

DOWN TO EARTH

Problems of City Sanitation

By ASM Nurunnabi

To every citizen of the city, it is clear that there has been no singular improvement in the look of the city which continues to wear an appearance of decay. With the recent change of the head of municipal corporation, hopes were raised about some notable improvement in municipal services. Such hopes mostly appear to have been belied. It is true that with the rapid growth of population, the growth of city areas has been consistently faster than development of infrastructural services. As a result, large sections of the urban population get no benefit from municipal services. In such a situation, the more neglected areas are, among others, health, sanitation, urban sewerage and waste management.

The elementary step in city sanitation is proper clearance of garbage. Except for the environs of the few big VIP roads and the sides and areas close to such roads, almost all other places in both old and new Dhaka, present sights of uncleared garbage on the sides of roads inspite of some recent inconsistent attempts for their clearance.

The slums and semi-slums which have increased in size and number over the years contribute substantially to the deterioration of the over-all sanitation of the city. In the Dhaka city, only half of its population can afford the facilities of sanitary toilets. Its floating population, slum dwellers and other poor classes of people are beyond the pale of this facility. In the city, only 15 to 18 per cent of its areas come under the purview of the WASA sewerage system. Poverty and lack of awareness among the people are the main causes of

Rabin opposes death penalty to Hamas activist

JERUSALEM, Nov 25: Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said today he opposed the death sentence that an Israeli military court gave a Palestinian guerilla for a bus bombing that killed six people, reports Reuter.

"In principle I believe it would be a blunder to carry out a death sentence," Rabin told Israel radio in his first comment on the sentence given said Badarneh, 24, on Thursday for the April bombing in Hadera, northern Israel.

"To this day Israel has not put a single Palestinian terrorist to death, and I think this was correct," he said. Legal experts predicted the sentence would be overturned on an automatic appeal to a higher court.

Were the sentence upheld, Badarneh of the Islamic Hamas movement would be only the second person, executed by Israel. Israel hanged Adolf Eichmann, an overseer of the Nazi holocaust, in 1962.

PID office to be set up in Sylhet: Saifur

SYLHET, Nov 25: Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman has said that a divisional office of the Press Information Department (PID) would be set up in the newly created divisional headquarters at Sylhet to help flourish newspaper industry in this area very soon, reports BSS.

The finance minister said this while speaking at a meeting as the chief guest organised by the "Sylhet Division Editors' Council" and Sylhet Division Newspapers' Association here last night.

Saifur Rahman said a cameraman would be posted at Sylhet and there would also be a teachers' training college in the city soon.

The finance minister said after the announcement by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia regarding creation of an administrative division at Sylhet, gazette notification in this regard is a mere formality now.

No one should have any doubt or confusion in this connection, he said adding that the newly announced divisional headquarters would enjoy all the facilities like other divisional headquarters of the country.

The function was also addressed by the President of Jatiya Press Club Hasan Shahriar, BNP central organising secretary Abul Haris Chowdhury and publisher of The Daily Star A S Mahmud.

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the deplorable sanitary situation in the city.

The National Sanitation Week was recently observed in the city under the joint auspices of the UNICEF and the Public Health Engineering Department and inaugurated by the Prime Minister. During the week, emphasis was laid on the need for increasing awareness among the people in the matter of sanitation and personal hygiene. Since 1962, under the auspices of the UNICEF, a project has been under implementation for production and distribution of slab toilet facility at a low cost.

The project covers the whole country, but it is a pity that even at a low cost, most poor people in the villages could not afford the facility. It is, however, felt that with the co-operation of NGOs, City Corporation and other public welfare organisations, such low-cost toilet facility can be installed in the city slums, thereby contributing substantially to the improvement of sanitary situation in the city.

An important aspect of public sanitation is represented by public toilets. In this area, serious problems exist. For want of adequate facilities in this behalf, a large number of pedestrians in the city are subject to serious inconvenience everyday. According to City Municipal sources, the total number of people using city roads is no less than 20 lakh. For the needs of such a large number of road users, the total number of existing public toilets in the city is only 51. As a result of grossly inadequate number of public toilets, the pedestrians are compelled to answer their need in any open space and in its absence near

the fringes of footpaths, presenting unseemly sights.

In the stadium areas, some public toilet arrangements are available on making a small payment for their use. There is a vast multitude of floating population in the city. From such people we can hardly expect payment for the use of such toilet facilities. The important thing is that it is not only necessary to make adequate provision for public toilets in the city but also to ensure their cleanliness and maintenance in the interest of proper sanitary condition.

