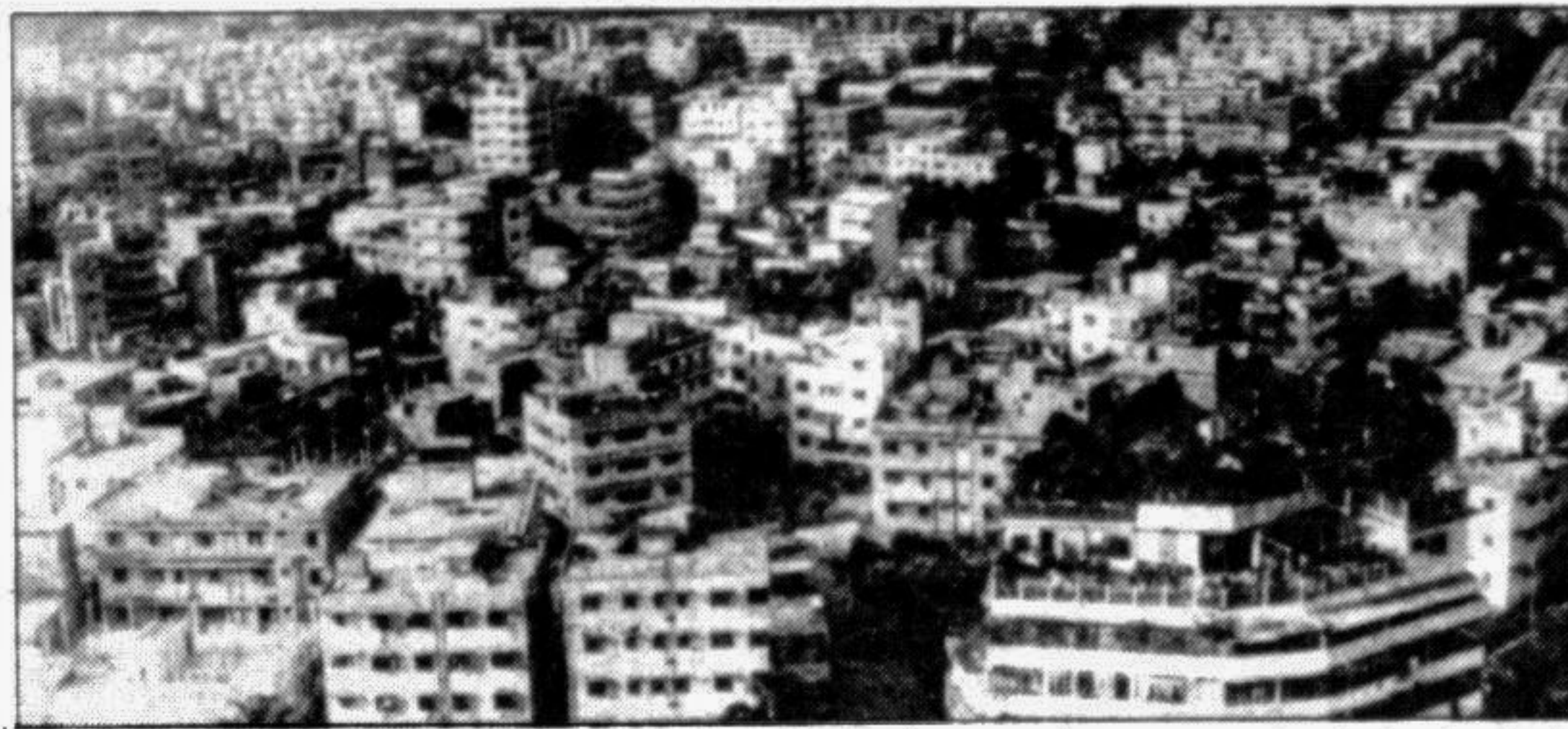


SAVE DHAKA

URBANISATION & HOUSING: PART I

A hydra-headed monster called Dhaka

By Masud Hasan Khan



UNPLANNED URBANISATION: This picture shows the emerging concrete jungle in the city's Kamalapur area.

