HE widespread abuse of

Drug abuse and illicit

trafficking in drugs are

problems no longer confined to

small segments of a given popu-

ultimately destroy people from

all walks of life. Growing drug

abuse is much more than a

"street problem". It has invaded

homes, workplaces and educa-

tional institutions affecting in-

dividuals of all ages and

classes. Beyond destruction

caused by drug dependence is

the damage to traditional val-

ues, life styles and national economies. This growing men-

ace transcends frontiers and

cuts across political, economic

Drugs and International

Fora

abuse situation ranks with en-

vironmental dangers as one of

the most life threatening prob-

lems facing the nations of the

world today. Since 1987, every year the United Nations anti-

drug day is being observed on 26

June. In recent past the magni-

tude of the drug problem has be-

come so alarming that it has led

the United Nations to call a

special session "Drug Summit"

be the largest multinational

gathering ever held on combat-

ing illegal drug trafficking and

abuse. Government leaders

from 185 countries including

Bangladesh participated in the

New York Summit. The UN

"Drug Summit" marked a criti-

cal new juncture in the global

fight against drug supply and

demand. For the first time na-

tional leaders from throughout

the world assembled to agree to

control drugs; the first interna-

tional agreement on demand

reduction; and the goal of sub-

stantially reducing and eventu-

ally eradicating the illicit cul-

next 10 years.

tivation of narcotic crops in the

tive drugs' has become priority

area in the Commonwealth and

SAARC forums. In Bangladesh,

both within the government

and organizations concerned

with social issues there is a

Besides the UN, 'psychoac-

The summit is considered to

this year from 8 to 10 June.

The international drug

and social boundaries.

Drugs entice, captivate and

lation.

psychoactive drugs has

become a human tragedy.

BJP: Crack in Coalition?

Pallab Bhattacharya writes from New Delhi

BJP-AIADMK ties have taken a firm knock. Although BJP leaders are putting on a brave front by saying that Jayalalitha has the right to express her views, they privately note that this was the sharpest criticism of BJP since the coalition assumed in March.

HE Bharatiya Janata Party is under intense fire I from friends and foes

alike. In both cases, the common thread is sustained pressure brought on Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee government by its allies Trinamool Congress and AIADMK headed by Mamata Banerjee and Jairam Jayalalitha who steadfastly cling to their personal agenda o seeking to topple their arch-rivals from power in West Bengal and Tamil Nadu respectively.

Foes first: In an unprecedented development having implications on relations between the Central government and those in power in states, the Left Front government in West Bengal refused to cooperate with a team of senior Home Ministry officials sent by Vajpayee government to assess law and order situation in that state.

The central team was sent to West Bengal following allegations mainly by BJP and Trinamool Congress about large scale violence unleashed by the Left Front against political rivals in the run up to and after the last month's Panchayat elections in the state.

The West Bengal government described the visit of the central team as 'unconstitutional' saying the Law and order was a subject within the purview of the state government as stipulated under the constitution.

The central team was rebuffed as the West Bengal government declined to answer questions relating to pre and post-panchayat poll violence in the state. West Bengal Home (police) Minister Buddhadev Bhattacharya said his government was surprised at the visit of the central team because only a week ago it had submitted a report on the law and order to

Vajpayee government. Under the Indian constitution, law and order comes under the jurisdiction of the state governments. But the centre is empowered to recommend dismissal of a state government only on the ground of breakdown of the constitutional machinery in that state.

\$900 million, eleventh

largest bridge of the world.

the Bangabandhu Jamuna

Multi-purpose Bridge has been

inaugurated on June 23 by

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

It has been a remarkable

milestone as the PM

maintained, in the national

endeavour towards the materi-

alisation of "Sonar Bangla" as

dreamed by Bangabandhu.

Surely, BJMB will be a fitting

springboard for the nation's

leap in the new millenium. De-

velopment of infrastructure is a

sine qua non for economic

progress of a nation. Balanced

and equitable development of

the various regions of a country

and total integration of the na-

tion should be the cardinal goal

celebration of the inauguration

of BJMB which will go a long

way in the fulfilment of the

above objectives. We cannot

help paying our due and imme-

diate attention to the Padma

river barrier which impedes

and handicaps a much greater

chunk of the land area of the

country measuring approx.

