

Dhaka Day by Day

Traumatic Bus Ride

by Ashfaquul Haque

"Direct... direct... Gullstan-Mirpur... Dosh Number Gol Chakkor... direct", slapping their palms on the steel body of the buses and the minibuses, the conductors and helpers shout in a hoarse and well rehearsed voice to attract the passengers at Fulbaria bus terminal. The scene is no different at other bus stoppages in Dhaka.

In a manner bordering on to hysteria they shout on until all the space inside a bus is fully packed.

Only then, the bus starts plying through the equally jammed roads, touching almost all the stoppages en route, while the passengers ponder about the real meaning of the word 'direct'. And ultimately they realize that the word 'direct' is a real misnomer here. This has now become a part of the regular ordeal the city travellers are subjected to.

Over 70 lakh inhabitants of this metropolis and almost an equal number who come for business have to avail various modes of transport to reach different parts of the city everyday. Of them nearly 54 per cent travel by bus or minibuses.

The number of buses and mini-buses is miserably inadequate to offer a reasonable service to the city dwellers.

Everyday at the city's different bus stoppages, people are actually left with no choice but to rush into the already over-packed buses and make place for themselves or at least create a scope for setting a foot on the foot-stand and grab with all the might the handle fixed to the door even with a single hand. Thus, an acrobatic work-out starts. The travails of bus travelling have produced many a jokes like — if you bring an empty bus at the 'finish' line, the bus travellers of Dhaka will be able to set the world mark in 100m sprint.

Some one who doesn't have the experience might think that the passengers inside the bus are the lucky few, actually the seats and the spaces are so designed that at times, the lucky (!) passengers inside have to perform

immensely difficult acrobatic caricatures and wrestle with the fellow passengers in such a desperation that one who hardly travels by bus might think of a rescue operation inside.

The servicemen, working people, students, for whom a journey by a baby-taxi or a rickshaw is much too expensive, have no way but to avoid the oddest and often the riskiest mode of travelling.

Taking the helpless passengers for granted, the transport owners are cashing in on their helplessness through various illicit ways, especially at the time of clock in and clock off at city's working centres. A section of the motor operators and workers have introduced some peculiar services like 'direct', 'gate-lock', 'sitting service' etc. only to meet their own ends.

According to a survey report conducted by the Consumers' Association of Bangladesh (CAB) in 1993, 74.66 per cent passengers accused the operators of charging excessive bus fares.

The government, however, through a gazette notification on September 26, 1990 has fixed the rate of inter-city bus and minibus fare which allows the operators to charge Tk 0.32/km for buses and Tk 0.35/km for minibuses. But there are numerous reports that the bus fare has been manipulated and that the government virtually has no control over the offenders of this rule.

Both the government and the private bus owners did little to promote this vital service sector as a modern and useful one to meet the growing needs of the denizens.

Some experts stressed the need to increase the number of buses and also to modernise the whole service system to overcome the gradually worsening situation.

They are also of the opinion that a modern transport service in this populous city could help replace rickshaws and simultaneously help reduce the severe traffic jams in most of the city routes.



SHARIF '94



CPB leader Mujahidul Islam Selim speaking at a meeting in the city yesterday. — Star photo

Dhaka reaffirms commitment to democratic values

Bangladesh has reaffirmed her commitment, abiding faith and interest in democratic values and institutions as well as welfare and safe working atmosphere for the people, reports UNB.

The reaffirmation was made by Labour and Manpower Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan while addressing the plenary session of 81st International Labour Conference on Saturday in Geneva, said a message received here yesterday.

He told the conference that the Bangladesh government had constituted National Law Commission for updating the existing labour law.

Mannan said the International Labour Organisation (ILO) should continue to play its role in strengthening national capacities of the developing countries, particularly the least developed ones.

The Labour Minister commended the report titled 'Defending Values and Promoting Change: Social Justice in a Global Economy', produced by ILO Director General Michel Hansenne before the conference.

He mentioned ILO's important role as partner to its

constituents in technical co-operation and hoped that this would remain a major means of action for the organisation.

He also hoped that the newly established Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs) of ILO in various regions of the world would play a major role in the field of ILO's technical services.

BUET exam dates shifted

Dates for different examinations of the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) have been shifted, reports UNB.

According to a BUET press release, 5th year (Architecture) examinations of 1990-91 session will be held on June 22 from 9:00 am instead of June 21.

Examinations of the 3rd, 4th and 5th years of 1991-92 session under all faculties of the university will also be held on June 22 instead of June 21 from 9:00 am.

The other schedules for the examinations will, however, remain unchanged, the release added.

Boy kidnapped

By Staff Correspondent

A school boy was reportedly kidnapped from the city's Willes Little Flower School yesterday.

Amit, a student of class six, was missing after the end of his class in the afternoon. No further details were available.

Amit's father, Manjur Rahman Biswas, has lodged a case with the Ramna police.

No steps to save local industries, says CPB

The leaders of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) yesterday called upon the authorities to take appropriate measures to promote the country's industrial sector with a view to minimising dependence on donors, reports BSS.

They said this while addressing a public meeting in front of the party office in the city yesterday evening.

With CPB president Shahidullah Chowdhury in the chair, the meeting was addressed, by party general secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim and central committee members Manjurul Ahsan Khan, Nurul Islam, Morshed Ali, Prasad Roy, Syed Baker, Ziaur Rahman and Abdul Halim.

Selim said the government had opted for the open market economy. But little measure have been taken to protect the local industries and enterprises.

Referring to the on-going strike of the non-government teachers, he said it was very unfortunate that the authorities were not paying any heed to their demands.

