

DOWN TO EARTH

City's Environmental Conundrum

By A S M Nurunnabi

Dhaka is in danger of dying from the road-side pollution that has been a notable feature of the city. The bigger issue that emerges from the suffocating conditions on the roads is the extent of the conditions that the city dwellers are forced to go through everyday. New vehicles including anything from reconstructions cars and autorickshaws to motor cycles are hitting the roads everyday. This inevitably involves the smoke factor which has taken or is beginning to assume ominous proportions, with the result that all those places in the city where traffic is forced to come to a standstill owing to jams every now and then, it is not unusual for people to come up against the smoke pollution arising from the myriad stalled vehicles.

Noxious fumes from those vehicles are slow-acting poisons from which every city dweller caught up in them would never escape their horrendous consequences. Admittedly, it is not an easy task for the authorities to grapple with these health hazards, but the regrettable aspect of the thing is that no serious attempts have yet been taken to deal with the situation, except for some futile efforts to take the owners of defective vehicles to task. In the end, it has always been a return to square one, as

some observers have commented.

Looking back to history, it has been seen that smoke pollution involving lead poisoning is known to be a factor in causing decay of great civilisations, apart from moral decay. Leaving aside the latter causative factor, it seems that we, in Bangladesh, especially at Dhaka, are treading, with great vigour, the path of destructive environmental pollution.

The extent of such pollution has gone so far that one observer has lately lamented: "Pollution, thy name is Dhaka." According to his experience, after a single trip through the streets of Dhaka, an unsuspecting visitor will not only be able to feel but actually see the blue and black pollution for himself. Autorickshaws, trucks and buses spew out exhaust in an uncontrollable frenzy, but no one seems to care.

There are some who could argue that traffic congestions and resulting pollution are an almost world-wide phenomenon. They may be right, but up to an extent. The difference is that in other countries when social conditions go wrong, effective measures are rigidly taken to correct the wrongs. In our case, the wrongful situations, requiring prompt attention and rigid ap-

7 injured in city incidents

By Staff Correspondent

At least seven people were injured in separate incidents of violence in different parts of the city yesterday.

Of them, five people sustained bomb injuries when a gang of extortionists attacked the Gulsitan Adarsha Market in Fulbaria at around 1 pm.

The gang hurled bombs as the traders at the market refused to give them tolls, witnesses said.

Of the injured, Amir Hossain, 40, Siddique Rahman, 30, and Rani Akhter, 55, were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

One Amirunnessa, 25, wife of Kader Miah, was injured in bomb blasts at a slum in Tejgaon area in the morning, hospital sources said.

In another incident, one Farid Ahmed alias Moni, 35, received bullet wound in his leg in the Film Development Corporation (FDC) premises, police said.

Moni, an assistant film director, was shot during a row with a person inside the FDC at around 4 pm. However, no case has been lodged with Tejgaon thana, police said.

Donors' confce on Bosnia begins

BRUSSELS, Apr 12: A key donors' conference opened here today with officials from 55 countries ready to tackle how to finance the huge task of Bosnia's post-war reconstruction, reports AFP.

The two-day conference, sponsored by the European Commission and the World Bank, hopes to raise 1.8 billion dollars for 1996.

The Bosnian Serb delegation, which was to join the Croat-Muslim federation delegation, has refused to participate in the conference.

A total 55 countries and 29 world agencies are taking part in the meeting, against a backdrop of a new flare-up of the Balkans conflict failing quick economic measures to smooth over the tension still simmering between Bosnia's three people: the Croats, Muslims and Serbs.

Another report from Belgrade says the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said today it had asked the Yugoslav government to immediately release 13 Bosnian Muslims being held in Serbia.

Belgrade has accused the 13 Muslims of war crimes, and barred them from joining 211 other Bosnian refugees who were repatriated to Bosnia on Wednesday.

A UNHCR plane was on standby at Belgrade Airport awaiting the green light from the Yugoslav interior ministry to transfer the refugees to Bosnia.

