

Build subway, waterway to ease traffic congestion

Speakers tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday called for building underground railway and surface railway as well as waterway in the capital to ease the growing traffic congestion.

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) and Manusher Jonnyo Rasta (Road for people) jointly organised the seminar on 'Transport planning and environment of the Dhaka city: Present and future' at the National Press Club, with Prof Muzaffer Ahmad in the chair.

Presenting the keynote paper, Mahbubul Bari, principle research engineer, Project Centre Limited, UK, said the proposed city transport policy has been formulated for vehicles, not for pedestrians.

He suggested widening the footpaths, preventing cars from parking along the streets and making the footpaths available for pedestrians' use.

Decentralisation of the administration can help reduce the pressure on city's infrastructure, including the transport system, which is an effective way to solve traffic problems, he said.

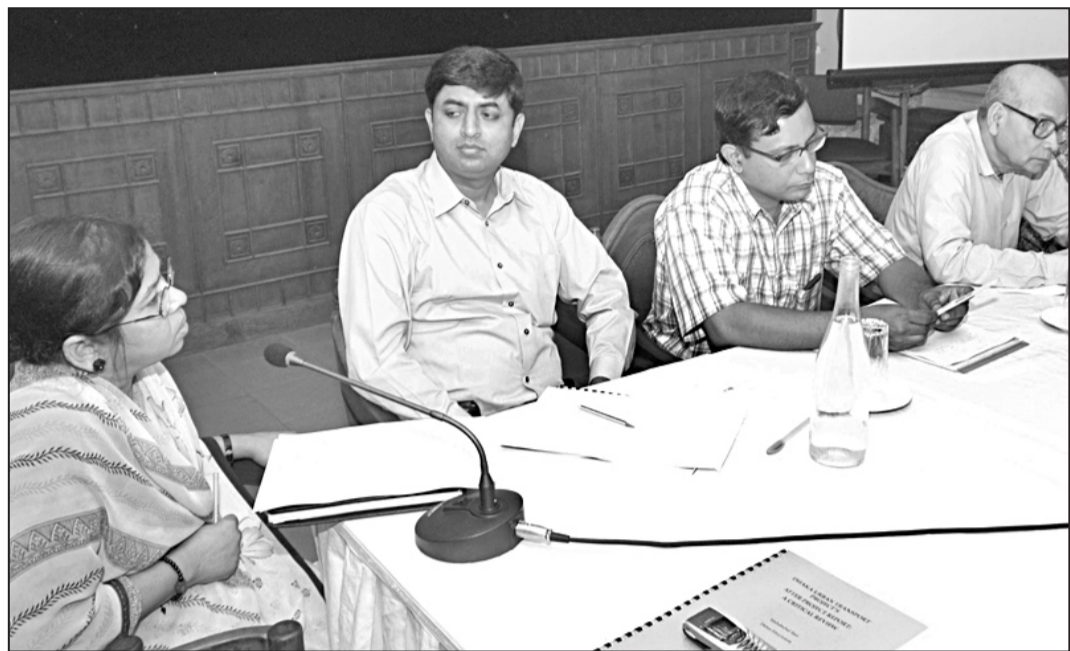
Bari called for making the transport policy environment-friendly with emphasis on the facilities for pedestrians, bicycles and rickshaws.

He, however, opposed the idea of removing train stations from the city and called for introducing commuter trains.

He also said that elevated expressway would damage the environment of the city.

Prof Nazrul Islam, an urban expert, said, "We have much less road space than what we need. An underground railway system is needed in a city like Dhaka where more than 10 million people are living."

Representatives from different organisations working to protect the environment also spoke at the seminar.



Dr Roksana Hafiz speaks at a seminar on 'Transport planning and environment of the Dhaka city: Present and future' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, extreme right, presided over the seminar.

HC stays fresh recruitment at RU until Oct 15

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The High Court (HC) in a rule nisi yesterday stayed the procedure of fresh recruitment of 573 employees till October 15 and asked the Rajshahi University (RU) authorities to show cause as to why the process would not be declared illegal.

