

Dhaka Day by Day

A Case for Rickshaw

by Sharier Khan

In the face of a never-ending and menacing traffic jam in the city, a strong opinion in favour of eliminating rickshaws is growing in society.

"We will not resist reducing the number of rickshaws from the city. Traffic jam is our concern as well. But first, determine the optimum number of rickshaws for this city of seven million people, and we would help reducing this number accordingly."

Shahar Ali has always been vocal about rights of the rickshaw-pullers, against stealing of rickshaws and introduction of a rational system for providing licenses and number plates which can not be counterfeited.

"We are the most ignored class. If rickshaw is the root of all evil for traffic jams, why the authorities never thought of educating the rickshaw-pullers about the traffic rules."

The City Corporation has stopped giving licenses to new rickshaws from 1986. It has authorised 88,260 licenses, but there is an estimated three lakh rickshaws in the city, all of which run with fake licenses and number plates which are provided by a section of unscrupulous DCC employees.

"And that is the problem. Anybody can own a rickshaw and anybody can drive a rickshaw as long as there is a raw deal.

Therefore, rickshawpulling remains a most easy-to-get job. No one needs training or a little care about this job," Shahar opined.

He firmly believes if the government provided licenses for 1.5 lakh rickshaws, the making of illegal rickshaws would stop and thereby, rickshaws would not cause traffic jams in the future.

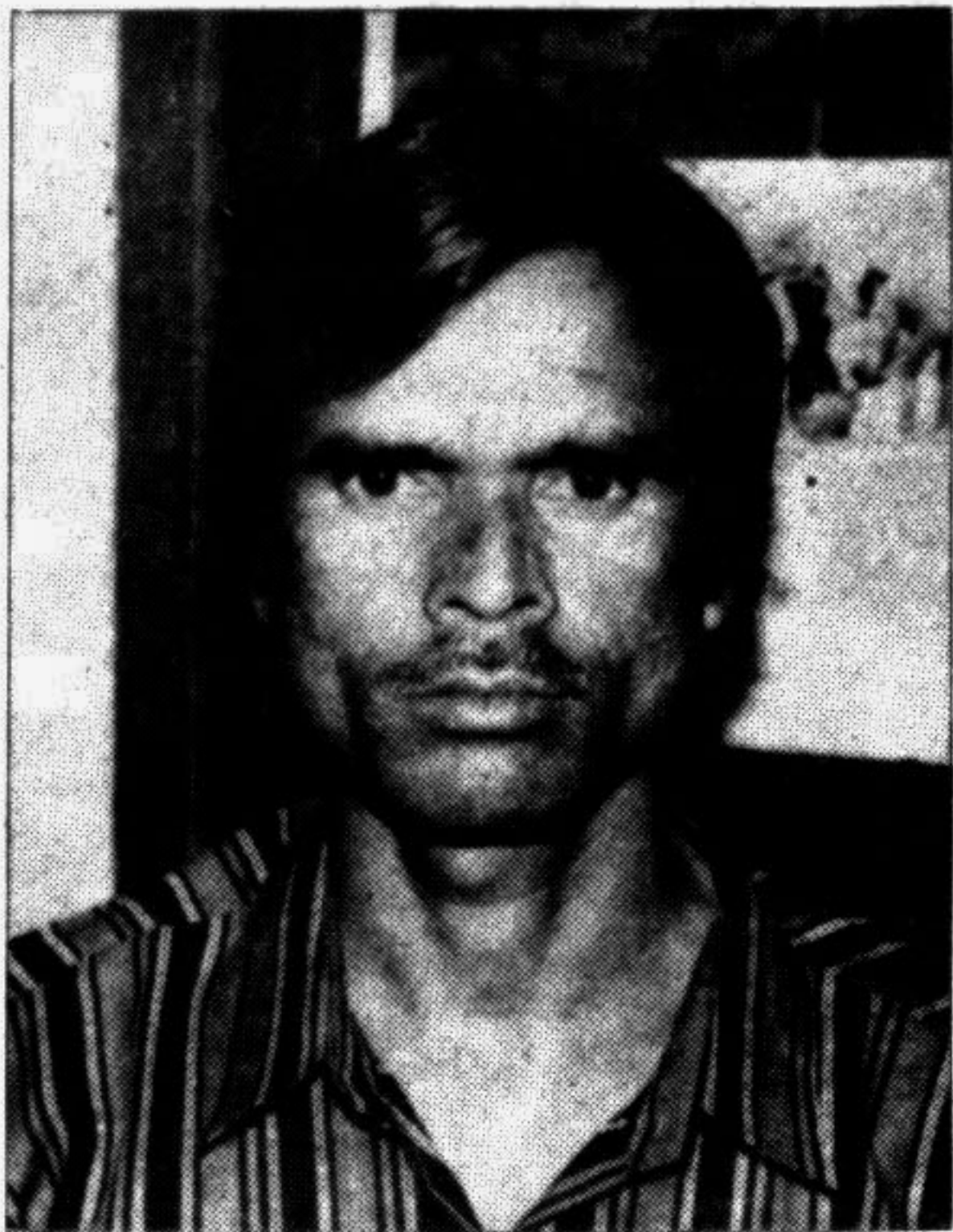
"You can not just banish rickshaw from the city. If you do, first you must ensure jobs for the rickshawpullers. To do that, you will need a lot of investment," Shahar pointed out.

