

## The DCC: Some Facts & Figures

Star Report

Over the past couple of weeks, the city has increasingly come to resemble an election bazaar with campaigning by the various mayoral and commissioner candidates for the January 30 Dhaka City Corporation polls gathering momentum by the day.

A walk down any road or lane, especially the winding by-lanes of the older part of the capital, is bound to bring to one's ears — and eyes — a plethora of rosy pledges promising a more comfortable lot for the ordinary city dwellers. Tricky civic issues — from traffic jams to taxes — are being wished away by each and every candidate.

Impressed by all the zeal and fervour of so many "do-gooders" soliciting the citizen's precious vote to serve him better, one cannot help but wish to learn more about what the City Corporation really does for his welfare, and at what cost. Here is a closer look:

The main task of the City Corporation is to keep the city clean, light the street lamps at night and keep accounts of the total number of holdings. Currently, the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has 1,42,000 holdings spanning an area of 132.54 sq miles, which is divided into 90 wards. The number of residential units, according to DCC statistics, is 4,48,500.

The citizens, mainly the house-owners, have to pay three types of taxes or levies to the City Corporation — nearly a 7 per cent holding tax, a 3 per cent electricity charge and a 2 per cent conservancy surcharge. This 12 per cent levy is determined on the rent of the houses.

In the case of self-occupied houses, the rent is assessed and the tax fixed. However, self-occupying house-owners have to pay only 60 per cent of the total assessed taxes. The DCC offers a 40 per cent relief to owners who live in their own houses. Again in the case of

both rented and self-occupied holdings, the corporation provides another two months' rebate on the 12 per cent surcharge, which are counted for only 10 months of a calendar year. Two months are tax free as an allowance for the repair and maintenance of the units, DCC sources said. The taxes are collected in quarterly instalments.

The DCC has a collection target of Tk 80 crore from such taxes in its Tk 181-crore revenue budget for the current fiscal. The total budget, both revenue and development for the year 1993-94, is Tk 247 crore.

The DCC earns revenue from 13 other sectors like markets, trade licences, rickshaw licences, trolley, push-carts, horse-drawn carts, billboards, plastic and neon signs, traffic canopies and overbridges. The corporation has 554 regular staff. Several thousand others, mostly sweepers, are on temporary master roll. Some other agencies are also closely involved in providing services to the dwellers. The Dhaka WASA maintains the water supply, sewerage and drainage systems and separately charges the dwellers. The Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) is responsible for household and commercial electricity supply on monthly payment. The citizens have to pay separate bills for the gas lines, too. The telephone system is maintained by the T&T Board.

There is a different division — the mosquito control department — to check the mosquito menace in the city. The department was annexed to the DCC several years ago. The DCC spends Tk one crore annually to control the pestilence.

The rickshaws, a trademark of this city and widely blamed for the terrible traffic jams in and around the metropolis, are a serious headache for the corporation. According to the official count, the total number of rickshaws is 78,972; but in ac-

tual fact the number is almost three times higher. A rickshaw owner pays only Tk 70 annually as licence renewal fee. The authorities stopped issuing new licences since 1987 to check the rickshaw boom but apparently have failed to control the menace posed by these three-wheeled contraptions constantly choking the already congested roads of the capital.

Despite the trappings of his office, the Mayor, who is also called the city father, most often can not provide all the basic utilities to his urban family — an estimated seven million city dwellers, of whom 1.8 millions are registered voters in the upcoming January 30 polls.

To be fair to the mayor — who ever he may be — running the city government of the country's largest city, with all its apparently insurmountable problems, is always a most daunting challenge. And until now, every mayor has left a lot to be desired by way of basic civic amenities.

### THE DCC AT A GLANCE:

Total area: 132.54 sq miles, Number of wards: 90, Total staff: 554, Posts vacant: 70, Holdings: 1,42,000, Number of units: 4,48,000, Mosques under DCC: 653, Madrasahs: 70, Temples: 72, Churches: 13, Orphanages: 11, Schools: 280, Colleges: 48, Markets: 40, Shops: 19,551, Rickshaws: 78,972, Private rickshaws: 47, Three-wheel vans: 6,528, Two-wheel trolleys: 75, Push-carts: 411, Horse-carts: 7, Cinemas: 38, Sub-registry offices: 6, Billboards: 2,237, Plastic or neon signs: 61, Traffic canopies: 23, Fountains: 4, Overbridges: 3.