42,579 sq. km than the Jamuna

which insulated approximately

32,513 sq km of Rajshahi Divi-

sion. The much adored popular

patriotic slogan which pro-

claims our national identity

starts as, "Padma, Meghna, Ja-

muna..." though authorities

thought it fit to start with

Meghna, and then Jamuna. Will

not we think of Padma now and

at the soonest? The PM herself

also reiterated the importance

of a bridge over the Padma

while inaugurating the BJMB

and assured that efforts will be

been tamed and crossed by a

bridge earlier catering to the

needs of some 15 districts of

Chittagong and Sylhet Divi-

sions. The bridge has shortened

almost by half the distance be-

tween the principal seaport

Chittagong and the capital

Dhaka promoting faster

movement of men and materi-

Jamuna have been joined on

June 23 facilitating swifter

communication between 16 dis-

tricts of Rajshahi Division and

the capital as well as south-

eastern region of the country

already in the realm of devel-

opmental surge. Teknaf and

Tetulia will now be thriving

and vibrating in the same vein

of perilious Padma that needs

to be joined for the greater good

of the largest natural harbours

It is now the longing banks

with similar gusto.

The olden shores of doughty

The Mighty Meghna had

soon made for its realisation.

On the occasion of the joyful

of any administration.

No doubt, BJP had sent the team of Central Home Ministry officials to placate an increasingly restive Mamata Banerjee who has been demanding the dismissal of the Left Front government alleging break-down

of law and order in West Bengal.

The Vaipayee government has initially been cool to Ms Banerjee's demand which once prompted her to accuse the centre of being indifferent to her demand, suspend Trinamool Congress support to Vajpayee government and boycott parliament for more than a week as a gesture of protest.

An embarrassed Vajpayee persuaded Ms Banerjee to rescind her party's decisions in return for sending a team of senior BJP MPs to West Bengal to assess law and order.

But Ms Banerjee suffered a loss of face when the BJP parliamentarians' team concluded its visit in the state declaring that the situation in West Bengal did not warrant dismissal of the Left government and there was no need to press the panic

The West Bengal government's rebuff to the central team was in stark contrast to the reaction of the governments in Bihar and Tamil Nadu which fully cooperated with similar central teams sent to assess law and order situation there following complaints by BJP's al-

The BJP leadership, of course, defended the sending of central teams to the states saying the Vajpayee government was authorised under Article 355 of the constitution to do so. Vajpayee himself said the teams were sent following reports of violence and atrocities on women and tribals.

But the entire opposition came down heavily on BJP for sending the central teams to selective states saying the ruling party was trying to "subvert" the Centre-state relations.

The opposition pointed out that as law and order was a state subject the party in power at the Centre could not be allowed to "usurp" this to resolve its own internal problems.

The opposition tirade is un-

doubtedly aimed at pre-empting any possible move by BJP-led government to topple governments in West Bengal, Bihar and Tamil Nadu. Political analysts say the BJP is most unlikely to go for such drastic actions and risk opposition agitation after just three months

But what must have caused more worries to BJP than the opposition attack is the outburst from Jayalalitha who accused a few days ago the saffron party of having a "secret" link with her arch political opponent DMK in Tamil Nadu to split AIADMK and behaving like a "big brother" with its allies, charges denied by Vajpayee's party.

The BJP also denied that there was any explicit understanding reached with Jayalalitha before the general elections earlier this year that, if voted to power, the party would dismiss the DMK government.

What clearly emerges from the maze of charges and denials is that BJP-AIADMK ties have taken a firm knock. Although BJP leaders are putting on a brave front by saying that Jayalalitha has the right to express her views, they privately note that this was the sharpest criticism of BJP since the coalition assumed in March.

It also does not reflect will on the cohesion in the ruling coalition which had formed a consultative committee for sorting out differences among the constituents.

