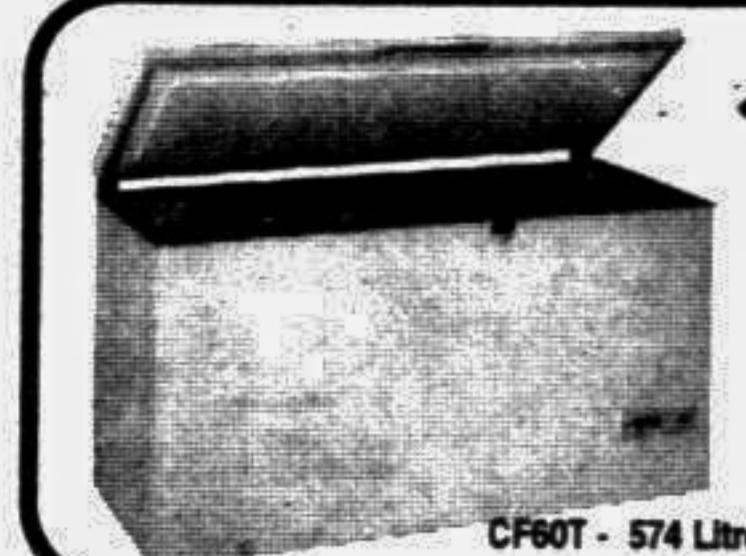




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Down to Earth Hazards on City Roads

By A S M Nurunnabi

A large number of hazards on city roads pose threats to the safety of city dwellers. Some of these hazards are life threatening. In this category we may cite open manholes whose covers have been lifted. The number of such missing manhole covers on city roads is so large that one wonders how such large-scale thieving operations are conducted with impunity and without proper vigilance from the concerned quarters.

Such hazards are compounded by several factors. At night time, such open manholes become potential death traps for unwary pedestrians. Even vehicles may fall into them. The hazard in this respect gets all the more uncertain when there are heavy showers, causing water-logging in many city roads. In such situations, the open manholes go under water, exposing all forms of traffic including vehicles to grave risks of injury. Such ominous exigencies call for adoption of suitable fool-proof techniques to foil attempts to steal manhole covers. Evil practises as this have taken such a grave turn that the concerned authorities need to be very alert, vigilant and prompt in taking remedial measures.

The haphazard positioning of the city corporation's large-sized garbage containers, taking up much of the limited space on city roads represents another hazard. The city road space is already under heavy pressure on account of the burgeoning growth of traffic of all descriptions. The large-sized garbage containers provided by the municipality disturbs the traffic flow on the roads. The most galling aspect of these garbage containers is that they are not regularly cleared by the City Corporation's garbage trucks. This means that such garbage containers are often

found to be overflowing with garbage which spill on to the roads creating nauseating stench all around and thereby polluting the surrounding environment. Observers say that this is the prevailing picture in respect of most of the city's garbage containers on many roads, particularly near bazaars, where the situation is just horrible. It behoves the City Corporation authority to take effective steps to check this chaotic state of affairs in the interest of the public health.

The third ominous thing is the non-use of any kind of lamp by the hundreds of thousands of city rickshaws plying at night. It is strange why the traffic police find it difficult to enforce this simple requirement of using lamps or lights by rickshaws at night. It needs no mention that the lapse in this respect, especially by rickshaw pullers enhances the risk of accidents. If there is loadshedding in any area, the hazard in this respect is increased all the more.

Zebra-crossings marked at road junctions and other convenient points on the roads are put up with an aim to facilitate pedestrians wishing to cross roads. But pedestrians just love to ignore their presence. People, many unaware of the significance of such markings, make a dash for crossing roads whenever there is a small break in the heavy traffic flow. In this way they invite accidents. The real problem is that many city dwellers are migrants from villages or are too illiterate or even lack civic sense. They do not even know the rudiments of city traffic discipline.

The city traffic police follows the practice of observing regular traffic weeks or fortnights. During such observance, the traffic authority seek to inculcate among city dwellers

through various publicity media the basic traffic disciplines that need to be followed for road safety. The present requirement seems to place greater stress, on the part of the traffic police in course of their day-to-day duties, to concentrate on traffic education of the city dwellers at large. The operators of the city's mechanical transports also need to be taught to respect the rights of pedestrians when they use Zebra-crossings, as they constitute an important safety factor in road discipline.