## Fake manpower agents to be taken to task, says Matin

Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury yesterday said the government will take stern action against those who cheat the innocent and poor people in the name of giving them job abroad, reports UNB.

He said new laws are being contemplated to regulate the business of manpower recruiting agencies to curb harassment of the job-seekers.

Addressing the third session of the conference on Promotion of Manpower Export at the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) in the afternoon, the Minister said a proposal for introducing a new recruitment law has already been placed to the Law Ministry for consideration.

He warned that those unscrupulous and fake recruiting agents who are robbing the poor and innocent people will be taken to task.

## Press Council concerned at Ittefaq incident

A special meeting of the Bangladesh Press Council yesterday expressed deep concern at the killing of a press worker recently in the daily Ittefaq office, reports BSS.

The meeting presided over by Justice Sultan Hossain Khan, Chairman of the Council, also condemned the killing. It requested the authority concerned to hand over the culprits for trial after instituting a impartial investigation.

The Press Council also requested the Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka and the proprietor to inform the council whether there had been any changes in the declaration of the Ittefaq and what changes had taken place since October 20, 1986.

The Press Council had met several times to discuss the situation in the daily Ittefaq and had expressed concern at the closure of publication of the paper. The Press Council had requested the owners separately to resume the publication of the daily, according to a press release.

## Manzur holds election rally

The mayoral candidate of the Left-leaning parties' Manzurul Ahsan Khan, yesterday warned the voters against electing 'terrorists' or people having black money.

He was addressing a public rally at Agargaon as part of his election campaign. The rally was also attended by Rashed Khan Menon, Haidar Akbar Khan Rono, Nirmal Sen and Abu Sayeed Khan.

Condemning the attack on one of his party activists Shumon on Wednesday, Manzurul Ahsan said the commissioner candidate of Ward no 54 was jailed earlier by the 'uncompromising' Khaleda Zia for terrorism. But how could he get a nomination from the ruling BNP? He wondered.

Workers' Party leader Rashed Khan Menon said the previous mayor during his tenure, could not arrange housing facilities for the city dwellers. Rather, Menon added, he had evicted about 50 slums.

He urged all to refrain from electing as mayor the caretakers of the interests of the rich people.

## 3 JCD leaders held, 4 expelled in Sirajganj

SIRAJGANJ, Jan 20: Police arrested three activists of the Jatayatadhi Chhatra Dal (JCD) today on charges of their involvement in acts of violence in the town, reports UNB.

The arrested students are: Palash, Musa and Sabuj. The JCD's district committee led by its president Nazmul Hassan Rana also expelled four leaders and workers of his organisation for anti-organisational and terrorist activities.

## Cold wave claims 88 in US

WASHINGTON, Jan 20: A record-setting, six-day cold wave has claimed at least 88 lives in the eastern and central United States and has forced the federal government in Washington to shut down, reports AFP.

Some 22 million customers from Washington to New Jersey have to contend with "rolling blackouts", some up to half-an-hour long, as power companies struggled to meet record demands for electricity.

The Arctic blast that rolled in a week ago has been blamed for 88 deaths so far.



Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina handing over a fish — the election symbol for her party's DCC mayoral candidate — to Md Hanif at an election rally at the Dhupkhola ground in the city yesterday. — Star photo

## Remain alert against false votes: Hasina

By Staff Correspondent

Sheikh Hasina has asked her party workers to identify the false voters in their respective areas and the election agents to resist such voters during the January 30 city corporation polls.

"You must remain alert so that nobody could cast false votes against any absentee voter," the Awami League chief told an election rally at Dhooikhola of Gandaria in the capital yesterday.

Hasina also directed the AL candidates and their supporters to go from door to door to solicit votes.

The Opposition leader alleged that the governing BNP was conspiring to ensure the victory of its mayoral candidate in the capital because, according to her, the voters were preferring the AL nominee.

She urged the city dwellers to vote for the AL nominees so that the anti-governance agitation aimed at realising the demands could be strengthened.

About the problems facing the city dwellers, Hasina blasted the former mayor of the Dhaka City Corporation during the present regime saying he even failed to eradicate mosquitos.

Showing a fish, the election symbol of Hanif, she told her audience, "If you like fish and rice, vote for fish."

The AL chief introduced Hanif and the commissioner candidates of 10 wards from 74 to 83 and urged the citizens of Dhaka to vote for them.

Addressing the rally, Mohammad Hanif reiterated

his commitments that if elected he would free the DCC from partisan politics and turn the city-based local government body into a service centre for 70 lakh citizens of Dhaka. He also pledged to solve other problems and adopting realistic steps.