A vacation bench of the HC division comprising Justice Nazrul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Siddikur Rahman Miah passed the order following a writ petition.

Besides staying the recruitment proceedings, the bench also issued a rule upon the RU authorities to show cause why the on-going appointment process would not be declared to have done without lawful authority and of no legal effect.

Workers' Party polit bureau member and a former RU Central Students' Union vice-president filed the writ challenging the fresh recruitment.

Fazle Hossain Badsha on August 6 served a legal notice on the RU authorities asking them to stop the recruitment process terming it 'illegal and anti-people' and a 'desperate bid to finalise the recruitment process before the end of the ruling alliance government's tenure'.

The notice pointed out that around 50,000 job seekers applied for the advertised posts but the authorities are issuing interview cards only to those applicants who were controversially appointed earlier.

The RU authorities appointed 546 employees in 2004 in an

unprecedented manner without any advertisement and violating the university rules and university grant commission circulars, the notice added.

As the news reached Rajshahi, the employees who were allegedly being legalised

through fresh recruitment expressed their resentment and said they would sit today for further agitation to secure their jobs.

They said they would go for tougher agitation including indefinite strike if the authorities failed

Railway signs agreement with Indian co to modernise signalling system

Bangladesh Railway signed an agreement yesterday with Indian Company M/S. Union Switch & Signal Pvt. Ltd. for modification and modernisation of Signalling and Interlocking systems of six stations in connection with conversion of Dhaka-Jaydebpur metre gauge section into dual gauge, says a press release.

Anwarul Hoque, Project Director/Signal, Bangladesh Railway and S Lahiri General Manager M/s. Union Switch & Signal Pvt. Ltd. signed the contract at the Rail Bhaban on behalf of their respective organisations.

Bangladesh Railway Director General Sultan Ahmed Talukder, Managing Director M/s. Union Switch & Signal Pvt. Ltd. Lyle K Jackson spoke at the signing ceremony.

The project will be implemented at a cost of Tk 35 crore in 18 months from the date of receipt of letter of credit by the supplier.

The existing signalling system of six stations in the Dhaka-Joydebpur section was installed to cater for the need of MG train operation. Under the signalling sub-project, the system will be modernised with computer-based signalling and interlocking system for operation of both BG and MG trains moving on a common track structure. It will ensure safe, speedy and efficient train operation over the Dhaka-Joydebpur dual gauge section.

The six stations are Dhaka, Tejgaon, Dhaka Cantonment, Biman Bandar, Tongi and Dirasram.



Health Department employees continue their hunger strike at Muktangan in the city yesterday to press their five-point demand.

8 JU students face disciplinary action

JU CORRESPONDENT

The disciplinary committee of Jahangirnagar University (JU) yesterday recommended different levels of punishment to eight students for their involvement in anti-disciplinary activities.

The committee took the decision at a meeting held at the administrative building yesterday morning.

It recommended that Abu Sayeed, a student of economics, who was found guilty of assaulting a female student on the campus on August 21, be expelled for one year. It also recommended suspended permanent expulsion order against him. This order will come into force if Sayeed is found involved in any anti-disciplinary activities in future.

Shafiq, a student of urban and regional planning, and Sajib, a student of statistics department, were fined Tk 3,000 each for their involvement in the August 21 incident. The committee also recommended suspended one-year expulsion order against the two.

Three other students involved in assaulting a teacher of the business administration also face one-year expulsion order along with a fine of Tk 3,000. Two of their associates were also punished.

A committee comprising hall provosts, deans and high level officials will be formed soon to formulate a code of conduct for the students, meeting sources said.

The disciplinary committee also recommended that the JU correspondents of The Daily Star, the Prothom Alo and the Bhorer Kagj be given a warning for publishing a 'false' report on anomaly in the admission process at zoology department, accusing the three of 'tampering the image of the university'.

The recommendations will be forwarded to the upcoming syndicate meeting for approval.