We will not deviate from the basic principles. The principles are not negotiable," Kibria told The Daily Star last night.

He said he had no knowledge of any fresh move from the Commonwealth Secretary-General.

The former foreign secretary-turned politician said, "We (the Opposition) would not like anybody to sit for judgement on the political matters of our country," he said. "But we welcome facilitators to end the impasse."

UNB adds: Opposition Chief Whip Mohammad Nasim, yesterday ruled out the possibility of any further dialogue until the ruling BNP accepts the concept of non-party neutral caretaker government.

There is no scope of holding a meaningless and unnecessary dialogue. A dialogue can only take place if BNP changes its position and accepts the concept of non-party caretaker government.

Nasim who was a negotiator from the opposition side in the abortive Commonwealth-brokered dialogue said there will be no compromise on the single demand for non-partisan caretaker government.

Police said they fired at the crowd after protesters attacked the car of a visiting state minister.

Around 100 people were injured in the demonstration by the youth and student wings of the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPM), part of a widespread action against the Kerala Government's education policy.

Communist-led opposition parties have called a statewide general strike for Saturday. Kant said this had forced the government to cancel the sec-

Opposition

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to give a complete reply after getting a report from his envoy Sir Ninian Stephen, Kibria pointed out.

The opposition leaders are likely to discuss the contents of Chief Emeka's statement today.

"The decision of the meeting may be faxed to the Commonwealth Secretary General," an opposition leader said.

The time of the opposition meeting was not fixed because Sheikh Hasina did not return from Gopalganj till late yesterday.

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A light drizzle over the city forced these slum dwellers and their children to seek warmth of quilt and shawl for most of the day. — Star photo

7 protesters killed in Kerala police firing

CALCUTTA, India, Nov 25: Police in southern India shot dead seven people today when they fired on protesting communist students who turned violent, officials said, reports Reuter.

"Seven people were killed," senior official Amitabh Kant told reporters in Calicut, a district in Kerala state adjoining Cannanore where the shooting took place.

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The Midnight File

Bomb scare on Emirates flight

COLOMBO, Nov 25: More than 200 passengers were evacuated from an Emirates Airline flight at Colombo airport Friday after intelligence reports said a bomb was aboard, officials said. Air Force security men used sniffer dogs, but failed to locate any explosives on the Airbus A300, which was on a stopover from Dubai to Singapore, said an airport official, speaking on condition of anonymity, reports AP.

US seeks better ties with Myanmar

WASHINGTON, Nov 25: Seeking to end a diplomatic stalemate, the United States is talking with the military rulers of Myanmar, a major source of heroin for 600,000 American users. US-Myanmar relations have been at an impasse since the SLORC, or State Law and Order Restoration Committee, took power in 1988 amid worldwide criticism of its stifling the Southeast Asian country's democracy movement and abusing human rights on a massive scale, reports AP.

10 die as rival guerillas clash in Sidon

SIDON, Nov 25: Yasser Arafat's loyalists dislodged dissidents from most of Lebanon's largest refugee camp in street battles that left 10 people dead and 14 wounded today, reports AP.

At least three-quarters of the teeming shanty town of Ein el-Hilweh on the outskirts of Sidon, a port in south Lebanon, was overrun by Arafat's forces during seven hours of combat, some of it house-to-house, police said.

Arafat

descended on the camp as mediators declared a ceasefire was reached for noon prayers. But dozens of Islamic fundamentalists were seen coming out of mosques armed with machine guns and shoulder-fired rocket launchers to join the dissidents, who counter attacked at 12:30 pm.

Palls of black smoke were soon billowing from the camp. Staccato bursts of machine-gun fire and grenade blasts echoed from the camp when the fighting erupted at 3 am. It raged for nine hours.

Zahiruddin said that exports from India to Bangladesh is to the tune of 500 million dollar last year according to an official estimate. Unofficial sources, however, put the figure at 1.5 billion dollars.

Addressing the members of Bengal National Chamber of Commerce and Industry here, Khan said with the implementation of free market economy and liberalisation policies by both India and Bangladesh, there had been a positive opportunity for the both the countries to increase trade and business.

Urging the Indian industrialists to come forward for massive investment in Bangladesh, Khan said that the present government would offer several facilities for setting up their units there. Besides, 30 per cent of the products of these units would be permitted to be diverted to the Indian market, the Bangladesh minister said.

Hartal at Bogra

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SATMATHA in the town in the evening. Four people were injured in the action.

