

DOWN TO EARTH

Hydra-headed Ills of City Life

By A S M Nurunnabi

A distressing recital of city's ills may begin with its pervasive adulteration syndromes. The phenomenon of adulteration exists in every country more or less. But in adulteration of food products, Bangladesh enjoys a unique position. Here there is hardly any food item which is free from adulteration. Since it has affected the basic food items, there is no way to escape from their consumption. For instance, common items like rice and sugar. They are sometimes mixed with urea fertiliser which lend an attractive appearance to these items for the buyers. The greatest degree of adulteration is practised with edible oils. Mixing palm oil with them is the common practice, but more dangerous is the use of low-grade oils which are unfit for human consumption. Mustard oil is also widely adulterated with specific chemicals. Ghee is another food item subjected to various techniques of adulteration. Recently a spurious ghee-making unit has been detected at Keraniganj where diluted polythene bags are used as adulterants. Lately we have come across some newspaper reports which presented chilling details of various methods of adulteration of food items. The dreadful saga of adulteration does not spare the field of medicines. Ours is perhaps the only country in the world where adulteration of medicines is practised on a wide scale. According to a source, in Dhaka alone, the number of bogus manufacturers of medicines is more than the genuine ones. It is alleged that even in some pharmaceutical factories, proper therapeutic standards are not maintained. It is surprising how the prevailing adulteration activities can go openly. According to a source in the BSTI (Bangladesh Standard and Testing Institute), it is virtually impossible to tackle the incredible number of fake factories. The bitter irony is

that reportedly the BSTI, or the Public Health Department or the City Corporation hardly makes any effective check on any food factories, licensed or not. On the other hand, there are allegations that many owners of clandestine food factories pay a regular "donation" to different departments and authorities concerned to ensure their inaction. According to a recent World Bank-UNICEF report, we have become a nation of people with stunted growth because of malnutrition in our children obviously caused by large-scale consumption of adulterated food stuffs. This is also creating a generation of children with a low-level of intelligence. Among the remedies suggested are that the relevant laws should be enforced on a larger scale to crack down on the wide-scale rackets of food adulterators. At the same time, people should be made aware of the slow but sure poisoning they are being subjected to through launching a social campaign with the help of consumers' organisations and citizens' groups. Observers feel that there is need for revamping the existing monitoring and testing agencies. They also feel that to stem the rot, the authorities, manufacturers, and consumers' right groups should sit together from time to time to review remedial measures and to correct market failings. Recently a round-table conference on the theme "Save Dhaka" was organised at which experts from various fields and knowledgeable persons took part in discussions on the multifaceted problems of the city and suggested their remedies. At the moment no impact of those exercises seems to be in evidence. One plea may be that it is too short a period to expect results. Meanwhile, the citizens continue to groan under the impact of the hydra-headed ills afflicting the city.

The habitable character of the city seems to be gradually eroding. The degree of environmental pollution in it seems to have reached a high point. The city life is plagued with an enormous range of problems and crises. These include waterlogging, erratic electric supply, vagaries of telephones, creater-ridden roads, water crisis, horrendous traffic jams, frequent power failures, chaotic education and medicare systems, increasing incidence of terrorism and extortion, etc. All this has disrupted the normal life of a citizen. At the beginning of the current fiscal year, the Dhaka City Corporation has adopted a "Clean Dhaka" scheme costing Taka 130 crore. The scheme provides for procurement of various items of equipment and construction of service facilities to improve the existing service infrastructure of the city. When that scheme is completed in 1997, it is expected that there may be some improvement in the service facilities and environmental situation of the city. The need for attaining greater speed in effecting improvement in all aspects of civic life has lately been underscored by another factor. According to a report of the World Bank, at the beginning of the 21st century, i. e. only after 5 years, the population of the city is expected to approximate 1 crore 20 lakh. With that perspective in view, there is little doubt that the existing service infrastructure of the city may break down completely unless appropriate measures are taken well ahead to meet the challenge and thereby save the city from a potentially cataclysmic situation arising from the high rise in city population. In this context, the recommendations made by the last round table conference on "Save Dhaka" need to be considered by the authorities concerned with all seriousness for the purpose of expeditious implementation.

Teenaged girl rescued from confinement

Police in a special drive Thursday rescued a teenaged girl forcibly married and confined for last three years in a house in the city's Badda area, reports UNB.

Farzana Banu Merry, 15, was coerced into wedding and then confined in a room by Nazrul Islam, son of Abdul Ali, former chairman of Badda area, police sources said. Nazrul allegedly also kept Merry's mother Monwara Begum and her sister Cherry confined for a long time. But both managed to escape from the confinement few months ago.

Nazrul was arrested during the joint special drive made by Gulshan and CID police by an order from the Ministry of Home Affairs to rescue Merry.

