

Dhaka Day by Day

Streets of Anarchy

by Aasha Mehreen Amin

If you think nobody follows traffic rules anymore let me prove you wrong. Everybody follows the rules of the road — their own! Whether it is the rickshaw wala, the baby-taxi driver, the truck driver or car driver, they all move according to their own set of 'regulations'. Added to this incredible concoction of confusion is a dash of jay-walking to make this scenario of utter chaos complete.

A common pastime in Dhaka nowadays, is to spend from 30 minutes to an hour every morning in a traffic jam.

This is especially true where city authorities decide to repair the roads since die — in the middle of an intersection.

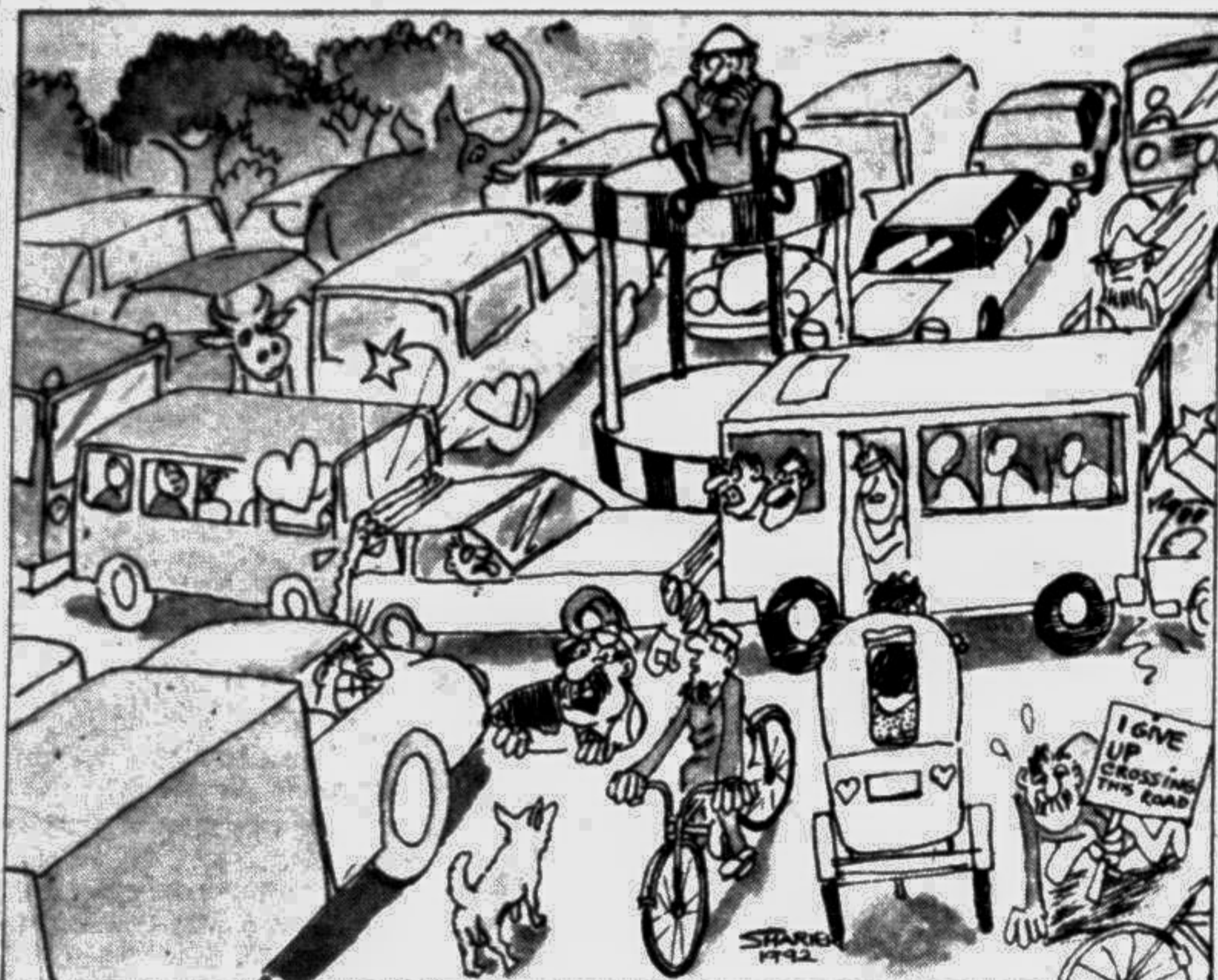
Now when you are in one of these delightful 'jams' don't feel bored or just a little peeved that you will miss out on the biggest deal in your life because you will be late for a meeting; as you sit in the rickshaw twiddling your thumbs, your college final will be over and with it, perhaps, your academic life. Relax. And enjoy the spectacle.

