Widening the Lanes and By-lanes of Dhaka

HAKA is famous for its numerous mosques and narrow lanes. I cannot give any figures, but I believe it has more narrow lanes than mosques. And some lanes are so narrow that even a rickshaw can hardly pass through them. The areas served by such narrow lanes are very densely populated. Surprisingly, it is not uncommon to see a large number of multistoried buildings in these areas although as per existing rules, multistoried buildings are not supposed to get approval from the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (RAJUK) unless they are accessible by roads with a width of at least 20 feet. The people living in these areas naturally suffer from much inconvenience. They are deprived of many facilities like modern transport, drainage, garbage collection, etc. During emergencies, they are unable to get services from the ambulance or the fire brigade. It is interesting to note that the existence of narrow lanes is not confined to the old part of the city alone, but they are found in large numbers even in the newly developed areas, mainly due to the inaction of RAJUK, formerly called the Dhaka Improvement Trust (DIT). Although a Master Plan for the development of the city was prepared long before our independence in 1971, most areas in Dhaka, except for a few posh and planned ones, developed without any control by RAJUK and without any reference to the so-called Master Plan. As a result, these unplanned areas, where the vast majority of the city population live, have virtually become "slums" as far as modern roads

and other municipal services

Garfield®

GARFIELD, MY HAIRLINE

IS RECEDING

are concerned.

IAN FLEMING'S

EMPORARILY

BLINDED,

BOND

SWIFTLY.

by Dr Engr Abdul Matin

A couple of years ago, a narrow lane in Zigatola, called Moneshwar Road, was widened without any assistance from RAJUK and without payment of a penny for acquisition of land! It was done through voluntary donation of land and/or funds by the local residents.

Recently, we were delighted to see a news item in The Daily Star (July 12, 1997) on a plan by RAJUK to widen over 1000 lanes and by-lanes in Dhaka at a cost of Taka 500 crore. RAJUK will first take up a few lanes and by-lanes as models and the rest of the project will be completed according to these models. If the proposal is approved and funds provided, the project will be completed in 40 years! First of all, we must give credit to RAJUK for taking up this project now, although we believe that they should have done so long ago. I do not know how many of us, particularly those in our late 50's or 60's. will live long enough to see the project completed after 40 years! If the long time taken for the construction of roads in built-up areas of the city is considered, particularly where acquisition of private land is involved, the reason for the long period for completion of the project is easily understood. Having read that news item and a subsequent editorial in The Daily Star (July 13, 1997) on this subject. I would now like to ask a very simple question: Can't this project be completed in less than 40 years and at a much lower cost? To find an answer to this dif-

ficult question, we don't have to go too far. A couple of years ago, a narrow lane in Zigatola. called Moneshwar Road, was widened without any assistance from RAJUK and without pay-

JE BUT IT REALLY ISN'T NOTICEABLE

... AND FELLS HIM WITH A SKULL-JARRING JUDO

THROW-ALREADY SUSPECTING THE INCIDENT WAS

STAGED AS A TEST OF HIS OWN RELIABILITY!

ment of a penny for acquisition of land! It was done through voluntary donation of land and/or funds by the local residents. They carried out the project under the guidance of the local Ward Commissioner of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) who initiated the project and motivated the people of donate land without any compensation. Once the boundary walls were shifted voluntarily by the local residents to widen the road, the City Corporation rebuilt the road with the necessary drainage and service facilities. This has changed the look of this road so much so that the difference will be obvious to anyone who saw this road before and after the changes. Unfortunately, this highly praiseworthy effort by the residents of Moneshwar Road got little publicity in the print and electronic media. The effort by the residents of Kalabagan, under the guidance of a local social

This work rightfully needs publicity as it can serve as a model to others who want to undertake similar projects. Let us now try to find out why the residents of Moneshwar Road donated land and funds to widen their narrow road. Definitely, they are not

fools because they donated their

worker, to keep their area clean

on a voluntary basis has been

widely publicised in newspa-

pers and on TV but I have not

seen a single report on the

widening of Moneshwar Road.

valuable land without compensation. In fact, they are very wise people, much wiser than many of us who prefer to live in slums beside narrow lanes with all the inconvenience and brag for not parting with one inch of land for the benefit of anybody! They know that in this world "no lunch is a free lunch". In order to enjoy better amenities in life, one must make a little sacrifice. They made this sacrifice and are now enjoying the following benefits:

a) Increased land value: The vale of land has increased significantly in the area and the incremental value of the land in their possession is several times more than the value of the land the residents donated. In other words, they have increased the value of their land assets.