2ND PHASE OF URBAN PRY HEALTHCARE

Tk 540 crore to be spent in five yrs

UNB, Dhaka

Nearly Tk 540 crore will be spent in the second phase of the Urban Primary Healthcare Project (UPHP) in the next five years up to 2011.

The government and different donor agencies will provide funds to run the project.

This was disclosed yesterday at a meeting of the national committee that will monitor and guide the project to be implemented in the six city corporations and five municipalities -- Bogra, Comilla, Sirajganj, Savar and Madhabdi.

Under the project, a number of clinics will be operated in the project areas to provide primary healthcare services to the people at a nominal cost.

Health and Family Welfare

Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain attended the meeting with LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in the chair.

The first phase of the UPHP was implemented in the same areas from 1997 to 2005.

Addressing the meeting, Bhuiyan urged the officials involved with the project to ensure optimum healthcare services to the people living in the areas.

He also emphasised making the project sustainable through self-mobilisation of funds.

The meeting formed a high-powered committee, headed by the LGRD secretary, to determine the user fee of the project.

Nasim Osman appears in N'ganj rally after 5 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nasim Osman, presidium member of the Jatiya Party (Ershad) and an accused in a number of cases, appeared in a public rally in Narayanganj yesterday for the first time in the last five years.

Later, a motorcade carrying Nasim Osman went round the main thoroughfares of the district as part of the election showdown. His brother Selim Osman, former president of Narayanganj Chamber of Commerce and Industry, also took part in the procession.

Centring on the rally, a tension has been prevailing in the area since the previous night as a faction of the BNP took out a procession from near the residence of local BNP MP Abul Kalam with a call to resist the arrival of Nasim Osman, a former lawmaker.

Huge contingent of police force were deployed at different points in the town to avert any untoward incidents.

Sources said Nasim Osman started to take preparations for the rally after the ruling alliance's move to bring the Jatiya Party (JP) under its fold. In the meantime, he has also announced that he would contest the upcoming election as an alliance candidate from Narayanganj-5 constituency.

Addressing the rally, Nasim Osman said many criminals in the JP had earlier tarnished the image of the party, but all of them would be expelled if the party is voted to power.

He also made apologies for his misdeeds and announced that he will hold bigger rallies in future.

Several accused in Alamgir murder case, including Jewel, who have been in hiding for the last five years, participated in the rally, witnesses said.

When contacted, Additional Police Super Habibur Rahman said law enforcement agencies have already been ordered to arrest any fugitives.

Local leaders of BNP and Awami League refused to make any comments on the appearance of the JP leader in the town after five years.

Nasim Osman along with his family left Narayanganj town a day after the 2001 general election.

PLAYING WITH FIRECRACKERS

Injured girl dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A minor girl who received injuries while playing with firecrackers on Shab-e-Barat night on Friday, succumbed to her injuries in the early hours of yesterday.

The dead was identified as Sheuli Akhter, 7, a class one student of Alimuddin Primary School at Peererbagh in the city.

Family sources said Sheuli,

daughter of Kazi Hanif of Shewrapara was playing in front of her house around 7:00pm with firecrackers on Shab-e-Barat night, when accidentally some fire sparks hit her chest.

She was rushed to Mohakhali Chest Disease Hospital where she died yesterday.

The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Al Qaeda reminds followers as West mourns

REUTERS, Islamabad

Al Qaeda's release of a videotape showing Osama bin Laden exhorting members of a suicide squad involved in the September 11 attacks was part of a media war meant to rouse Islamist militants worldwide, analysts say.

While, international media broadcast images of mourning for the victims on the fifth anniversary and Western governments use it to reinforce their justification for the war on terrorism, al Qaeda shows it as triumph of the suicide squad's faith.

"Bin Laden wants to memorialise this date in history," said Rohan Gunaratna, of the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies in Singapore.

Images showing the al Qaeda leader with Ramzi Binalshibh, one of the key planners in the plot, now in US custody, and addressing leaders of the suicide squad, were significant.

By releasing the tape, analysts say al Qaeda was declaring "we did this", ending doubt among conspiracy theorists that anyone else had flown the airliners into New York's Twin Towers and the Pentagon in Washington, killing almost 3,000 people.