A rickshaw owner since 1976 and a leader since the early eighties, 40 year old Shahar Ali observed that it providing genuine licenses and "counterfeit-proof" number plates were continued, the pullers and owners might have taken the matter much more professionally and would have been respectful about traffic rules.

Presently, according to his estimates, there are nearly 3 lakh rickshaw pullers in the city and 20,000 rickshawowners

Although an owner, Shahar speaks for rickshawpullers because he believes that there are hardly any social gap between a rickshaw owner and a puller and they share a common interest.

He maintains regular contact with the DCC authorities. In several applications he appealed to the authorities to keep the footpaths of Gulistan free from vendors and hawkers, to remove the bus terminal and take actions against "voluntary traffic controllers," who, he blames, take illegal tolls from vehicles and steal manhole covers.



The Jatiya Party Secretary Gen Anwar Hossain Monju speaking at a rally held in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

BELA concerned over poor health services

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association (BELA) yesterday served a legal notice to authorities concerned for proper maintenance of health centres in the country, reports UNB.

The BELA requested the authorities either to ensure that private clinics, hospitals, diagnostic centres and laboratories, including Islamia Eye Hospital (IEH), comply with the requirements of law or else close them down until such compliance is maintained within three days from the date of receipt of the notice.

The notice was served to Secretary, Health and Family Welfare Ministry, the Director-General of the Directorate of Health Services, the Chairman of Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council and the Chairman/Director, IEH.

In its notice, BELA cited

newspaper reports that safety, hygiene, sterilisation and other precautionary measures to operate high-risk instruments of X-Ray, CT Scan and all that were very poor or non-existent in most of those areas and inadequate standard of operating facilities and tools were resulting in deaths and grave injuries to the patients.

Besides, many people lost their eyes for being either negligence or for fungal infection owing to unhealthy and infectious conditions of the operating tools and ancillaries.

BELA alleged that the authorities had failed to perform the statutory obligation to ensure sound health service system for the people.

It requested the authorities to take immediate action as per law, otherwise appropriate legal action would be taken against them.

Caretaker govt issue BCL threatens agitation

Pro-Awami League Chhatra League leaders yesterday threatened to paralyse the country by waging greater action programmes if the government did not concede to the opposition demand for a caretaker government, reports UNB.

Addressing a rally in front of Jatiya Press Club in the morning, the BCL leaders said the situation would go beyond control if the ruling party did not accept the demand even after the 96-hour hartal.

The rally was addressed, by BCL general secretary Ishaq Ali Khan Panna, Mahbul Huq Shaki, Moniruzzaman Monir, Akhter Hossain and Ajoy Kar Khokon.