The 1979 development masterplan of Dhaka predicted that the city would have a population of 14 lakh 20 thousand in the next 20 years. However, the actual growth of the city and its population belied all statistical and demographical models. According to experts, the population of Dhaka will double in just 25 years and will reach 6.3 million by the year 2016. By then, the population of Bangladesh would start reaching its optimum level — perhaps before slowing down, they say. Dhaka has already begun to accommodate 40 per cent of all people who set out from their villages to the cities. Professor Nazrul Islam, a teacher of Geography at the Dhaka University, says that by the year 2025, between 40,000 and 50,000 people would live in every square kilometre of the Metropolitan area. Land being a scarce resource in Dhaka, its price has increased 25 to 35 folds since independence in 1971. For example, the land price in the Bashabo area which was Taka 2,000 a katha in the late 1970s has now increased to Taka three lakh. An increase of 150 times. Experts involved in matters relating to Dhaka city lands predict that the scarcity would be even more intense in future and 90 per cent of the future citizens would own no land. As it is now, the capital would be a city of migrants with low social and educational attainments, they say. Small-scale employment like vending and peddling will

How many people live in Dhaka?

A mammoth banner hung during the last Dhaka City Corporation elections pronounced that the metropolitan city accommodates some 70 lakh people. Former mayor Mirza Abbas, MP and present mayor Mohammad Hanif were possibly in agreement in their claim that between 60 and 70 lakh people were living in the city. However, this is a misnomer, contradict the geographers. According to the Urban Studies Programme (USP) of the Dhaka University, the area of greater Dhaka then was 1,353 square-kilometres. The greater Dhaka, called Statistical Metropolitan Area (SMA), includes the Dhaka City Corporation area and the Cantonment, Tongi, Gazipur, Savar and Narayanganj municipalities and all rural areas within the limit. The population of Dhaka SMA is 69,50,920, according to a 1991 count of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistic (BBS) which perhaps has reached the population of 70 lakh by now. However, the area of the Dhaka City Corporation is 225 square-kilometres and the population was 33,96,188, according to the 1991 BBS count, which by now has reached 40 lakh. The total number of voters within the Dhaka City Corporation area was 17,00,848 out of which 54.03 per cent (or 9,18,906 voters) cast the ballots in the last mayoral elections, pointed out a USP bulletin.

Starting today, we begin our Agenda 95 series on SAVE DHAKA. Appearing on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, this special feature is part of The Daily Star's campaign to sensitize the citizens and city planners alike to the issues and challenges relating to the development of the country's capital. Our purpose is to begin an active public debate on issues facing this ever-expanding, bustling metropolis today and tomorrow to make it more liveable.

The broad themes to be covered in this series are the problems of urbanisation and housing; traffic and transport; civic amenities; health; safety; pollution; and need for proper recreational facilities.

The Daily Star solicits readers' contributions in the form of write-ups, photographs, suggestions or opinions to make this debate truly broad-based.

Looking back at the growth of Dhaka, the size of the city today is no small wonder.

Once a small trading-spot and later the economic nerve-centre of the region, Dhaka's growth outstrips even that of Calcutta considering its resilience against the successive waves of change that have often remoulded its history.

A glimpse at the future of the city is an even bigger wonder — because it is changing so rapidly. What would be the face of our capital when the 21st century arrives?

A crucial question follows immediately — "Are we prepared for that unpredictable future?"

Experts say that with the expanding city limits, Dhaka would turn into a mini megalopolis — four or five times the present size — connected with smaller towns around.

The area would spread up to Kalkajoir, Joydevpur and Kapasia in the north — if the urbanisation proceeds recklessly. Narsingdi and Kaliganj will come well within the city limits in the east and Munshiganj in the south. Savar has already become a *de facto* part of Dhaka.

Just imagine, the swank Gulshan area or the busy commercial district Motijheel would be called the old city, and nobody can guess how the present day Islampur-Babubazar or Labagh areas would be described. The 'old, old city' perhaps?

The city has already expanded five to six fold since its dated founding, with its population growing much faster.

Hajj needs no permission, Libya tells UN

UNITED NATIONS, Apr 22: Libya told the chairman of a Security Council sanctions committee on Friday that the Muslim pilgrimage to Makkah was a religious matter which did not require anyone's permission, reports Reuter.

"We should obey our God without permission from anybody — it is not an international matter — it is a matter of religion," Libyan UN envoy Mohamed Azwai said.

Any interference with this matter of religion would not be agreeable to any Muslim.

Azwei said he gave this response to the sanctions committee chairman Karel Kovanda of the Czech Republic when he asked about reports that a Libyan airliner flew pilgrims to Jeddah earlier this week in defiance of UN sanctions.