The tape first aired by the Qatar based al Jazeera news channel

gave no clue to Osama bin Laden's whereabouts.

"The basic purpose of this tape appears to be to allay all doubts that bin Laden was not associated with 9/11. It is the first ever time that al Qaeda has shown Osama bin Laden meeting the executors (of the September 11 attacks)," Ahmad Muaffaq Zaidan, al Jazeera's bureau chief in Pakistan, said.

Bin Laden hasn't been seen on any new videotape since late 2004, though audiotapes surfaced this year, and US intelligence has authenticated the voice on them belonged to the Saudi-born fugitive with a \$25 million reward on his head.

"Osama bin Laden does not attach much importance to whether people think he is dead or alive. He does not think in the Western way, his message goes beyond the importance of himself or al Qaeda. His message goes out to supporters of the global jihad," Gunaratna, author of 'Inside al Qaeda', said.

Bin Laden is regarded as an icon of by radical Sunni Muslims who subscribe to armed opposition to Western intrusion into Muslim lands, be they in Iraq, Afghanistan or elsewhere.

"Osama is trying to act like a provocateur, exhorting Muslims to fight," said Zaidan, author of a

biography on bin Laden.

As a fighter, bin Laden's star became eclipsed by Abu Musab al Zarqawi, the leader of al Qaeda in Iraq until US forces killed him in June, but as symbol of the Islamist cause, bin Laden status is undiminished.

"That's why al Qaeda is gaining ground day by day," said Zaidan, who has interviewed bin Laden several times.

NO SIGHTINGS

The core al Qaeda that bin Laden nurtured during the years before US-backed troops drove his Taliban hosts from power in Afghanistan in late 2001 is no longer regarded as the potent force it was.

Its ability to organise and execute strikes far afield has diminished, as its ranks have been decimated, according to the Pakistan government, which has arrested more al Qaeda members than anyone else.

But at the same time, militant groups have morphed and new links have been formed, resulting in al Qaeda copycats.

The suicide attacks on London's transit system in July 2005 was the last big Islamist militant attack in the West.

According to relatives of British-born Muslims involved in that attack, the bombers admired bin

Laden, but investigators have not publicised any clear ties to al Qaeda, though videotaped messages left behind by two of the bombers bore similarities to the production work of al Qaeda's media arm, al Sahab.

Last month, Pakistan said an al Qaeda planner, probably in Afghanistan, was behind a plot thwarted in Britain to blow up US-bound airliners.

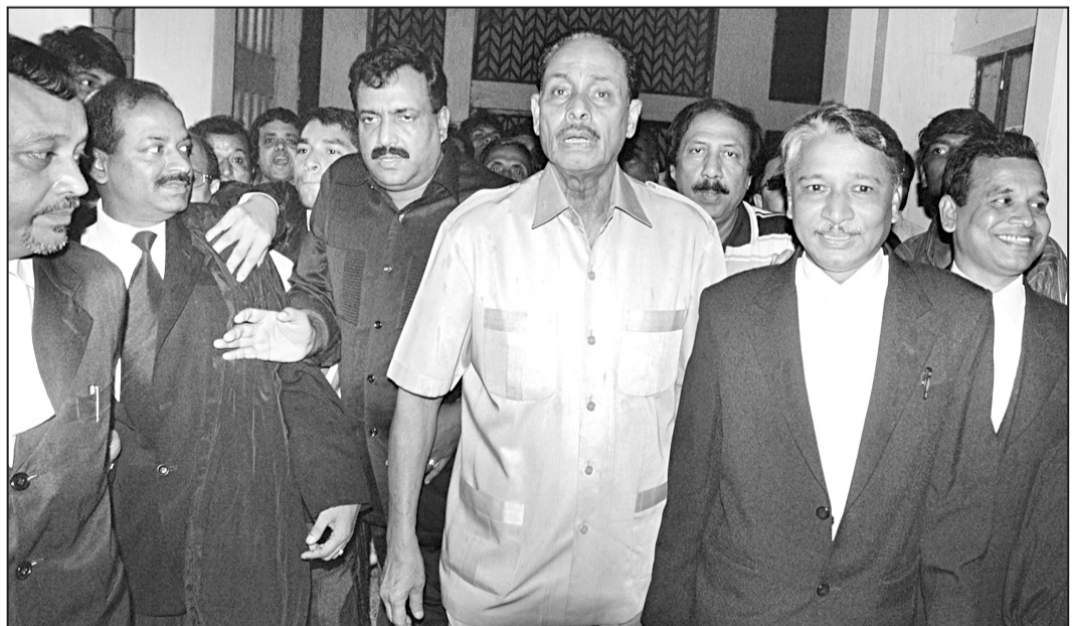
As for where bin Laden is, the common belief is that he's somewhere on the mountainous border between Pakistan and Afghanistan, most probably in one of Pakistan's seven semi-autonomous tribal agencies, where the Pakistan army only ventures with trepidation.

