

# DOWN TO EARTH

## City's Environmental Damage from Industrial Wastes

By A S M Nurunnabi

The environment of the city is facing a constant threat from the poisonous wastes from the tanneries.

Everyday huge quantities of untreated wastes from such tanneries in the city fall into nearby river waters and areas, poisoning the atmosphere of the adjoining neighbourhoods. These wastes make adjoining water bodies dangerously unsuitable in the aquatic sense and cause the spread of water-borne diseases.

The neighbouring areas with a population of 20 lakh are daily affected by the malodorous atmosphere created by these tannery wastes.

The main centre of tannery industries in Dhaka is located in the Hazaribagh area. The tannery industries developed in this area from the early sixties because of the available advantage of discharging their wastes into the nearby Buriganga. At present there are about 170 tanneries, big and small, in this area. These tanneries are highly outdated and do not possess waste treatment facilities.

For the processing of leather, many chemicals are used, such as chromosol, sodium chloride, sodium sulphate, lime and other acid compounds. It is estimated that from each tannery in this area about two thousand five hundred gallons of liquid wastes fall into the Buriganga river every day. On this basis, 2000 to 2500 cubic metres of liquid wastes go into the river water daily. From sources in the Environment Department, it is understood that besides chromium, the wastes contain arsenic, a large quantity of biological waste, leather, animal

hairs, bloods, oil, grease, diluted and undiluted salt, etc. For preservation of aquatic life, the level of diluted oxygen (DO) should not be over 5 PPM. But in the Buriganga and other water bodies adjacent to the tanneries, the level of DO has been found to be between 7 to 38 PPM.

During the monsoon, the low level areas at Hazaribagh go under water. As a result, the tannery wastes spread widely through the drains and manholes. Even the Dhanmandi lake is not free from this pollution. The level of chromium in the river water which is increasing may cause cancer in human body. Besides, the river bed is being silted up with the high volume of wastes thereby making use of the river water highly dangerous for health. The big casualties of this lethal practice have been the fish resources of the river. Fishermen, who in the past caught *ruihi, katta, pangash, shoal*, etc from parts of the river near Dhaka, hardly ever net these species nowadays. Many fishermen who lived on the banks of Buriganga changed profession and became manual labourers or turned into destitutes.

The wastes have also polluted the environment of the adjoining residential areas. The sodium sulphate used for processing leather turns into hydrogen sulphide which makes the air malodorous at all times in an area of 10 sq. miles. These wastes also create sulphuric and sulphurous acids which cause a process of erosion on the neighbouring buildings and habitats.

The other worst polluters of Buriganga are the large number of sewer lines which emit into the river. Sewerage lines

from Wischhat, Postogola Farashgah Ghat, Mitford, Badamtali ghat etc regularly discharge untreated putrid substances into the river.

On the shores of Buriganga live a tenth of the nation's 120 million population. And a fair share of the nation's industries uses its water and return to it thousands of tons of poisonous effluents regularly every day. For want of any sewerage treatment plant, close to a million ton of pollutants finds its way to the small river direct from the bathing and laundry facilities every day.

Most of the factories and industrial units along the river banks have no waste treatment plants. Industrial wastes are being dumped into its water from different salt factories at Kamrangirchar areas. Other polluting agents include mixed soap, soda and bleaching powder used by washers at Chandighat. At Swarighat and Sadarghat, chemicals from different jewellery shops, ice factories and bilge and oil from the river vessels are released into the river. From Sadarghat to Pagla Bazar, different cold storages and brick kilns dump solid and liquid wastes into the river.

The result of all this is that we are now living on a dead river. The cleaning of the Buriganga river on all counts has, therefore, become an urgent task. The pollution needs to be stopped by banning industries of all sizes and kinds from emptying any waste into the river without due treatment processes. In the event of our failure to take remedial steps on an urgent basis, we shall be living on a stinking cesspool.



Mirza Abbas MP, who has been re-elected president of Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Jubadal, presenting a bouquet to BNP chairperson and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia at Hare Road Office yesterday.

