

Traffic Jams: One Way Out

by Nafees Imtiazuddin

Solutions have to be sought and found. We cannot possibly reach a stage where we have to stay home all week and starve because the roads are jammed up.



Typical traffic jam in Dhaka: No way out

It is not something that can or should happen overnight. I am not trying to justify rickshaws or the problems they create. I just feel that people with mechanized forms of transport are equally to blame.

Recently the situation has improved with the government taking a very pragmatic step, involving some of the defence personnel in controlling the traffic. But I do not know if this

is a permanent arrangement. There are so many reasons for traffic jams. Impatient drivers stopping way past red lights. Mini-bus drivers queuing up in double/treble lines on the wrong side. Public utilities digging up roads. Water-logging on roads. Bazaars on the roads. Beggars at the crossings. Activists and demonstrators marching in processions even during peak hour. Buses stopping for passengers in the middle

of the road for minutes together. Sports of different speed modes using the same avenue. Truck-drivers blocking the roads and holding the entire old city hostage. In fact blocking the roads to register protest seems to have become a real favourite. I dare say next only to smashing cars.

Another major problem is parking-space. Cars on Dhaka roads are parked angularly, and

not parallel to the side-walk as I have seen being done in many foreign countries. This creates a number of problems. First it takes up double the space, the cars cannot gradually ease out into the moving traffic. They have to back out of the parking space, obstructing the flow of traffic. If in the process they can get into a shouting-match the jam gets worse. Parked cars on most roads in Dhaka take up almost half the road width on either side. People normally try to park their cars right in front of their offices or the shops they want to buy from. This they do for fear of pilferage. Park too far away and come back to find the side-view mirror gone. Or some little children (self-employed car-cleaners) gleefully announcing that you have a flat-tyre, and they can help you to change it. Tricky business. But all contributing to the traffic jams. The problem of parking is difficult to solve both because of shortage of space and due to the emergence of shopping districts or shopping malls that never took parking space into account. The result is that now there is no space nearby to even construct multi-storied car-parks.

Nevertheless solutions have to be sought and found. We cannot possibly reach a stage where we have to stay home all week and starve because the roads are jammed up.

One possible solution could be introduction of one-way roads. Take the case of Secretariate or Motijheel bound traffic. In the first half of the day from 8 AM to 12 Noon both lanes on some of the roads lead-

ing to Motijheel could be made one way, that is traffic on both sides of the road would be allowed to go towards Motijheel only. These roads could be Elephant Road from Science Laboratory along Suhrawardy Uddyan Road, and the stretch from Ramna Park past the Foreign Office, Central Secretariate, Baitul Mukarram down to Bangladesh Bank. The same could be done for both sides of the road starting from Kakrail crossing, past Jonaki Cinema and down right past the Water Tank to Dainik Bangla crossing. During that period traffic leading out of Motijheel by the south would go one-way through Dilkusha, Gulistan, T&T road, past Curzon Hall, and Mymensingh Road. On the northern side, the traffic would go out of Motijheel through the front of Notre Dame College, turn right past the Police Hospital and then left through Shantinagar. After 2 PM that is from 2 PM to 6 PM this arrangement could simply be reversed to flush out the home-bound traffic from Motijheel. For the rest of the time all one-way restrictions would be lifted and traffic would move both ways.

This is merely a suggestion. The authorities concerned, that is the Mayor and the traffic authorities could work out a truly workable route-plan and put it in place. The idea of using one-way roads during rush hour is to allow double the road space without actually building new roads or fly-overs (which are astronomically expensive). Doubling the road space would allow double the number of vehicles to move in half the time. By doing this most of the red-lights would also be cut out. And a lot of the exhaust fumes. Certainly a great improvement at no extra cost.

Richer Britain Gets Depressed

THE old adage is true: money really can't buy you happiness. A study has shown that Britons get less enjoyment and happiness from their money than most other nations, writes Cherry Norton. The research, into the link between personal spending power and the perceived quality of life, showed that people in Bangladesh, one of the poorest countries in the world, get far more happiness from their small incomes than the British do from their relatively large ones. Britain also lags behind the Philippines, Nigeria and Ghana, and is placed 32nd out of the 54 countries measured.

