DOWN TO EARTH

City's Water Crisis

By ASM Nurunnabi

Dhaka city suffers from se rious water shortage. For a city of eight million people, having a demand of about 140 crore litres of water per day, WASA is at present capable of supply ing only half the requirement. The present supply is derived from 91 active deep tubewells in Dhaka and Narayangani re-

In some quarters it is feared that the city may be condemned to prolonged water scarcity as the city's runaway growth may never allow the WASA to come up to the desired level of supply position. There are, however, some others who think that the supply shortfall can be met to a large extent if there was satisfactory answer to the current system loss of 40-45 per cent. It is felt that the shortfall is

nearly equal to the system loss through pipeline leaks, opens nozzled hydrants and unauthorised connections. Citing a source of system loss as an example, some observers point out that the street hydrants in the old city areas are the outlet for constant drainage of water as most of do not have their taps. Reportedly a survey found a large number of them without taps for the last 50 years discharging valuable water day and night.

The water supply situation in the city has worsened in the current dry season due to over-exploitation of sub-soil water reserves which continue to decrease alarmingly. To meet the rising demand for water. WASA has taken up some projects such as aug-

Beijing's choice

From Page One

that Jiang Chunyun was an un-

known to them. President

strongly for his Shanghai col-

league. Wu, 53. As a result, he

had a better showing: 2,366 in

favour, 210 against, 161 ab-

challenges when they take up

100,000 state-owned enter-

prises were losing money at

the end of last year, according

to government statistics. The

drain on state coffers has con-

tributed to more than 20 per

is rapidly using up farmland

and farmers have tended to

turn away from staples like

grain and cotton and look for

other ways of making more

money. Rising food costs have

been a major factor in inflation.

Azam asks govt

to quit for

fresh polls

e-Islami Ameer Golam Azam

today renewed the demand for

immediate resignation of the

government to pave the way

for fresh elections under a

caretaker administration, re-

"During its four-year in

power, the present govern-

ment has failed to prove its ef-

ficiency in running the coun-

try", he told a public meeting

at Faridpur High School

is the first time after 1970

that he is addressing a meet-

ernment for clinging to power,

he said: "Quit the obstinacy

that you have to remain in

power during the election."

The Jamaat chief said this

Criticising the BNP gov-

Azam also criticised the

government for its "failure to

check the abnormal price-hike

of rice, fertilizer and paper'

and expressed deep concern

about the deteriorating law and

CPA body

From Page One

order situation in the country.

ground in the afternoon.

ing in Faridpur.

ports UNB.

FARIDPUR, Mar 17: Jamaat-

In agriculture, development

Both men face enormous

One-third of China's

staining and 15 not voting:

their new duties.

cent inflation.

reportedly lobbied

menting the capacity of Chadnighat surface water treatment plant by way of balancing, modernisation, and rehabilitation. Besides, 20 more deep tubewells will be sunk against our best judgement, since we all know well that sub-soil water sources have dried out due to their over-exploitation. The experts. however, say that surface water-based plants could help solve the water crisis and reduce the pressure on sub-soil

In this context, all hope is pinned on the French-aided Syedabad Water Treatment Plant. WASA sources are of the view that water crisis will continue till this plant is completed. It is scheduled to be completed in three phases by 2010 with water supplied from the Sitalakhya river. On completion of the first

phase of the project at a cost of Tk. 708 crore in four years, the plant will be able to supply 50 Imperial Metric Gallons (IMGD) per day through the existing 1294 kilometres of listribution channels of the WASA. The next phase will also take four years and the plant will then supply another 50 IMGD. When the last phase is completed by 2010, the plant will supply 200 IMGD against the present requirement of 128 IMGD. WASA presently supplies around 70 IMGD.

