DOWN TO EARTH

Bane of Illegal Toll Collection in City

By AS M Nurunnabi

Some typical examples of il-

It is reported that approxi-

number a total average of ten

All cattle-carrying trucks

are forced to stop at Gabtali,

Gabtali terminal

illegal toll collection is lence rather a post-independence phenomenon. It takes many of illegal toll collection which forms which adversely affect afflicts other areas also. This the ethos of our economic life. malaise has become a regular The factors helping its growth practice with anti-social eleare many, the predominant of ments. People, mainly business which is a general erosion of classes suffered from this from values for a disciplined way of time to time in the past. When life, coupled with organised any resistance occurs, it groupings of evil elements of sometimes leads to problems society to make easy money by of law and order way of exactions, extortions and other forms of forced legal toll collection are pregains. The agencies of law and sented in the following lines. order are sometimes found to be helpless in the face of the mately three hundred trucks baneful growth of this phe- carrying cattle for sale enter the city every day. Each truck

The evil is not confined to carries a load of 15 to 25 cows any particular area. According and bullocks. Such convoys of to a recent news report, the trucks begin their journey businessmen and industrialists from Aricha Ghat where there in the Motifheel and Dilkusha are reportedly several sheds Commercial areas are fre- used as transit camps for the quently subject to harassment cattle collected from the and threats of violence by northern and southern regions groups of illegal toll collectors. of the country. These heads of They force their entry into dif- cattle are carried to Aricha ferent commercial offices in Ghat either by boats or trucks those areas demanding sub- using ferry services. This Ghat scriptions in the names of var- is said to be the assembly point ious organisations and pur- for such heads of cattle which poses.

It was reported by some thousand each day. They are businessmen of those areas distributed in trucks to differthat activities of such elements ent areas of the country have alarmingly increased including Dhaka through a lately with their usual demands corridor passing through for money for various political parties, social organisations and cultural groups. Sometimes names of notable per where organised groups are sonalities are used for such said to operate for the purillegal purposes. The amounts pose. The amount of illegal of such money demands are in tolls exacted here by these most cases not small. Some groups varies from Tk. 200 to businessmen in their arraiety. Tk. 500 for each head of catto avoid unpleasant situations tle, depending on its size and sometimes give in to their physical condition. It is repressure. Others who hesitate portedly impossible to pass or refuse are subjected to through this barrier at Gabtali threats of harassment and vio- without making payment of

this illegal toll. It is also re-This is the normal pattern ported that the total amount of such illegal collections ranges from Tk. 9 lakh to Tk. 37 lakh

The organised gangs engaged in such illegal activities are said to have a wide net work possessing considerable clout. This serious situation was reportedly brought to the notice of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Any effective steps from this Ministry in this be-

half is said to be awaited. Other trucks plying the city are also said to be subject to payment of illegal tolls. According to a recent report, the total amount of such daily collections from the city's 10,000 trucks amounts to Tk. 30,000. On an average each truck has to pay a small sum of Tk three, Since those trucks which operate daily are made to pay at different points, the actual amount of toll paid by a truck may be several times

According to sources, so aggrieved are the truck owners by the continual fleecing of their pockets that some them are said to be seriously considering to discontinue their business. According to observers, this has become a serious cause for concern on account of the unbridled role of some mastans or musclemen without any check by the traffic controllers.

It is urgent and important that the body of men responsible for traffic discipline responds effectively to these illegal activities so that none can allege that a part of it allow themselves to be helpers in the organised network of illegal toll collectors.

between 1980 and 1990. In Chile, it said, minimum

BMA

we would have done that." Dr Majed said defending the BMA's intransigence.

Dr Gazi Abdul Haq.

"The Health Minister and the Deputy Health Minister cannot be spared from the responsibility of preventing the implementation of the demands and resorting to repressive measures and provocative statements," Gazi Ab-

In a written statement to the press the BMA secretary also pointed fingers at the Health Secretary and other bureaucrats for 'conspiring' against the doctors and for creating the present situation in the health sector.

The press conference was girder and others.

Demanding withdrawal of the government press note, which ordered doctors to resume duties forthwith, the BMA called upon all to support

the 8000 members of the organisation would work in squads in the event of an outbreak of plague in the country and that presently, a "plague cell" has been opened at the BMA office.