UNB adds: Earlier in the afternoon, Hasina addressed a big election rally at Tantibazar in Kotwali thana.

Speaking at the rally Hasina criticised the administration for not allowing erection of podium. "This cannot be a democratic gesture," she said, adding only two days ago, BNP chairperson held rally at the same venue blocking traffic for two hours without any obstruction.

The Opposition leader cautioned the authorities not to block roads and create traffic jam for the passage of Prime Minister.

"There will be no new taxation in next five years if our candidates are elected in the city corporation election," Hasina told her cheering workers and supporters at Azimpur Batiola, Nawabganj, Jagannath Shaha Road, Boubazar, Islamabagh Eidgah Maidan, Chawk-bazar crossing and Mitford.

She also led mass contact and exchange greetings with cross-sections of people at the BDR gate, Nawabganj police outpost, Shaheed Nagar, Killermorh, Reazuddin Road, Islamabagh, Postarmoh, Water Workers Road, Talpatty, Chakbazar crossing, Armanitola, Jaikhana crossing and Nazimuddin Road in Ward-59 and Ward-60.

## 5 killed, as many hurt in mishaps

By DMCH Correspondent

At least five persons were killed and five others injured in and around the city in the last two days. Two persons reportedly committed suicide.

Two persons were killed when a running train ran over them at Khilkhet rail crossing early Thursday.

The victims could not be immediately identified. However, they were about 25 years old.

In another road accident, a minor girl was killed when a speeding van knocked her down at Uttara at about 4 pm yesterday.

Shila, 4, daughter of one Mohammed Abul Hasem died on the spot. Two more unidentified persons aged between 21 and 25 were killed when a speeding truck ran over them at Dhamrai Wednesday night.

They died on the spot. A peon of the Nowab Habibullah High School, Uttara, reportedly committed suicide at his house at Azampur, Uttara at about 3 pm yesterday. Mohammed Saiful Islam, 30, killed himself by hanging.

In another suicide case, one Mohammed Zakir, 15, ended his life by setting himself on fire at Demra staff quarters Wednesday night.

Having been seriously injured he was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where he died shortly after admission.

Police sent all the bodies to the DMCH morgue for autopsy. The reasons for the suicides were not known.

One Mohammed Ainul Haque, 19, was injured when a group of miscreants stabbed him in front of the Gulshan Park at about 3.30 pm yesterday.

Haque was admitted to the DMCH with stab injuries in his left shoulder.

In another incident, a student of the Adamjee Cantonment School was injured when a group of musclemen stabbed him at Monipurpara at about 2 pm Thursday. The victim, Bikash, 15, alleged that when he went to Monipurpara to buy medicine, suddenly a

group of mastans stabbed him. Bikash, with stab injuries in his abdomen, was admitted to the DMCH.

Two muggers were beaten up by a group of students when they tried to snatch a gold necklace from a lady, who was in a rickshaw in front of the Rokeya Hall of Dhaka University at about 4 pm Thursday.

The muggers identified as Salam, 30 and Motaleb, 35, were admitted to the DMCH.

Police say, the victim cried for help when the two muggers waylaid her.

Hearing the cries for help, the students chased the muggers, and caught them red-handed in front of the Shahidullah Hall with their vehicle, an auto rickshaw (no. Dhaka Tha-1525).

Police arrested the muggers and admitted them to the DMCH.

In another incident, one Mohammed Zainul Abedin, 25, was injured when a group of miscreants stabbed him at Ananda Bazar Wednesday night.

The victim, son of Mohammed Abdul Mazid, was admitted to the DMCH.

## DCC polls

From Page 1 Col 5

ing chairs but could not get any.

In one case, a family living at Arambagh had to reschedule a marriage reception because the decorators declined to rent them the necessary chairs and other materials.

Enthusiastic supporters of the Awami League yesterday presented a live fish to their mayoral candidate Mohammad Hanif at Dhupkhola in the older part of the city.

Amid great cheer and applause, Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina and Mohammad Hanif lifted the *ruhi* (carp) fish before the packed audience at the Dhupkhola Maidan. But one fishy vote in the crowd asked, "Who will eat the fish?"

## The Midnight File

### Shevardnadze in Paris to sign friendship treaty

PARIS, Jan 20: Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze arrived in Paris today for a two-day official visit during which he will sign a friendship and cooperation treaty. Shevardnadze will sign the treaty with President Francois Mitterrand when he meets the French head of state tomorrow, reports AFP.