The BJP is also uncomfortable about Jayalalitha's comparison between the "respectable" treatment her party received from Congress under Rajiv Gandhi's leadership when the latter had more than two third majority in parliament and BJP's "big brotherly" attitude with barely half the strength of Congress at that

Political analysts see in this veiled warning by Jayalalitha that she might look for new allies if BJP failed to help her secure her demands "nothing is impossible in politics," she

Containing Drug Abuse

Needed a Coordinated International Effort

by Dr S H Mahmud

All aspects of drugs should be dealt together; that is crop control, interdiction, law enforcement, education, psychological motivation must go hand in hand. Only an effort that is cooperative, vigorously enforced and truly international can successfully address the global drug problem.



considerable evidence of a heightened awareness of the potential danger inherent in drug abuse. The government attitude is reflected both in the legal and institutional framework of drug abuse control.

The Government of Bangladesh with the assistance of United Nations International Drug Control Pro-

gramme (UNDCP) is preparing a Master Plan to deal with all aspects of psychoactive drugs. preventive education, treatment and rehabilitation and law enforcement and legal assistance. This five year plan at a cost of 1.7 million US dollars

is due to be completed in 1998. **Motivation and Conse-**

quences

In most approaches to so called drug problem insufficient consideration has so far been given to the human factors involved and to the motives for drug abuse. However, before we undertake preventive measures for drug abuse we must know the motives that precipitate such behaviour, since motives have been regarded as the immediate psychological factors responsible for any human behaviour, including drug addiction. Hence prevention and control of addiction behaviour to any desired degree must depend upon the understanding of the motives underlying such behaviour.

The phenomenon is multifactorial in origin, involving a complex interweaving of sociological and psychological factors. While these factors may influence initial drug use, once an individual becomes physically dependent the motivation complex varying through time. geographic region and by demographic characteristics. The underlying causes of drug abuse are as diverse as the population they affect. Research indicates that there is a causal relationship between many forms of drug abuse and anti social activities. Drug addicts seem to engage in crimes mainly to obtain money to support them. But even more

dangerous to society than the

criminal acts is the colossal

changes radically. The person

has acquired a new need that

may be so powerful that all

other concerns are ignored. He

or she lives only for the next

fix. The etiology of drug abuse is

loss of the human resources for constructive purposes. As the ego structure of the drug addicts become increasingly weaker and mental strength progressively poorer all kinds of high ambitions, morale and vitality extinguish prematurely. Drug dependence develops intense apathy to daily works, makes its consumer severely insensitive to social environment and responsibility and finally leads the person to be an unbearable

to the society. **Education and Prevention** The only long-term hope for

liability to the family as well as

dealing with the problem of drug misuse and abuse lies in the field of education. Education aimed at preventing the misuse of drugs has to be the initial intention. As society seeks to prevent drug abuse by limiting the availability of drugs, we are forced to recognise several other facts. First, as long as there is a

sizeable market for these substances there will be people to supply them. Thus only if we can teach people not to seek drugs we can discourage the sources of the problem. Second, these substances

will never disappear entirely. So we should try to teach people to live in a world that includes

Third, society has accepted the continued existence of tobacco, yet some people are harmed by them.

Can we teach people to live in such a way that their lives and health are not impaired by drugs? The apparent goal of most educational measures has not been just to impart drug information, but to convey only the type of message that was expected to create negative attitude towards drug use. In other words, the goal has usually been prevention of drug abuse rather than increase in knowledge for its own sake.

The widespread use of various effective education approaches are:

The knowledge, attitude and behaviour model: Here it is assumed that information about drugs would increase the person's knowledge which would lead to the changes in attitudes

about drug use, and these changed attitudes would be reflected in decreased drug using behaviour.

Value clarification: Teaching the persons to clarify their own values.

Teaching alternatives to drug use: We can see the possible alternatives are sensory awareness training, instruction in social customs, and study and practice of religion. However, the mode of alternatives depend on the background and the personality factors of the individual.

Positive peer influence: Learning to recongnise peer pressure and teaching ways to minimise or to refuse drugs have been shown to be very elfective in reducing number of drug users.

Community remedies: Obtaining cooperation from the public, civic groups, local media, parent groups and other interested parties.

It seems clear that these approaches should have an impact, but evaluating them has been difficult. Thus it appears that effective prevention strategy requires training, technical assistance, research into the problem and fund for projects.