With the widening of the road, the traffic jam has been drastically reduced and the residents can now move with ease and in less time. c) Modern transport facilities: The residents are able

Reduced traffic jam:

to use modern transport facilities without any problem. Better utility and municipal services: The residents are enjoying better utility and municipal services like water. electricity, gas, drainage, sew-

erage, garbage collection, etc. Availability of fire and ambulance services: During emergencies, fire and ambulance services can now reach

JUST A

LUCKY

by Jim Davis

DRAWN BY JOHN MCLUSKY

IT APPEARS

SOUNDLY, MY

DEAR ZOE!

YOU'VE CHOSEN

FOREHEAD

B04!

"The Queen of Hearts" is Dead: Culprits the residents much more quickly and easily.

Obviously, the residents of Moneshwar Road gained much more than what they parted with. If they could do what they have done, why can't the oth-

Yes, others can. They only need motivation and guidance. In my opinion, RAJUK, with its record of inefficiency, corruption and failure to implement the Dhaka City Master Plan, is not the most competent authority to carry out the task of widening of the lanes and bylanes of the city. After all, these lanes and by-lanes are partly the creations of RAJUK. A project of this kind needs active participation of the concerned people and RAJUK being a purely bureaucratic organization, lacks experience involving people's participation. It will, therefore, be advisable to entrust this work to the Dhaka City Corporation, which is managed by the elected representatives of the people. The local Commissioner, who has direct contact with the residents of his/her locality, should be placed in charge of the projects of his/her ward and he/she should implement these projects following the Moneshwar road model. For each lane or by-lane, there should be a separate committee headed by the local Commissioner and this committee should be entrusted with the responsibility of making necessary land available for the widening of each lane or bylane under the overall technical supervision of the City Corporation. The local Member of Parliament should also be involved in this project. He should be made the Chief Patron of each committee in his constituency and his assistance should be sought whenever there is any major problem which the local Commissioner is unable to solve. The Member of Parliament, the local Commissioner and the committee members should jointly motivate the residents to donate necessary land without compensation through meetings and personal contacts. Once the

land is made available by the local residents, funds should be provided to DCC to rebuild the road with the necessary drainage and other services. do not think it will be too ambitious to undertake two projects on an average every year in each ward and if this can be done, 1000 lanes and by-lanes can be widened in 5 or 6 years. The cost? Since no compensation for acquisition of land will be involved, the cost of the project will be significantly less than that estimated by RAJUK. in summary, the whole pro-

icet of widening of the lanes and by lanes of Dhaka can be executed in less time and with less money only if the Moneshwar Road model, which involves voluntary participation of the local people and their elected representative, is followed and the Dhaka City Corporation. instead of RAJUK, is made the executing agency. For, if RAJUK is to execute the project, it might eat a major part of the funds provided as administrative costs and after 40 years, come up with a list of 4000 new narrow lanes and by-lanes to be widened under a new project!

The author is a former Chief Engineer of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission.

from continent to continent, from one country to another, on

HE most-loved, admired

elegant women of today's world.

"the Queen of the People's

Heart," as she aspired to be

called, Diana, the Princess of

Wales, is no more there to

traverse this earth, hopping

ality and one of the most

and charismatic person-

Glories of death humanitarian pursuits. Apart from her private and personal life-style, to millions she appeared like a "Lady with the Lamp". She built up a highprofile image of herself as she was deeply involved in the world-wide campaign against menacing AIDS problem, against anti-personnel landmines, in charities for children and against deadly diseases like cancer. Finally, she became the uncrowned "Queen of the Peoup to the neck with another married woman. With the passage of time, just as the disintegration of their marriage widened, she became a total 'misfit' in the Palace. She couldn't make a compromise with the "fusty" atmosphere. But, on the other hand, she began to draw more attention of the crowds and more focus of the cameras, than on her husband or any other member of the royal family. So there developed a sort of ambivalent attitude in the Palace against her, as she appeared to be in "higher public esteem than royal family as a whole." And after her fateful divorce, she was gradually "shunted" and "shunned" by the royal family. She fell from royal grace, losing her "Her Highness"

Must be Brought to Book

by AMM Shahabuddin

Devastating Shock

ornament.