The Sayedabad Water Treatment Plant is estimated cost Tk. 3000 crore. Misgiving is expressed that since not a single brick has been laid on the proposed site

as yet, there is likelihood of a natural cost escalation over the next sixteen years by which time the project is expected to be completed. Observers feel that the over-long time-frame looks variable if we fail to begin early enough.

Containing the system loss is a much debated issue. It is felt in some quarters that it holds the key to a sizeable easing of the water scarcity if success can be achieved in arrest ing the system loss through sheer efficiency. Controlling the systemic waste of water in the first place has assumed importance, pending completion of the contemplated projects for additional sources of

On account of our failure to timely put a new water treatment plant in place, we have reached a situation in which the Dhaka city which has an abundant supply of surface water around its perimeter should be practically starving

likelihood of any dramatic improvement of the situation as almost the entire water requirement in the city is met by a battery of deep tubewells.

Experts feel that there is no

Hence, according to experts and WASA sources, the water crisis in the capital is likely to continue in the near

In consideration of the overall water situation, the need is paramount and urgent that we must use water with utmost economy and save the last drops.

Russian news agencies said. The news agency Interfax put the casualty toll at 8 people killed and 40 wounded during the fighting at the police compound, in a residential suburb of Baku. about 8 kilometres (5 miles) from the centre. It was not clear how many

WHAT NEXT Harvesting of potatoes

MOSCOW, Mar 17: Azerbai

jani government troops cru-

shed a coup attempt by rebel

police and killed their leader

in a bloody gun-battle today in

the Caucasus republic's capital

Baku, President Geidar Alivev

ment soldiers stormed the

compound where members of

the elite Opon unit were holed

A fierce fire fight ensured.

with exchanges of mortar.

grenade and machinegun fire,

Before dawn today, govern-

said, reports AFP.

up since Tuesday.

Azeri troops crush coup

bid, kill rebel leader

of the casualties were combatants and how many civilians The shooting damaged buildings around the base and residents fled into hiding.

Quoted by Interfax, Aliyev said the mutinous police had been planning to overthrow the government and that their rebellion was finally put down by government troops late this

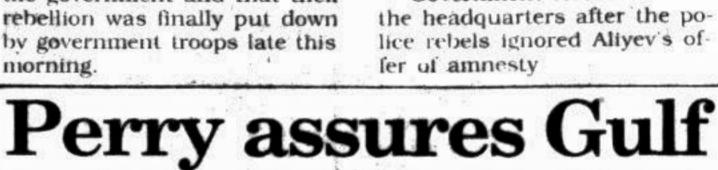
The leader of the rebels Rovshan Javadov, was killed in the fighting along with four government soldiers and an unknown number of civilians and mutineers. Alivev said.

The president added that the mutineers had been planning to seize the parliament, Interior Ministry, presidency and the national television sta tion later today.

Azerbaijan's Security Minis ter. Namik Abbasov, claimed that ex-president Avaz Mutaliboy and ex-prime minister Suret Gusinenov were linked to the coup attempt and had planned to fly to Baku from exile in Moscow, Interfax said.

Aliyev, a 71-year-old hard line communist and former member of the Soviet Union's politbure, said that following the abortive coup. "The state of Azerbaijan has strengthened."

Azerbaijan, an oil-rich country bordering the Caspian Sea at the southern end of the Caucasus mountain range, was plunged into isolation today Its airport was closed and telephone links were cut. Government forces stormed



states of security WASHINGTON, Mar 17: Defense Secretary William Perry is traveling to the Persian Gulf this weekend, looking to bolster US firepower in the region and assure friendly nations that America is ready to help in the face of potential threats from Iraq or Iran, re-

Iraq has rebuilt much of its military despite its crushing defeat in the Gulf War and the four-year-old United Nations sanctions. Iran has recently deployed anti-aircraft missiles at a strategic point near the

southern entry to the Gulf. Perry is slated to visit Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar on his six-day tour and will meet with leaders of each nation, including Saudi Arabia's King Fahd and Kuwaiti Emir

Sheik Jabir al-Ahmed al-Sabah A senior Pentagon official speaking on conditions of anonymity, said Perry will discuss positioning additional stocks of US military equipment in the region and also meet with some of the 20,000 US troops and sailors who are deployed there.