may crane your neck to see what lies ahead. A sea of two, three, four-wheelers surround you, with no apparent intention of budging. It is too late to turn back, too early to go home.

A closer look at the traffic lights indicates that they are functioning alright although the red light seems to have a stubborn streak. It's just that the vehicles in all four roads of the intersection have decided to move at the same time and all of them want to be first. The traffic policeman seems to have given up and can do little save look harassed and helplessly blow on his whistle — at no one in particular.

After about an hour, the traffic may miraculously clear a little. But strange things begin to happen. You will realize that 'maintaining lanes' is a totally alien concept on these roads. A rickshaw, scooter, truck and car will be competing for the same lane regardless of size or speed.

The rickshaws may decide to take the easy way out of this confusing mess. They promptly drag their rickshaws on the pavement and



Take the rickshaw wala for example. The first thing he aims for is to hit the rickshaw in front of him with as much force as possible so that the surprised passenger experiences the unique feeling of being in mid air for a few seconds, before crashing into the seat again. By this time a second and third row of these three-wheelers will have formed, playing this game of 'charge, hit and crash' while at the same time interlocking each other's wheels in a passionate embrace. For some reason this does not go down well with either passengers or the pullers themselves who hurl sweet terms of endearment at each other.

With such lively exchanges comes a background music of private cars and monstrosities called buses, the drivers of which think that their exuberant and incessant honking will somehow move the traffic. The pattern they make while they wait, is a sort of symmetrical zigzag with each car or bus squeezing into the narrowest inch it can find. Here I must add that the scooters — dear little devils, have a special advantage, whisking their way through little nooks and crannies to get to the very front of the line while their passengers alternate between hyperventilation and asthma attacks.

At this stage the traffic is somewhat mobile, going at a rate of an inch, in say, fifteen minutes. After half an hour (and two inches), however, everything comes to a standstill. You

whiz off on their merry way! The traffic police is nowhere in sight since he is too preoccupied with being bribed — or cleaning wax from his ears.

As the traffic begins to 'unjam' the drivers of all vehicles will rush headlong like crazed maniacs as if to 'iron out' the pedestrians, cycles etc. Signals are also made in peculiar ways. If a rickshaw wala wishes to go left, he will invariably hold out his hand to the right. Buses will go at full speed to establish that they are the only ones to have the 'right of way'. As for the jay-walkers, if it is a two-way street he is crossing, he will naturally look in the opposite direction from which the cars are coming.

So what can be done about such anarchy? Getting rickshaws, scooters and automobiles to move in separate lanes would help. Enforcing speed limits for buses and trucks through penalties wouldn't be such a bad idea either. Jay-walkers could be fined on the spot (if they are alive).

Laws may be made every day, but without proper enforcement they are ineffectual and meaningless. With enforceability, we as people, need to develop two important qualities — discipline and consideration. Before this happens, however, remember one thing when you step out of home: going out can be hazardous to your health.

Anti-Racism Day tomorrow

The International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination will be observed in Dhaka as elsewhere in the world on Saturday, reports UNB.

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the International Day in 1966, which commemorates a 1960 demonstration in Sharpeville, South Africa, against the country's apartheid 'pass laws'. On the day police shot dead 69 demonstrators, including eight women and 10 children and wounded 180 others.

In its resolution the UN General Assembly called on the international community to redouble its efforts to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination.

The day also marks the beginning of the week of solidarity with the peoples struggling against racism and racial discrimination (21-27 March).