"People in Britain are generally less happy than they were 10 years ago. Two-thirds would rather see the environment improved than have more economic growth and personal spending money," said Robert Worcester, visiting professor of government at the London School of Economics, who co-wrote the study. The study, published by Demos, the independent think tank, shows that although the British have twice as much money to spend in real terms compared with 40 years ago, their perceived quality of life has not improved. Earlier studies have shown that many Britons still believe that money does bring happiness. The Demos research shows that such a link still exists in poor countries because a small increase in income can mean large improvements in lifestyle. However, above a certain level of income that direct relationship breaks down and, the research suggests, happiness in Britain is far more dependent on close personal relationships, good health and job satisfaction. The researchers concluded that although Britons are rich compared with most other

countries, many suffer from an emotional poverty caused by consumerism and the destruction of communities. Nic Marks, a social sciences researcher at Surrey University who also worked on the report, says: "We are being seduced by an economic juggernaut and our personal needs are not being met." For many people, the research will only confirm their decision to "down shift" by exchanging affluent lifestyles for ones that allow more time for personal interests.

World Happiness Survey

Level of happiness once income is taken into account

1. Bangladesh 28. Czech Republic
2. Azerbaijan 29. Netherlands
3. Nigeria 30. Australia
4. Philippines 31. Spain
5. India 32. Britain
6. Ghana 33. Finland
7. Georgia 34. Iceland
8. China 35. Denmark
9. Poland 36. Belgium
10. Turkey 37. France
11. Dominican Republic 38. Norway
12. South Africa 39. Austria
13. Venezuela 40. Portugal
14. Brazil 41. Switzerland
15. Uruguay 42. Germany
16. Latvia 43. Canada
17. Croatia 44. Japan
18. Mexico 45. Italy
19. Argentina 46. United States
20. Hungary 47. Slovenia
21. Estonia 48. Lithuania
22. Armenia 49. Slovakia
23. South Korea 50. Russia
24. Chile 51. Ukraine
25. Romania 52. Belarus
26. Ireland 53. Bulgaria
27. Sweden 54. Moldova

Courtesy: The Sunday Times, 6 December 1998.

TOM & JERRY



By Hanna-Barbera



Special Supplement

Import of Bulk Cement

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point, Scancem made an important strategic decision. It was decided that, during the intervening period of 2 years or so, concurrent with the activities for establishment of the grinding plant, Scancem will also undertake import of cement in bulk, store this off-shore in what is known as terminal ship, bag the cement on board and discharge the bagged cement in coasters for transportation and marketing in Dhaka and other suitable areas. The objective is to introduce the brand name and acquaint dealers and consumers with high quality of Scancem cement in Bangladesh at the earliest opportunity. It is mentioned that major part of country's requirement of cement is met by imports. The importers, by and large, are more interested in large turn-over and profits and do not have any abiding loyalty to or interest in any particular brand. Quality of imported cement constituting bulk of available cement in the country, has been found to be erratic and, at times, poor. Some time back the issue of quality of imported cement assumed topical interest and the government was obliged to take some remedial measures. Thus the decision of Scancem to import high quality cement under a brand name exemplified a happy combination of fulfillment of its own objective with satisfaction of the urgent need of the country for quality cement. We must also keep in mind that quality of cement of crucial importance in ensuring the quality

and long life of all infrastructural and development works involving billions of taka in our tight national budget. Chittagong port situated in a narrow deltaic strip with a rather low drought, has certain inherent constraints in its capacity. Apart from this locational limitation, the port has also been festered with a variety of problems including some stemming from restive labour which has a deleterious effect on its operation. This results in not infrequent hiccups in the port which sometimes precipitate into alarming problems. Positioning/stationing of a terminal ship for a considerable length of time, say one or two years, in the port under such congestion, thus posed a serious problem. It was fortuitous to find that the jetty of Chittagong Urea Fertiliser Ltd. (CUFL), had been lying idle for the last few years. Capacity and dimensions of CUFL jetty are: platform size-175mx20m; full design draught-8.5m; mooring force 100 mts; capacity (max. bulk)-200 mts/hr. Bollard pull calculation, one of the basic parameters, was checked by Bureau of Research, Testing and Consultancy (BRTC) of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET). Such calculation confirmed that the jetty could be used for berthing and unloading of cargo from ships of capacity under consideration of Scancem. As such, the proposal for use of idle jetty on payment of hire charge was also quite attractive. Such operation of jetty for import of cement will