The visit "sends a message to both Iraq and Iran, which is that we take our defense role in the Gulf very seriously," the

Iraq's threat against Kuwait last October was met by the deployment of the 24th Infantry Division from the United States within three days. Stocks of tanks, armored personnel carriers and other weaponry stored in Kuwait allowed the Americans to make a quick display of force, the official said.

Saudi Arabia has discussed such an arrangement, but no progress has been made,

Fire at Ctg dock

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Mar 17: A fire broke out during the repair work of a ship MV Minhar-1 at the Chittagong Dry Dock this afternoon, fire brigade officials said. It took an hour to bring the blaze under control. The fire started at 5:15pm. The extent of loss is yet to be ascertained.

Ctg Urea Factory

water exceeds 25 parts per million (ppm), it cannot be used for production of urea because the plant would be seriously affected. Usually in this season of the year, the salinity

Unlike previous corresponding seasons, this year the salinity level of the Karnaphuli river near Kalurghat rises to nearly 4000 ppm in high tide and 1000 ppm during ebb tide, a factory source pointed out adding, "by processing, we

level rises due to poor flow of

can handle water having 100 ppm salinity level. But we can never handle salinity level exceeding 100 ppm. "We usually pump water

from the Karnaphuli during ebb tide. When the ebb tide is in full force, the salinity level decreases proportionately. Thus, we pump water for eight to ten hours to feed the urea plant," the source said, explaining the salinity problem. "Presently, we can pump the water for not more than two hours. This water is not enough to run the plant steadily, but we are reserving

The authorities are also the water reservoir of the factory and have decided to hire barges for supplying sweet

being installed with old pipes of the Chittagong Urea Factory. "We have never seen such a

rise of salinity level of the Karnaphuli in the last ten years. We never had to close the factory for this reason. the factory source said, adding, "It was painful for us to close the factory but we had no choice."

"As my knowledge goes, the salinity level of the Karnaphuli river increased due to poor rainfall last year. Also, the water from the Kaptai lake was not released for the same reason." He said, the navigability of the river had also decreased

"We might fail to resume production on Sunday. although we are trying our best, because the situation is not completely in our hands, but in the grasp of nature," a

at Baligaon in Tongibari thana of Munshiganj. - Star photo Potato From Page One

and purchase of potatoes for even throw away prices.

Reports reaching the Dis trict Agriculture Office. Munshiganj, say that in the remote areas of the district many farmers have become bewildered at the current situation in this cash crop market.

depend mainly on potato crop," said Md. Latafat Hossain, agriculture officer of Tongibari thana. "This year the buyers are absent, and the existing storage facilities are inadequate," he said.

Sources in the district agriculture office at Munshiganj said that at the beginning of the season it was forecast that some 2.2 lakh tonnes of potatoes would be produced in approximately 20,000 hectares of land in the district. In fact, 27,755 hectares of land were used this year and it is an unprecedented bumper crop. The production may run into 3.5 lakh tonnes, they said.

When asked if they have taken any measure to improve the marketing system, the sources said that the agriculture department is not con cerned with it.

'All we have do is to give advice to the farmers on production and the department has nothing to do with marketing or storing," one official

agriculture office, there are 50

can be witnessed on the main canal in the district, locally nearby fields rush in expecting that buyers have come.

The agriculture office sources at Tongibari said the actual problem lie in the marketing system of the crop. The authorities only encourage production but as soon as the harvest is over, the farmers are left out isolated.

from the national level," said an officer at the Tongibari Agriculture Office.