Addressing the meeting, the Jamaat leader warned that his party would launch an agitation if the Opposition demand for a caretaker government to conduct elections was not met.

Party's district Ameer Golam Rabbani presided over the meeting, also addressed by Jamaat leaders Abbas Ali Khan, Abdus Sobhan MP, Mujibur Rahman, Abdul Kader Molla, Latifur Rahman MP, Shahiduzzaman MP, Nasiruddin MP and Abdur Rahman Fakir.

Hasina

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Criticising nearly four years' rule of the BNP, the Opposition leader said the present government has totally failed in every sector. Its only success has been institutionalising corruption, she said.

She accused the BNP government of turning the country into a market of Indian commodities. The BNP has closed hundreds of mills and factories in the Indian interest, leaving thousands of workers unemployed," she said.

The Prime Minister and most of her ministers have been amassing illegal wealth when the people in northern districts are facing hardship due to drought and famine-like situation.

She demanded that assets of the BNP ministers before and after they were inducted into the cabinet be made public.

Often one or two buses out of the 16 develop mechanical trouble adding to the already acute transport problem.

Rafiqul Islam, who resides in the city's Mohammadpur area, said "suppose, I'm waiting for the bus at the stoppage nearest to our residence. After waiting for more than half an hour beyond the scheduled time, I come to understand that the bus will not come. In such a situation, it becomes difficult to reach the university and appear at examinations."

Pro-Vice Chancellor of DU Prof Wakil Ahmed said that the university authorities were very much concerned at the transport problem of the students. The university would buy two more buses soon, he added.

About the garage problem, the Pro-VC said that there was not enough space on the campus for a bus shed. Besides, a huge amount of money would also be needed to construct a shed.

Session jam is also another cause of heavy rush in the buses", the pro-VC said.

On average, the students' buses make 10 trips each in the nine routes everyday. The nine routes in which the university buses ply are: DU campus to Gazipur (route name: Khanika), Narayanganj (Ananda), Adamjee (Moitree), Postogola (Ullash), Kamalapur (Kirinch), Rampura (Srabon), Mohammadpur (Tarang), Mirpur (Chaitalee) and Kaichukheta (Baishakhi).

Earlier, some 5,000 people from different parties led by District JP leader Mesbahur Rahman and Kajuri UP Chairman Khannder Nurul Hossain joined the AL expressing allegiance to the leadership of Hasina.

Liberian peace talks collapse

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told The Associated Press Thursday that his first priority would be to make the constitution and the democratic system strong."

Adhikary, who spent 15 years in Nepali jails for anti-monarchy activity, said he would appoint a judicial commission to investigate alleged human rights abuses during the three years of Congress government and under Birenrao's rule.

He also toned down the anti-India rhetoric that marked the communists' election campaign, promising that New Delhi would be the first stop on his traveling itinerary.

"Our relations will be most friendly with both India and China. I can assure you that we will do nothing to impair our relations with India," he said.

Asked about Emeka's possible visit to Dhaka and revival of the dialogue, Moudud said, "We have not received any message of that kind...Once he (Emeka) gets an invitation, only then the Opposition can think of it."

About the reported desire for fresh dialogue of the ruling party leaders, Moudud said the initiative must come from the government and it will have to come with a clear intention of forming a non-partisan neutral caretaker government. "Only then such dialogue can be meaningful."

On the question of the Opposition move for en masse resignation, the JP leader said, "We have not yet fixed the date for resignation, but it will be done soon."

"People are extremely desperate, crying openly, they are extremely emotional," she said.

In Sarajevo, Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic said Serb forces had resumed attacks on Bihać.

They are attacking Bihać again. The shelling has intensified," he told Reuters. "They are attacking by all means and we are resisting."

A reporter at the government-controlled television station in Bihać told Reuters by telephone that shells were falling on the town centre.

"I can't talk. We have to go to the shelters. There is panic in the town. They are shelling the very centre with all sorts of heavy artillery and mortars. We heard they have pierced the defence lines," reporter Aida Skopljak said.

"That was not the case when I was there," Tuffelli said.

"We are also in constant touch with the commander of our troops and other relevant people," Mostafa said.

Visit successful

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visit sectors of the two countries would take effective steps towards further expanding and diversifying cooperation in the fields of trade, industry and manpower.

He said two sides had extensive discussions to further strengthen the SAARC and added that the Bangladesh Prime Minister, current Chairperson of the seven-nation regional forum, had