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Down to Earth

Roads' Unbearable Burden

By A S M Nurunnabi

The burden on the city roads has been steadily on the rise. Obviously this growing phenomenon involves ominous implications not only for the present but also for the future. Because constraints are there in effecting expansion of city road network by way of constructing alternative routes or by-passes.

Questions have also been raised about the existing pattern of uses of the city roads and for whom the roads are actually meant. If one passes through Motijheel or the Elephant Road, these places would seem to be meant for parking of various types of motorised vehicles. On the other hand, if one looks at the picture of the roads leading from Mouchak to Rampura, the Outer Road or the roads in the old part of the Dhaka city, it would seem that these are venues for innumerable shops, all bedecked with various kinds of their merchandise.

It seems that for a long time a powerful racket has been operating in the city's streets, lanes and by-lanes through forcible occupation by raising structures thereon. The racketeers regularly realise money from the shopkeepers and portions of such illegal gains are divided among the interested parties.

Here are some instances how city streets in certain areas are being used. The busy street in the Dholaiapar area has been turned into a repairing zone for defective old vehicles.

At a road junction at Nayabazar in old Dhaka, a big pile of sand has been kept in front of a shop located on a narrow street connecting Armanitola, Babubazar, Islampur.

Khaleda: CHT conspiracy

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November 7, 1975 and resist it," she asserted. The former prime minister accused the government of lying that army was not being withdrawn from the CHT. "But, it appeared in the press that all permanent and temporary army camps in Barkal have already been dismantled. In the guise of dismantling these camps, conspiracy to hand over CHT to India is on," she said.

Begum Zia alleged that those in power now were making money through corrupt practices and warned that each of them would have to face trial for making their fortune at the cost of national wealth. She also made allegations of wrongdoing in oil and gas extraction and said, "It is being heard that oil would be smuggled out to India through pipeline."

Turning to the ban on holding of street rallies in the city, she referred to a Youth Day programme when she said the Home Minister had himself attended a rally on city road. "Home Minister does not abide by his own law."

Begum Zia portrayed a dismal picture of the national economy. She claimed that industrial growth rate has come down to three per cent now from 10 per cent when her party ruled the country. "There is virtually no business in the country and no money in the hands of peasants as well. Moreover, toll extraction has become rampant." She added that Taka had been devalued 10 times and the government opened up borders giving a free entry to smuggled goods.

The BNP chief compared the present situation with that of 1971-75 period. "Government is failing to do anything about the situation as workers of the ruling party are involved."

Recalling the happenings of November 7, 1975, she said the patriotic people and sepoys had freed her husband General Ziaur Rahman and entrusted him with the responsibility of saving the country's independence and sovereignty.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad and senior BNP leader Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury also took part in the discussion. He highlighted the "significance of November 7 in the history of

Business summit

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November 23 morning, will be accompanied by delegations of top businessmen and industrialists from their respective countries.

At the end of day-long conference, Gujral is scheduled to return to New Delhi the same evening.

Nawaz Sharif is expected to stay till November 25 to complete his bilateral visit programmes.

Dhaka, New Delhi and Islamabad are now negotiating a draft declaration to be announced at the end of the summit.

Hasina, in her bilateral talks with her Pakistani counterpart, is expected to discuss the entire gamut of bilateral relation as well as the regional and international issues of common concern.

The leaders of the two OIC countries are also likely to deal with matters concerning the unity and solidarity of the Muslim Ummah.

Damal

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Mohammedans went on to play the second semifinal against Biman on Thursday. But in a surprise letter to the Cricket Committee of Dhaka Metropolitan yesterday morning, Mohammedans informed that they would not play unless the fines were withdrawn.

Meanwhile, the news has certainly brought a big disappointment for Abahani Kriya Chakra who whisked two Pakistan internationals Shahid Afridi and Muhammad Hussain yesterday for the final.

The CDDM coordinator told The Daily Star late last night over telephone that the game will be held tomorrow.

Water, power lines

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the rent to the court as per their previous contract. They were ready to pay increased rent but not at the rate of 15 per cent per year, he said.