Security and Integrity Despite recent success in

some parts of the world in controlling the supply, diversion and trafficking of illegal drugs, the scope of the narcotics problem today transcends law enforcement and public health questions, posing a threat to the security and integrity of nations and regions. The narcotics trade under-

mines government and officials through corruption, intimidation, and economic destabilisation. The erratic ebb and flow and sheer volume of drug money have a destabilising effect on the supply of money and exchange markets.

Moreover, the threat posed to individuals the world over by drug related acts of terrorism is very real. In the past, traffickers often viewed enforcement success in interrupting their operation. Now with stricter drug control and law enforcement measures around the world, some trafficking channels have been disrupted and their priority organisations are on the defensive in many areas. In addition to devising new

trafficking routes through less well guarded areas, they are now reacting not only with threats but also with acts of vio-

The UN "Drug Summit" of June 1998 tells us that international community has come to understand that illegal drugs are a global problem and required a coordinated international response. All aspects of drugs should be dealt together: that is crop control, interdiction, law enforcement, education, psychological motivation must go hand in hand. Only an effort that is cooperative, vigorously enforced and truly international can successfully address the global drug problem.

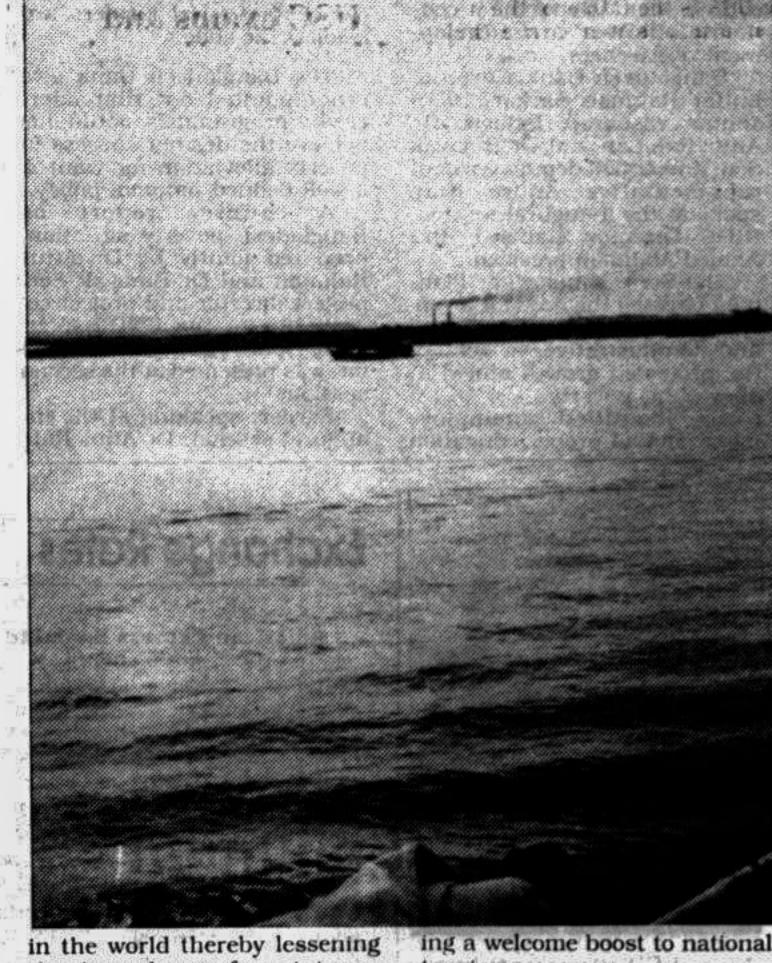
Psychology, University of Dhaka and Director, Drug Abuse Research Centre (DARC).

The writer is Professor of

Bridge on the Padma — an Imperative Now the width of Padma to be HE five-kilometer long,

by Q M Karamat Ali

The socio-politoco-economic importance of the construction of a bridge over Padma can hardly be overemphasized. After Meghna and Jamuna, it is time for Padma to be pondered over.



the dependence of our international trade on Chittagong which besides heavy congestions, seems to have regrettably and almost irretrievably fallen to partisan and factional squabbles, dangerous labour politics and machinations of mastans and vested interests.

