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**DOWN TO EARTH**  
**Some Civic Headaches In City Life**

By A S M Nurunnabi

Bottled water has been gaining increasing popularity in our country. There are some seven or eight brands of such bottled water in the market. The increased consumption of such bottled water has been perhaps promoted by the concern of citizens who are after pure drinking water free from any pollution. But the big issue is whether the biological quality of bottled water in our country is beyond question. We may not perhaps get an unequivocal answer in this behalf.

We are told that bottled water is basically any portable water available in any sealed container for sale. The source of such water may be springs, wells, municipal taps and other sources and the water may be distilled, carbonated, ozonated, filtered, etc. In principle, bottled water should not contain more than 100 aerobic bacteria count per millilitre and no coliform bacteria at all. But in practice what we actually find may be disconcerting.

A group of researchers reportedly tested, in course of a recent survey, some bottled waters of various brands from various shops in Dhaka city. According to their findings, total aerobic bacterial counts were beyond the acceptable limit in most of the samples tested. *Escherichia coli*, *Klebsiella*, *Pseudomonas* bacteria were found present in some sample bottles. In the opinion of the researchers, if bottled water is not produced under good manufacturing practices, it can be the source of various diseases.

From their work, the researchers have found that bacteria can survive and even proliferate in bottled waters kept

for long periods. There may be secondary growth as some bacteria die and provide nutrients for the growth of other bacteria, such as enteric pathogens. It has been reported in various research journals that bottled water can be the source of the causative agent in outbreaks of cholera and typhoid as well as causing traveller's disease.

There are good reasons for suspicion that bottled waters of our country may not be of good quality and need to be investigated by public health authority and other investigators.

In course of stray visits to some neighbourhood medicine shops, a few samples of bottled water which contained fungus growth came to our notice. This testified to the deteriorated condition of the bottled water. Another strange thing was that most brands of bottled water were found to bear the seals of the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institute (BSTI). This naturally gives impression of the good quality of the bottled water. In spite of this, the deteriorated samples of bottled water in some cases give rise to the question whether such products, as a matter of routine, pass through the due process of quality control. This question seems to call for specific answer by the competent authorities in order to dispel any possible suspicion as to the quality of bottled water.

Another cause for civic headache relates to the Guest Control Ordinance which restricts entertainment of more than 100 guests at social functions. This law has been in the statute book for a long time. The number of guests permissi-

ble under law might have varied from time to time in the past, but the concept of control of guests due to economic exigencies has always been there. The characteristics of our social ethos might have prompted many not to take the law seriously. Since a question of change of social outlook is involved, such passive attitude to law is not considered desirable. The people of means have the option to entertain additional guests by paying extra fees within the purview of the law. Any predilection to bypass the law by taking advantage of position of power or influence is fraught with the possibility of detection by magistrates, in which case there may be cause for social embarrassment to the sponsoring parties.

We find another cause for civic discipline when we observe cycle rickshaws in some cases carrying three passengers instead of the usual two on the city streets. The rickshaw is a delicate contraption for which the normal load of passengers is quite enough. To lure the rickshawpuller to carry extra passenger burden with the incentive of payment of extra fare is not considered a wise proposition in view of the fact that the extra load of a passenger may interfere with effective control of the vehicle in an environment of traffic congestion. More pronounced among young passengers, both male and female, who do not seem to realise the potential hazard involved. It behoves the traffic police to play a helpful role by way of discouraging such potentially hazardous practice.

**Gowda govt under fire for sacking Gujarat govt**

NEW DELHI, Sept 20: India's centre-left rulers faced a barrage of criticism today for forcing the sudden sacking of a state government headed by rival Hindu nationalist, reports Reuter.

The Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was joined by a string of newspapers in denouncing the decision by Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda's cabinet on Thursday to recommend dismissal of the BJP-led government in western Gujarat state.

President Shankar Dayal Sharma, who under his limited constitutional authority had no power to reject the recommendation, sacked the 18-month old Gujarat government despite its having won a trust vote in the state assembly on Wednesday.

The federal government said it was forced to act because the voting took place in an environment of disorder and violence.

But the BJP's claim that the move smacked of politics ahead

of important assembly polls in populous Uttar Pradesh state was echoed in editorials.

"The imposition of president's rule is a needless invitation to the charge that the (federal) government was looking for ways to finish the BJP through extra-political means," the Times of India said in an editorial titled "Shame and Scandal".

The northern state of Uttar Pradesh, which has more than 130 million of India's 930 million citizens, goes to the polls in late September and early October to elect a new state legislature.

The BJP, which draws its strength from the northern Hindi-speaking belt, has high hopes of capturing Uttar Pradesh, which has produced seven of India's 10 prime ministers and is considered the nation's choicest political prize.

The Indian Express said the cabinet's decision was "not only irregular, but politically motivated," and aimed at helping BJP rebels survive in Gujarat.