### Yemen's President, VP accept reconciliation accord

ADEN, Jan 20: Yemen's President and Vice-President have both personally accepted a reconciliation agreement intended to prevent their rivalry from splitting the country, the official media reported today. President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Vice President Ali Salem Al-Baidh have agreed to meet and sign the accord whenever and wherever a mediation committee says, committee official Ahmed Jaber Afif was quoted as saying, reports Reuter.

## Doctors end strike

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The government also agreed to build up an infrastructure for primary health care at the union level, which would be headed by a doctor.

Within December 1994, the government would create 1000 new posts at the union level for the doctors and the Health Ministry would send a requisition for the vacant posts of the doctors to the Public Service Commission (PSC).

The government also decided to create some 11,000 new posts for doctors which will be completed by 2003, while 2042 posts at different levels will be created by December this year.

The Health Ministry also agreed to promote 20 per cent of the BCS (Health) cadre officials within the next six months.

The government will issue an order within one month to create a 1499-member BCS (Family Planning) cadre.

In order to set up new medical colleges and to ensure autonomy of the medical college hospitals and institutes of the country, the government proposed to set up a committee headed by the chairman of the University Grants Commission. The committee would place its recommendations within the next six months.

It was also decided to increase the number of beds at the hospitals from 250 to 100 and from 100 to 50, and a policy to regulate non-government medical colleges has been formulated, which would be implemented strictly.

Other than these, the government agreed to remove inconsistencies from different posts of the doctors, increase increments and facilities for them.

"We have given the government time to implement the decisions since different ministries are involved in such a process," BMA secretary Gazi Abdul Haq said, adding that if the government failed to fulfil

its promises according to the agreement in time, the BMA would resume its agitation.

The BMA's 21-point agitation started during the Ershad regime in the shape of a 23-point charter of demands. The BNP government verbally agreed with some of the demands two years ago. Following a series of agitational programmes, the BMA began the indefinite strike involving 8,000 of the country's doctors from January 11.

"Our strike has caused a lot of inconvenience to the public, for which we are sorry. But this struggle aims at improving the country's health sector. Presently, 80 per cent of the people are deprived of proper health facilities," Gazi Abdul Haq said.

### 30 die in Sylhet

Our Sylhet Correspondent adds: The total medicare system in the Sylhet region has been suffering extremely as private practice in about 30. Private clinics and doctors, chambers had been stopped since Wednesday. The doctors have been continuing their strike in different government hospitals including the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College and Hospital.

More than 30 people died in the Sylhet Medical College Hospital due to the strike since January 11.

According to hospital sources, 660 patients left the hospital informing the authorities while more than 200 others went away without any intimation since the start of the strike.

### Tk 38.85 cr Norwegian grant

Bangladesh will receive Norwegian kroner 70 million equivalent to about Taka 38.85 crore as grant from Norway for the second phase of the Rural Employment Sector Programme (RESP), reports UNB.

An agreement to this effect was signed between Bangladesh and Norway in the Economic Relations Division (ERD) here yesterday.

The project under the local government division of the Ministry of LGRD and Cooperatives aims at improving the socio-economic standard of the rural poor in Faridpur, Madaripur, Rajbari and Kurigram district through facilitating increased production, employment and income.

### Accountability

From Page 1 Col 4 tends to be introverted, and suggested that a budgetary system that allows managers to be flexible and accountable be developed and sustained.

It observed that implanting borrowed norms has not achieved the intended aims and that it should be accepted with great deal of care and caution.

Termining the people as the custodian of their own rights who can enforce accountability from public service servants, the conference called for educating the people about their rights for promoting accountability.

It underscored the need for an effective management information service (MIS), realistic and rational pay-structure for the public servants, and transparent and objective performance appraisal system to promote accountability.

The participants strongly recommended that the office of ombudsman be established where it has not been established, and strengthened where it is in existence.

They also recommended exchange visits of politicians, legislators, civil service groups and undertraining officers through the APDC, who should study accountability successes and failures in the SAARC and the ASEAN countries.

Exchange of publications and research activities were also underlined at the conference.

It emphasised that roundtables of politicians and bureaucrats be organised at the regional level for establishing an accountable and transparent administration.

### Japanese grant

From Page 1 Col 4

signed a memorandum of understanding with the government of Myanmar on November 5 which allows the UNHCR's participation in the repatriation of over 200,000 Rohingya refugees now living in camps in Bangladesh.