Some Pakistani intelligence officials admit, he could just as easily be hidden in cities such as Karachi or Lahore.

"There's not even a rumour. There's not even a murmur," said one Pakistani agent.

Britain's Sunday Telegraph reported that the CIA could have killed bin Laden in a border region in the southwest province of Baluchistan, but Pakistan delayed giving permission for a US missile strike.

But that was almost three years ago, and now the trail is very cold.



Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad comes out of the courtroom along with his lawyers yesterday after the court adjourned the delivery of verdict in a graft case against him.

Death anniversary



Today is the 17th death anniversary of Dr Nazma Jesmin Chowdhury, an eminent writer, playwright and a teacher of Dhaka University Modern Language Institute, says a press release.

Dr Nazma Jesmin, wife of Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury, died on this day in 1989 due to cancer.

On the occasion, foods will be distributed at Ahsania Mission Mohila Etmkhana at Mirpur in the city.

A 'Nazma Jesmin Chowdhury 17th Memorial Lecture' will be organised at Modern Language Institute this month. Prof Zaheda Ahmad of history department of Dhaka University will deliver the memorial lecture titled 'Fundamentalism: Different faces with same character'.

<p>Seminar Human Rights Forum organises a seminar on selected human rights issues. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 10:20am.</p>	<p>Publication ceremony The publication ceremony of a translation of the Holy Quran by Tofazzal Hossain Khan will be held. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 4:00pm.</p>
<p>Dialogue Centre for Policy Dialogue organises a dialogue on 'Rise of China and India: Economic Implications for their Low Income Neighbours'. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 2:30pm.</p>	<p>Debate Sujoon, an NGO, and 'Debate for Democracy' organise a debate on 'Free and fair election can only be held through electoral reform'. Venue: Baitul Iqra auditorium. Time: 10:00am.</p>
<p>Workshop Action on Disability and Development organises a workshop on 'Disability, good governance and local government'. Venue: LGED auditorium. Time: 9:30am.</p>	<p>Rotary Sonargaon The weekly meeting of Rotary Club of Sonargaon Dhaka will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club. Time: 5:30pm.</p>

Sanjukta Sramik Fed executives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mukhlesur Rahman and Mukaddem Hossain yesterday were re-elected as president and general secretary of Bangladesh Sanjukta Sramik Federation (BSSF), a platform of 22 labour bodies, for the next two years at the ninth BSSF National Congress at the Institute of Diploma Engineers in the city.

A 71-member executive committee was elected defeating the Tofazzal-Jahangir group. Other elected executive members are Vice Presidents Mukaddem Hossain Swapan, Amjad Hossain Bhuiyan and Abu Mohammad Julfikar Azad, Joint Secretary Anwar Hossain Shikdar, Organising Secretary Moshirur Rahman Sohel and Treasurer Wareh Ahmed.

Around four thousand representatives of 45 district committees were present in the daylong national congress.

World Confederation of Labour (WCL) Deputy Secretary General Jaap Wiener was present at the congress and urged the workers to be united setting aside their internal dispute.