College student beaten to death

From Staff Correspondent

vesterday. The deceased of the Sylhet Government Degree College asked for a up. He succumbed to his in-Osmany Medical College hospiwas registered, but no arrest

Kremlin running out of money to

MOSCOW, Mar 17: Defence Minister Pavel Grachev warned today that the Kremlin was running out of money to finance the war in Chechnya but added that "military methods" to settle the war were not yet exhausted, reports AFP.

government's pocket is empty although the executive branch is trying to raise money to fiduring the voyage.

Afghan troops capture 3 Taliban positions

ISLAMABAD, Mar 17: Afghan government forces ousted the Taliban student militia from several strategic positions around Kabul and killed more than 100 of them, official Kabul radio said today. The operations took place on Thursday night and today according to the broadcast which was monitored in Islamabad. It said government forces captured three positions from Taliban south of Kabul today, killing 41 of its fighters whose bodies were lying on the frontline, reports Reuter.

Blast kills 7 in Muzaffarabad

ISLAMABAD, Mar 17: Seven people were killed and one seriously wounded when a bomb exploded at the office of a Kashmiri militant organisation in Pakistan-administrated Kashmir today, a report said. The official Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) said that the explosion was occurred in the office of Hizab-ul-Momineen, a Kashmiri Shi'ite organisation in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Kashmir, reports AFP.

Kashmiris begin march toward Charisharief

SRINAGAR (India). Mar 17: Kashmiri Muslim leaders began a march to an Islamic shrine town from here today carrying medicines and food for people they claim are besieged by Indian troops, police and witnesses said, reports

Top leaders of the All Party Freedom Conference, encompassing 27 Muslim political and militant groups, led 30 vehicles loaded with "Essential commodities" for the 37-kilometres journey to Charisharief town, they said.

"If the government does not lift the siege and allow people to live normally, we will be forced to take drastic steps," Kashmiri leader Shabir Shah said, before starting the march.

"Our journey might be followed by mass protests if the troops do not withdraw. added Abdul Ghani Lone, a senior politician.

State officials, however, say the northern town, which houses a holy mausoleum, has not been cordoned off despite the deployment of some 5,000 troops around its fringes to flush out Muslim militants holed up inside the shrine.

The rebels deny occupying the 18th-century shrine and say they frequent it only for daily prayers.

Meanwhile, conference chairman and Kashmir's head Muslim cleric, Umer Farooq urged worshippers offering weekly prayers in the state's largest mosque here today to step up protests if the army siege was not lifted, witnesses

Similar messages of support were broadcast over loudhailers in other city mosques

PM in UK

From Page One vestment the present govern-

ment is presently offering. The government, she said, will extend them all out coop-

eration to help them invest in Bangladesh. She asked them to invest their hard earned money for the establishment of standard private schools, colleges and hospitals in the private sectors. The Bangladeshis, Begum

Zia said, could also go for joint ventures with the foreign in-Giving a brief resume of the

country's socio-economic development activities, the Prime Minister said present Bangladesh is now rid of the stigma of bottomless basket, a country of famine and a country solely dependent on foreign assistance. Bangladesh has to go ahead

keeping pace with the other countries of the world, she Apprising the Bangladeshis

of the contributions made by her four-year long government in the development of the country, the Prime Minister said, you could easily see how the BNP government is carrying out development programmes as per its pre-election pledges from the country's own resources. The Prime Minister appre

ciated the Bangladesh caterers for their good services here. She also referred to the creation of Sylhet division, expansion of Sylhet airport and stopping of harassment of the country-bound passengers in the airports. President of Bangladesh

Caterers' Association M A Rahim and president of Greater Sylhet Development Council Dr Hasnat Hossain addressed the receptions, welcoming Begum Zia here.

Deportees From Page One

declared one lakh foreigners. including 20,000 Bangladeshis as illegal. The rest of the Bangladeshi deportees will be sent back in phases, officials

When ship reached the port Jetty, the deportees on board demonstrated and chanted slogans, demanding trial of the captain for, what they said, ill treatment meted out to them

One of the deportees, Shahjahan said, "We were not given adequate food and other facilias two government vehicles were set on fire by suspected rebels who have warned they would destroy state property until the siege is lifted.