bring in substantial benefits to the economy of the country in general and cement sector in particular. In absence of sufficient surplus exportable urea, CUFL jetty has been underutilised for the last few years. Scancem's operation has offered a unique opportunity to CUFL to utilise their export jetty and, at the same time, earn handsome revenue through hire charge. Chittagong Port Authority will also have its own share of earning through provision of various usual port services. With this import of bulk cement, Scancem has started implementation of its phase one operation. In phase two, Scancem will set up a grinding plant with a capacity of one million tons per annum. It is estimated that this will take about two years for completion of the plant. The company decided that, simultaneous with implementation of phase 2, they would carry on marketing of their own brand of cement. It goes without saying that different elements of marketing such as development of physical infrastructure, establishment of distribution network along with selection of distributors/dealers, launching of integrated market promotion, pricing and actual marketing of a sensitive consumer product in a competitive market, would take considerable time for proper implementation. It, therefore, made lot of sense on the part of the company to commence marketing of their brand of cement ahead of their own production. Whilst this will give an opportunity to the company to acquaint the dealers and untapped numbers of consumers with the quality of their ce-

ment and evaluate market response, it will, similarly, give the traders and users an opportunity to make their own assessment about the new brand. It is relevant to emphasise that the Scancem has taken all care to select the cement which consistently conforms to its own high quality standard so that worldwide reputation of the company and its parent Group, is not compromised in any manner. The country will also have its own share of benefits as this will be served with a steady supply of quality cement. The company will also set a quality standard in cement sector, particularly, in the market of the imported cement which in the past showed erratic levels of quality and, at times, appeared to be invaded, if not dominated by cheap cement of poor quality. This will also increase the consumers' awareness regarding quality and have a salutary effect on the market through restricted entry of low grade cement. Scancem is the first European company, and one of the top players in the cement world, to have launched their operation in Bangladesh. Their grinding plant with a capacity of one million tons per year, will also be the largest grinder in the country. These demonstrate not only their business commitment but also a high degree of confidence. They plan to install state-of-the-art plant with emphasis on quality control. They have excellent expertise in areas such as sourcing of quality raw materials, transportation, supply and logistics management. They have also wide contacts in the shipping world. They have extensive operative experience in developing countries in different parts of the world. All these factors are expected to combine and reinforce to enable Scancem to bring about a substantial qualitative change in cement sector in Bangladesh, particularly, in transfer of latest technology to the country. This will result in higher utilisation of installed capacity.

Company Profiles

Scancem Bangladesh Ltd.
Name of the company's directors: 1. Hans Fredrik Mykleslu, 2. Bent E Nygren.
Launching year: Launched 1st phase operation i.e. import of bulk cement for bagging and marketing in Bangladesh in Oct 1998.
Installed capacity: One million tons per annum (grinding plant capacity).
Current year production: 1st phase operation about 41,000 tons up to mid Nov. 1998.
Next 5 year's plan: 1st phase operation will continue for about 2 years after which grinding plant will start as 2nd phase operation.
Employment: About 250 in 2nd phase.
Factory location: Mouza Tarabo, PS Ruppangj.
Address of Office: Iqbal Centre (11th Flr), 42, Kemal Ataturk Avenue, Banani-1213, Dhaka. Tel: 871691. Fax: 872584. E-mail: Scancem@Dhaka.agni.com
Total project cost: USD 90 million.
Total revenue paid from launching year: Tk 66.63 million (approx) as per provisional accounts.

Confidence Cement Ltd.
Name of the company's directors: Mr Rezaul Karim (MD), Mr Shamsul Alam, BU Director, Mr Shah M Hasan, BU Director, Mr Rupam Kishore Barua Director, Mr Runu Anwar Director, Mrs Momtaz Ahmed Director.
Launching year: 1991
Installed capacity: 1,80,000 M/T Per Year 600 Tpd.
Current year production: 1,50,000 M/T
Next five years plan: Erection of 2nd Unit Capacity 3,00,000 M/T Per Day 1000 Tpd.
Employment: Direct-123, Indirect-41
Factory location: Madambibir Hat, Bhatiyar, Sitakunda, Chittagong.
Address of Liaison Office: Ishpani Building (5th Floor), 14/15, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, Tel No 9562431-9565659, Fax No 880-2-9565317
Total project cost: 48 crore.
Total revenue paid from the launching year (yearly basis): 1994 - 5.39 crore, 1995 - 6.32 crore, 1996 - 8.80 crore, 1997 - 19.58 crore.

