

80 pc poor in city walk to jobs

By Rahat Fahmida

Nearly 80 per cent of poor commuters in Dhaka walk to their places of work as they can not afford transport fares, according to a recent survey conducted by Centre for Urban Studies (CUS).

The survey that covered Bangladesh's four major cities — Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna, revealed that between 66 and 94 per cent of urban poor travel on foot to reach their jobs.

In Dhaka, a city of 70 lakh people, only 20 per cent of poor commuters use some kinds of transport, mainly buses and tempoes, the survey said. It is 6 per cent in Chittagong, 5 per cent in Khulna and 15 per cent in Rajshahi.

"Walking is predominant mode of transport for the urban poor, followed by bus and rickshaw rides," said Prof Nazrul Islam, director of CUS, a Dhaka University-based research centre.

Speaking to The Daily Star about the study conducted recently, Islam said this week: "The urban poor, after meeting most essential expenditures, are left with little money to pay for transport fares."

According to the study poor city residents spend 50 per cent of their meagre income — estimated between 700 and 1,200 takas a month — on food alone. The remaining half is spent on house rent, clothings water, fuel, light and other essentials.

For the urban poor, who make up more than 70 per cent of the metropolitan population, bus offers the cheapest mode of transportation.

Meanwhile, the study found that a significant number of city residents are employed in the transport sector. In Dhaka 28 per cent of workforce in the transport sector is filled by the urban poor, 23 per cent of them being rickshaw pullers, their number estimated between 1.5 lakh to 3 lakh. Others work as drivers of cars, taxis, trucks, buses, auto-rickshaws and push carts.

This category of people — defined as urban poor along with garments workers, storekeepers, hawkers, class four employees and maids and pavement dwellers — make up more than 5 per cent of heads of households in Dhaka. The number of people involved in the rickshaw sector is estimated at 95,000 in Chittagong, 24,000 in Khulna and 10,000 in Rajshahi.

The modes of transport in Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi are more or less similar to those in Dhaka — rickshaws, buses, trucks, pick-ups, minibuses, auto-rickshaws, auto-tempoes and push carts.

Islam said the number of powered vehicles has been growing steadily in the country since independence, the annual growth rate of buses estimated at 6.5 per cent, trucks 6.3 per cent and auto-rickshaws 5.4 per cent. The pattern of ownership is mixed, the privately-owned transports outnumbering the public sector vehicles. Majority of the vehicles are run by hired workers, while a small number of cars, auto-rickshaws and minibuses are owned by the drivers themselves.



Workers in Jakarta yesterday giving final touch to the conference hall for Non-Aligned Summit due to open there Sept 1. — AFP photo

Menon off to London

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Menon was admitted to the CMH in a state of 'hypovolemic shock' due to profuse loss of blood. According to the attending physicians, he also had prolapsed lung tissue due to traumatic rupture in the right dome of the diaphragm.

After a four-hour surgical operation his liver was repaired, wounds debrided and shock corrected the very night he was admitted to the CMH, the physicians said.

Since then he remained at the ICU and his condition continued to improve. However, the physicians added, at one stage Menon developed jaundice which was subsequently brought under control.

On hearing the news of his departure for treatment abroad, a large number of relatives, friends, political leaders and workers, and people from various walks of life thronged the CMH to pay Menon a visit.

The Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and the Awami League Chief and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina also visited him in the hospital.

A group of Workers Party leaders including Party President Amal Sen, acting GS Akbar Haider Khan Rono, Bimal Biswas, Tipu Biswas, Fazle Hossain Badshah, Saiful Huq visited Menon at the hospital.

Nirmul Committee Convenor Jahanara Imam, former Prime Minister Kazi Zafar Ahmed and Five-Party alliance and Communist Party leaders also visited Menon at the hospital.

Menon was scheduled to be flown by a Birman flight at 3:45 this morning, to London for advanced treatment of the lacerated wounds in his liver at the King's College Hospital.

He is scheduled to reach Heathrow Airport at 5:30 pm today.

His wife Lutfunnessa Beauty, brother Shahidullah Khan Badal, sister-in-law Dr Nafla Khan and Colonel Zafullah, a CMH surgeon, were to have accompanied him on the trip.

In the message addressed to the nation prior to his departure, Menon called upon the people to defeat terrorist activities unitedly at any cost.

"I shall have no sorrow even if it is achieved at the cost of my life," he declared.

Rendering his heartfelt gratitude to those who had transferred him to the CMH and to those who donated blood and the others who wanted to do so, Menon said: "Your blood runs through my entire body, I am grateful to all who have and wanted to donate blood for me."

"I am one of yours, you have bound me with the bonds of blood," he said, adding "your blessings, prayers and profound love saved me from certain death and restored me to my present state."