United Nations Association of Bangladesh (UNAB) in cooperation with the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) will hold a symposium at the centre premises at 4.30 pm on the day.

Acting Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan will attend the symposium as chief guest.

UNDP Resident Representative Charles Larimont will be the guest speaker. UNAB President Prof M Innas Ali will preside over the function.

Radio covers special reports on Khaleda's visit to US

Radio Bangladesh has started airing special reports on Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's visit to the United States, reports UNB.

The special reports are being broadcast by radio till its 'Darpan' magazine programme at 8.30 am, special book up at 8.45 pm and in the 'hourly news bulletins'.

Radio Bangladesh is receiving these reports through special arrangement with the Voice Of America (VOA).

Biswas hosts Iftar party

President Abdur Rahman Biswas Thursday hosted an iftar party to the members of cabinet and diplomats of the Muslim countries at Bangabhaban here, reports BSS.

Among others, Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad Shaikh Razaque Ali, Law and Justice Minister Mirza Golam Haifaz and Deputy Leader of Jatiya Sangsad Prof. A.Q. M. Badruddoza Chowdhury attended the iftar party.

President Biswas exchanged greetings with the ministers and diplomats.

UNHCR provides 3 planes of relief goods

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has provided three plane-loads of relief goods, including plastic sheets and blankets, for the Rohingya refugees sheltered in Bangladesh, reports UNB.

The last of the three planes flew into Chittagong Thursday morning.

The UNHCR, which is assisting the Bangladesh government in its relief operation, has flown in 1,000 bundles of plastic sheeting for roof materials and 46 tons of blankets.

The relief materials are being given to the distributing agencies in the refugee camps.

Friday Morning Session

- 8:00 Opening announcement Al-Quran Programme summary
- 8:10 News in Bangla
- 8:15 Chena Kahini
- 8:45 Cartoon: Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 9:10 Tarunya
- 9:30 Film: The Spectacular World of Guinness Records
- 10:00 News in English
- 10:15 Moner Mukurey
- 11:15 Documentary
- 11:45 Closing.

Evening Session

- 3:00 Opening announcement Al-Quran Programme summary
- 3:15 Recitation from the Tripitak
- 3:20 Alore Dishari: Religious programme
- 3:40 Movie of the Week
- 5:10 News in Bangla
- 5:50 Mahy Ramadan
- 6:30 Anu Paramanu
- 7:05 Shangeeta: Songs
- 8:00 News in Bangla
- 8:30 Documentary: Rohingya story the untold plight
- 9:30 Drishtikone
- 10:00 News in English
- 10:30 Film: L.A. Law
- 11:25 Saturday's programme summary
- 11:30 Closing.



Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina discussing with leaders of the Sammita Sramik Karmachari Oikyajote at her Minto Road residence Thursday.

— Star photo

Marine Engineers Institute branch opens Minister for finding out causes of maritime disasters

CHITTAGONG, Mar 19: State Minister for Shipping Harun-Al-Rashid inaugurated a branch of the Institute of Marine Engineers at Chittagong Port Training Complex here today, reports BSS.

Rear Admiral MA Vallis, President of the Institute of Marine Engineers, London also spoke at the inaugural function.

Speaking on the occasion the State Minister urged the marine engineers to work hard

and help build the nation. He asked them to find out the causes of maritime disasters such as capsize of lurches and country boats and suggest solution in this respect.

He said, with the establishment of a branch of such a famous international organisation of the world, a long felt desire of the marine engineers of Bangladesh had been fulfilled. The marine engineers will dedicate themselves in the development of Maritime

technology of Bangladesh, he hoped.

Rear Admiral MA Vallis, in his speech, assured all sorts of support from the headquarters in London for its newly formed branch in Bangladesh. He said the goal of the institute was to serve not only the marine engineers communities but also the society as a whole.