The rebels inside Char-

isharief rejected a government offer for safe passage to Pak-Islan Tuesday which would allow them to cross a line of control demarcating the Indian and Pakistani zones of the divided and troubled state. The army operation is the

second involving a Kashmir shrine since October 1993 when troops ringed Srinagar's Hazratbal shrine, which houses a hair of Prophet Mohammad (SM), to force out occupying rebels. The 33-day siege was re-

solved peacefully when the militants surrendered without

Khomeini's son dead

NICOSIA, Mar 17: Ahmad Khomeini the son of Iran's late leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, died today, the official Iranian news agency IRNA said. He was 48, reports Reuter.

Khomeini, a cleric who had an informal role in Iran, had been taken to hospital in Tehran after a heart attack on Sunday

IRNA said Khomeini "left for heavenly abode today. plunging the nation in gloom he was a prominent face in the struggle against the oppressors, and spared no efforts to safeguard the legacy of his immortal father," IRNA added.

It said he is survived by three sons. The eldest, Hassan, 23. is a student at the Theology school in the holy city of

A Muslim cleric. Khomeini was his father's closest aide during the decade in when Ayatollah was at the helm of the Islamic republic until his death

in 1989. He held no government position but was a member of several policy-making councils

Filipino maid

From Page One said in an affidavit she was a former cellmate of Contemplacion and had evidence of

inside," according to Filipinos at the scene.

Parumog arrived just after midnight on Thursday and according to lawyer Jose Grapilon made a statement to police in the early morning hours. Police said they would pass it to unname higher authorities, Grapilon told Reu-

Grapilon and other lawyers had filed an appeal on Thursday, one said had not asked for clemency but simply a 14-day reprieve so that they could affairs ministry to present new evidence.

The government made no public response to the request Singapore on Wednesday rejected an appeal by Philippine President Ramos to stay the execution. The Singapore government then made a detailed rebuttal of some of the alleged new evidence in the case. It said it had "carefully investigated this" new evi-

dence "and found it to be untrue. A police statement announcing the hanging today said: "Contemplation had admitted to both the murders to the police investigators and at all stages of the proceed ings," and "led police to re-

cover valuables and jewellery' belonging to the strangled Aside from the Ramos and lawyer appeals, the case sparked public protests in the

"Singapore's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on

Wednesday: "The Singapore embassy in the Philippines has received a number of threatening messages against the em bassy and against Singaporeans in the Philippines. They appear to be motivated by the Flor Contemplation case.

volume of traffic and containerised cargo at the port has prompted the authorities to plan for expansion of its infrastructure with modern equipment and facilities to match other Asian ports official sources said. Though the installed han-

dling capacity of the port stands at 6 million metric tons, its traffic in the '93-94 fiscal rose to 7.9 million MT, up from 7.6 million MT in '92-Containers handled in '93-

94 recorded at 175,000 TEUs and increase of 25,000 TEUs over the previous year.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

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Chinese President Jiang Zemin drops his yellow ballot sheet into the voting box to cast his ballot in the election of two new vice-premiers at the plenary session of the Eighth National People's Congress yesterday in Beijing. - AFP photo