The Workers Party leader, also the Convenor of the Five-Party Alliance, expressed his gratitude to the CMH authorities, surgeons, nurses and employees.

"CMH has once again upheld before the nation its ideal of service," he said, urging "Let us unitedly come forward to serving the suffering humanity."

The wounded parliament member went on to express his profound thanks to the political parties and different social forces irrespective of party affiliations for unitedly rising to protest terrorism ever since the attempt on him.

He said that although he had to go abroad for a while for medical treatment "My heart will remain at home with you, I seek blessings from you all."

According to the latest medical bulletin, Menon's condition continued to improve over the last 13 days.

His kidney function was stated to be 'normal' while the liver showed steady improvement in its functioning. However, the bulletin added: "At present Menon has some effects of chest injuries."

The bulletin was issued after his condition was reviewed by the Chief Physician Major General Anis Wajiz and Chief Surgeon Major General MA Mohaimin along with other attending physicians.

Editor : S. M. Ali
Executive Editor : Mahfuz Anam

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African states

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Movement had ceased to exist after the breakaway of several of its republics, leaving only the rump Serbia and Montenegro.

"Serbia and Montenegro, no matter how disguised, is an aggressor and is abetting the most serious Serbian atrocities committed against the Bosnian Muslims and Catholics in Bosnia-Herzegovina," he said.

Yugoslavia, which hosted the Non-Aligned Movement's first summit in 1961, expressed confidence it would retain its membership.

"Everybody has the right to propose everything, but it is the decision of the movement [which we will abide by]," senior Yugoslav diplomat Menad Zirojevic said.

Another Yugoslav delegate said: "I am optimistic. It is impossible to get the consensus to throw us out."

His optimism appeared based on opposition by several African countries led by Benin to what would be the first expulsion from a movement that prides itself on consensus.

Tanzanian delegates to the ministerial meeting said current international negotiations were aimed at seeking peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina and not sanctions or the expulsion of Yugoslavia from world bodies.

Other countries also believe that expulsion would set an unhealthy precedent.

Polytechnic student

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Shahabuddin was a prospective VP candidate for the next student union polls in the Institute while another faction of JCD wanted Mahmudur Rahman for the post.



Shahabuddin. — Star photo

Following this dispute, activists of the two factions met city JCD President Abul Khayer Bhuyan Friday night but the meeting was fruitless, the source said.

Shahabuddin came back to the hostel late Friday night and instead of staying in his own Room No-209, he stays in Rauf's room, said the source.

Police said that Rauf, the lone witness to the murder, lodged a case with Tejgaon police accusing seven persons of the killing. Police declined to give the names of the accused.

Meanwhile, police picked up four persons including the autorickshaw driver and put them in custody for questioning, said police.

Shahabuddin was the eldest of six children of Abdul Majid. His body was sent to his village at Sripur under Gazipur District yesterday afternoon.

NAM leaders

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Bangladesh thinks NAM should play a more effective and assertive role in the united system with a view to protecting the sovereignty, political independence and economic freedom of the developing countries.

The Bangladesh delegation is likely to support the proposal for writing off the debts of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) converting those into grants.

The Bangladesh may also take the following position on economic issues: The debts of the middle-income group countries may be rescheduled or their terms eased, "better-off" developing countries may extend technical assistance to poorer countries under the overall financing scheme of the developed countries. The Paris club may apply the procedures and criteria of the Toronto terms to LDCs seeking relief to their official debts, the developed countries should increase their ODA (Official Development Assistance) to LDCs to 0.20 per cent of GNP by the year 2000, may stress for further strengthening economic and technical cooperation between LDCs and other developing countries.

According to the provisional agenda of the summit, the NAM leaders will review the current international political situation, the role of the Non-Aligned Movement, strengthening of the United Nations, assess the world economic situation and strengthening of south-south cooperation. (Related Story on Page 5)

Non-formal edn plan faces fund crisis

By Masud Arif

The Expansion of the Integrated Non-formal Education Programme is facing shortage of funds amounting to about Taka 14.70 crore, according to an Education Ministry source.

Negotiations with the Swedish donor agency, SIDA, are going on to meet the shortage of funds for the programme, the sources added.

Earlier, the department wrote a letter to the Economic Relations Division (ERD) of the government to arrange the funds from interested donors.

The non-formal education programme was started in July 1991 with a budget of about Taka 44.6 crore of which 66 per cent was allocated by UNICEF.

The government took the initiative with a view to educating the masses through this programme which will end in June 1994.

The programme includes pre-primary, non-formal primary, non-formal adolescent and non-formal adult education.

Sources said that the establishment work for the adult education programme had already begun in 43 thanas of 38 districts from May '92. It would be extended to another 26 thanas, the sources said.