But Diana, being herself a young, enthusiastic and dynamic character, virtually rebelled against the Palace and came out in the public, throwing in the winds all royal restrictions on her free movement. She chose a different path both in her private and public life. It was a positive posture on her part with new themes, perhaps with an ultimate aim at taking revenge on the royal family. Unfortunately she plunged too deep, when came into contact with Al-Fayed, with rumours of their possible marriage in near future. Perhaps somebody somewhere in the hierarchy couldn't swallow the idea of a marriage between the ex-wife of an heirto-the thrown with an "outsider"

missible by law in the tunnel. Perhaps he was driving faster and faster to escape from the clutches of the chasing bunch, at the behest of Diana or Al-Fayed. Only the lone survivor. the body guard, now hospitalised, can throw more light on the whole episode.

Mediamen on the Dock

journalists and important world

leaders have directly blamed

the mediamen who were reck-

Meanwhile, some prominent

lessly chasing Diana's car. Prime Ministers of New Zealand and Japan are among them. The Sunday Times Editor, in a recent BBC interview, said that it was "a sort of assassination." Diana's only brother in an interview, expressing similar feelings, said: ".... every publisher and every editor of a publication that has paid for intrusive and exploitative photographs of her, encouraging the greedy and ruthless individuals to risk everything in pursuit of Diana's image, has blood on their hands today." Indeed, it is these so-called 'tabloid' papers that paid millions of dollars to buy these pictures, that made these "greedy" photographers more and more reckless. Strangely, though it seems, the Lybian media has gone a step ahead to accuse Britain of having "killed" Diana. while a Lybian Human Rights organisation accused London of "involvement and complicity with other intelligence services in the death of Diana due to her friendship with an Egyptian Arab". In this connection it may be recalled here a recent BBC

From the beginning of her life she had to pass through many shocking events and circumstances, right from the age of six, when she grew up in a broken home and after some thirty years the sun set in her life, again ironically, following a broken home of her own.

ple's Hearts" all over the world. From the beginning of her life she had to pass through many shocking events and circumstances, right from the age of six, when she grew up in a broken home and after some thirty years the sun set in her life, again ironically, following a broken home of her own. Her fairy-tale marriage with Prince of Wales Charles, the heir to the throne, came to a sorry end with an inevitable divorce that forced a tragic turn in her life.

that brought her again face to face with an Egyption million-aire, Al-Fayed, when she found new flicker of hope and a respectable survival. But fate was calculating otherwise. The awful end is now a well-known tragic

Dead Persons Tell No Tales

It is said that dead persons tell no tales. But they sometimes leave many things behind them to speak on their behalf. The same applies aptly to Diana : Since her marriage with Charles and her entry into the Buckingham Palace lots of changes were visible around. It is a fact that in the early years of her marriage, she simply outshone her husband, the heir to the throne, on each and ev-

ery royal function. That must

have hurt the ego of Charles

who had already betrayed his

feelings towards her as he was

been seen as a direct slap on

billionaire's son. It might have

The French police is

report which noted that "criticism was growing against the continued silence of the palace" on the tragic incident. Similarly, Conservative Party leaders like Margaret Thatcher and John Major have kept mum so far on

people in Britain and around

BCIDO contradicts news item

By Staff Correspondent M A Muttalib, Convenor of the Bangladesh Customs Intelligence Directorate Officers' Association (BCIDO) Tuesday said that the customs intelligence officers, under order of transfer from Dhaka and its adjoining areas after serving seven or more years in their posts, are moving out under

normal circumstances.

Protesting a news on behalf of the BCIDO in this regard published in The Daily Star on Monday he said Tuesday that these officials were doing their job efficiently and kept on their posts by the authority in the interest of the directorate. The allegations of corruption against them is not applicable as it had never been established or proven, Muttalib added.

He further said that the directorate of customs intelligence is not involved in collection of revenue. Therefore the involvement of its officials with corruption in paying duties in collusion with the unscrupulous businesspersons

does not arise, he added. The directorate has 83 officials throughout the country. most of them are based in Dhaka, who collects intelligence on smuggling and tax evasions and takes action through the law enforcing agencies. Apart from it during the past five years the directorate succeeded in seizure of about Tk 60 crore worth of goods and tax frauds and misuse of imported raw materials for the garment industry. The officials who are under transfer had been more or less involved in this operations, discharging their duties successfully, Mr Muttalib added.

