

## Why Transport Strike?

On the first day of the 48-hour transport strike called by the Sarak Paribahan Sramik Federation one transport worker was killed, more than 100 others, including passengers, were injured — 10 of them seriously. There were series of clashes between the supporters of the strike and those of, opposing transport organisations. This once again brings to the fore the inevitable question of anarchic development we are fast plunging into, thanks to the administrative stoicism. Impressions from almost every sector are aplenty, that no one has the slightest qualms to take law in his own hands. There is a general tendency to settle score through organised terrorism or anarchy. And all this by default of the government.

'We do not question the right to strike or other peaceful means of demonstration. But certainly oppose violence, use of force and other intimidatory means often resorted to in the name of strikes, hartals and demonstrations. If striking is a democratic right, opposing the move is as much a fundamental option. But neither side has the right to impose on each other its own decision. It is exactly at this point the striking transport workers have infringed upon the non-striking workers' rights. They have not only burnt two buses but also damaged about 25 others. Reportedly the police stood silent spectators and intervened only after hours of clashes.

The police action is symbolic of the wait-and-see policy of the government. When such is the law enforcers' stoic response to running battles, it is futile to expect responsible behaviour from striking or opposing employees. Otherwise, how can one explain the 48-hour transport strike that has caught the general public off guard. Before going for such a lengthy programme, there is a need for coming through several stages and exercises, none of which was done this time. Surprisingly, no prior warnings or notices were even issued. But conventional wisdom says that such public services cannot be delinked from responsibilities to the users. That principle has long been a casualty with the administration not doing its part of the job properly. To revive the order and restore confidence in the administrative ability, the government must come clean on the issue and act promptly. It needs to be tough as well. Long accumulated garbage has to be get rid of from the system. Can the government rise up to the challenge?

## A Growing Threat to Health

There was a time in the Pakistani colonial span when the so-called Chinese eateries spread over Dhaka city. In recent years video shops have proliferated all over the city in the same fashion. The way diagnostic centres and hospitals and clinics are sprouting everywhere in the town, this new growth may in no time beat the earlier fads hollow — in terms of number of joints as also of size of investment. One knows only too well that the spread of diagnostic centres or plain pathological labs are a phenomenon very close to the mushrooming of coaching centres. In the former case physicians and surgeons have struck a gold mine to supplement their fabulous but regular earning. In the later teachers and even students have devised a new mechanism to fleece students caught up in the admission ordeals. It is foolish therefore to be waximpressed by the growth of any apparently helpful enterprise.

Nothing illustrates the point better than the growth of the privately owned and run clinics and hospitals. While there is no way of guaranteeing that a spurt in hospital bed numbers to even twofold the present city capacity, inclusive of government facilities, would at all mean more people would get their money's worth of medical care, there is literally no end to the problems this will create. For one thing this will blow up the as yet unaddressed albeit very serious problem of disposal of hospital waste.

Hospital services have so long been exclusively a government enterprise. There was as such no problem in getting the hospitals to abide by instructions government felt were necessary in the interest of national medicare. It is strange yet true that neither the government nor hospital administrations on their own did devise any acceptable way of hospital waste disposal. Now with the radical growth of hospital treatment in the private sector, the waste problem is sure to pose a serious threat to the health of all residing in this megacity. Hospital waste is very special in that most of these are contaminated stuff very easily polluting and infecting the city's water and atmosphere.

The government needs to formulate an exhaustive and fail-safe policy in the matter and in an urgent manner.

## Science Projects by the Thousand

About three thousand research projects on science and technology are going on in 61 research organisations under 15 ministries. That is some extraordinary news. But coming from no less an important functionary than a minister of state, it must be true. Coming to think of it, it seems to be quite possible that government conducts so much of scientific research. With each project entailing a cost of say Tk 5 lakh on an average the whole undertaking would cost Tk 1.5 billion. We never knew government spent so much money on application of science. Very encouraging indeed.

From water management and meteorology to that oldest of all composite sciences — agriculture — there are vast areas calling for scientific research. And the overall need must be gigantic. For the government to correctly respond to this need, projects could be drawn by the tens of thousands. But before we can appreciate the position of government commitment in relation to the need for such research we must be told of what constitutes a project. And we are also very interested to know what happens to these projects and how are their end-results garnered.

There seems to be an absolute indifference inside the government about letting the people know of the government's thinking and activity involving the question of bringing the benefits of modern science to society. This nation is still steeped in anti-science prejudice and obscurantism of the weirdest kind. One way of avoiding being bogged down under its weight is to go for science in a bigger way and make our people aware of such exertions.

THE crisis in fertilizer, if it is a crisis, need some explanation. The farm-level scarcity of fertilizer in the boro planting season, directly implied that the demand was so much in excess of supply at that particular point of time, that prices shot up like nobody's business and farmers became so desperate that they were forced to take the law in their own hands.

Fertilizer godowns and trucks were looted; dealers beaten up — these were the unusual incidents reported by newspapers. This is simply because fertilizer today is food tomorrow. We must (Government included) realize that fertilizer riots and food riots are two sides of the same gramophone record. It is the tune of fire on both sides and if the desire is to make some quick money, the chances are that it would turn (burn) black due to the same fire.

The crisis in fertilizer cannot be explained by the lack of availability of fertilizer in the country. According to government statistics, domestic production of fertilizer increased from less than a million tons seven years back (1986/87) to near around three million tons by the end of the last fiscal year. All told, it was an almost three-fold expansion. In fact, we never had it so good and with effect from last year, fertilizer export amounted to as much as 20 per cent within last two years.

At the same time, farmers suffered. They paid much more, often more than double, the factory price. Therefore, someone or few in-between the producer that is the government and farmers made lots of money. According to my estimates, at least half a million tons of urea was involved and a profit of at least Tk 4,000 per ton would mean a colossal amount of 200 crore taka was secured by newly appointed dealers. This is blood money to say the least, and one day very soon, those who made it must also pay for it in the same way. In the meantime, I do hope that the Income Tax authorities would obtain the list of dealers, how much they had received from urea fertilizer factories, thereafter easily calculate the bloody profits and secure the rightful share in taxes. At least that part might be ploughed back for the welfare of the farmers. Or am I out of my mind to expect such welfare notions from the Income Tax department?

It is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at least 40 per cent higher than that. No where else fertilizer business

is beyond any rational explanation why the price of urea was brought down to only US\$ 93/ton while the international market price was at