

# Dhaka Day by Day

## Hartal Has its Own Rules

by Zunaid Iqbal

The city of Dhaka can be an attractive scene of entertainment often during periods of hartal. I was a regular passer by in the street on one of these hartal days.

I was riding a rickshaw on a fairly calm road of Pantha Path. I noticed that all the stores by the street were closed. Perhaps not all, a few I noticed were open. These were stores that had video games seemingly for the entertainment of little children on the street (the ones we frequently identify as tokais).

Great! In the turmoil of all the economic problems relating to hartal, these video game stores are making some radical planning to keep at bay all the problems that may hinder their flourishing businesses; surely it's quite a trade secret. I was naive to ponder on where the little boys were getting the money to spend on video games, especially the kind who hardly get sufficient to eat their daily meals.



After riding for a while on my rickshaw, I reached the junction at the Mirpur Road. A police van was stationed at the corner, yet the friendly neighborhood 'shantashis' were nice enough to tell me that I should get off the rickshaw. I behaved myself; I wasn't in a mood to show much gallantry. I began taking the hike. Not more than a few steps had I taken, I heard a big noise behind me. I turned around, trying to find the source of the trouble. To my surprise, I noticed a few 'tokais' blocking a rickshaw (surely, someone more gutsy than my rickshawpuller, and a rider more assertive than me), and had managed to relegate 'richshawala'

out of his seat. Few more seconds elapsed and the rickshaw began to disintegrate. First the air went out of the tires, next it was toppled over, and hence the little hands expert at manoeuvring video game joysticks were adroitly at service to complete a destruction. However, it definitely seemed to me that they had a few silent instructors standing around the street, who were giving directions as to control the extent of damage. The police van standing about fifty yards away was probably enjoying the action as it took the driver about ten minutes to start up the van and arrive at the scene. By then, one of the tires were broken. The episode ended fast. Not much was said, or done by the police and the tokais were back to playing video games. I found the wisdom leading to the source of money found by these children to play on video games.

The economics of supply and demand is quite simple here. The parties calling for hartal have a large demand for picketers. Since the supply of little children (tokai) is abundant in city streets of Dhaka, this large resource of population can be utilized for a purposeful organized job of picketing and various other hartal-related petty violence. As supply is high, the price is also low. Hence the political parties are essentially making a low investment, and therefore wise to organize a successful hartal. But on the other hand, the video game stores are keeping this large group happy and entertained. Therefore, they are eventually pocketing a large portion of the investment made by the hartal organizer.



The BNP brought out a procession yesterday in the city protesting the Opposition's ongoing non-cooperation programme. — Star photo

### 3 lakh more digital phones to be installed

The Post and Telecommunications Ministry has decided to install three lakh more digital telephones at a cost of Taka three thousand crore under Build, Lease and Transfer (BLT) scheme by the year 1999, reports BSS.

The decision was taken in principle at a review meeting of the progress of different ongoing projects of the T and T Board held at the ministry's conference room with Post and Telecommunications Minister Tariqul Islam in the chair.

Post and Telecommunications Secretary M Hafizuddin Khan, chairman of Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board MH Choudhury and senior officials of the ministry and the board were present.

It was informed in the meeting that to meet the increasing demand of telephones in the capital city, more 22 thousand digital telephones would be given from Sher-e-Bangla Nagar exchange including 10 thousand conversion of 31 analogue telephone exchanges and 24 thousand digital phones from Moghbazar exchange with four thousand conversion of old 40 exchange within March 1996. This conversion from analogue to digital would be made free of cost along with a telephone set to the subscriber.

Besides, to meet the demand of telephones outside the capital more eight thousand digital phone connection would be given by March 31, at Chittagong, Barisal, Jessore, Mymensingh, Moulvibazar and Sylhet on first come first serve basis.

Moreover, in April 10 thousand telephone from Mirpur exchange, 10 thousand from Nilkhet exchange in July and seven thousand five hundred from Gulshan exchange in August will be given to the subscribers.

### What's on today

**Asiatic Society lecture:** Professor Syed Anwar Hussain of Dhaka University will deliver a talk on "Separatism, Communalism and Fundamentalism: Pejoratives revisited." Venue: The society seminar room. Time: 4 pm.

**Rotary Club of Ramna:** The weekly meeting of the club will be held. Venue: Sonargaon hotel. Time: 5:30 pm.

**Rotary Club of Motijheel:** The regular weekly meeting of the club will be held. Venue: Purbani hotel. Time: 5:30 pm.

**Nazrul Institute:** In observance of *Atumar Ekushey* a seminar and cultural function has been arranged. Chairman of the Institute Obaid-ul-Huq will preside over the function while Dr Razzeb Humayun will present a paper. Prof Wakil Ahmed and Prof Mir Abul Hossain will take part in the discussion. A cultural soiree will follow. Venue: Nazrul Institute. Time: 4 pm.