They also held a rally at Farmgate protesting the alleged attack on Awami League President Sheikh Hasina in the afternoon. They blamed JCD activists for the attack.

Dhaka City (South) BCL will organise a rally today in front of the Press Club protesting the attack.

CPA to keep offices open on Friday

CHITTAGONG, Oct 18: The Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) will keep its offices open on next Friday as normal working day to clear the congestion caused by the 96-hour hartal, official sources said today.

The decision was taken as per the directive of the Commerce Ministry, the sources added.

CPA has already issued letters to customs and other relevant bodies requesting for keeping their offices open on that day.

UN fair in city Oct 24

A three-day "United Nations Fair" in observance of the 50th founding anniversary of UN will begin in the city on October 24, reports UNB.

The programmes of the fair include cultural function, art competition and open film show at Bangladesh Shishu Academy to be organised by the office of the Dhaka Divisional Commissioner.

To mark the day, Motijheel Government Boys and Girls High School will also organise an essay competition for the school students of Dhaka division at 4 pm on October 23.

Fair and cultural functions will also be held in Myemensingh and Netrakona districts on October 24 and 25 respectively in this connection.

Transit consignment of fertiliser for Nepal stranded at Ctg Port

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Oct 18: A transit consignment of 6,000 metric tons of fertiliser for Nepal has got stranded at the Chittagong Port due to the hartal.

A ship, MV Progress Excellence, now anchored at jetty No 9, arrived here on October 15 from Singapore carrying the transit cargo.

Railway officials said, wagons were put on the line but due to hartal the unloading of cargo remained suspended.

Bangladesh Railway has so far carried about 5 lakh tons of goods to Nepal since the signing of a transit agreement between Bangladesh and Nepal in 1976.

A memorandum of understanding also was signed with India in August, 1978 allowing the movement cargo through India.

RU exam postponed for lack of question papers

From RU Correspondent

RAJSHAHI UNIVERSITY, Oct 18: Final year examination of a subject of the Law Department had to be postponed because the authorities failed to give the examinees the question papers.

Over one hundred examinees who sat for the examination on "Muslim Law" this morning had finished writing their roll and registration numbers in the answer sheets when the chairman of the department declared the examination postponed.

The chairman said that the question papers could not be brought to the examination hall because the Controller's Office could not provide those.