Under the integrated education programme, ten libraries in every 69 thanas would also be set up, the sources said.

Curriculum development and preparatory work on the pre-primary, non-formal primary and non-formal adolescent programmes are also being undertaken.

536 more arrested

Police arrested 536 persons on different charges from different parts of the country yesterday, a press release issued by the police headquarters said in Dhaka last night, reports BSS.

Dhaka to join IPU confce

Bangladesh will participate in the 88th conference of the Inter Parliamentary Union to be held in Sweden September 7-12. Speaker Shatikh Razzak Ali is due to leave for Stockholm on September 6 leading a four-member parliamentary delegation to the conference, reports UNB.

Textile owners seek firm instructions to banks

By Staff Correspondent

A section of private sector textile industry owners Saturday said that firm instructions by the government to the banks were essential for the rehabilitation of the industries facing problems. The instructions should also contain packages of measures, they added.

The President of the Bangladesh Specialised Textile Mills and Powerloom Industries Association, Quazi Salimuddin in a statement said that unless the measures were taken, the new initiative of the banks to rehabilitate the industries would go in vain.

The Association said that in the present situation a well-thought sick industry rehabilitation policy was most needed.

It said that the policy should be binding to all those responsible for its implementation.

It further suggested that the government immediately adopt the recommendations of the Sick Industries Revival and Rehabilitation Cell and implement them.

Hijacked Ethiopian plane lands at Cairo

CAIRO, Aug 29: A hijacked Ethiopian airliner landed at Cairo Airport today, airport sources said, reports Reuter.

The sources said the plane landed safely on a remote runway which police and technical staff had sealed off.

The Ethiopian airliner Boeing 720, with three Ethiopian hijackers aboard, had come from Aden in Yemen, where it spent several hours on the tarmac.

In Aden the hijackers asked to speak to the UN representative and the British Consul in the city but it was not clear what they wanted from them.

The plane was hijacked on a regular flight from Addis Ababa to the Yemen capital Sanaa via Djibouti, where most of the 66 passengers disembarked, diplomatic sources in Aden said.

CID records Menon's statement

By Staff Correspondent

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) police Saturday took a statement from Workers Party (WP) leader Rashed Khan Menon at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH), according to police source.

When the Detective Branch (DB) police failed to make a significant headway in the investigation, the CID was entrusted to look into the case of the attempt on WP leader on August 24. But they are yet to nab the assassants.

Italy to buy leather goods

Italy would like to buy various types of leather products including ladies' bag, belt, wallet and watch strap from Bangladesh under buy-back arrangement, reports BSS.

The leader of the visiting eight-member Italian private sector delegation, Carted Mauro, said this when he along with the other members of the team called on Industries Minister Shamsul Islam Khan at his office chamber in Dhaka yesterday.

Mauro said they were interested to buy leather products from Bangladesh as the quality of the country's leather was very high. He said the members of his delegation were also eager to establish direct contact with the Bangladeshi counterparts in the leather sector.

Mauro indicated that if necessary they would also supply machinery consultancy services and technical know-how to ensure the quality and standard of products.

The Industries Minister informed the Italian delegation that the government had taken an elaborate programme to develop the country's leather sector and also to boost the export of leather products.

Welcoming the delegation members, Khan assured all cooperation and assistance to them for an effective collaboration with their Bangladeshi counterparts.

Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Industries Afzalur Rahman and Chairman of BSCIC Mantruzzaman Chowdhury and concerned officials were present.

Earlier, the members of the delegation held a meeting with the members of Bangladesh Tanners Association at its office and exchanged views with them about the possibility of setting up joint ventures. They also visited two finished leather factories.

The Midnight File

Georgia govt rebels agree to ceasefire

MOSCOW, Aug 29: Georgian government and rebel leaders agreed today to a ceasefire in the Black Sea region of Abkhazia, where more than 100 people have been killed in clashes this month, Russian Television said. It was decided to cease military operations and troops movements from August 31, and to exchange wounded and bodies of those who have been killed, it said. Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze sent troops into Abkhazia earlier this month after the regional parliament effectively declared independence, reports Reuter.

Fresh fighting in Sarajevo

SARAJEVO, Aug 29: Bosnia's warring factions accused each other of initiating heavy fighting today in the aftermath of the London peace conference on Yugoslavia. The leader of the republic's rebel Serbs, Radovan Karadzic, accused Muslim forces of unleashing a "crazed onslaught" in Sarajevo, capital of the former Yugoslav republic. But the Belgrade-based news agency Tanjug said most of the city was quiet and Western journalists in the centre heard only occasional mortar explosions and gunfire, reports Reuter.

Afghan camps closed

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the government's.

In a telephone interview with the Associated Press from his headquarters south of the city, the firebrand rebel chief said he demanded the expulsion of a fierce Uzbek-dominated militia from Kabul.