He expressed solidarity with the teachers.

2990 held under Anti-terrorism Act so far

Some 2,990 people have been arrested under the Anti-terrorism Act since its enactment, the Home Minister told Parliament yesterday, reports UNB.

Replying to a question that stood in the name of Dr A K M Asjad of Jamaat, Abdul Matin Chowdhury said 813 of the arrested people had been punished.

He categorically said the act was not used indiscriminately for any political purpose.

Replying another question from Latifur Rahman of Jamaat the Home Minister said 1,306 people had been arrested on charge of assaulting women till date since July 1 last year.

To another question from Maulana Sakawat Hossain, also of Jamaat, Matin said 203 incidents of crime had occurred in Dhaka city in the last 5 months since January 1. The crimes included 41 murders, 115 incidents of kidnapping, 8 dacoity and 39 hijacking.

In reply to a supplementary, Chowdhury said following the enforcement of the Anti-terrorism Act the rate of crime had declined remarkably.

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26 NGOs to help rehabilitate city hawkers

Twenty six non-government organisations (NGOs) will assist Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) for the rehabilitation of the city hawkers and slum dwellers, reports BSS.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the representatives of various NGOs held yesterday morning at the Nagar Bhaban with Mayor Mohammad Hanif in the chair.

Matters relating to improved housing, sanitation and self-employment opportunities for the city hawkers and slum dwellers were also discussed elaborately in the meeting.

Mayor Mohammad Hanif thanked the NGO representatives for their decision to be involved with the DCC in such humanitarian services.

Among others, Director of Urban Development Studies, Prof Nazrul Islam and representatives of 26 NGOs including Gana Sahajya Sangstha, Manobik Shahajya Sangstha, Bangladesh Women's Health Coalition and Proshika Manabik Unnayan Kendra were present at the meeting.

Sramik Party criticises budget

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Sramik Party in a statement yesterday criticised the proposed budget saying that the budget was formulated protecting the interest of the rich people.

The statement issued by its president Shah Mohammad Abu Safar and general secretary M A Gafur also said that the budget does not contain any directives for creation of job opportunities.



- Monday
- 4:30 Opening announcement
 - Al-Quran
 - Programme summary
 - Documentary: Growing up Children
 - 5:10 News in Bangla
 - 5:20 Sports programme
 - 6:05 Magazine programme
 - 6:50 Open University
 - 7:15 Nazrul songs
 - 8:00 News in Bangla
 - 8:30 Population programme
 - 9:00 Musical programme
 - 10:00 News in English
 - 10:30 Comedy series: Murphy Brown
 - 11:00 Musical programme: Disco Rally
 - 11:30 Khabar/The News
 - 11:40 Tomorrow's programme summary
 - 11:45 Closing



Editor of the daily Janakantha Atiqullah Khan Masud coming out of the court in the city yesterday after appearing with his anticipatory bail petition

What's on today . . .

Rotary Club of Dhaka Central: Regular weekly meeting will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club. Time: 1:30 pm.

Zahir Raihan Film Society: Organises a Bangla-Russian film session. Film: Youth of Maxim. Director: G Kozintsev. Venue: Russian Cultural Centre, House 510, Road 7, Dhanmondi. Time: 6 pm.

Girl Guides Association: Concluding ceremony of its national council '94. Chief guest: Education Minister Jamiruddin Sircar. Venue: Guide House auditorium. Time: 9:30 am.

Weather

Moderate rain likely

Occasional moderate rain or thundershower is likely to occur at most places over Chittagong and Barisal divisions, at many places over Khulna and Dhaka divisions and at a few places over Rajshahi division during the next 24 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Met Office said moderately heavy to heavy rainfall may also occur at places over Chittagong and Barisal divisions and moderately heavy fall at places elsewhere over the country during the period.

It said the day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

The country's highest temperature was recorded 32.4 in Srimangal and the lowest 24 degrees in Hattia yesterday.

The sun sets today (Monday) at 6:48 pm and rises tomorrow (Tuesday) at 5:10 am.

The maximum and minimum temperature of some major cities/towns recorded yesterday were

	Max	Min	9 am	6pm
Dhaka	31.0	26.0	92	82
Chittagong	30.6	25.5	78	88
Rajshahi	30.8	25.0	92	90
Khulna	30.5	25.4	94	88
Sylhet	30.6	25.2	88	97
Barisal	27.6	24.5	98	90
Cox's Bazar	—	25.0	100	—
Dinajpur	31.5	24.8	89	91

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Re-Tender Notice

No.P&D/LP-1(318)/1993-94/D-2636 (2) Dated 12/06/94

Sealed Tenders are hereby invited from the bonafide suppliers for supply of Micro Computer, Printer and Voltage Stabilizer at an estimated cost of Tk 2,78,000.00.

Intending tenderers shall have to obtain permission for purchasing tender papers etc. on application to the undersigned. Application must accompany GIR certificate, Trade licence and certificate of experience about concern works/supplies etc. from reputed organisations. Tender papers and other terms & conditions will be available from the office of the undersigned on payment of Tk 400.00 (non-refundable) to the Sonali Bank, BUET branch, Dhaka. Each tender must accompany a Bank Draft or Pay Order from Nationalised Bank amounting to 5% of the quoted amount as earnest money deposited in favour of the Comptroller of this University without which no tender will be considered. Tenders must be put into the tender box kept for this purpose in this office up to 2-30 PM of 22-6-94 and will be opened on the same day at 2-35PM before the tenderers present.

The University authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders or one or more items of any tender without assigning any reason whatsoever.

No tender papers will be sold on the opening day of the tender.

Deputy Director
Planning & Development