A ZIA official, however, said they tried to solve the dispute through negotiation during the last couple of months but failed due to the shop owners. The defaulting owners were not ready to pay the arrear money, he added.

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Nov 7 observed

BNP and some other political parties yesterday observed the National Revolution and Solidarity Day, reports UNB.

In observance of the day, BNP, JSD, Jamaat-e-Islami, Japga and other socio-cultural organisations organised elaborate programmes, which included hoisting of party and national flags in their respective offices, visit to the mazar of Zia and offering fateha, Qurankhwan, milad mahfil, discussion meeting and cultural function.

JSD observed the day as "Sepoy-Janata Uprising Day" while some pro-government organisations observed the day a "Sepoy killing day."

The main opposition BNP has also drawn up a 10-day programme and formed a National Revolution and Solidarity Day Observance Committee.

Authorities tightened security in the capital city. Huge contingents of riot and armed police were deployed at different points of the city. However, no untoward incident was reported.

BNP Chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Begum Khaleda Zia placed wreath and offered fateha at the mazar of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman in the morning.

3 killed in Gopalganj bus plunge

From Our Correspondent

GOPALGANJ, Nov 7: Three persons, including a minor girl were killed and 50 others injured, 15 of them seriously in a road accident near Galabaria bridge on Gopalganj-Kotalipara road today.

The accident occurred when a Gopalganj bound bus from Kotalipara overturned and fell into a roadside ditch.

The dead were identified as Karim Sardar 15, son of Nawabali, Shahabuddin Sheikh 70, son of late Fazlu Sheikh and Ameena Khatun, daughter of Habib Mia of village Kath under Gopalganj Sadar thana.

The injured were admitted to Gopalganj sadar hospital.

Police seized the bus and a case was filed with Gopalganj thana.

3 more EPZs

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sources, competitive wage level and its "geo-political location" are some of the comparative advantages of Bangladesh in setting up EPZ, Khan pointed out.

Khan said in the EPZs, 104 industries are in full operation and 93 industries are in different stages of construction or implementation. He said actual investment in EPZ so far is 265 million dollars and proposed investment is estimated at 781 million dollars.

Enterprises in EPZs now employ about 60 thousand workers. The number of employees will go up to 1.06 lakh when all units go into production. Export earning from EPZs during last fiscal year was 463 million dollars which was over 10.5 per cent of total national export. BEPZA estimated that current year's earning would reach 700 million dollars.

Khan told the session if the operation of the five EPZs could start in full swing, BEPZA will be able to contribute between 30 to 40 per cent of the national export when the investment will reach between 1200 to 1500 million US dollars.

Sarkar also suggested upgradation of the public relations department of the bank and publication of new journals on country's economy. He said, central bank officials should write articles on liberalisation of capital account, foreign direct investment, loan defaulting and savings. "If necessary, please contact university economists for such articles," he was quoted as telling his colleagues.

"I can not inform foreigners the latest economic situation," Sarkar reportedly told the officials in a meeting Sunday last. The issue was also discussed in the last meeting of the Board of Directors of the bank on October 30.

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BB Governor

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the Bangladesh Bank Annual Report 1996, Export Receipts and Import Payments 1996, Balance of Payments 1996 and monthly Economic Trends.

The monthly "Economic Trends," which is considered an important bulletin for bankers, economists, teachers and journalists, has not been published since July this year. One official said that it would not be possible to publish the journals until December though tender has already been floated in this regard.

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ESP intervention

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cost per disability' - Adjusted Life Year' gained. The report identifies the interventions and their costs for low income countries with a burden of disease similar to that of Bangladesh where 47 per cent of the population is under 15 years of age and 25 per cent are of child bearing age.

The estimated cost was eight US dollars per capita for a package of public health, family planning and curative services under the ESP. The existing per capita spending on the health and population services is about four dollars.

According to an official of health directorate, the services will be cost-effective and promise to satisfy the needs of the most vulnerable ones in the society. In fact it will ensure about 80 per cent of the population's sought after services.