Connected with the problem of jay-walking is the reluctance of many pedestrians to use foot-bridges constructed at different congested points in the city. Instead of taking the trouble to use them when there is heavy traffic movement on the roads, some pedestrians are seen to dash across the traffic caring the least about the risks of accident in such rash actions. As such foot-bridges are little utilised for the purpose they are actually built for instead they become easy haunts for street hawkers to set up centres for their business in various low-priced wares. Beggars and vagabonds also take shelter there, creating such an unwholesome environment resulting in a situation that even those pedestrians who wish to use them hesitate to do so. The traffic police sometimes conduct raids to clear such foot-bridges, but such clearances turn out to be very temporary when the agents of law and order withdraw.

All in all, our city life is fraught with many preventable hazards and pitfalls on the roads. In the midst of such wide-ranging dangers, it behoves us to be more cautious and vigilant as far as possible, and to avoid any situations where our own safety may be at stake.



THIS IS KARWAN BAZAR: The veritable mound of garbage that continue to pollute the busy business centre in the heart of the city. Several stories and such photos published in The Daily Star however failed to awake the city fathers.

— Star photo

Assistant Public Prosecutor stabbed at Satkhira

From Our Correspondent

SATKHIRA, Oct 29: An Assistant Public Prosecutor (APP) of Satkhira district Judge's Court was stabbed by some unidentified miscreants at Kamal Nagar in the town last night.

The victim was identified as Advocate Khoda Bux of Kamal Nagar in Satkhira sadar thana.

Police said Khoda Bux came under attack while he was returning home.

He was admitted to Satkhira District Hospital in a critical condition.

A case was filed with Satkhira police, but none was arrested till filing of this report at 7 pm today. Awami League leader A K Fazlul Haq, PM, condemned the attack.

A weather official in Bhubaneshwar, capital of Orissa, told Reuters wind speeds were estimated between 240 and 260 km an hour. State officials said the storm was expected to rage until midnight.

Satellite images showed that the cyclone had crossed the coast.

An official at the control room of the India Meteorological Department in New Delhi, said: "We have classified it as a super-cyclone, which means one of the highest intensities."

The Press Trust of India news agency said two people had been crushed to death under a falling wall in the Orissa port town of Paradip, where about 200 houses had been destroyed. UNI however said, at least 14 people were killed in Paradip.

During the meeting the BGMEA leaders assured the garments workers and employees of implementing their four-point demand including issuance of appointment letter and identity card, granting weekly holiday and maternity leave, from November 1, a BGWEF press release said.

The arrested are Sunil, 30, Subhash Bala, 35, Subhas Mallik, 40, and Chitta Ranjan, 32.

Police said they recovered seven forged notes of Tk 500 and one fake note of Tk 100 from the four who are members of an organised gang engaged in illegal trade for long in the bordering areas.

Garment workers postpone strike programme

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Garments Workers and Employees Federation (BGWEF) have postponed their planned strike on November 1, a BGWEF press release said yesterday.

Leaders of BGWEF took the decision following a "fruitful" discussion with the BGMEA leaders during a meeting of the two organisations at the conference room of BGMEA on Thursday.

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4 held with fake currency notes

KHULNA, Oct 29: Police arrested four people along with eight fake currency notes of Tk 500 and Tk 100 from Shahapura bazaar in Dumuria thana today, reports UNB.

The arrested are Sunil, 30, Subhash Bala, 35, Subhas Mallik, 40, and Chitta Ranjan, 32.

Police said they recovered seven forged notes of Tk 500 and one fake note of Tk 100 from the four who are members of an organised gang engaged in illegal trade for long in the bordering areas.

The cause of the crash was not immediately known, but officials said it was being investigated.

Reports received in Dhaka said that besides drizzles and strong winds, nothing more happened in the Sundarbans coast.

Dublarchar, a traditional camping ground for fishermen experienced drizzles and high winds yesterday.

Navy aircraft crash kills 21 in Pakistan

KARACHI, Oct 29: A Pakistan Navy aircraft crashed into the Arabian sea today, killing all 21 military personnel on board, said a navy official, reports AP.

The Pakistan Navy P-3C Orion American-made aircraft was on a regular reconnaissance flight over the coastal regions of southwestern Baluchistan province when it crashed, said officials.

The cause of the crash was not immediately known, but officials said it was being investigated.

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