The government in Gujarat, one of India's most industrially advanced states, was sacked after a vote of no confidence was passed on Wednesday on the floor of the assembly.

Opposition lawmakers, led by the Congress Party, were protesting against a decision by the acting assembly Speaker, BJP member — to suspend all opposition legislators before the government won a trust vote.

Scuffles broke out in the assembly, and members hurled microphones at each other. Several lawmakers and journalists were injured in the fighting.

**Stagnant water pumped out**

By Staff Correspondent

Stagnant rain water was pumped out from different city areas yesterday.

City dwellers on Thursday experienced the worst waterlogging in years following intermittent heavy rains since Tuesday.

Dhaka WASA set up 19 pumps at four points of the metropolis to pump out the stagnant water.

Meanwhile, the Met Office recorded one mm rainfall in the capital from 6 am to 6 pm yesterday.

It also forecast cloudy sky and rain accompanied with gusty wind in the city today.

UNB adds: Dhaka City Corporation set up 15 pumps in different points of the city yesterday to pump out stagnant water.

"DCC has done this to remove public suffering although it is officially not responsible for maintaining the city's drainage system," said a DCC official.

Thursday's unprecedented waterlogging, according to experts, occurred mainly due to faulty drainage system in the city.

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**PHILIPS**

**Special flights from UAE soon to ferry 20000 Bangladeshis**

Star Report

Special flights from the UAE to Dhaka are likely to be arranged shortly to ferry over 20,000 Bangladeshis staying there without valid documents, according to official sources.

More than 400 Bangladeshis were sent back from the UAE in five flights on Thursday. Immigration sources at Zia International Airport (ZIA) said.

Over 1,50,000 people from different countries including Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Philippines and Egypt are likely to be sent back as the government of UAE has introduced a new Residence Law, according to reports.

Amnesty was offered to thousands of workers staying there without valid documents till September 30.

Sources said ambassadors of the countries, concerned were seeking extension of the deadline to ensure smooth departure of their citizens.

Officials at ZIA said 600 to 700 people might return from the UAE today.

**Yarn worth Tk 20 lakh looted**

From Our Correspondent

NARAYANGANJ, Sept 20: A gang of armed dacoits looted 175 cartons of yarn worth about Tk 20 lakh from two textile mills in Bhulta under Rupganj thana of the district early today.

The gang of about 15 dacoits came in a truck and attacked Polli Textiles and Solean Textiles at Aduria on Dhaka-Chittagong highway at about 2 am, police sources said.

Tying down the guards of the two adjoining mills, the gang loaded the truck with yarns and sped away, sources added.

Two separate cases have been filed.

Shahjahan Member was seriously injured as the terrorists beat him up mercilessly at the thana BNP office premises on Thursday. The attackers also ransacked the office, Haris alleged.

In another statement, he blamed the district and police administration of Habiganj for filing of false cases against 46 leaders and workers of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) in the district ahead of the by-election there.

He termed it as a 'conspiracy' and demanded immediate withdrawal of the cases.

In support of their demand, the National Garments Workers Federation held a rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the afternoon with its president Mujibur Rahman in the chair.

Addressing the rally, its leaders said garments workers, particularly the women, are being affected physically, mentally and socially as they can't enjoy any weekly holiday.

They warned of abstaining from work every Friday if the weekly holiday is not implemented in the garments factories.

"The Chechen side has, therefore, decided to suspend all prisoner exchanges so long as these two journalists have not been freed," he told AFP.

Udugov said he had received reports that the two journalists, one of whom is Salman Betelgouev, director of Chechen Independent Television, had been tortured.

The release of the two had been agreed on Tuesday during a meeting between separatist leaders and Alexander Lebed, the Russian national security advisor, Udugov said.

Chechen rebel spokesman Movladi Udugov said the reporters were to have been released today but the Russians said they would not free them "for the time being."

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**IPU confce ends with call for action to boost HR**

BEIJING, Sept 20: An international conference of parliamentarians ended in Beijing today urging global action to boost human rights, end hunger and curb the scourge of anti-personnel land mines, reports Reuter.

The 96th conference of the inter-parliamentary union (IPU), which gave foreign legislators a rare chance for debate in China on human rights, won the host nation plaudits from both organisers and a watchdog group often critical of Beijing.

Non-binding resolutions on rights, food issues and land-mines adopted by the meeting embraced a wide range of international concerns, said IPU secretary-general Pierre Cormillon.

The Chinese ... had a big role in this success and in the building of this atmosphere," Cormillon told a news conference after the close of the five-day meeting, a talking shop for around 600 members of parliament from more than 100 countries.

Human rights group Amnesty International, which has long been critical of China's treatment of political prisoners and limits on free expression, also praised Beijing's approach.