Mongla's potentials as a transit port for use by Nepal and Bhutan will further brighten. The entire coastal belt of the South, an ideal ground for modern shrimp-culture with the prospects of surpassing RMG sector as a foreign exchange earner could be further exploited being easily frequented by more local and foreign entrepreneurs once a bridge is built over Padma.

The government has have demonstrated ample awareness of the importance and necessity of developing the region by going with plans to construct a bridge over Rupsa - a long-felt demand of the area - and by recently laying the foundation of an EPZ at Mongla. Construction of a bridge over Padma will further hasten the process of development in the region.

The great Sunderbans, one of of the nation and interest of the the largest mangroves of the people of 21 districts of Dhaka. world stretching along the coast Khulna and Barisal Divisions. of Khulna and Jessore, currently uncared and rather ne-Padma Bridge will boost glected will come closer unbo-Mongla and usher Sunderbans soming her boundless natural closer: A bridge over Padma will greatly bolster and activate treasure and unending charm to the people of the country evok-Mongla — the second-largest ing loving concern and care sea-port of the country and one

from all concerned thereby giv-

tourism.

Prospect for establishment

of private ports in the coastal belt of Barisal will brighten: As soon as Padma is bridged, the prospect for establishment of private ports in the coastal belt of Barisal will look up. Traditional ports like Chittagong and Mongla, government managed and sometimes mismanaged as they are, cannot always efficiently serve the needs of trade in the competitive global market of the day. So many countries of the world including some of our neighbours like India have gone for development of private ports. Coastal belt of Barisal holds bright prospect in this area as a destination of local and foreign investment. Bridging Padma will further enhance the possibilities.

Benapole will enormously benefit: An overwhelming bulk of our trade with India, currently our largest neighbouring trading partner is transacted through Benapole. This is also possibly the busiest point handling inter-country movement of people. The plans for introduction of bus-services between India and Bangladesh will further add to the rush. Spanning of the Padma will to a very great extent reduce the transport cost of men and materials between the two neighbours.

A political and social obligation: Politically and socially, it is now the South that needs to be soothed since it remains

handicapped communication and development wise but for a bridge over Padma, government awareness has been demonstrated by plans and projects which are sporadic and isolated. Popular demand for a bridge over Padma is mounting gradually as is manifested in the formation of "Padma Shetu Bastabayan Parisad" comprising socio-political leaders, representatives from trade and industry and professionals. Construction of Padma Bridge after Meghna and Jamuna is of paramount importance for greater socio-political integration of the nation as well as for equitable and just development of all the regions of the country.

Facilitate visitors to Bangabandhu's mausoleum at Tongipara: We all know how a deprived people was transformed into a wakeful nation, an unarmed mass of grew into a formidable fighting force challenging and finally mauling the warmachine and marauding occupation army of Pakistan. If the liberation and independence of Bangladesh was a miracle - it was Bangabandhu's utiring and unrelenting struggle and charismatic leadership which worked that miracle. If it was a magic, the magic was in the voice of Bangabandhu by whose clarion call and thunderous exhortation a slumbering nation rose to a man to seize the historic opportunity of carving out a proud place on map of the globe.

Father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman now lies in eternal rest in the lap of rural Tongipara which once dotingly nurtured and nourished his childhood and youth. Many would like to pay their tributes to his revered memory by visiting his mausoleum at Tongipara and pray for the salvation of a soul who held nothing dearer to it than Bengalees and Bangladesh. A bridge over Padma could facilitate the fulfilment of such desire — making return journey to Tongipara only a matter of three hours from Dhaka for which now even a day may not suffice.

Bridges over Dhaleswari have already paved the way: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has already inaugurated one of the two Dhaleshwari Bridges, while the other one is just a couple of spans away from completion, thereby paving the way to the Padma Bridge which could be constructed in any of the nearest sites suitable based on studies and surveys to be carried out by national and international experts.

Reportedly, a bridge over Padma will be much more costeffective than the JMB, since

spanned near Mawa will be narrower than the site of Jamuna and the return on investment on Padma Bridge is expected to be higher than JMB. Padma Bridge besides reducing the cost of movement of cargoes between Mongla Sea Port and Benapole on the side and the rest of the country via Mawa, will handle a greater volume of cargoes and men and earn more in the shape of toll or any other charges to be levied because of the higher density of population in the South of Bangladesh than in North Bengal that the JMB is meant to serve. The erection of Padma Bridge will generate much more investments and employments in the region, The wealth of expertise and

experiences earned in the construction of Meghna, Jamuna and other important bridges will help us plan and implement things much more efficiently in the construction of a bridge over the Padma.