The Midnight File

Nepali PM to visit China

KATHMANDU, Apr 12: Nepali Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba will travel to China next week for talks expected to focus on economic ties, the Foreign Ministry said today. Deuba will visit Beijing between April 18 and 23 at the invitation of Chinese Premier Li Peng, it said in a statement, reports Reuters.

Probe into arms smuggling demanded

4 new equipment installed at NCHSC

From Our Correspondent

RAJSHAH, Apr 12: Some 64 teachers of Rajshahi University in a joint statement today demanded of the caretaker government immediately form a committee headed by a judge of the Supreme Court for investigating the incident of arms smuggling at Cox's Bazar on March 24.

They observed that people of Cox's Bazar recovered the arms and caught 17 smugglers, all of whom were handed over to the police.

The RU teachers maintained that the countrymen should be informed of the matter for the sake of sovereignty of the country.

The signatories included Hasan Azizul Haq, Saidur Rahman Khan, Shahidul Islam, Abdul Khaleque, Moloy Kumar Bhuiumik, Abul Fazal Haq, Ramesh Chandra Debnath, Anand Kumar Shah, and Mijan Uddin.

Son of Somali warlord Atto shot dead

MOGADISHU, Apr 12: The son of Somali warlord Osman Hassan Ali Atto has been killed by a sniper believed to be a member of the militia loyal to south Mogadishu and Atto's rival Mohammed Farah Aided, relatives said today, reports AFP.

Abdulsalan Osman Hassan Ali Atto, 18, was shot in the head on Thursday as he sat on the balcony of a building near the spot where Aided's and Atto's militiamen clashed in south Mogadishu last week.

Two days of fighting between the militias last week left 25 people dead and 250 others wounded.

Abdulsalan's killing is said to have infuriated his father's fighters who have vowed to avenge his death.

Osman Atto is the first Somali warlord to lose a son in Somalia's five-year factional bloodletting. He has 19 other children, 18 of the teenage boys. Five serve their father as militiamen.

Osman Atto, a successful Mogadishu businessman, is a former ally and financier of Aided. The two warlords fell out last year.

Other major warlords, including Aided sent their children abroad for studies and to escape the war.

'Publish White Paper on BNP corruption'

FARIDPUR, Apr 12: Begum Sajeda Chowdhury, a member of the presidium of Awami League, today demanded of the caretaker government to publish a White Paper on the corruption of BNP government, reports BSS.

Addressing a huge public meeting at Nagarkanda thana head quarters this afternoon, she alleged that the BNP leaders during their rule had amassed huge amount of money through corrupt practices.

"They are likely to use these money to destroy the sanctity of election process," she said demanding immediate investigation into the source of their money.

With the thana Awami League convenor Moazzem Hussain in the chair, the meeting was also addressed by district Awami League leaders Mosharraf Hossain, Bipul Ghosh and Hasibul Hasna Labu.

Begum Sajeda Chowdhury urged the Election Commission to simplify the process of correcting the voters' list to enable the eligible voters to get enlisted easily.

18 killed in German airport fire

DUSSELDORF (Germany), Apr 11: Eighteen people have died in a fire at Dusseldorf Airport, firefighters said this evening as the toll in the disaster mounted, reports AFP.

Around 100 were injured, mainly by thick acrid smoke which spread through the airport building.

Welding work was the cause of the fire, senior city prosecutor Rolf Chanteau said today.

Chanteau said the firm that carried out the work was under investigation to determine if the necessary protective measures had been taken.

He declined to identify the firm but said it was from Dortmund.

The prosecutor, who was speaking at a news conference, said first investigations showed that the fire was torched off by welding work on an expansion seam at an approach to the departure area.

The fire rapidly spread to the arrivals area.

Reuter adds: firefighters battled for over five hours before they managed to bring the blaze under control after it broke out at around 1600 local

Jamaat to set up Islamic welfare state if voted to power : Azam

RAJSHAH, Apr 12: Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Prof Golam Azam today said his party will establish an Islamic Welfare state, if voted to power in the upcoming elections, reports UNB.

He was addressing a public meeting at the local Madrassah ground.