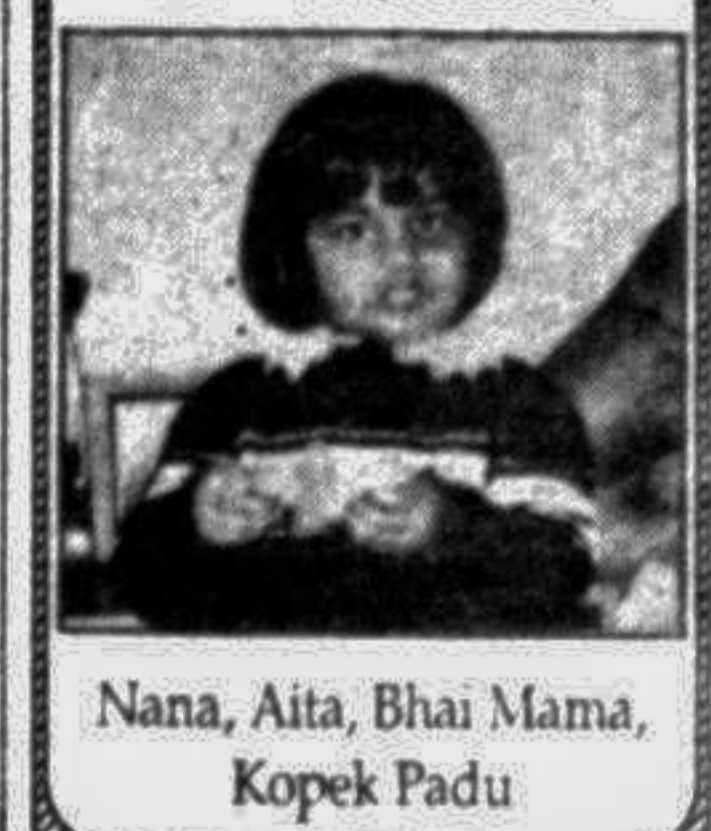
NW Khandakar, Chairman of the Bangladesh branch described the history and objectives of the institute.

JS privilege body meet Saturday

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Privilege will hold a meeting on Saturday at 11 am, at Sangsad Bhaban, Room No-1, with Speaker Shaikh Razaque Ali in the chair, reports UNB.

All members of the committee have been requested to attend the meeting, said a press release of the Parliament Secretariat office Thursday.

Happy Birthday Sarwat (Mamo)



Nana, Aita, Bhai Mama, Kopek Padu

What's on today

Lions Club International

A seminar on 'Primary Eye Care and Prevention of Nutritional Blindness' will be held at 9 am today (Friday) at BLF Auditorium, Agargaon in the city.

Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, Deputy Leader of the House in the Parliament will attend the seminar as chief guest.

Juba Kalyan Samity

Dakshin Bangla Juba Kalyan Samity will organise a discussion meeting today (Friday) to observe the birth anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The meeting will be held at 4 pm at the auditorium of National Book Centre in the city. Awami League Presidium Member Dr Kamal Hossain will attend the meeting as chief guest.

Jatiya Sramik League

Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik League will hold an iftar party at its central office (68/2 Purana Paltan) today (Friday).

Ganotantrik Juba Parishad

The extended meeting of the central committee of Ganotantrik Juba Parishad, Bangladesh will be held today (Friday) at 3 pm at the central office of the organisation (132 DIT Extension Road). The meeting will be followed by an iftar party.

Peace For All

The regular weekly meeting of the 'Peace For All' will be held today (Friday) at 4 pm at the organisation's office at Mirpur.

BCS (adm) AGM, election

The annual general meeting and election of Bangladesh Civil Service (administration) Association will be held at 3 pm today (Friday) at the BCS (administration) Academy, Shahbagh.

. . . . and tomorrow

Training Course on 'Fire Fighting'

A week-long training course on 'Security and fire fighting' will be inaugurated tomorrow (Saturday) at 9.30 am at Rapport Seminar Hall at 98 Malibagh (DIT Road), here. Sponsored by Rapport Bangladesh Limited, the course will be participated by security personnel of various organizations of public and private sectors.

Workshops for college principals

Workshops for the college principals have been arranged in four divisional headquarters under the 'Higher Secondary Institution Survey' project, according to an official handout here Thursday, reports BSS.

This will be applicable for those colleges which obtained recognition up to March 1, 1992.