The sanctions which include a ban on flights to and from Libya were imposed in 1992 because of its failure to surrender for trial two men indicted in the United States and Britain for the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland with killed 270 people.

The sanctions committee on Wednesday gave permission for Egyptian airline Egypt Air to conduct 45 return flights from Tripoli and Benghazi to Jeddah for Libyans making the Hajj. But before those flights got under way a Libyan airliner, in defiance of the UN ban flew about 150 pilgrims of Jeddah.

The Egyptair has airlifted 1,000 Libyan pilgrims to Saudi Arabia from Tripoli and Benghazi in the first 24 hours of the operation. Egyptair officials said on Friday.

The airlift began on Thursday afternoon after the Libya sanctions committee of the United Nations gave Egypt Air clearance to move 6,000 Libyan pilgrims in 45 flights to and from the Saudi city of Jeddah.

SAARC states to offer each other trade concessions

KATHMANDU, Apr 22: Seven South Asian countries have agreed to offer each other trade concessions to boost commerce in one of the world's poorest regions, officials said today, reports Reuter.

Negotiators from the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) agreed to prepare lists of goods which will receive preferential treatment in the form of lower tariffs when exported to other member countries.

SAARC comprises Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Trade among SAARC countries makes up less than three per cent of world commerce.

SAARC officials said the trade arrangement will give a fillip to regional cooperation and should lead to more concessions.

JS session

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The constitutional provisions and established a one-party business in Parliament. The MPs who have resigned are also meeting today to discuss the political situation and their sit-in programme. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, at a public meeting last week, had offered to have talks with the Opposition to resolve the crisis. On the other hand, Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina in a recent statement said she, too, was ready for a peaceful solution.

BNP secretary general Abdus Salam Talukdar, who is now on a tour of the Barisal region, earlier said he would contact his AL counterpart on his return to the capital Sunday.

Talukdar had a telephonic conversation with AL general secretary Zillur Rahman on April 17 regarding the possibility of a government-Opposition dialogue. The details of their talks, however, could not be known.

Khaleda

From Page 1

visit, the Bangladesh Prime Minister will call on Pakistan President Farooq Ahmed Khan Leghari.

She will hold talks with her Pakistani counterpart, Benazir, covering matters relating to the SAARC as well as bilateral relations.

The two leaders are expected to review the progress made in the activity of the SAARC since the seventh summit in Dhaka.

They will also focus on steps need to be taken for making the forthcoming summit a success as well as in making the SAARC a more effective organisation that can bring tangible benefits to commonman of South Asia.

UN sanctions on Y'slavia eased

UNITED NATIONS, Apr 22: The United Nations on Friday extended the relaxation of sanctions on Yugoslavia but said it will set stricter conditions in future, reports AP.

The Security Council voted 13-0 to approve a resolution backed by the United States, Britain, Germany, France, Italy and the Czech Republic.

Sanctions were eased only for another 75 days instead of 100 days as in the past.

The Midnight File

3 peacekeepers killed in Sarajevo

SARAJEVO, Apr 22: Three French peacekeepers were killed and four wounded in a munitions accident at Sarajevo airport today, UN officials said. Maj Pierre Chavancy, a UN spokesman, said the accident occurred at 3:10 pm (1310 GMT) as the soldiers were trying to defuse ammunition at the French-controlled UN airport compound, reports AP.

Spl credit facilities for N region demanded

RAJSHAHI, Apr 22: A divisional convention of businessmen here today highlighted the wide economic disparity between the northern and eastern parts of the country and demanded special credit facilities and investment fund for the northern districts, reports UNB.

Speaking at the convention at Rajshahi Stadium, FBCCI President Salman F Rahman said the government should adopt an integrated industrial policy to ensure balanced development in the country.

The conference, attended by a large number of businessmen of the region's 16 districts, even proposed that the government declare the northern division as a province to remove the imbalances between the two sides of the Jamuna river.

The FBCCI president emphasised the need for a congenial atmosphere for better utilisation of the business opportunities created by the opening of the economy.

He said Bangladeshi industrialists are competent enough to take the advantage of the opportunities and respond to the challenges of the free-market economy if there is political stability in the country.

"We have to press our political leaders to bring a stable condition so that we can utilise the opportunities," said Salman who attended the convention as chief guest.