Hyundai Cement (Bangladesh) Co. Ltd.
Name of Director : Mr Ok Kyun Jung
Install capacity: 200,000 M/Ton
Commercial production: Mid of April, 1996
Last 2 years production: a) 1996 - 64,000 M/Ton, b) 1997 - 180,000 M/Ton
Current year production: Until September '98 - 130,000 M/Ton
Next 5 years plan: 200,000 M/Ton expansion
Employment: Staff - 14, Expatriate - 04, Workers - 50, Dailyes - 60
Factory location: Meghna Ferry Ghat, Sonargaon, Narayanganj. Phone: 011-852192

Niloy Cement Industries Ltd.
Name of the company's directors: Mr Abdul Matlub Ahmad - Chairman & Managing Director, Mr Humayun Kabir Khandaker - Executive Director.
Launching year: 1997.
Present status: Niloy Cement Industries Ltd. is a promising industrial project of Nitel Group, a very prestigious name in the business arena of Bangladesh. The complete machinery was supplied by M/s Korea Rungdo General Trading Corporation, PYONGYANG, DPR of Korea, who are also providing technical know-how. The first unit of the company went into commercial opera-

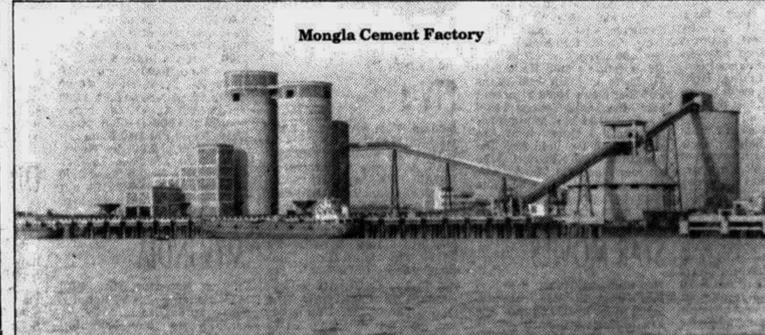
Hyundai Cement—At a Glance

HYUNDAI Cement (Bangladesh) Co. Ltd established by Hyundai Engineering and Construction Co Ltd, Seoul, Korea with 100% foreign investment in Bangladesh in the year 1995 started its production in April, 1996. The daily production is 720 M Ton. The factory is absolutely controlled by Korean experts to maintain the quality of its production. Hyundai cement is one of the best quality cement in Bangladesh while most latest technology is being used in its manufacture. It has also a modern clinker grinding technology. Quality clinkers are used in manufacturing the Hyundai cement, which are from Korea, Indonesia and Thailand. In no way Hyundai makes compromise in keeping its world famous quality in every respect. It is well-known to everybody that Hyundai, a world renowned organization is always keeping its quality everywhere. There are some other cement factories in the world established by Hyundai which are recommended by users, as a

purpose Bridge. Beside this, Hyundai cement is being used for construction of Brahmaputra River Bank Protection Project, Bangladesh. To keep its quality and international standard, we, ourselves, frequently arrange the cement testing at BUET. Besides this, to check and control the quality, we have established a laboratory at factory premises as well, which is absolutely led by Korean experts. As Hyundai do not compromise with quality we do not only check the clinker after arrival in Bangladesh but send our experts to overseas or the sources to check the clinker quality prior to shipment. In my experience I have seen that somebody who wants to construct a hanging roof or a big multistoried building, prefer Hyundai cement because of its quality and strength. Some users want to use Hyundai cement in foundation construction as it seems better than others to them. The writer is Manager, Dhaka office, Hyundai Engineering and Construction Co Ltd

best quality cement. Having a computerized system in production at all the stages Hyundai produces cement as per American Standard (ASTM) and British Standard Specification (BS), totally controlled by foreign management. I have personally interviewed with some construction workers (most of the time Ramistis) who confirmed that Hyundai cement is absolutely a quality cement. Moreover they reconfirmed that Hyundai cement keep weight (50 kg/bag) accurately in every bag. The packing of Hyundai cement is as such that it protects the cement quality from moisture and no one can easily duplicate its packing or whatsoever so that no way duplication is possible. As Hyundai kept option to purchase the cement and take delivery from factory directly, so users are quite happy to purchase this cement. As a quality cement Hyundai cement is recommended for construction of world's 11th largest bridge, Jamuna Multi-

The writer, an ex-Secretary of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation, is now associated with cement industry in the private sector.