Police said they also rescued a one-year-old son of Merry.

Merry was rescued from a locked room at GP/GA 1/5 Idgah Masjid Road, Shahjampur, Badda, sources said.

Nazrul was produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Court yesterday. The court refused police prayer for remand and sent him to Dhaka Central Jail.

Girl jumps from police van, dies in hospital

By DMCH Correspondent

A young girl who was injured after jumping from a police van in the city died at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) late night Thursday.

Sabina, 24 had jumped from the police van to escape while police was taking her and six other girls to the government centre for floating people at Mirpur after picking them up from near Ramna Park and Suhrawardy Uddyan areas, police said. The girls used to roam about in the areas.

Child lifting

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was beaten by another mob in front of Kusum Kumari Girls' School. Later police rescued him.

Rupam had gone to the school to meet his niece. The mob not only beat him, but also took away his wrist watch, wallet and other valuables.

Meanwhile, most of the guardians of school-going children are increasingly becoming worried about their wards. "Now I do not allow my son go to school alone. Either my wife accompanies him or I do," Nurul Islam of Port Colony said.

The city's school authorities have also become alert and have advised guardians to remain cautious.

School students brought out a procession in the city recently and submitted a memorandum to the police commissioner and the deputy commissioner demanding measures against child-lifting.

City mayor Mohiuddin Chowdhury in a recent statement expressed grave concern at the situation. The mayor called for deployment of police around schools and stepping up security measures.

Mastaans and muggers are allegedly taking advantage of the situation to snatch away valuables from passers-by, branding them as child lifters.

Anwar, Firoz Reporters Unity VP, GS

By Staff Correspondent

Anwarul Haq, chief reporter of The Daily Star and Mostafa Firoz of the Dainik Janakantha have been elected Vice-President and General Secretary respectively of the Dhaka Reporters Unity, a newly formed body of reporters.

Earlier, Shafiqul Kabir, Chief Reporter of the Dainik Ittefaq and Shamim Ahmed, Chief Reporter of the UNB were elected uncontested President and Joint Secretary respectively of the Unity.

The other office bearers, elected through a direct voting held yesterday at the Jatiya Press Club, are: Organising Secretary — Aini Ilyias (Observer), Treasurer — Ajit Kumar Sarker (Morning Sun), Publicity and Research Secretary — Monowar Islam (Banglabazar Patrika), Cultural Secretary — Shaikat Hussain Masum (Sangbad), and Office Secretary — Abdul Mannan (Inqilab).

The elected members of the executive committee are: Rashed Chowdhury (UNB), Shahed Chowdhury (Khabar), Shahrier Shahid (BSS), Syed Ishtiaq Reza (Financial Express), Azam Mir Shahidul Ahsan (Sangram), Saiful Huda (Independent), Rezoanul Haq (Janakantha), Mufti Ahmed (Al-Amin), Mesbah Ahmed (Ajker Kagor), Shamsul Alam Belal (BSS), Aatur Rahman (Nobo Chetana), and Akram Hussain Khan (Ittefaq).

Out of a total of 223 votes, 194 votes (87 per cent) were cast in the polling held from 9 am to 4 pm with a two-hour lunch break from 12 noon to 2 pm.

Chairman of the election conducting committee Abdul Khaleq Bhuiyan announced the results at 7:15 pm. The other members of the committee are: Mostafa-Jamil, Jafar Iqbal, Rashida Mohiuddin and Anjita Karim.

Hasina

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try-wide hartal on September 2 and 3 a success.

AL General Secretary Zillur Rahman and the party's city unit General Secretary Mofazzal Hussain Chowdhury Maya were also present at the meeting chaired by DCC Mayor and city AL President Mohammad Hanif.



Artistes presenting a dance at the Nazrul Institute in the city yesterday in observance of the death anniversary of poet Nazrul. — Star photo

Mostafiz at OIC meet explains PM's proposal

Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman has said in New York that OIC member-states could help in upholding the territorial integrity of Bosnia and ensuring that its status as territorial integrity is fully respected, reports UNB.

In a statement at the meeting of OIC working group on Bosnia-Herzegovina on Thursday, he explained the salient features of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's proposal for an emergency summit of the OIC countries on evolving situation in the Balkans.

On August 15, Begum Zia, through letters addressed to all heads of state or government of OIC countries, called for the summit to devise ways for protecting the territorial integrity and independence of the Muslim republic, deterring Serb aggression.

"The Bangladesh Prime Minister had underscored the need for closer cooperation and establishment of effective OIC mechanism in several practical spheres," Mostafiz told the working group, according to a message received here yesterday.