## 'National edn programme should be reviewed'

By Staff Correspondent

A symposium on higher education, youth and economic development yesterday called for reviewing the national education programme and chart a fresh curriculum to keep up with the changing world.

Prompted by the call some students participating in the symposium wanted to know what future the present education system offer them and why is the system still outdated despite full knowledge of the authorities.

Rotary Clubs of Dhaka Buriganga and Metropolitan Dhaka organised the symposium together with the Independent University of Bangladesh at the BCIC auditorium in the capital.

LGRD Minister Abdus Salam Talukder attended the function as chief guest.

Noted educationist Dr Abdul Majid Khan, Rotarian Iftekharul Alam Chowdhury, University Grants Commission Chairman Professor M Shamsul Huq, noted banker Lutfar Rahman, Sarker, Samson H Chowdhury, Chairman of the Square Pharmaceuticals Limited and Rotary District Governor Mosharraf Hossain took part in the discussion.

Speaking on the occasion, the LGRD minister informed that about 2,50,000 students passed the HSC examinations this year although the enrolment capacity of all the universities, medical colleges, engineering and agricultural institutions put together does not exceed 13,000.

Talukder said the country with its limited resources can hardly train up these young men. Despite having the world job market open, we cannot compete for employment, he said.

The Minister pointed out

that the government has attached highest priority to the education sector and has opened up a venues for the private sector.

He suggested a private-public collaboration to achieve economic development through education and training to youth.

However, Salam Talukder pointed out that the private universities must provide quality education to the students in return for the expenses borne by their parents.

Dr Abdul Majid Khan in his speech suggested narrowing the gap between the education programme and the need of the present day society.

He also said that the appropriateness of programme should be determined by the need.

Prof Shamsul Huq in his speech informed that he has proposed to the government to extend the time period for basic education in the country from five hours to eight hours to keep up with the changing economic and social patterns.

Lutfar Rahman Sarker pointed out that the banks and other financial institutions could play a very effective role in increasing the education in the country.

He suggested a separate subsidiary bank - the Self Employment Bank - under a fully supervised credit scheme. He also called for starting employment savings certificates by the banks.

Rotarian Governor Mosharraf Hossain in his speech said that time has come to review the national education programmes as well as the role of private educational institutions.

## Shaheed Paribar Sangram Parishad formed

By DU Correspondent

The wives and children of the martyrs of the country's War of Independence floated a new organisation under the name and style of Shaheed Paribar Sangram Parishad yesterday to realise their demands.

The organisation, formed to solve their problems, will also help in upholding the memories of the martyrs.

The Martyrs' family members announced the launching of the organisation at a conference at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

Md. Harun, son of Shaheed Abdul Khaleque, read out a paper explaining the aims and objectives of the organisation. Children and wives of some martyrs were present at the conference.

The members of the martyrs' families spoke on different problems including residential and pension problems. They urged the President and the Prime Minister to solve their problems in consultation with them.

## No alternative to caretaker govt for fair polls: Azam

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Oct 28: Professor Golam Azam, the Ameer of the Jamaat-e-Islami, has said today, elections should be held under a caretaker government to ensure the democratic rights of the people.

It has already been proved that there is no alternative to a caretaker government for a fair election in the near future, he added.

Professor Azam was addressing a big public meeting at the Sylhet Government Alia Madrasah maidan this afternoon.

Dr. Shafiqur Rahman, district Ameer of the party presided over the meeting which was also addressed by Professor Mujibur Rahman, Professor Fazlur Rahman, Md. Abdul Quader Mollah, Moulana Abdus Sobhan MP, and Moulana Matir Rahman Nizami, MP.

Golam Azam said, the Jamaat-e-Islami was fighting for establishing the Quranic laws in Bangladesh where more than 90 per cent population are the followers of Islam.

He also urged the people to vote for the honest and God-loving ones in the elections.

## Major Hewitt

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horse riding with a mystery woman.

Hewitt fled into hiding early this month in a fence cottage - a converted pigsty, British tabloids found out - after his friend Anna Pasternak's book "Princess in Love" detailed in gushing prose his alleged five-year romance with Diana.

Diana, whose estranged husband Prince Charles has admitted his own adultery, has remained silent on Hewitt's claims.

