored the need for implementation of SAPTA (South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement) by the SAARC states.

Kinnock will take up his new job in Brussels alongside Sir Leon Brittan, a former Conservative Minister.

His wife, Glensy, has been elected to serve as a Euro-MP in Strasbourg.

In this context, he underscored the need for implementation of SAPTA (South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement) by the SAARC states.

Kinnock will take up his new job in Brussels alongside Sir Leon Brittan, a former Conservative Minister.

His wife, Glensy, has been elected to serve as a Euro-MP in Strasbourg.

In this context, he underscored the need for implementation of SAPTA (South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement) by the SAARC states.

Kinnock will take up his new job in Brussels alongside Sir Leon Brittan, a former Conservative Minister.

His wife, Glensy, has been elected to serve as a Euro-MP in Strasbourg.

In this context, he underscored the need for implementation of SAPTA (South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement) by the SAARC states.

Kinnock will take up his new job in Brussels alongside Sir Leon Brittan, a former Conservative Minister.

His wife, Glensy, has been elected to serve as a Euro-MP in Strasbourg.

In this context, he underscored the need for implementation of SAPTA (South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement) by the SAARC states.