UNDP official calls on Alamgir

The Resident Representative of UNDP in Dhaka, David E Lockwood, called on State Minister for Planning, Civil Aviation and Tourism Dr Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir at the latter's office yesterday, reports UNB

Permission to shift

James Bond

tory to the environment build-

five months. department said the ninth floor of Nagar Bhaban was being vacated to accommodate the envi-

had to be done to install the laboratory at the new premises

to install all the heavy equipment there but the laboratory will start functioning from the very first day we move in," he

'Russia to buy more jute from Bangladesh'

from Bangladesh, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Bangladesh E P Ivanov said this while he called on State Minister for Jute and Textiles A K Faezul Huq at his office at the Bangladesh secretariat yesterday morning, reports BSS.

test of time.

DCC's public health lab issued

By Staff Correspondent

The laboratory— only au-

ronment building.

near Banga Bazar.

DCC's acting chief engineer. Shafiul Islam said the process of shifting had already started and it would be completed

- Metropolitan -

Dhaka City Corporation authorities on Monday formally issued permission to shift its public health labora-

thorised centre for testing the quality of food in the city - has not been functioning for nearly Sources at the DCC's health

"Now the engineering section must act fast to help us start our business at the new premises," said a health official explaining that some adjustment work

"At present we won't be able

within a very short time'.

Russia will buy more jute

The Russian envoy stayed some time with the state minister and discussed issues relating to bilateral and mutual interest. Faezul Huq recalled with gratitude the Russian role in the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971 and said our friendly relations with Russia stood the



The truck lying on the road in city's Dhanmondi area as one of its wheels was removed from it accidentally. - Star photo

Illiteracy prime cause of poverty, says Sadeque

Education Minister A S H K Sadeque yesterday said that illiteracy is the prime cause of poverty and socio-political instability in the country, reports

He was speaking as the chief guest at the national conference of Bangladesh Secondary and Higher Education United Employees' Union held here at the education building premises. Secretary of Education Min-

istry Kazi Raqib Uddin Ahmed and director general of Secondary and Higher Education Department Dr Hamida Banu spoke on the occasion as the special guests. Presided over by president of

the employees' union Salauddin Selim, the conference was addressed, among others, by Dr Golam Rasul Mian, Sikendar Ali Khalifa and Kafiluddin Ahmed

VHSS condoles Mother Teresa's death

A condolence meeting was held at Voluntary Health Services Society (VHSS) office on Tuesday in memory of Late Mother Teresa. The meeting chaired by VHSS Executive Director-Incharge Ms. Rowshan Rahman and was attended and addressed by VHSS workers who paid rich tributes to Mother Teresa, says a press re-

Addressing the meeting Ms. Rowshan said that the best tribute to Mother Teresa would be to follow her teaching by serving the suffering millions. Her dedication to humanity will be always remembered, she

She also said that the NGOs have many things to learn from Mothers Teresa's teachings.

Indian journalist Bhupen Dutta dead

A leading Indian journalist and editor of the widely circulated "Dainik Sangbad" of Agartala, Tripura, Shree-Bhupen Dutta Bhowmik, 58, died on Tuesday, according to a message received here last night, reports BSS.

Bhowmik was the leading media personality of Tripura who contributed greatly to mobilise public support in favour of Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971. He died at the Apollo Hospital of Madras where he was undergoing treatment for cardiac problems

leading role in extending whole-hearted support to the Bangladesh Liberation War. Bhowmik, is survived by his

Q: There was a programme "Dainik Sangbad", founded also by Bhowmik, played a

wife, three sons and a daughter.

the royal family. But their 'nightmare' came to an unexpected end with the sudden tragic death of both Diana and Al-Fayed, leaving a devastating shock-wave all over the world. All eyes are now turned on those photographers who were

desperately chasing her to the 'end' of her journey. They were after Diana's car just to have 'shots' of every moment of her in the car. No sensible and decent person will call it journalism! A message left by a mourner at Diana's Kensington Palace home read : "A life wasted by crooked greed of the media". Another shouted at cameramen: "you are horrible". so this is the apt price people gave to the misguided photographers who could run to any length for the sake of money. It is to me to draw a line of demarcation between "Do's" and "Don'ts" to avoid in future such a tragic end. The peeping-Toms must be chained to the ground