Though there is marked donor fatigue and resource constraint in the international market because of the recent financial turmoil, our tested friends and development partners who helped us bridge Meghna, Jamuna and Buriganga will surely help surmount this last hurdle.

A sizeable amount of our Foreign Exchange earnings is utilised for debt servicing. We have so far borrowed an astronomic sum of BDT 65 billion. The donors have an indirect stake in the economic development of the country specially in the growth of the Export Sector. The construction of Padma Bridge will boost our export earning resulting in the enhancement of our debt-servicing capability.

The increased interest of overseas investors in the gas sector of the country - a peaceful delta pursuing economic prosperity in a region recently gripped by a fatal nuclear arms race - further highlights and adds to the urgency and significance of embarking on such a vital project.

Right initiative to be taken

by the Prime Minister: The socio-politoco-economic importance of the construction of a bridge over Padma can hardly be overemphasized. After Meghna and Jamuna, it is time for Padma to be pondered over. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina while opening the JMB on June 23, seemed to be faced with the onerous responsibility of focusing her attention to Padma. The sagacious and dynamic leader will, it is hoped, live up to popular expectations by taking urgent policy decisions, initiating necessary enactments, raising funds locally and internation ally for this vital and seminal project for the overall developmerit and integration of the na-

The writer is editor of The Business Review.

Sri Lanka Gets Projected as Sex Paradise

Sugeeswara Senadhira writes from Colombo

W HEN the Sri Lankan government handed a ▼ ▼ European firm an image-building contract, little did it suspect that the island nation would be projected as a sex paradise! Sri Lankans in Germany

were shocked when the country's much publicised first promotion film handled by the European company turned out to be a semi-pornographic one portraying the island nation as a place where sex is easily ac-"Ina's Journey cessible. Through Sri Lanka," produced by Manning, Salvage and Lee (MSL) and screened by Germany's RTL 2 television channel, had erotic pornographic scenes and portrayed Sri Lanka as a place where German men and women could seek sex eas-

Many are now questioning the necessity to hire a foreign public relations company to boost the country's image abroad when its action has ended up tarnishing Sri Lanka's The film, which was produced by MSL under its \$3.5 million contract, was filmed in Sri Lanka under the patronage of the Ceylon Tourist Board (CTB) and the national carrier AirLanka. It starred German porn actress Ina Werner who has been described as a Pamela Anderson clone. The film has scenes of female nudity as well as depiction of sexual intercourse inspired by the Kama Su-

Mahil Goonaratne, manager of the CTB office in Germany, was the first to alert the authorities that the film focussed exclusively on the alleged availability of easy sex in Sri

CTB Chairman Henry Samaranayake claimed that in the televised documentary there were certain scenes which were not in the original footage approved by the National Film Corporation. "We were horrified to learn that scenes of the Kama Sutra were included," Samaranayake said.

"What they have done is a violation of the contract," he said. However he admitted that Ina's scenes were filmed in Sri Lanka in the presence of a CTB official. Commenting on the fiasco. The Sunday Times said the tender for the image-building contract should be scrutinised. It pointed out that while early damage control measures were required, it was also essential to probe the whole issue and

are responsible or those who failed to exercise enough responsibility, resulting in a tarnished image for Sri Lanka.

The MSL was given the image-building contract last year by the tourist board following approval from the cabinet. The company was first given a contract to handle the overall image of Sri Lanka, including propaganda against the secessionist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

the CNN interview for President Chandrika Kumaratunga in London when she went to Britain for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Edinburgh in October 1997. The company charged \$19,000 for making arrangements for the interview. The original contract for

The company even handled

MSL included the overall image building for Sri Lanka — taking up part of the work from the ministries of Foreign Affairs, External Trade, Tourism and Finance (foreign investment promotion), some of which expressed dissatisfaction with MSL's work.

Trade Minister Kingsley Wickremaratne also supported the Foreign Ministry's position.