> Begum Zia said her government has already established a university and a medical college in Khulna and measures have been taken to increase the supply of drinking

She said some 15,000 digi-

While speaking at the meeting Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali put forward various demands of the local people for the development of Khulna division.

BNP President Nurul Islam, the meeting was also addressed by Post and Telecommunications Minister Tariqul Islam, State Minister for Social Welfare Fazlur Rahman, State Minister for Sports and Youth Sadek Hossain, Khulna City Mayor Sheikh Tayebur Rahman. Whip Ashraf Hossain Mashiur Rahman MP. Syeda Nargis Ali MP, Golam Sarwar Jamaddar, Nazrul Islam Manju,

Shamsul Huq.

urging people to attend today's ground rally at the Manik Mia Avenue. Cuban leader meets Hasina, seeks support against US sanctions

- Star photo

By Staff Correspondent

The visiting Cuban Communist Party leader Ramon Farnandez yesterday met the country's opposition leaders including Awami League chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina to secure opinion against American economic sanctions imposed on his country.

Farnandez is scheduled to meet the ruling BNP leader and Deputy Leader of Parlia ment Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury this afternoon. Accompanied by Delhi-

based Cuban counsellor Victor Baminez, the communist leader met Sheikh Hasina vesterday evening and requested her to support the Cuban cause through registering protest against the 'unjust' economic sanctions imposed by the United States.

During the meeting with Hasina , the Cuban leader informed her that 88 member states of the United Nations had last month voted against the US imposed sanctions while only three states, including the US, supported the sanctions. Those who had supported the US cause included Israel and Paraguay. Bangladesh, however, abstained from voting.

The Cuban leader also invited Sheikh Hasina to an international solidarity gathering to be held in the Cuban capital Havana next month.

Sheikh Hasina is learnt to have expressed her solidarity with the Cuban people and promised to attend the Havana gathering if the political situation in Bangladesh at the time permits.

The Cuban leader also met the leaders of the country's Left Democratic Front (LDF) and sought their active sympa-

The visiting Cubans also attended two separate receptions hosted by the Bangladesh-Cuba Solidarity Association and the LDF leader Rashed Khan Menon MP.

Leaders of both the ruling and opposition parties attended the functions.

Hasina

From Page 1 Col 7 corruption, said the Prime Minister's family has become one of the richest families in Asia by amassing 'illegal money.

"How could they become owners of ships, launches, industries and have huge bankbalance overnight ... Has the broken suitcase of President Zia turned into a magic box, she asked.

Referring to her current agitation for a caretaker government, Hasina said the BNP lost its credibility because of its three and a half years 'misrule,' and that is why it has been opposing a neutral care+

taker government. "We are agitating to establish a system so that the people can vote freely to elect their government which will remain accountable to them for its actions. We want to introduce a process for ensuring an accountable and transparent government."

During her day-long visit to Tungibari, the Opposition Leader addressed several rallies, both scheduled and unscheduled. These included rallies at Muktarpur, Sipahipara. Hatimara, Shukbashpur, Tungibari Bazar, Hashail. Shiroil and Bangla Bazar.

Awami League leaders Zillur Rahman, Begum Matia Chowdhury, Abdul Mannan. Mohiuddin, Mrinal Kanti Das and Dr Badiuzzaman Dablu accompanied Hasina and addressed the rallies.

40-day programmes

From Page 1 Col 5

government repression on opposition political activists. The next programme -

marches towards the capital will be organised on October 9. The AL march from Tongi will end at Mahakhali while the JP's march will start from the Mukti Sarani at Demra. The Jamaat's plans for the march were yet to be announced.

The Midnight File

NATO for more forceful response to Serb violations

SEVILLE, Sept 30: US Defence Secretary William Perry said today that NATO had agreed to call on the United Nations for a much more forceful response to Bosnían Serb violations of UN Security Council resolutions. Speaking at the end of a two-day meeting of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation defence ministers. Perry said: "We reached a consensus that NATO and the UN should use airpower more forcibly," reports AFP.

Delhi frees 2 top Kashmiri leaders

NEW DELHI, Sept 30: Two top Kashmiri leaders. Syed Ali Shah Geelani of the Jamaat-I Islami and Prof Abdul Ghani Lone. Chairman of the People's Conference were today ordered to be released, an offi cial spokesman here said, reports PTI.