FBCCI vice president Khandaker Rashiduzzaman Dudu presided over the meeting while president of Rajshahi Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mohammad Ali Sarkar delivered the address of welcome.

Speakers at the conference listed different problems of industrialising the country's northern zone and blamed the government's "wrong industrial policy" for the backwardness of Rajshahi division.

ADB, Japan

From Page 1

informed that a three new power plants with a capacity of 510 megawatt had commissioned in 1994 and another plant having capacity of 82 megawatt would be added to the national grid by June next after its overhauling. Another four power plants having capacity of 740 megawatt will go into operation by 1998.

The meeting expressed satisfaction over the progress of the process of private power generation.

Teresa meets PM

From Page 1

in love and peace. Begum Zia wished Mother Teresa good health and a long life so that she can continue her noble services to humanity.

Mother Teresa, who preaches "the fruit of love is service," "The fruit of service is peace," said all good works can be done if they are pursued with love.

Appreciating the warm hospitality she received in Dhaka, Mother Teresa said "the people of Bangladesh are very good."

Mother Teresa also paid a courtesy call on the officials of the NGO Affairs Bureau at the Malsya Bhaban in the city yesterday afternoon.

Water issue

From Page 1

solve all problems through open-minded discussion. She said her country has good relations with all the South Asian countries and expressed Bangladesh's firm commitment for achieving the objectives of the seven-nation SAARC.

The Prime Minister assured all possible cooperation from her government during the tenure of the Indian envoy in Bangladesh.

Senior officials were present on the occasion.

Bus services in Patuakhali suspended

From Staff Correspondent

BARISAL, Apr 22: Bus services from Patuakhali have been suspended for an indefinite period from yesterday following clashes between two groups of the local road transport workers union. They clashed over the possession of the union office. No buses are plying from Patuakhali to Kalapara, Mirzaganj, Amtali and Baufal.

Rly to rehabilitate important stations

Important railway junctions and district town stations will be brought under a full-fledged rehabilitation programme to give better service to the passengers, reports BSS.

This was decided at a review meeting held at the Railway Bhaban here yesterday with Communications Minister Oli Ahmed in the chair.

The meeting was told that renovation work in 25 stations in the eastern zone and 30 stations in the western zone had been going on.

GDP growth remained static

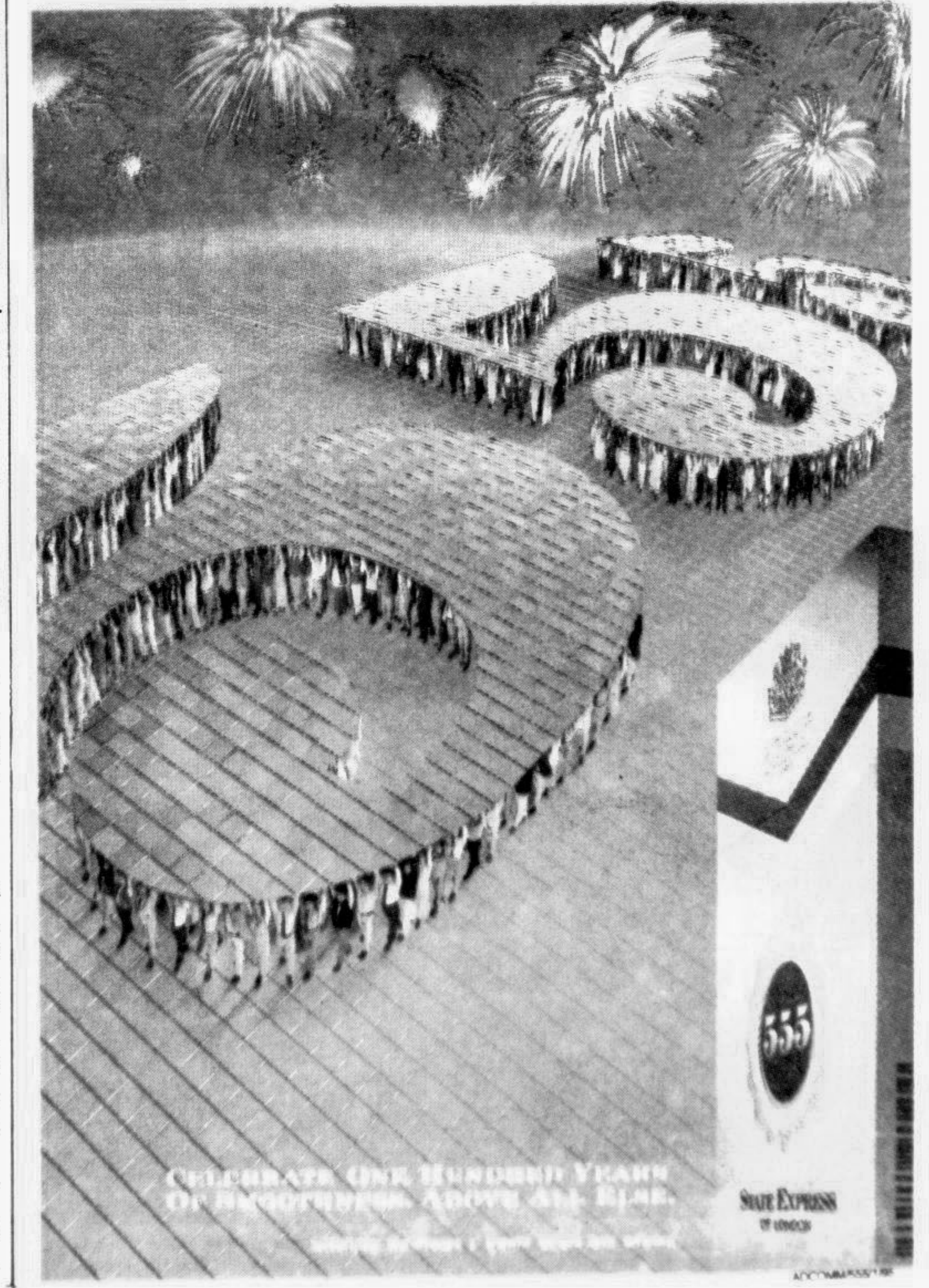
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port-based taxes which contributed half of all tax collections in 1990-91 to 1993-94 compared to 52.1 per cent in 1985-86 to 1989-90," it noted.