Weather

No change in day temperature

By Staff Correspondent
Rain or thunder shower accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at one or two places over Dhaka division and the regions of Pabna, Bogra, Jessore, Kushtia, Comilla and Sylhet during the next 36 hours commencing 6 pm Thursday. Met office forecast.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged during the period.

The sun sets in Dhaka today (Friday) at 6.10 pm and rises tomorrow (Saturday) at 6.02 am.

Temperature and humidity recorded in important cities and towns on Thursday were:

Cities/Towns	Temperature in degree Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	31.3	23.7	80	71
Chittagong	29.6	23.0	25	71
Rajshahi	35.5	17.2	49	52
Khulna	31.7	22.2	87	74
Barisal	30.8	21.8	85	80
Cox's Bazar	30.0	25.0	70	77
Sylhet	28.7	17.4	88	77
Dinajpur	32.8	15.4	76	29

Maximum and minimum temperature recorded in major regional cities on Thursday were:

Kathmandu	26.6	6.8
Colombo	32.9	24.9
Male	31.6	27.0
Islamabad	22.6	7.7
New Delhi	32.5	14.9



Death anniversary of Kazi Idris Sunday

The 17th death anniversary of Journalist and litterateur Kazi Mohammad Idris will be observed on Sunday.

Quran Khawani, feeding the poor and Milad Mahfil will be held at the residence of his eldest daughter Kazi Madina at 8/12 Tajmahal Road, Block-G, Mohakhali.

Kazi Idris was editor of several daily and weekly news papers. He had begun his journalistic career in Calcutta in the early forties. He had to his credit a number of books, including 'Translation from world renowned literary works'.

Obituary

Md Masir Khan, Former Assistant Director of T&T Department died of cardiac failure Wednesday at Combined Military Hospital. He was 65.

His namaj-e-janaja was held at Mahakhali Jame Mosque Thursday and he was buried at Banani Graveyard here.

He left behind his wife, three sons, three daughters and a host of relatives and friends to mourn his death.

Qul Khawani of Masir Khan will be held today Friday after Asar prayers at his G/FJ 155, Mohakhali residence.

Commission for amending labour laws to be announced soon

Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan Thursday said a law commission to suggest amendment to the existing labour laws would be announced next week, reports BSS.

He said many of the labour laws were needed to rewrite, amend and simplify for their proper implementation in the interest of the employees, the employers and the nation.

The Minister was speaking at the concluding session of the five-day national workshop on 'Amendment of Labour Laws' held at the Management Development Centre in Dhaka. Mannan suggested organising a bipartite workshop on amendment of labour laws in

which representatives of both the workers and the employers would participate.

Jointly organised by the National Coordination Council on Labour Education and International Labour Organisation (ILO) the workshop was participated by 16 trade union leaders.

Presided over by the workshop coordinator Nazrul Islam Khan the concluding session was also addressed by ILO representative Per Bertilsson, resource person, Advocate Nirmalendu Dhar, labour leaders M. Nurul Islam, and Nasim Ali and member secretary of the National Coordination Council on Labour Education Abdul Quader.

Mahmuda Khanam dead

Dr Mahmuda Khanam (Reba), a retired Assistant Director of the Bangla Academy, died of cerebral haemorrhage at Red Crescent Holy Family Hospital in Dhaka Thursday morning, she was 53, reports BSS.

Dr Khanam, wife of journalist-writer M R Akhtar Mukul, had been admitted to the hospital on March 15.

She left behind her husband, two sons and two daughters besides a host of relatives, friends and well wishers to mourn her death.

She was buried at Savar graveyard.

The Qul Khawani for the deceased will be held on March 21 after Asar prayer at her Nawraton colony (1, Property Mansion) residence.

Investing highest amount in agriculture stressed

Agriculture Minister M Majid-ul-Huq Thursday laid emphasis on investing the highest amount in agriculture as 56 per cent of the national income comes from this sector, reports BSS.

He was presiding over the second meeting of the Parliamentary Committee on the Ministry of Agriculture at the Sangsad Bhaban Thursday.

The Agriculture Minister said that it was very much necessary to ascertain the number of landless farmers, low-income and middle-income farmers and absentee landlords for increasing agricultural production.