Cement Industries in Bangladesh

tion with 50,000 metric ton capacity per annum in the month August 1997 and the second unit of the company is scheduled to go into commercial operation in the middle of 1999 with further expanded 50,000 metric ton capacity per annum. Meanwhile, FISH Brand Niloy Cement has become a very popular and well-known brand among most of the high-rise builders in the capital and at the western zone of the country. Current year production: 9,971 metric tons (1997-1998). Next 5 years plan: 50,000 metric ton (1998-1999), 70,000 metric ton (2000-2001), 80,000 metric ton (2001-2002), 80,000 metric ton (2002-2003). Employment: a) Direct-56, b) Indirect-24. Factory location: Bamiargati, Bashundia, Singia, Jessore. Address of head office and Tel/Fax: NITOL CENTRE, 71, Mohakhali C/A, Dhaka-1212, Tel: 9887102, 9886758, Fax: 9883121. Total project cost: Tk 1910 lacs (Expected). Total revenue from the launching year: 72.68 lacs (1997-98).

based with modern close circuit Ball Mill with dynamic separator. The capacities are as under: a. Grinding Capacity (20 hrs per day for 300 days): 65 M Ton per hour, 1300 M ton per day, 3.90 lacs M Ton per year. b. Packing capacity: 100 M Ton per hour. c. Conveyor Belt capacity: 180 M Ton per hour. d. Clinker unloading jetty with 4 Hoppers: 150 metre. e. 1x clinker silo storing capacity: 12,000 M Ton. f. 2x cement silo capacity (5000 each): 10,000 M Ton. g. Gypsum storing capacity: 5,000 M Ton. h. Number of employees (authorised): Officer -33, Staff -96, Worker-76, Total: 205. Raw Material & Packing Material: The main raw material of the factory is clinker imported from abroad. A little quantity of gypsum is used which is procured locally. Moreover packing materials (empty cement bag) are imported from abroad. Testing Facilities: The factory has got own laboratory equipped with modern testing equipment and qualified manpower to check and maintain the quality of product. Marketing: Our product Elephant Brand Cement is delivered in the market after testing the quality of cement carefully by well-equipped men and machines in our own laboratory. Marketing of our product is done through SKS trading house and dealers all over the country. In the meantime our product has earned good name in the market mainly due to its guaranteed quality. Mongla Cement Factory being a bigger and modern cement grinding mill the country is playing an important role in the industrial and economic development of the country and we very much hope that the Factory and Sena Kalyan Sangstha as a whole will be able to contribute more in the days to come.

Meghna Cement Mills Ltd.
Status of the company: Public Limited Company listed with Dhaka and Chittagong Stock Exchange. Main sponsor: Mr Ahmed Akbar Sobhan, Managing Director. Commencement of production: January 1996. Installed capacity: 300,000 MT/annum. Next 5 years plan: Expansion by additional 500,000 MT/annum. Employment: a) Direct-489, b) Indirect-5000. Factory location: Mongla. Address of Liaison Office: Sena Kalyan Bhaban (14th Floor), 195, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka. Phone: 9556452, 9556454, Fax: 9556454. Total project cost: Tk 56 crore.

Modern Structural Services Ltd.
Name of the Chairman & Managing Director : Al-Haj Md Suruzamam. Directors : AKM Samsur Rahman, Md Shafiqur Rahman, Md Anisur Rahman. Year of commercial production: 1 July 1992. Installed capacity: 100 M/tons per day. Last year's production: 5,500 MT. This year's production: 5,000 MT. Employment : 30 Staff, 150 Indirect. Factory location : Baushia Gojaria, Munshigonj. Address of office : Suite # 1307, Sena Kalyan Bhaban, 195, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000. Tel: 9559147-8. Total project cost: Tk 7 crore. Total revenue paid : Last year: 1,08,27,137. This year: 98,75,673 (up to Aug 31/8/98).

Mongla Cement Factory
Background: To increase the financial ability of Sena Kalyan Sangstha, create employment opportunity and save foreign currency, idea of setting up a clinker grinding factory was conceived by Sena Kalyan Sangstha in mid 1989. In pursuit of the idea Mongla Cement Factory was established in Industrial Plot No-2 measuring 10.66 acres of land belonging to Mongla Port Authority along-side Pasur river at an upper stream of 4 kms from Mongla Port jetty. Set up of the grinding mill was completed by Dec '94 with a cost of Tk 65.42 crore. Technical Specifications: The factory has been designed as de-dusted automatic/PLC

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