The Foreign Minister referred to the Prime Minister's proposal for some measures to be taken following lifting of arms embargo. The measures include mobilisation of adequate military arms and equipment, channeling humanitarian assistance to refugees, organising relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction measures and helping orphan children.

Referring to a Malaysian move to host a meeting of the Foreign Ministers and the Defence Ministers in September 14-15, he said these developments are compatible with and fully reinforce the rationale of the Bangladesh Prime Minister's call for an urgent convening of an OIC summit.

"If the majority wishes so, the current chairman of the OIC, Morocco, would agree to provide a venue in any one of its beautiful cities," he said.

JCD faction

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and Shahjalal Hall today and arrested four more student leaders of Chanchal group.

They include BAUCSU joint secretary Shamimur Rahman Shamim and cultural secretary of Shahjalal Hall ABM Anisur Rahman.

The total number of arrested students stood at 25 since the crackdown began Wednesday.

The police action follows gunbattles between two factions of the JCD's university unit — one led by BAUCSU VP Chanchal and the other by GS Shamsul Alam Tofa — for the last few days.

Police arrested Afsan, Shahjahan and Humayun this morning.

Dhaka, Bamako to face challenge

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Though distanced by geography, President Biswas said, "We are both heirs to ancient civilizations and we have rich cultural heritage as we have potentials for economic advancement."

President Biswas said, "We are happy to know that the government of Mali is considering to engage Bangladeshi farmers for agricultural development of the fertile area of Niger basin in Mali."

This welcome concept of transnational migration, he hoped, would help in further consolidation of political and economic relations between "our two countries."

Bangladesh and Mali, he said, had experienced the sufferings from disasters, both natural and man-made.

President Biswas referred to profound worldwide changes brought about by the end of the cold war with formidable challenges for the developing countries.

President Konare said both Bangladesh and Mali, being Third World democratic countries with similar challenges, were needed to strengthen their solidarity. "We need to strengthen our cooperation," President

Konare said, adding, "in this regard our direct contacts, will help us to explore the areas of possible cooperation."

The immediate objective of Mali, President Konare said, was to achieve self sufficiency.

"I insist on cooperation with Bangladesh," said President Konare, "in the field of agriculture and exchange expertise and knowledge in this field."

The end of cold war, President Konare said, raised high hopes but it was unfortunate that there were still remnants of malice and hatred here and there.

In this regard, he mentioned Bosnia-Herzegovina, Afghanistan, the Middle East and Somalia as examples.

President Konare stressed the urgent need for a new international economic order to end the growing dependence of the countries of the south on developed countries.

Earlier President Alpha Oumar Konare and his wife Madam Adame ba Konare, were accorded a warm welcome yesterday as they began a four-day state visit to Bangladesh.

One stabbed to death

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COMILLA, Aug 25: A young man was allegedly stabbed to death only for Tk 180 in the district town on Thursday night, reports UNB.

Babul, 35, of Katabeel area of the town succumbed to his injuries soon after his admission to the Comilla General Hospital.

Police said Babul and his companion Ramjan were attacked with sharp weapons allegedly by Afsan Mia, a local municipal ward commissioner, and his associates Humayun, Shahjahan and two others at about 10 pm on Thursday. Babul and Ramjan went to claim repayment of a loan of Tk 180.

Police arrested Afsan, Shahjahan and Humayun this morning.

Formal talks

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tural workers in Mali as well as trade and economic cooperation.

They are likely to exchange views on various international issues, including the evolving situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina and problems facing the Muslim Ummah.

Before the official talks, the two leaders will have an exclusive meeting.

Prime Minister Begum Zia will host a dinner today in honour of the visiting President and his wife.

The Malian President will visit the Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) and the Islamic Institute of Technology (IIT) at Gazipur.

On Sunday, President Konare will visit Comilla to see Grameen Bank project, Mainamati archaeological site and Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD). He will also visit the National Museum.

President Konare will leave Dhaka on Monday morning, concluding his four-day visit to Bangladesh.

No easy task

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President Zia had taken the initiative to build ties between Bamako and Dhaka and since then the bilateral relations had been developing steadily.

He condoned the sudden death of Bangladesh Ambassador to Morocco Abdul Quayum who was concurrently accredited to Mali. Konare said Quayum had played a vital role in developing Bamako-Dhaka relations.

Talking to President Konare, Begum Zia expressed her gratitude to the people of Mali for naming a road after Shaheed President Zia and said the people of Bangladesh were very happy to know it.

Welcoming him in Dhaka, she said both Bangladesh and Mali enjoyed an excellent bilateral relationship because both the countries have religious, cultural and other identities.

Four jets of Bangladesh Air Force escorted the aircraft carrying the guests as it entered the Bangladesh airport.