"It is notable that the resolution ... on human rights protection is actually based on the Chinese draft," said Rory Mungoven, Amnesty's Asia Pacific Programme Director.

"This is exactly the type of positive engagement we would like to see China make with the international human rights debate," Mungoven told a news briefing in Beijing.

China is highly sensitive to foreign criticism of its rights record and on Tuesday blasted a call from a western conference delegate for less repression in Tibet as ill-informed and inappropriate.

Proposed Bandarban power project hangs in balance

BANDARBAN, Sept 20: The proposed hydro-electric power project in the hill district is now hanging in the balance because of contradictory feasibility reports submitted by two foreign companies, reports UNB.

The project was first conceived in 1966 and a Canadian company suggested three 50-megawatt generators to produce 150 MW of electricity by creating a dam on the Sangu river.

Eighteen years later, in 1984, a local project was included in the Annual Development Programme (ADP) for setting up a 150 MW generator instead of three at an estimated cost of 275 million US dollars.

But the project could not be launched for want of necessary funding from foreign assistance.

US troops

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Director John Deutch told lawmakers Thursday.

Appearing before the Senate Intelligence Committee, Deutch called the development 'very bad' and said the Iraqi leader 'will continue to challenge' the United States and its allies.

The stark assessment from a top Clinton administration official bolstered Republican criticism of President Clinton's efforts to contain Saddam.

Reuter adds: Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan has broken weeks of silence on the Iraq crisis and spoken out against any US military strike on southern neighbour Iraq, the Turkish press said today.

"America could attack Iraq again and enflame the situation. But we don't want an increase in tension," the Hurriyet newspaper quoted Erbakan as saying at a private lunch on Thursday for leading Turkish journalists.

"One of the causes of the situation in Iraq is America's failure to put forward an unambiguous, clear and lucid solution to the Iraqi issue," he said.

Other papers carried similar remarks and quoted him as saying that three Turkish soldiers a day were dying in south-east Turkey in attacks by PKK rebels who have bases in Kurdish-held north Iraq.

US co keen

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by power shortfall, sources concerned pointed out.

Unocal is already co-working with another US company, Occidental, in the Surma basin in hydro-carbon exploration. Occidental last year signed two production-sharing contracts under 'unsolicited negotiation' with the government for exploration in Netrokonia-Sylhet region and is likely to drill the first well in Sylhet in December.

"Although the government had closed doors for 'unsolicited negotiation' in July last, Unocal is unofficially lobbying with it over Shahbazpur," one source said.

According to an expert in the Energy Ministry, an investment of over 235 million US dollars is required for developing the gas field, building a 210 MW power plant and setting up a 71 km 132 kv line for utilising the power.

Shahbazpur gas field was discovered in November last by BAPEx, hydrocarbon exploration wing of the Petrobangla, after two years of operation at a cost of about Tk 40 crore. But following confirmation of a reserve of over 0.40 trillion cubic feet of gas a few months later, Petrobangla decided to 'seal' the gas field as it could not be utilised.

**PM: Govt pledge-bound**

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She said at the end of 21 years of movement for democracy and realising the people's right to food and franchise, the people put their trust in us to serve the country.

"We believe, the Buddhist community is an inseparable and glorious part of our national entity," Hasina said and lauded their contribution to national history, culture and heritage.

Recalling the past, she said as a Bangla-speaking nation, "We are indebted" to Buddhist monks, known as Shiddhacharya, whose famous works 'Charlyapada' are recognised as the oldest in Bengali literature.

The reign of the Buddhist rulers like Pal, Dev and Barman from 7th till 12th century was a golden era in the history of Bengal, the prime minister said, adding that the historical fame of that era spread to different parts of South East Asia crossing the boundary of this sub-continent.

She said Sompur Mahabihar at Parbatipur, Pandit Bihar at Chittagong, Shalban Bihar at Mainamati in Comilla, Sitakot Bihar at Dinajpur and the Buddhist monasteries at Dhamrai and Savar in Dhaka were set up with the patronisation of the Buddhist kings as educational and cultural institutions.

Hasina recalled with gratitude the role played by Bishuddhananda Mahathero and Pandit Jyotipal Mohathero in the country's Liberation War along with other members of the Buddhist community.

She also lauded the role of the Bouddha Krishi Prachar Sangha in spreading education and helping the distressed people, and assured that the government would do its best to help the organisation in their humanitarian activities.

Responding to demands — representation of Buddhists in the government, higher educational funds taken by Pakistan, India and Britain, and the preservation of historical Buddhist sites — the prime minister said that the government would look into all these with sympathy.

The function was also addressed by Health Minister Salauddin Yusuf, Dhaka city Mayor Mohammad Hanif, State Minister for Labour and Manpower M A Mannan, State Minister for Religious Affairs Moulana Nurul Islam, Saber Hossain Chowdhury MP, Chairman of Dharma-Wheel Foundation of Taiwan Reverend Master Kuang Shin and Dr Pranab Barua.