"Japan highly values the fact that the government of Myanmar has recognised the UNHCR's activities by concluding the MOU and decided the present contribution from the viewpoint of contributing as much as possible in response to the UNHCR's appeal," the embassy statement said.

The fund donated would be used for the transportation of the Rohingya refugees, provision of goods for daily use, and the implementation of small-scale projects on agriculture, health, water and sanitation, in support of resettlement of the repatriated people, it added.

### Euro-Parliament

From Page 1 Col 3

Bosnia-Herzegovina along ethnic lines, despite its status as a UN member."

Meanwhile, Bosnia's president Thursday called on NATO to follow through on its threats to launch air strikes against Bosnian Serbs, declaring the alliance did not need further UN approval.

"My feeling is (NATO) will do something to stop the problem," Alija Izetbegovic told reporters after meeting for about 45 minutes with Amedeo de Franchis, deputy secretary-general of the 16-nation North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

### Minu

From Page 1 Col 4

Command chose me for the post."

Replying to a question as to why the Awami League candidate had begun campaigning from his house, Mizanur Rahman Minu said "It is because my mother blessed my rival mayoral candidate."

AL candidate Abdul Matin Khan reportedly started his campaign from the house of Minu after seeking the blessings of Minu's mother.

## Sobhraj on trial for jailbreak

NEW DELHI, Jan 20: Charles Sobhraj, whose criminal exploits were the stuff of books, went on trial Thursday for an audacious jailbreak eight years ago, reports AP.

Sobhraj pleaded innocent to the charges, but admitted to a reporter that "it's difficult to deny, as everybody saw it."

"Reality is one thing and legal process is another," he said.

He said he would appeal to a higher court if convicted of the charges of conspiring to escape from jail, resisting arrest and sedating jail guards. The crimes are punishable by a maximum 10 years imprisonment.

The trial was likely to last beyond a December 1995 deadline, when an extradition request by Thailand on murder charges will expire under a 20-year statute of limitations.

After the pleas, judge Lakshman Dass Mual adjourned the trial until April 9.

Asked during a recess if he was worried about extradition, Sobhraj said Indian courts were fair, "but the judicial system is not free in Thailand. They have military courts, police courts, and can do anything with you."

Eleven other people, including a Briton, David Hall, were charged in connection with the 1986 escape from New Delhi's maximum security Thar prison.

Sobhraj was at one time wanted in eight countries for crimes ranging from car theft to murder. The Vietnamese-born Frenchman has been in Indian jails since 1976.

Sobhraj, 49, appeared in court in imported jeans, athletic shoes and a golfing cap. He was brought handcuffed to the wrists of two policemen.