The Midnight File

Bosnian troops attack British peacekeepers

SARAJEVO, Aug 25: Bosnian government soldiers seeking supplies and weapons attacked British peacekeepers in the Gorazde "safe haven", the United Nations said Friday. The British killed two of them. No UN casualties were reported in the fighting about 50 kilometers (30 miles) southeast of Sarajevo, reports AP.

DUTA condemns Vice Chancellor

By Staff Correspondent

The Dhaka University Teachers' Association (DUTA) yesterday condemned Vice-Chancellor Prof Emajuddin Ahmed for his "partisan" attitude in selecting delegation members for a meeting with the Prime Minister.

"We are surprised that the VC met the Prime Minister on Thursday along with the deans and syndicate members who were elected from a certain group," said DUTA president Prof ATM Zahurul Haq and general secretary Prof S M Imamul Haq in a joint statement.

They said it was expected that the VC would take along with him all elected Deans Syndicate and Finance Committee members and talk to Prime Minister about different problems of the university.

But, the two deans who were elected from the "other group" and teachers' representatives in the Syndicate were not even informed about the meeting, they regretted.

BCL leader Raja arrested in city

By Staff Correspondent

Chhatra League leader Mosharrar Hossain Raja wanted in connection with the killing of two fellow members of the organisation, was arrested by police from a slum at Agargaon in the city Thursday, police said yesterday.

Moulana Jessori dead

From Our Correspondent

JHENIDAH, Aug 25: Alhaj Moulana Khairul Islam Jessori, President of the Bangladesh Ulema Party, died of cardiac arrest at his village home at Kala Laksmipur in Jhenidah sadar Thursday night. He was 55.

Moulana Jessori was a veteran freedom fighter. He first recited the Taiseer-e-Quran from the Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra in 1971.

He was a candidate in the country's presidential election in 1979.

After the namaj-e-janaza this afternoon, he was buried at the Kala Laksmipur Moulana-nabagh graveyard.

Guest birds

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Wood or Spotted sandpiper in the third week of August.

All these species of birds are regular visitors and they come in large number, according to the Wildlife Society. But their arrival starts from October or November.

The Common Swallow, the Little Ringed Plover and the Common Sandpiper come from the Himalayas. Others come from the Siberian-Tibetan region.

Nearly 200 species of such migratory birds come to Bangladesh.

Early arrival of migratory birds this year has raised questions in the mind of wildlife experts, the press release said.

Journalist

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Kharel and Tawhidul Anwar on Thursday, tied them up and kicked them despite their protests that they were journalists who had come to Malaysia to attend a seminar. The Star newspaper said.

Federal police spokesman superintendent Ghazali Mohamed Amin was quoted by Bernama news agency as saying that the policemen were only carrying out their duty and that two other suspects were later arrested.

Kharel is the editor-in-chief of the Nepal's national daily, 'The Rising Sun'. Tawhidul Anwar is the director of the Press Institute of Bangladesh.

It quoted the South Korean man, Kim Jong-yuel, as saying that several armed men barged into his room and dragged him out of his bed at about 4.30 am.

"They then pushed me on the floor, told me to lie spread-eagled and started to beat and kick me," he added.

All the victims were allowed to go when the policemen realised their mistake.

In a statement today, veteran journalist Samad Ismail said the police owe an apology to the two journalists.

He said Kharel was very generous in making light of the experience, but "I think we owe him and his colleagues an apology and an explanation."

"I earnestly hope the police could be equally generous and extend their apology," he said. Samad said Malaysia had been embarrassed by the incident that marred the seminar to discuss the common problems of the Asian journalism.



Anwarul Haq (L) and Mostafa Feroz. — Star photo

DSE trading falls

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share and Tk 2500 each debenture.

A total of 5 lakh 74,189 shares and debentures worth Tk 9 crore 1 lakh 66,582 were traded last week as against 5 lakh 75,720 shares and debentures worth Tk 13 crore 42 lakh 42,289 of the previous week, which had only four working days.

The average daily volume of trading declined to 95,698 last week from 1.43 lakh of the previous week.

The daily average value of trading fell to Tk 1.50 crore from Tk 3.35 crore of the previous week.

A total of 569 issues having 241 gainers and 258 losers was traded last week.

A random sampling of 18 frequently traded issues revealed that prices of most issues declined by Tk 1 to 35 in one week. Out of these is-

Mother, sons

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branch, and their children Rabbi, 9, and Rashik, 5.

Three killed

Our Staff Correspondent reports: Three more people were killed in two separate incidents in the Dhaka city Friday evening.

Of them, the two — Motlab Hawlader, 40, and Akbar Ali, 50 — died when a speeding truck ran over them at Uttara while Dulal, 17, was killed at Shanir Akhra, police and medical sources said.

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