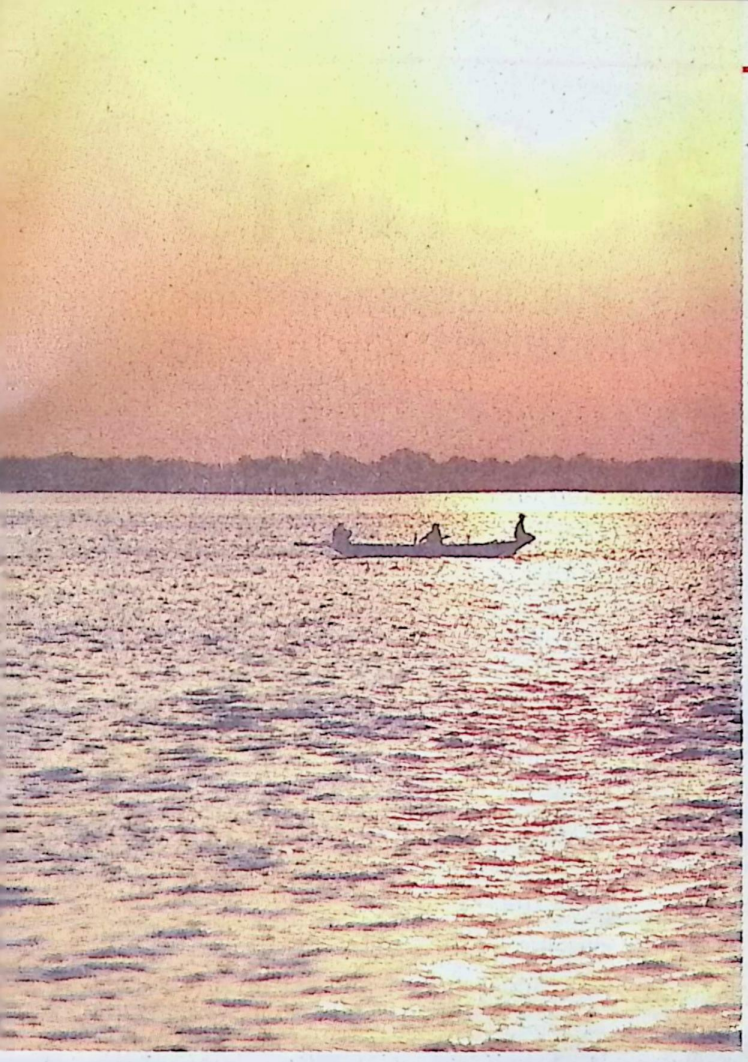


making of dams, ditches and drainage systems. She spoke of underwater archaeology, as well.

Prof. Dr. A.M. Shadullah dealt with Dhaka , a mega-city, which maybe traced down to 1608, if not earlier. Prof. Shadullah spoke on Dhaka's acute water scarcity, pointing out that the sanitation and drainage as provided by WASA was inadequate, leading to grave environmental problems.

Prof. Nazrul Islam and Salma A. Shafi of the Centre for Urban Studies, Dhaka, highlighted the positive manner in which people have used water for economic, social and cultural purposes. They also tried to look into the future of settlements vis a vis effects of climate change. Dr Seema Hoque and Prof. M.M. Hoque talked on the three major rivers such as Ganges, the Brahmaputra and their tributaries. Bangladesh, as a tropical country, faces cyclones and floods every year causing havoc to the lives of millions of people.

Thus the paradox of water goes on; water is the source of life but it can also be the end of life. For us especially, water is vital for our thirsty crops, yet floods can often wash them away along with our very lives while droughts in our neighbouring countries cause untold miseries. Meanwhile, unplanned urbanisation and encroachment of our water bodies, has ensured that there is an acute shortage of water for drinking and other essential purposes. Unchecked polluting of our lakes and rivers has contaminated our water supplies, threatening our health and again, our lives. There is no doubt that human negligence and abuse has resulted in this pathetic state of being where water is either too much or too little but somehow never just enough. The workshop may not solve our water paradox but it does raise the point that there is so much we can do to ease the crisis. We must clean up our water bodies and stop polluting them or filling them up with our greed; We must save the water we have and refrain from wasting it whether in terms of not letting the water run while we brush our teeth to collecting the water from the heavens when it pours. For many it may mean adopting less wasteful lifestyles, using less energy, being a little more restrained. There is a lesson to be learned for every nation, whether rich or poor, to make sure that the pure relationship of man and water is once again, restored. ■