The two leaders had been detained for over a year under the state public safety in the wake of some militants taking sanctuary in the Hazratbal shrine in September last year

While, JMR Lone is under treatment in the capital, the Jamaat leader is detained in a iail in Jammu.

Dhaka-Delhi accord on scientific cooperation

NEW DELHI, Sept 30: Bangladesh and India signed here today a two-year working programme of scientific and technological cooperation between the councils of scientific and industrial research of the two countries, reports BSS.

The agreement was signed following four-day talks held between the two-countries Anwarul Islam, Additiona Secretary-in Charge, Ministry of Science and Technology, led the three-member Bangladesh delegation while the Indian side was led by Dr SK Joshi Secretary, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research.

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No plague cases

and at least 19 others were reported to be infected.

From Page 1 Col 4 had recently come from India and entered Bangladesh with out any medical check up to stav at home for seven days as a precautionary self-quaran-

If any plague symptoms are noticed, the people were advised to immediately contact their local health offices. In another decision, the National Anti-Plague Commi

ttee asked the city corpora

tions to clean the cities of

wastes and filth by 5 each afternoon. People were also advised to dump their garbage in designated dustbins as soon as pos-

Meanwhile, the plague scare has sparked off spontaneous rodent eradication campaigns at many places of the country as one more person suspected of carrying the germ was hospitalised in Chapai-

nawabganj district yesterday. According to reports received in Dhaka, people in different districts have started killing rats and mice, in a bid to ward off the scourge inching towards the borders of the

country. Sales of mousetraps and pesticides as well as plaguepreventive drugs have also increased, the reports said.

A UNB report from Chapainawabganj said yesterday that another Bangladeshi national, who returned from the plague-stricken western Indian township of Surat, was admitted at the Gomastapur Health Centre.

Mizanur Rahman, 26, re-

at the health centre for tests along with another Bangladeshi who was suspected Thursday. Civil Surgeon of Chapai-

nawabgani Dr Matiur Rahman said that both would have to wait at the centre for the next 10 days to have their test results confirmed The results of the throat

A crowd gathers outside a pharmacy in the Indian capital New Delhi vesterday to purchase

medicine effective against the pneumonic plague after two people died from the disease here

turned home September 26

and was put under observation

swabs of the two persons who were hospitalised Thursday at the Infectious Diseases Hospital in the capital were found negative, according to the

They said that tests on the throat swabs of M Shamsul Huq and Feroz Ahmed had proved that they were not car rying the plague germ.

However, only the results of the blood culture tests on the two Bangladeshis would confirm that they were absolutely free from the disease, the doctors said. Those results are due

Our Staff Correspondent writes from Sylhet: The district health department has formed four medical teams for checking the incoming people from India through the Tamabil and Zakiganj borders in the

district. Two medical teams have been deployed in each of the border outposts with one medical officer, one medical assistant (male) and one medical assistant (female in each

A district health official Friday informed that 10,000 tetracycline tablets had been sent to the said border posts.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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— AFP photo 2 die in Delhi

From Page 1 Col 3 Six Gulf countries have cut sea and air links with India along with Egypt, Yemen and

Malaysia. Nepal, Taiwan, China, Bangladesh, The Philippines and Pakistan were among nations slapping varying degrees of curbs on travel to and from India. The United States and Israel have issued advisories to their nationals to avoid

plague-hit zones. Thousands of passengers were stranded in New Delhi and in Bombay due to stalled traffic.

Haiti

From Page 1 Col 6

for Friday's events, which began with a morning Mass attended by thousands at the cathedral.

Reuter adds: The Security Council Thursday lifted fuel, trade and arms sanctions against Haiti, beginning the morning after President Jean-Bertrand Aristide returns from three years of exile.

Four of a family

From Page 1 Col 8 with a truck coming from the opposite direction.

Joynab Bibi, 40. the wife of one Alhaj Abul Hossain — a businessman of Chandpur her son Monty, 12, daughter Dipa, 15, and mother Abedunnessa, 65, as well as the car driver, Rafiqul Islam, 25, died on the spot.

Joynab Bibi's eldest son Sumon, also in the car, was seriously hurt and had to be shifted to the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in the capital last night in a most critical condition. Meanwhile, police and local

people rescued the injured passengers of the bus and sent them to nearby hospitals and clinics.