The official claimed that expertise and facilities for providing the services already exist in the country but experts argue that a lot of support in terms of equipment and health providers is needed to achieve the goals. The delivery service needs to be more efficient and management skills and practices have to be strengthened, they added.

The services will be client-oriented, which means a shift from servicing the system to serving the people for whom the system is designed.

The ESP will include services made available at every level of service infrastructure which will become familiar to patients. The clients will know what are the minimum services that can be expected, officials said.

The conference, during its last day, also paid attention to the prospects of foreign investment in light of regional cooperation among the countries in South Asia which are gradually opening up to outside.

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"We look upon Bangladesh as a country with potential for growth in which we continue to invest as a long-term commitment," said John Noal, the Chairman and Managing Director of Lever Brothers Bangladesh Ltd.

Khan Sung, the Chairman of South Korean Youngone Corporation which has a large investment in Bangladesh, lend support to the chief executive of the British origin multination company.

There are "huge potential in Bangladesh, with an abundance of well educated professionals and ample supply of willing workers," said Kishak, whose company is one of the major foreign investors in the country.

The official claimed that expertise and facilities for providing the services already exist in the country but experts argue that a lot of support in terms of equipment and health providers is needed to achieve the goals. The delivery service needs to be more efficient and management skills and practices have to be strengthened, they added.

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She was accompanied by party leaders, including Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Dr Khandaker Mosharrif Hossain, Khandaker Delwar Hossain, Tanvir Ahmed Siddique, Khandaker Mahbubuddin Ahmed, MK Anwar, Kursheed Jahan Haq, Selima Rahman, Mirza Abbas and Ehsanul Kabir.

Due to the removal of the floating bridge on Crescent Lake that connected Zia's mazar, they reached there through the Chandrima Uddyan. A young man crossed the lake by swimming in protest of removal of the bridge.

Leaders and workers of different front organisations of BNP, including Jubo Dal, Chhatra Dal, Sramik Dal, Krishak Dal, Mohila Dal, Ulema Dal, Zia-Khaleda Research Council, Zia Parishad and Jasas also placed wreaths at the mazar.

Jatiyatabd Ulema Dal organised a doa and milad mahfil at the mazar premises in the morning.

Colonel Taher Parishad arranged a discussion meeting at its central office at Malibagh in the afternoon.

JSD organised a discussion meeting at Osmanli Uddyan which was addressed, among others, by its president ASM Abdur Rab, general secretary Hasanul Haq Inu, Nur Alam Ziku, Kazi Aref Ahmed, Sharif Nurul Ambia, Syed Zafar Sazzad and Mainuddin Khan Badal.

Sharif accused of receiving Rs 3.5m from ISI

ISLAMABAD, Nov 7: Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif finds himself amidst a new controversy as a list admitted by Supreme Court named him as a recipient of Rs 3.5 million from ISI to cobble up an alliance against former premier Benazir Bhutto before the 1990 polls, reports PTI.

The list, submitted by former interior minister Nasirul Haq Babar in the ongoing ISI case along with an affidavit regarding the political role of the intelligence agency, named Sharif and 31 others who allegedly received various amounts.

It also named Abida Hussain, a member of the Sharif cabinet, as having received Rs one million from ISI.

The Supreme Court had started suo moto proceedings in the case following a letter sent to the court by Air Marshal Asghar Khan drawing its attention to the statement of Nasirul Haq Babar that the ISI distributed Rs 140 million among various political parties before the 1990 elections.

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Delegations from countries likely to attend the meeting included Cuba, Egypt, India, DPRK (North Korea), Nepal, Nigeria and Pakistan.

Government delegations and scientists from most of the member countries have already arrived in the capital.

The 8th meeting of the Governing Council of Science and Technology Centre of the Non-Aligned Movement begins in Dhaka today, reports UNB.

Education Minister ASHK Sadique will inaugurate the two-day meeting to be attended by member countries of the governing council.

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The Dhaka session of the centre is expected to adopt a specific proposal on the expansion of inter-country communication and patronisation of young and promising scientists.

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