proceeding well with the investigation into the role played by the five photographers who were arrested by them, for chasing Diana's car till it met its doom: It is also now controversial whether the driver drunk beyond limit and whether he was driving much faster than per-

this tragedy. It's this Conservative government that has not granted citizenship to late Al-Fayed's father who had invested billions of dollars in England, owning the largest department store, Harrods, publishing the oldest cartoon magazine the Punch, and running a profesis best known to them: I V The French lawyer of Al-Fayeds had announced that he would soon file a law suit, adding. "We want to know the

entire truth". He was convinced that there is a case for "manslaughter" or "involuntary homicide" which must be probed. Millions of grief-stricken

the world will be waiting crossfingered to know the whole truth, the outcome of the probe by French police and judiciary. All are, however, unanimous on one point that the culprits shouldn't go scotfree. They must be punished, at least to serve as a warning to others not to venture to tread the same path out of greed for money. Nor they should venture to put another slap on the face of this noble profession of journalism.

BANGABANDHU MURDER CASE Verbatim Text of Cross Examination of Twelfth Prosecution Witness

Excerpts from cross-exami-nation of ALD Serajul Huq by A; Advocate Khan Saifur Rahman. defence counsel for arrested ac cused Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Faroogur Rahman:

Q: Cantonment was a protected and controlled area. A. Yes Q: There were check posts

and guards posted in different areas of the cantonment. A: Yes. Q: All the time?

Q: Outsiders need permission for entering and coming out of the area. Q: Only there was no control

on movement of military personnel or on their entering or coming out of the Cantonment. A: Their movement was also controlled. Q: There was no ammunition

fall-in for parade at 9 pm on A: Yes, there was no ammunition at that time. Q: The 11th prosecution witness (LD Bashir Ahmed) was

in your rifle when you were in

with you in the headquarters squadron. Q: None of soldiers who took part in the parade at 9 pm had ammunition in their rifle.

A: True Q: Arms and ammunition were kept in one armoury of the headquarters sdquadron.

of exercise in that night parade. Q: The trucks of armoured and artillary were of same kind. A: Yes.

Q: How many soldiers were accommodated in a military

A: We 33 soldiers went by a truck on that day.

Q: Was there any truck on the parade ground when the exercise began at 3.30 am on August 15. A: There was no truck when

the fall-in took place there. The trucks were in the garage at that time. But when we came back with ammunition there were trucks on the parade ground

Q. When did you normally had your dinner in the cantonment. A: At about 7 pm.

Q: When did you asked the mess as the mess-in-charge to send breakfast on the following morning to Road-32.

A: I asked them for breakfast on August 14 evening for the following morning, but did not say anything about where to send the breakfast Q: When did you take your

A. When we stayed with the regiment, we used to take breakfast early in the morning and launch at 1 pm.

Q: On that day, both breakfast and lunch were taken on Mirpur Road. A. I had my breakfast on Mirpur Road, but did not have

my launch there. Q: As mess-in-charge you sent lunch to Mirpur Road after going back to the cantonment. A: I sent food after going

back to the mess.

Court at this stage wanted to know when he (Haq) went back to the cantonment. The witness said he went back at about 10 am and found the lunch prepared and LD Bashir sent those food. But he said he did not

know where the food were sent.

Q: For how many people

cooking used to take place in vour mess? A: It depended on the strength of unit. At that time there was about 70 to 80 peo-

Q: There was 33 soldiers in your truck, where were the other people of your unit? A: I don't have any knowl-

Q: When you went back to the cantonment, you found no one except Bashir. A: There were other people in

the barrack. Q: Till now, you have given three evidences. One to the IO, then to the magistrate and now

at the court. A. Yes. Q: In your statement to the IO, you have said, "At about 7.15 to 7.30 am Major Farooq came with a tank and went to Road-32 by a jeep. At about 9 to 10 am breakfast came by a truck, you had your breakfast

and went back to cantonment with that truck." A: A portion of the statement is correct. I told the IO that Major Farooq came from Road-32 with a tank and after proceeding towards south on Mirpur Road he (Farooq) came down from the tank and disappeared in the southern direction by a

jeep. The incomplete cross-examination resumes today (Wednesday) at 10 am.

Earlier, state defence counsels for absconding accused cross-examined the witness.

Further verbatim texts will be

published as and when received