Bangabandhu's birthday From Page One lent while the whole nation is

celebrating the birthday of the

great national leader", she Referring to Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's recent visit to the grave of Bangabandhu, the AL chief said. "It is not clear why and for what purpose the PM visited Bangabandhu's mazar since she (the PM) never recognised the

contributions of the great leader." Turning to the Opposition agitation she said Opposition MPs were compelled to resign and take to the streets since they were not allowed to speak in Parliament on national issues. She also criticised the government for 'failing' to arrest the price spiral of essentials including rice and fertiliser and called for unseating

the "vote-dacoit and corrupt' BNP government. Held at the GT High School ground in the afternoon, the meeting was also addressed by AL leaders Zillur Rahman. Sajeda Choudhury, Abdur Razzak. Amir Hossain Amu. Salahuddin Yusuf . Mozaffar Hossain Paltu, Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Charge d'Affaires of the Russian Embassy in Dhaka Sergei Velefkin. Prof. Kabir Choudhury, Prof. Mazharul Islam, Justice KM Sobhan, journalists Habibur Rahman Milon, Hassan Shahrier, Shafigur Rahman

hadev Saha, writer Rashid Haider and others. People from different areas of Tungipara and other parts of the country thronged the venue to participate in Mujib's birth celebration pro-

and Altaf Mahmud, poet Ma-

grammes. In the capital, the Awami League and its front organisations, the Bangabandhu

Parishad and many other so cio-cultural organisations laid wreaths at the portrait of Sheikh Mujib at the Banga-

bandhu Bhaban in the morning. AL leaders, including Abdus Samad Azad, Dr Alauddin, Tofael Ahmed, Fazlul Haq. Prof Abu Sayeed, Rahmat Ali, Shudhangshu Shekhar Halder, Abdul Momin Talukder, SAMS Kibria, Barrister Shawkat Ali and Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya were present during

the laying of wreaths in Dhaka. Mayor Mohammad Hanif, who is also president of the

city unit of AL, also placed a wreath. The day's programme included hoisting national and party flags atop the party central office, discussions and mi lad mahfils.

Party sources said, similar programmes were taken throughout the country by local units of the AL The Bangabandhu Parishad

organised a painting exhibition

at the Bangabandhu Bhaban

premises and a gathering of children and juveniles in the afternoon. Hundreds of people thronged the Bagabandhu Bhaban yesterday and visited the Bagabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Memorial Museum

Sheikh Rehana, the voungest daughter of Sheikh Mujib, was present at the museum throughout the day.

The organisations, which

placed wreaths at the portrait

which remained open for chil

of Bangabandhu in the city, included Jatiya Sramik League. Awami Jubo League, Mahila Awami League, Sechha Sebak League, Bangladesh Chhatra League, Jagannath Hall Students Union, Sadhana Sangsad, Sonar Bangla Jubo Parishad, Joy Bangla Sangskritik Oikya Jote, Bagabandhu Samaj Kalyan Parishad, Bangabandhu Pathagar, Auto-Rickshaw Sramik League, Muktijoddha Sanghati Parishad, Bangabandhu Prakaushali Parishad, Bangabandhu Chikitsak Parishad, Awami Garments Sramik League and Amra Mujib Sena.

procuring 200 to 300 tons of water by trucks everyday for

> water on an emergency basis. The pipeline with KAFCO is

alarmingly due to siltation.

BCIC official said.

he said: "Unfortunately the

nance our efforts."

"The farmers in this area

According to the district cold storages in the district having a total capacity of storing only 55,000 tonnes.
The farmers desperation

roads from Munshiganj towards the dry Padma-Taltala known as the 'Suez Canal' for its strategic situation. Thou sands of sacks of potatoes lie along the roads and just on approach farmers from the

Munshigani district is the highest potato producing area in the country.

"The change has to come

SYLHET, Mar 17: A college student was beaten to death by the owner and employees of a furniture shop in Sylhet town Harun-or-Rashid, 18, a student screw driver from the workshop, but he was refused. An exchange of hot words started and at one stage, they beat him juries at the Sylhet MAG tal yesterday afternoon. A case

fund Chechen war

Speaking in an interview with the news agency Interfax,

Grachev, addressing journalists at the Russian military base of Mozdok near Chechnya.

her innocence. Outside the prison, she broke into tears and sobs, saying in tagalog:"Mama Flor is innocent" and "why can't we go

approach the Singapore home

Philippines, and threats of vio