## Junta intelligence chief meets Suu Kyi

BANGKOK, Oct 28: Myanmar's military intelligence chief Lieutenant-General Khin Nyunt met detained dissident leader Aung San Suu Kyi for three hours of talks in Yangon today, state-run television reported, says Reuters.

The meeting at a military guest house, was the second since last month. The two met for three hours and discussed the current political and economic situation, Myanmar Television said.

Suu Kyi, daughter of Myanmar's independence hero General Aung San and leader of the opposition National League for Democracy, was placed under house arrest in July 1989.

## The Midnight File

### Clinton leaves for S Arabia

KUWAIT, Oct 28: US President Bill Clinton left Kuwait for Saudi Arabia today on the final leg of a Middle East swing after telling Iraq would never again be allowed to threaten the small oil-rich state it invaded in 1990. During a six-hour visit, Clinton met US troops he rushed to Kuwait early this month in response to the massing of Iraqi troops close to the border and told them they could probably expect to be back home for Christmas because Iraq had heard their message, reports Reuters.

### 2 newsmen held in Gaza

JERUSALEM, Oct 28: Palestinian police arrested two Arab journalists in the Gaza Strip to question them about ties with Islamic militants, officials said Friday. Relatives said that Taher Shreiteh, 34, a correspondent for Reuters in Gaza and his brother Anier Shreiteh, 29, a cameraman for CBS, were held at their office in Gaza City on Wednesday night. They said that the police also confiscated a fax machine and searched the office, reports AP.

## Talks resume today

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on track Thursday with the intervention of sir Ninian.

Fifteen members from each side took part in the first round of deliberations which began on October 20 in the Parliament Bhawan.

Meanwhile, the Opposition parties in Parliament, which have been boycotting the House demanding a caretaker government to conduct general elections, will hold a meeting at 11 am today to discuss the progress of the dialogue and their next course of action.

Opposition sources said, the leaders would also discuss and finalise a new group of four negotiators with the Deputy Leader as its chief to represent the Opposition in the dialogue.

Moudud Ahmed of the Jatiya Party, who is also the chief of his party's parliamentary group may be included in the opposition team today.

On Thursday, when the second round of talks began at the Meghna State Guest House.

## Clinton

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baer medal.

Later the same day, he would fly to Haifa al-Batin in northern Saudi Arabia to meet King Fahd, winding up a Middle East tour which has also taken in Syria, Jordan and Egypt.

Clinton will press Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to follow Jordan's example and make peace with Israel during his trip to the Gulf today, US diplomats in the region said.

"Clinton will try to convince his close Gulf allies, the Saudis and Kuwaitis, to make peace with Israel," one diplomat said, asking not to be named.

"It will be a delicate task for Clinton because the Saudi Kingdom and Kuwait are still reluctant, despite mounting pressure from the United States to normalise relations with Israel," he told AFP.

## 2 killed in Pak post-poll gunfight

ISLAMABAD, Oct 28: Two people were killed in a post-election gunfight between protesters and a paramilitary force in Pakistan's remote northern areas today, government officials said, reports Reuters.

They said one paramilitary official and a protester were killed in the clash at Gilgit during a demonstration by supporters of the opposition Pakistan Muslim League (PML) party.

The PML supporters were protesting at the announcement of an allegedly premature election result showing a candidate of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) as a winner in the first party-based elections held on Monday for 24 seats on a 26-seat council.

Further details of the incident were not immediately available but one government official said the situation was now calm and under control.

## Fundamentalists oppose Jordan's treaty with Israel

AMMAN, Oct 28: Muslim fundamentalists opposed to Jordan's peace treaty with Israel clashed with police today in the capital Amman, witnesses and Islamists said, reports Reuters.

They said worshippers at the Abu Hurira Mosque fought with police when plainclothes security men tried to stop radical cleric Muhammad Abdul-Moneem Abu Zanat from delivering his sermon.

Parliament deputy Abu Zanat was hurt later in a brawl between his supporters and police outside the mosque, but there were no reports of other casualties.