President of the Sangha Suddhananda Mohathero, who presided over by the function, presented to the prime minister a crest and also a few rare photographs of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Earlier, the Prime Minister inaugurated the newly-constructed International Prayer Hall and the 25-bed Nikkio Niyano Clinic at the Kamalapur Damarajik Mahabihar.

ALCWC meets

From Page 1  
meeting of the ALCWC.

Talking to this correspondent AL joint secretary Abdul Jalil said that the upcoming meeting would mainly focus on party organizational matters. Replying to a question on the main opposition party's preparation for street agitations he said "the meeting will take stock of the latest political developments". "It will opt for a go-slow line", he added.

Awami League presidium member Amir Hussain Amu said as the national council session of the party in scheduled for December, the ALCWC meeting will focus on various organizational matters including completion of district and thana-level council sessions by mid-November.

About expansion of the cabinet, a ranking leader of the party who is not a member of the cabinet gave an impression that it was unlikely till President-elect Shahabuddin Ahmed takes over on October 9.

Party chief Sheikh Hasina's recent discussions with different political parties on the concept of 'national consensus' may also come for review for a better understanding among the party rank and file.

**2 rival groups clash in city**

At least two people were injured in a clash between two rival groups at Chankharpo near Shahidullah Hall of Dhaka University yesterday, reports UNB.

Police said the rival groups clashed in the evening over establishing supremacy in the area. They exploded a series of hand-made bombs and chased each other for about an hour creating panic in the area.

The injured, Ripon and Saju, were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with splinter wounds.

Police arrested two youths from the spot. They were identified as Piaro and Billal.

**Fertiliser loot: One arrested in Barisal**

BARISAL, Sept 20: Police arrested a man here today in connection with the looting of some 300 bags of fertiliser from a cargo vessel, reports UNB.

The cargo vessel ran aground at a char in the river Meghna in Hizla thana of the district on September 17.

The arrested was identified as Mojibul Haque Moju.

Police had recovered 86 bags of looted fertiliser from a shop of Takerbarar in Hizla on Thursday. They also picked up shopowner Khorsheed Alam Tipu for questioning.

**Khairuzzaman**

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at the Banani graveyard, "Khairuzzaman was also brought there. His health condition was poor, a family source said.

Earlier, Reeta Rahman, wife of Khairuzzaman, had applied to the home ministry for his release on parole for attending his mother's *janaza* and burial.

On August 13, Khairuzzaman, along with two other former army officers, Col (ret'd) Farooq Rahman and Col Shahriar Rashid Khan were picked up from the city for alleged 'involvement in activities threatening lives of some important persons.' They were sent to the Dhaka Central Jail under the Special Powers Act of 1974 with a 30 days detention which was later extended by another 90 days.

On September 10, the CMM had issued warrants of arrest against the three former army officers — Farooq, Shahriar and Khairuzzaman — after the CID formally took up the November 3, 1975 jail killing case, filed with the Lalbagh thana earlier.

The CMM, on September 10, had placed Khairuzzaman on seven days' remand on a CID prayer for interrogation in the jail killing case. However, he was yet to be taken to the CID custody for interrogation, official sources said.

Farooq was placed on a fresh CID remand for five days on Thursday for interrogation in the same case. Shahriar was also taken to the CID custody yesterday. Earlier, Shahriar was granted remand for seven days by the CMM on prayer from the CID.

More than 56,000 Sri Lankan Tamils are living in refugee camps in southern India since 1990 after fighting between Tamil separatists and government troops escalated. Another 54,000 have been



Police drag away top Kashmiri separatist leader Abdul Ghani Lone during a protest demonstration against elections in Srinagar yesterday, a day ahead of the state's third round of key assembly polls. — AFP/UNB photo

**Lankan navy seize two Indian trawlers: 30 held**

COLOMBO, Sept 20: The navy has seized two Indian trawlers and arrested 30 people including eight Indians, after the boats were detected in Sri Lankan territorial waters, a military official said today, reports AP.

The boats, apparently ferrying Tamil civilians fleeing the civil war, were caught Tuesday off Talaimannar, on the northwestern coast about 235 kilometers (147 miles) north of the capital, Colombo.

The Indians, along with 21 Sri Lankan civilians who were on the two vessels, had been handed over to a nearby police station, said Capt Panduka Senanyake, a military spokesman in a statement.

Tamil civilians fleeing the fighting between government troops and Tamil Tiger rebels, have been crossing over by boat to refugee camps in neighbouring India.

More than 56,000 Sri Lankan Tamils are living in refugee camps in southern India since 1990 after fighting between Tamil separatists and government troops escalated. Another 54,000 have been

repatriated to the Sri Lanka in the last four