A case was lodged with the Gazaria police station.

in recent times.

LONDON, Sept 30: British aid agency Oxfam castigated the IMF and World Bank on Thursday for what it called below the poverty line. their failure to alleviate poverty in Latin America and said their policies had in fact made exist ing inequalities worse, reports

WB, IMF policies hinder

Oxfam, in a report on International Monetary Fund-World Bank policies in Latin America over the past decade, said it did not question the need for realistic economic policies in developing countries facing chronic trade and

financial problems. But it added: "Oxfam believes that current World Bank-IMF approaches are actually jeopardising prospects for sustainable economic recovery and poverty reduction.'

The report, due to be released in full on Thursday in Madrid to coincide with the annual IMF-World Bank meeting there, said the number of people living in poverty in Latin America had increased from 62 million to 93 million

wages were 20 per cent lower

From Page 1 Col 5

ment implement the demands

"The government has declared (through a press note) the health services essential and banned all strikes and threatened us with punitive measures if we do not withdraw the strike. Such a press note is reminiscent of that once issued by an autocrat," said secretary general of the doctors' national organisation

dul Haq added.

also attended by Dr NA Kamrul Hasan, Dr Syed Mudasser Ali Dr Rafiq Chowdhury, Dr Sirajul Islam, Dr Kamrul Hasan Jai-

its agitation programme. The BMA leaders said that

PM: Rupsha bridge

belts under special arrangements. Begum Zia said. The Khulna Alia Madrassah would also be brought under the development programme. Before addressing the pub-

lic meeting the Prime Minister

laid the foundation stone of the

Taka five crore Khulna

city's Sonadanga area. the biggest meeting venue of Khulna, the Prime Minister of people. The packed meeting

proach road and nearby areas. Begum Zia.

biggest meeting held in Khulna

Oxfam also criticised the

cratic and unaccountable." Nations system with mechanism to monitor the impact of their policies on poverty and

basic rights.

Wreck of sunken terry found STOCKHOLM, Sept 30:

TT reported today, says Reu-The wreck of the Estonia.

Suunta. Procession

From Page 1 Col 4 Saiful Islam, Abdus Samad and

The PPPKSP in a press release last night protested the doctors attack on its procession and demanded their punishment.

president of BMA Dr M A Majed regretted the incident Indian family

Calcutta, their two children and a pet dog anxiously wandered all over town from early morning after hotels refused them entry apprehending they might be carrying the plague

Frustrated and exhausted. the family, however, managed to convince the owner of a lesser known hotel in the town just before the sun was about

of the family could not be Plague phobia has also

district.

From Page 1 Col 7

women's sports centre in the Earlier, on her arrival at the packed Circuit House Maidan, was greeted by a vast multitude venue was extended to all ap-

The rooftops of adjacent buildings were packed with men, women and children. In a spontaneous expression of jubilation thousands of people, splintered in groups, brought out sporadic processions in the city which reverberated with shouts expressing their support to the leadership of

* Many people said, it was the

economy: Oxfam in 1990 than in 1980 and the take-home pay of 45 per cent of Chile's work force left them

Ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party activists brought out a procession in the city yesterday

In Nicaragua, the unemployment rate doubled between 1990 and 1993 from 11 to 22 per cent of the working population, it said. Oxfam urged the IMF and World Bank to adopt a more flexible approach to structural adjustment economic reforms in Latin American states and called for policies aimed at redistributing income, land reforms and social expenditure to benefit the poor.

"Structural adjustment is depriving millions of poor Latin Americans of their basic rights to health, education, employment and an adequate standard of living," the report

Washington-based institutions for being "essentially undemo-It called for their full integration into the United

Searchers have found the wreck of the sunken ferry Estonia off the coast of Finland, the Swedish news agency

lying in around 80 metres (250 feet) of water in the Baltic Sea and believed to contain the bodies of more than 900 people after it sunk on Wednesday, was discovered by the Finnish rescue vessel

Later at a press conference

From Page 1 Col 3 An Indian couple from

to set. The names of the members

gripped Cox's Bazar for the last few days and the sale of mousetraps and rodent killers has increased manifold in the

tal telephone connections will be given in Khulna.

Presided over by district Sardar Moinuddin and Syed

water. A water treatment plant would be built soon, she as-

day against what they said.