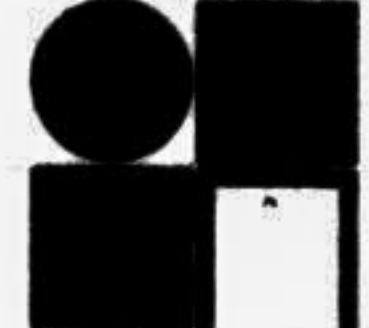
The draft pointed out that the revenue expenditure to GDP ratio actually increased to 8.9 per cent during the 1990-94 period, the highest level in 15 years. While, on the other hand, the development expenditure to GDP ratio declined from 8.9 per cent during 1975-90 period to its lowest level at 7.2 per cent over the 1990-94 period.

It also questions the level of domestic resource contribution to the ADP, saying that rise in the share of self-reliance owes to the fact that the development budget has been well below expected levels while noting that the revenue surplus is itself the end result of 'peculiarities' of budgetary accounting techniques.

The chapter on the external sector, written by Abdul Bayes, M Ismail and Mustafizur Rahman, noted the real growth rates of exports of 16 per cent during the 90s compared to around 5.5 per cent in the 80s. However, the draft expressed concern over the fact that the country's exports remain concentrated and vulnerable to a regulated trade regime. "It is of some concern that other than ready-made garments and knitwear, ex-



SAARCH CONFERENCE 1995



INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS BANGLADESH EXHIBITION OF ARCHITECTURAL WORKS & BUILDING MATERIALS APRIL 21-23 TODAY IS LAST DAY THE EXHIBITION WILL REMAIN OPEN TO ALL FROM 10:00 AM TO 07:00 PM AT HOTEL SHERATON BALL ROOM. S-215

SGS (BANGLADESH) LIMITED

RE-LOCATION OF IAN DEPARTMENT

To facilitate easy approach to our IAN department (Import under circular issued by the National Board of Revenue), we have decided to shift the said department at the following address:

Globe Chamber, 1st Floor 104, Motijheel Commercial Area P. O. Box-197 DHAKA. Tel: (880-2) 23 21 25 Fax: (880-2) 86 23 75 Tlx: 642433 SGS BJ

The importers who are importing materials according to the circular issued by the National Board of Revenue are requested to contact SGS at the above address from Tuesday the 28th April, 1995.

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