4 dacoits held in N'ganj

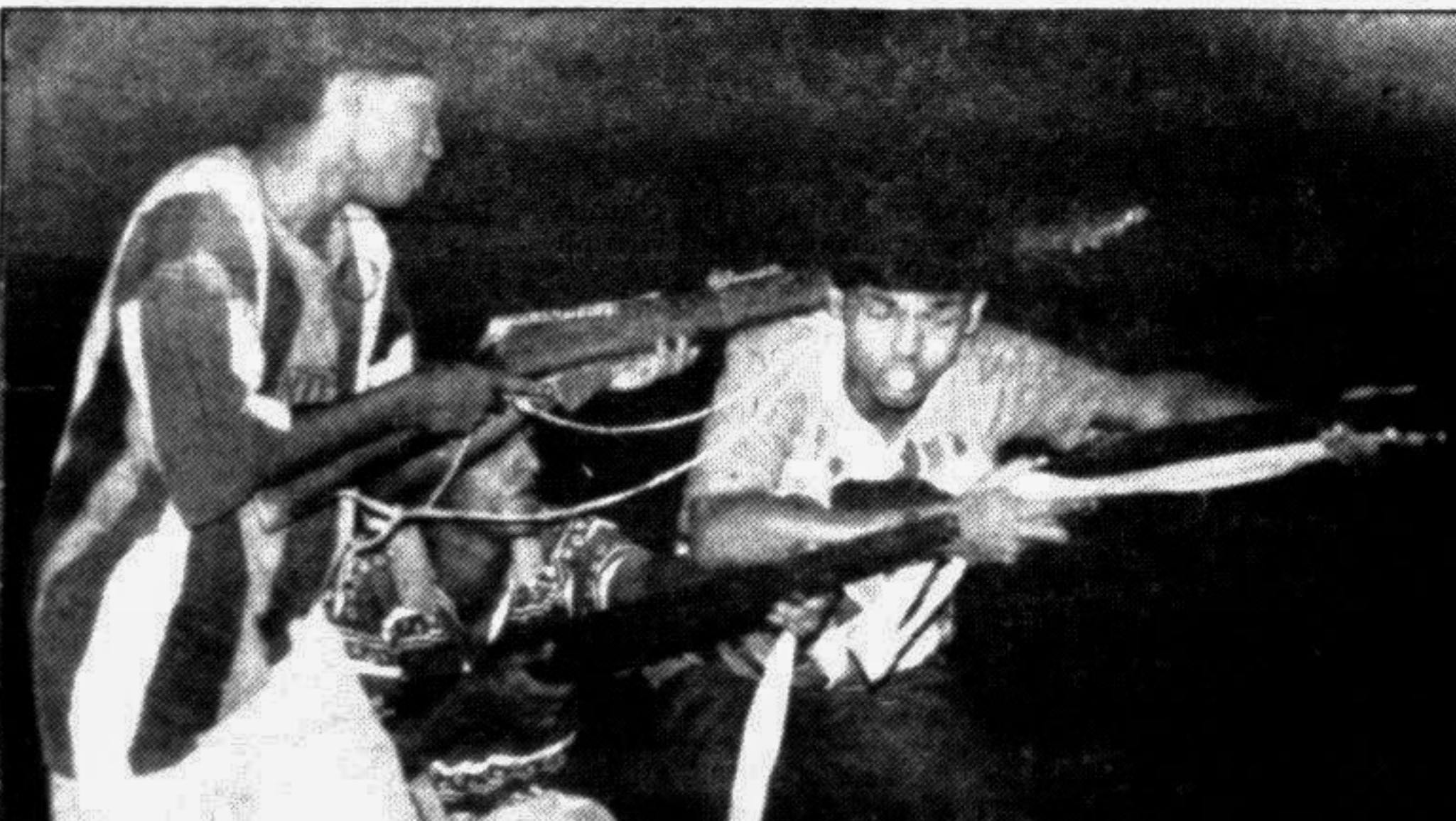
From Our Correspondent

Police arrested four dacoits along with a hijacked truck from Ruppangj thana area of the Narayanganj town yesterday.

Police said, the four — Malek, Jali, Sher Kha and Shahidul Islam — along with 10 other armed dacoits hijacked a five-tonne truck loaded with tin-foils Sunday from Ruppangj area.

More relief for N-dists

The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief has allocated another 185 metric tons of rice for the affected people of the flood-stricken northern districts, an official handout said, reports BSS.



A sequence of the play Trial on Camera staged at the Mahila Samity auditorium in the city recently.

Directorate General Defence Purchase Ministry of Defence New Airport Road, Tejgaon Dhaka-1215 Tender Notice

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার আনসার ও গ্রাম প্রতিরক্ষা সদর দপ্তর বিলপী ও চাকা দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

Weather Thundershower likely Temporary light to moderate rain or thundershower is likely at a few places over Barisal, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Khulna, Rajshahi and Chittagong divisions in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

তিতাস গ্যাস ট্রান্সমিসন এন্ড ডিস্ট্রিবিউশন কোম্পানী লিমিটেড (পেট্রোবাংলার একটি সাবসিডিয়ারি কোম্পানী) পুনঃ দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি

BCIC International Tender Notice Khulna Newsprint Mills Ltd., Town Khalishpur, Khulna invites International sealed Tender No. PD (F)- 50/95 for Purchase of Electrical Spares which will be opened on 28-11-1995 at 3-00 PM.

Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha Head Office 141-143, Motijheel Commercial Area BIWTA Bhaban (5th & 6th floor) Dhaka Law Department Notice for Sale of Mortgaged Assets and Properties of M/s Rahman Jute Tape Industries (Pvt.) Limited, Padmavilla, Jessore