Presided over by Rajshahi city Ameer Ataur Rahman, the meeting was also addressed by Jamaat central leader Prof Mujibur Rahman, Prof Fazlur Rahman, and city secretary Tasnim Alam.

The Jamaat chief criticised the previous governments for doing nothing to realise compensation from India for the colossal losses incurred due to share of the Ganges waters from India.

To realise this compensation, the need is of a fearless government which is not afraid of anyone except Allah, he said adding that if voted to power, his party would take steps for realising compensation and due share of the Ganges waters from India.

Prof Azam also pledged to eradicate poverty, introduce an interest-free Zakat-based economy, meet fundamental rights of the people, and ensure peace and security for them.

Another report from Khulna says, the Jamaat-e-Islami secretary general today pledged to establish a Zakat-based interest-free economy in the country, if voted to power in the coming election.

"We will also establish a terrorism-free, Islamic society and ensure basic rights of the people. If we are voted to power," Maulana Matur Rahman Nizami said addressing a party workers' meeting at the Al Faruq Society ground in Khulna in the afternoon.

He called upon all political parties to show tolerance and practice democratic values.

Presided over by advocate Ansaruddin, the meeting was also addressed by local Jamaat leaders Prof Abdul Ahamd, Prof Mia Golam Parwar, Prof Abdul Matin and advocate Sheikh Abul Kashem.

Nizami also addressed a gathering of the local elite at the Zia Hall in the evening.



Cong-I manifesto

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ity forces time to move around and guard polling stations.

In the southern state of Karnataka, a top right-wing lawmaker was gunned down in his home on Thursday night, newspapers said.

It was not clear who shot and killed U Chittaranjan, a lawmaker of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, near the city of Bangalore, India's equivalent of Silicon Valley.

Also on Thursday night, at least one person was killed and many others, mostly women, were injured in a stampede when police swung batons to disperse a mob that hurled rocks at a politician.

Many of the women had shouted slogans as Jayalitha Jayaram, the chief minister of Tamil Nadu state, was addressing an election rally in the city of Madurai, news reports said.

The women said Ms Jayaram had done little for their constituency during her five years in power.

In the northern state of Bihar, police are investigating the theft of 900 ballot boxes from a truck last month. The driver and two helpers in the truck were found dead in farm fields.

It was not clear who stole the ballot boxes, but police suspect it was done by politicians trying to rig the voting.

So far, violence during this year's election campaign has been less widespread than in previous years, when at least 100 people have been killed in violence before a big vote. The reduction may be the result of tighter controls and security organized by India's current Election Commission.

CHT peace confce Apr 15

A peace conference, organized by the Chittagong Hill Tracts National Coordination and Council, will be held on Monday, (April 15) at 11 am at the town hall auditorium at Ramgar in Khagrachhari district, reports UNB.

Tribal and non-tribal leaders from Khagrachhari, Rangamati and Bandarban hill districts are expected to join the conference, aimed at ensuring permanent peace in the region.

Khagrachhari Local Government Council Chairman Samiran Dewan will be the chief guest at the conference to be inaugurated by UNB chairman Amanullah Khan.

US aircraft leaves Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Apr 12: The US maritime patrol aircraft (P-3 Orion) left here today ending its six-day visit to Bangladesh, reports BSS.

The aircraft which had 21 crew members were seen-off by local senior naval officers and US embassy officials prior to their departure from the Chittagong international airport, an ISPR press release said.

During its stay in the country, the aircraft took part in a joint exercise with some of the Bangladesh navy ships in the Bay of Bengal on maritime surveillance. Besides, the crew members took part in a friendly basketball match with the local BN team and visited some of the naval training establishment in Chittagong and Kaptai.

3 parties

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tion of anonymity, said "The issue came up for discussion at the liaison committee meetings but nothing, except setting consensus candidates against the BNP stalwarts, has so far been decided."

The number of parliamentary constituencies to have such common candidates is likely to range from 20 to 25, a member of the AL Working Committee said, adding, "Begum Zia will face the three-party common candidates in all the constituencies she contests from."

Explaining the criterion for setting common candidates, another leader said that candidates who had secured the highest votes, next to the BNP leaders elected in the 1991 polls, would preferably be three-party nominees this time.