State radio said Abu Zanat started the trouble when he defied an official ban against him delivering the sermon and tried to prevent a government-appointed imam from preaching. It said the fighting was between supporters of the two clerics.

all the four leaders who represented the Opposition were from the Awami League. They were Deputy Leader Abdus Samad Azad, chief whip Mohammad Nasim, Special Adviser to the AL chief Sheikh Hasina, SAMS Kibria and Abul Hassan Chowdhury MP.

The sources confirmed that Samad Azad and SAMS Kibria will remain on the team. On the other hand the ruling party will be represented by Deputy Leader of the House and BNP presidium member Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury, BNP Secretary General and LGRD Minister Abdus Salam Talukder, chief whip Khandaker Delwar Hossain and Communications Minister Oli Ahmed.

The ruling party negotiators briefed the Prime Minister and Party chief Begum Khaleda Zia about the progress of the dialogue at a meeting at her Hare Road office last night.

The four BNP negotiators and some other senior leaders elaborately discussed certain provisions of the Constitution that permits an interim government system with the elected Prime Minister as its chief.

They are also learnt to have discussed alternative proposals but details of those proposals could not be known.

## Serbs risk attack

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use air power against the better armed BSA but NATO Secretary General Willy Claes said the UN was ready for a "more robust (air) strike policy."

A NATO source cautioned that the alliance was not entirely convinced the UN was persuaded, saying: "Precisely because (air strikes) may be more effective, UN commanders on the ground may be more hesitant in calling in NATO support."

The BSA can only shell Sarajevo by violating a weapons exclusion zone for 20 km around the Bosnian capital which NATO and UNPROFOR have a duty to enforce.

NATO has chafed at being restrained by the UN a lethal Serb artillery attack on Sarajevo recently was allowed to go unpunished as was an attack on an aid convoy near Gorazde in which a driver was killed.

## Minor boy slain in Sylhet

From Staff Correspondent

SYLHET, Oct 28: A four-year old boy was found slaughtered at village Dhakadakhin under Lakshmanabad Union of Gopalganj thana yesterday.

The victim Obaiddullah, son of Alauddin, a rickshawpuller, was kidnapped early Wednesday.

The body was recovered yesterday afternoon from a jungle. Police sent the body to the Sylhet MAG Osmany Medical College Hospital morgue.

The cause of the murder could not be known immediately. No arrest had yet been made.

## Srima

From Page 1 Col 4

Mendis, who lobbied strongly for and got the UNP presidential nomination for Dissanayake's widow, Srima, party sources said.

"The Prime Minister is trying to throw a red herring," UNP legislator Tyrone Fernando told reporters here today, reiterating the Opposition charge that the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) carried out the bombing.

After five days of unexpected calm, the government today lifted the nationwide curfew it imposed after Dissanayake and 53 others were killed.

"The curfew has been lifted as of this morning, but may be reimposed if there are serious outbreaks of violence," said Brig. Gamunu Kulatunga, the Defence Ministry spokesman. Skirmishes continued in the countryside between the military and Tamil rebels, but no serious incidents of civilian violence have been reported since the killing.



Actress Anjana rendering a song at a function organised by Nirapad Suvarak Chai - a campaign for safe roads spearheaded by actor Ilyas Kanchan, at the National Museum auditorium in the city yesterday. — Star photo

## Baboons first animals to show AIDS symptoms

WASHINGTON, Oct 28: Baboons clinically infected with the AIDS virus have become the first animals to develop full-blown symptoms of the disease, researchers said on Thursday.

"This is the first time HIV has caused AIDS-like syndromes in an animal other than a human," Susan Barnett, a scientist at Chiron Corp in Emeryville, California, told Reuters.

"The infection in baboons mirrors the progression of the disease in humans, and that's very exciting to us," Barnett is the lead author of a report in Friday's issue of the journal Science by researchers affiliated with the University of California in San Francisco.

Since 1988, the report said, researchers have injected 10 baboons with two different types of HIV-2, the AIDS strain rare in the United States but prevalent in West Africa.

All of the baboons have demonstrated signs of HIV infection.

Two of six baboons infected with an HIV-2 strain originating from the Ivory Coast so far have developed full-blown AIDS symptoms.

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