The government has absorbed the militia has been absorbed into the regular army.

Hekmatyar also demanded elections within two months, something the government says is not possible. Hekmatyar also asked for an Islamic army to provide security for the capital. The government said the army already exists and is busy battling his Hezb-e-Islami forces.

With the cease-fire less than a few hours old and already the subject of fierce disagreement, few people expected it would last.

"When Hekmatyar and his forces have been killed or driven away we can have a picnic to celebrate the cease-fire," said Gen Abdul Momen, a leader of the militia Hekmatyar reviles.

The militia, which once backed the Communist government, traded allegiance earlier this year and joined the rebel resistance that led to April's collapse of the Communist government.

But Hekmatyar refused to accept them as allies and threatened to destroy Kabul unless they left. Earlier this month he tried to make good his threat with an all-out offensive that has left at least 1,800 people dead, thousands more injured and as many as 500,000 refugees in their own country.

Meanwhile, the remaining 50 Russian diplomats and their families left the besieged capital early Saturday aboard an Afghan military transport plane, Fared said.

The plane headed toward the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif. From there, a Russian transport plane was expected to ferry them home to Moscow.

A day earlier two flying-76 military transport planes escaped a bombardment of Kabul airport and ferried 120 Russian embassy staffers, their spouses and children out of the city.

Benazir invites SAARC opposition leaders

By Staff Correspondent

KARACHI (Pakistan), Aug 29: Former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has invited opposition leaders from South Asian countries to a meeting in Karachi on September 8, officials of her People's Party (PPP) said today, reports Reuter.

Invitations have been sent to opposition leaders in the seven-nation South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) for a debate on the role of opposition in Asian societies, one PPP official said.

"Some of them have accepted the invitation while the acceptance of others is being awaited," Sind province PPP Information Secretary Zia Isphahani said. The details of the conference will be announced on Monday.

The invitees include former Indian Prime Minister VP Singh and Bangladeshi opposition leader Sheikh Hasina, he said.

Road block

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Nilkhet Tuesday immediately after a clash between students and shopkeepers.

The agitated students brought out processions and held a protest rally near the college yesterday afternoon. They also exploded several crackers and pelted stones at the police during the demonstration.

In the morning, a group of students also damaged two cars near the Ideal College at Central Road, witnesses said.

Meanwhile, hundreds of people living inside the Bakushah Market and its adjacent areas left their houses in the fear that the students might set fire to the market.

However BDR as well as heavy contingent police led by high officials including eight Officers-in-Charge (OC) of eight police stations of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (South) have been posted in the areas to prevent any untoward incidents.

WB lifts

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The suspension was lifted last week, sources in the Economic Relations Division said.

The on-going reforms being implemented in the banking and financial sectors were agreed upon under the 175 million US dollar Financial Sector Credit approved in 1990.

The credit is due to be disbursed in three instalments subject to implementation of the reform package. First instalment of 50 million dollar was disbursed in late 1990.

GCO march

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Addressing the rally, the left leaning student leaders accused the government of mounting repression on progressive forces to back the anti-liberation elements.

The GCO leaders warned that if the Home Minister was not replaced, the student community would seek their own ways to replace what they said the inefficient minister who totally had failed to restore law and order in the country, including the campuses.

Earlier, leaders and workers of the GCO brought out the procession from the Dhaka University campus chanting slogans against terrorists and the government.

A pleasant surprise for Omar

Omar Serajul Hasan who topped the merit list of the SSC examinations of the four boards this year, will visit Jakarta as an entourage member of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia to the forthcoming Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit, reports BSS.

The inclusion of Hasan's name as an entourage member of NAM summit with the Prime Minister has come as a pleasant surprise for him. Expressing his feelings about the visit to Indonesia with Prime Minister Begum Zia, Hasan said, "It will give me a rare opportunity and I feel deeply encouraged for the kind gesture of the Prime Minister."

He further said that the inclusion of his name as an entourage member of the Prime Minister, will encourage him for still better results in future.

Son of Dr KM Serajul Islam and a student of St Joseph High School, Hasan also expressed his gratitude to the Prime Minister for the affection shown to him. He appeared at the SSC examinations of 1992 from Science group under Dhaka Board.

Khaleda Hasina

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was thankful to the Prime Minister for visiting him twice and her presence at the time of his operation.

UNB adds: Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina also visited Workers Party leader Rashed Khan Menon at the Combined Military Hospital yesterday afternoon.

She stayed there for some time, talked to the wounded MP and enquired about his condition. Party leader Abdul Jalil accompanied her.

Earlier, Hasina returned to the capital yesterday noon ending a week-long organisational tour of Gopalganj, Faridpur and Rajbari districts.