New marriage problem in UK royal family

LONDON, Apr 12: New marriage problems hit Britain's royal family on Thursday when lawyers for the daughter of Queen Elizabeth's first cousin and her husband said the couple were to separate, reports Reuters.

The announcement, on behalf of Marina Mowatt and her freelance photographer husband Paul, added to a growing catalogue of marital woes for the family.

Hair to the throne Prince Charles is already negotiating a divorce settlement with his estranged wife Princess Diana, and two of the Queen's three other children, as well as her sister Princess Margaret are either separated or divorced.

In their statement, lawyer Max Bittel Greene said: "It is with great sadness that Marina and Paul Mowatt today announced that they have separated, having been experiencing marital difficulties for some time. No one else is involved."

The marriage of Mowatt, daughter to Princess Alexandra and her husband Sir Angus Ogilvy, never approached the status of fairy tale.

She created a scandal by giving birth to her first child, Zenouska, just 8-1/2 months after the wedding ceremony in 1990 and had a son, Christian, in 1993. The family lived in a modest house in the outer London suburb of Wickham.

But Royal watcher Harold Brooks-Baker, publisher of Burke's peerage, an official guide to Britain's aristocracy, described the separation announcement as "a further blow to the monarchy."

"This gives strength to the republican cause," he said.

DU halls

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started at about 10:30 am.

Earlier, police also raided Sergeant Zahurul Haq Hall but could not arrest anyone or seize anything.

According to campus sources, activists of pro-Awami League Chhatra League (S-P) took "control" of the Zahurul Haq hall after driving out activists of BCL (M-L), known as Montu group, at around 6:30 am. However, there was no clash between the two rival groups.

Mentionably, BCL (M-L) backed by Gano Forum leader Mostafa Mohsin Mantu had taken control of Zahurul Haq Hall in May, 1992. During a police raid on March 2 this year Masum Ahmed, a leader of this group, was arrested from the hall.

Israeli shelling kills 8 in Lebanon

BEIRUT, Apr 12: At least eight people were killed, including four children and a woman, in Israeli air and artillery attacks on Lebanon today, police and security officials said, reports AFP.

The heaviest toll was inflicted in the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley of eastern Lebanon, where seven people were killed and seven other civilians wounded in Israeli shelling.

Police said the artillery fire, from Israel's border "security zone," was concentrated on Sohmar and Mashghara. A 50-year-old woman and four children aged between five and 15 were among the dead.

In Beirut, a Lebanese soldier was killed and six Syrian troops were wounded in raids by Israeli helicopters on the Shi'ite Muslim southern suburbs, Prime Minister Rafic Hariri told journalists.

Lebanese security services said 11 Syrian soldiers including an officer had been wounded in raids which also left five Lebanese civilians injured.

Posts of judges

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Some lawyers alleged that attitude of a section of this college also contribute to stockpiling of cases. "There are many lawyers who find it quite lucrative to prolong a case for years together," said a lawyer of the High Court Division. People from rural areas fall victim to such situation, he said.

Justice delayed, justice denied. We may say that we are reaching a point of no return so far as doing justice is concerned," commented a recently retired judge of the SC.

Share prices

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cial items highlighting its significance.

But the following day the DSE regretted that it was a major mistake in its computer system which had shown the price index at 838.33 points, instead of 813.30 points.

However, as some new issues entered the market last week, the market capitalisation increased by about Tk 129 crore. It reached Tk 5518.31 crore at the closing of the week from Tk 5389.41 crore in the previous week.

The new issues which had come into the market last week were Monno Fabrics, Shandhani Life Insurance and AMLC Pran.

As many as 9 lakh 22 thousand shares and debentures worth about Tk 20.84 crore exchanged hands during the week.

The volume leaders of the week were Beximco Pharma (239400), Monno Fabrics (118550), Chic Text (87500), AMLC Pran (28924), Ashraf Textile (19,050), Beximco Synthetic (34,620), Chittagong Cement (16,821), Eastern Housing (10945), BOC Bangladesh (11782) and Quasem Drycells (16,750).