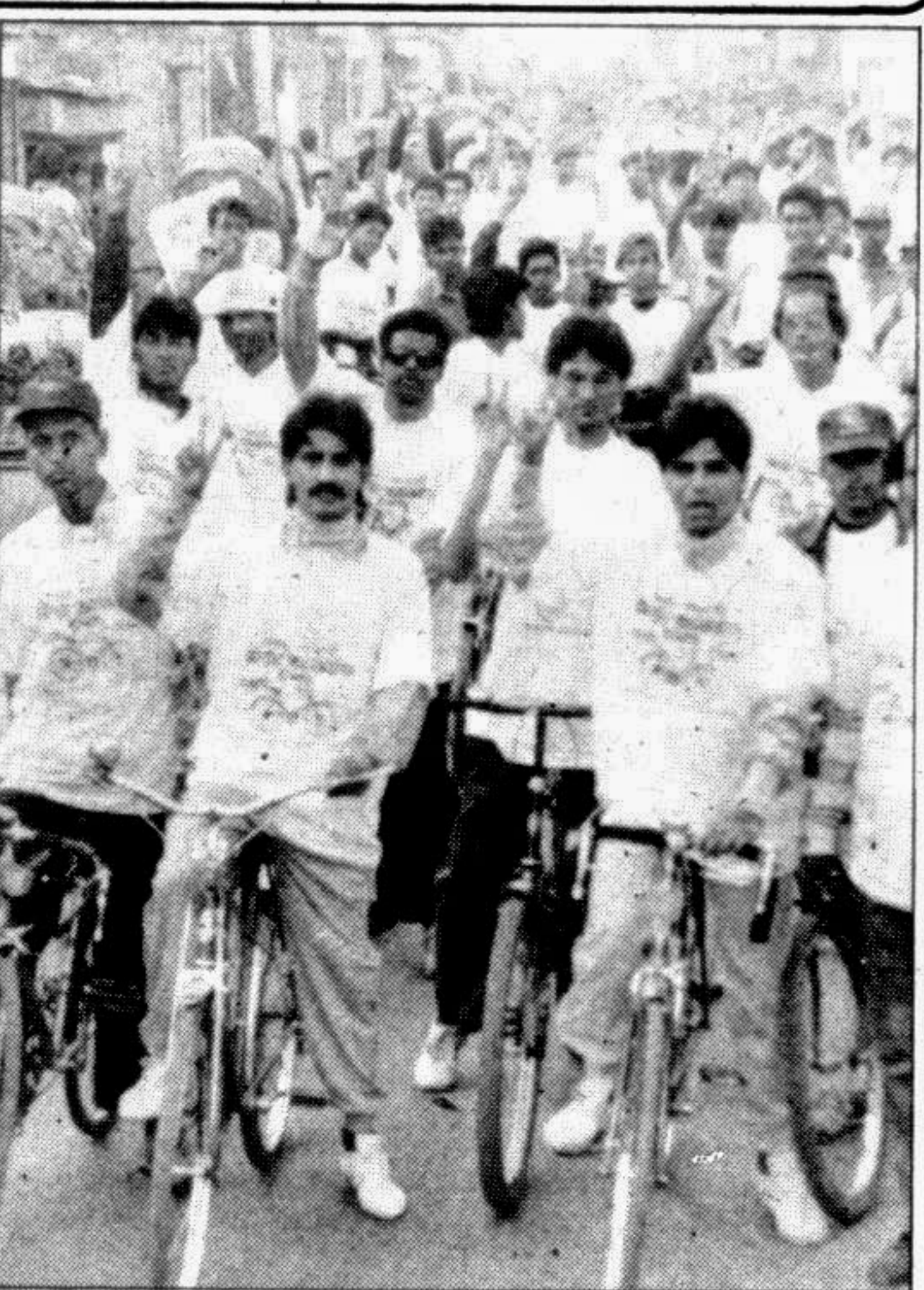
## Leaflet

From Page 1 Col 8 of the International Majlis-e-Tahaffuz-e-Khatme Nabuat at the Manik Mia Avenue demanded the government dub the Quadianis a "non-Muslim minority", charging them to be anti-Islamic.

Ahmediya leaders, however, deny the charges and say they believe in all the principal tenets of Islam.

On October 29 last year, some 500 people attacked the Ahmediya mosque at Bakshibazar area in the capital, leaving 30 people injured.

They also set fire to the mosque and damaged furniture.



Supporters of BNP's mayoral candidate Mirza Abbas brought out a colourful cycle procession in the city yesterday. — Star photo

## Key reformer Fyodorov quits Yeltsin's cabinet

MOSCOW, Jan 20: A key reformer quit as Russia's finance minister on Thursday after President Boris Yeltsin appointed a new Cabinet dominated by conservatives opposed to rapid economic reforms, reports AP.

"I have no intention of staying in the government," Boris Fyodorov told a news conference.

Fyodorov, who has earned the confidence of Western leaders and the International Monetary Fund, had been asked to stay as finance minister.

He was the most important remaining reformer in the government after the resignation Sunday of First Deputy Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar, widely considered the architect of Yeltsin's economic reforms.

Fyodorov said he made his staying conditional on the removal of State Bank Chairman Viktor Gerashchenko and Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Zaveruykha, but that demand was not met.

Fyodorov is an advocate of tight credit policies to fight inflation. Reformers blame

Gerashchenko and Zaveruykha for huge low-interest loans to state farms and enterprises that sent inflation soaring last year.

Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin announced Thursday that both Gerashchenko and Zaveruykha would remain in the Cabinet, while most of Russia's bold young reformers were removed or demoted.

The Cabinet changes, worked out by Yeltsin and Chernomyrdin during two days of talks in the Kremlin, could endanger dirr 1.5 billion in loans to Russia that the IMF has not yet released.

Chernomyrdin told reporters that "the period of market romanticism has ended" and that the reforms must be corrected to "make people's lives easier."

The prime minister insisted, however, that the transition to a free market would continue. "The course that was pursued by the government in 1993 remains unchanged," he said.

Yeltsin's decree removed two top reformers, Yegor Gaidar and Vladimir Shumeiko. Gaidar had resigned on Sunday, saying he no longer had power to carry out consistent reforms.

Three other reformers were demoted in the Cabinet shuffle, losing the rank of deputy prime minister.