### Weather

#### Thundershower likely

Rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at a few places over Dhaka, Rajshahi, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions on the next 12 hours (till 6 pm today), reports UNB.

It may also occur at one or two places over Khulna and Barisal divisions. Met office said, adding night temperature may remain nearly unchanged during the period.

Country's lowest temperature 15.5 degree Celsius was recorded at Comilla and the highest 30.8 degrees at Khulna. The sun sets today at 6 pm while rises on Saturday at 6:23 am.

Minimum and maximum temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	min	max	morning	evening
Dhaka	19.3	30.1	75	62
Chittagong	19.3	30.0	88	73
Rajshahi	19.0	26.5	85	—
Khulna	16.0	30.8	—	—
Barisal	19.2	29.0	87	63
Sylhet	16.5	28.0	80	72



Jatiya Party secretary general and Ittefaq Editor Anwar Hossain Monju is being taken to Kushtia jail from Dhaka Central Jail on Sunday night. — Star photo

### Attack on Inquilab Editor's house deplored

Leaders of Bangladesh Sanbadpatri Parishad (BSP) in a statement yesterday strongly condemned the attack on the residence of the Editor of the Daily Inquilab, AMM Bahaudin, reports BSS.

BSP president Prof. Majedul Islam and general secretary Abul Kashem Majumder in their joint statement said a group of armed youths had created a horrifying situation by firing and bombing at the residence of the editor of the Daily Inquilab Sunday night.

"We count this attack as an utter threat on the freedom of the press," the BSP leaders said, adding that this kind of evil act to stop the pen of journalists and editors through threat would undermine the democratic process and values.

They said the editorial institution of the country would be made hostage in the hands of anti-social elements if terrorists and miscreants were allowed to attack journalists.

The BSP leaders referred to earlier attacks on newspaper offices and journalists and said they were deeply concerned at the firing and bombing at the residence of the editor of the Daily Inquilab.

The BSP leaders urged the Ministry of Home Affairs and the highest authority to inquire into the incident, arrest and punish the terrorists for this heinous act.

### Shaheed Day observed in Islamabad

The historic 'Shaheed Day' was observed in the Bangladesh mission in Islamabad on Thursday with due solemnity, BSS reports from Islamabad.

A discussion was organised at the residence of the high commissioner which was attended by a large number of Bangladeshis living in Pakistan.

High Commissioner Gama Rahin spoke on the spirit and significance of the Language Movement, which had contributed to the independence of Bangladesh. It is necessary to continue efforts for attaining objectives of the Language Movement through introducing Bangla at all strata of life and help develop further Bengali language and literature, he added.

The discussion was followed by a recitation session of Bengali poems dedicated to the martyrs. Munajat was also offered for the peace of the souls of the martyrs and sustained progress and prosperity of Bangladesh.

A cultural programme was presented on the occasion by the members of the families of the officials of the mission and Bangladeshis living in Islamabad. The national flag was hoisted at half mast on the high commissioner's residence and the chancery.

### Nizami asks govt to resign

The Jamaat-e-Islami secretary general yesterday said people have set an example in the movement for safeguarding democracy and protecting voting right, by "resisting farcical polls and observing non-cooperation" programme, reports UNB.

"If the BNP has any faith on democracy then it will give a chance to the Election Commission to cancel the election of conspiracy," Maulana Mattur Rahman Nizami told a party rally.

Addressing the rally at the north gate of Baitul Mukarram mosque on the third-day of the opposition's "non-cooperation" programme, Nizami said the government should immediately resign "showing respect to the people's demand for election under a neutral non-party caretaker government."

He said even after three days of non-cooperation of the people, the government has no feelings about their appeal and has been continuing its "autocratic and undemocratic style" to suppress the movement.

"No autocratic government could stay in chair by using muscle power, and this government will be no exception," he said calling upon the people to continue the non-cooperation upto 2 pm on Wednesday.

### Photo exhibition

A photo exhibition on "To Be or Not to Be: The Industrial Destruction of Nature" begins in the city today, reports UNB.

State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahanara Begum will attend the inaugural programme at Bangladesh National Museum as chief guest.

German Ambassador to Bangladesh will be present as guest of honour while Cultural Secretary Mokhesur Rahman as the special guest.

Bangladesh National Museum and German Cultural Centre have jointly organised the exhibition.

Meanwhile, State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof Jahanara Begum will distribute awards among the best Bangla handwriting practitioners at the National Museum on Wednesday. It will be followed by a cultural function.

### Envoy to Maldives named

The government has deputed to concurrently accredited Masum Ahmed Chowdhury as the High Commissioner of Bangladesh to the Republic of the Maldives, reports BSS.

### BFUJ, DUJ condemn arrest of Ittefaq, Al-Amin editors

Leaders of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) yesterday strongly condemned the arrest of editor of Daily Ittefaq Anwar Hussain Manju and editor of Daily Al-Amin Alhaj Maqbul Hussain, reports BSS.

BFUJ president Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury and secretary general Shihjahan Mia and DUJ president Abul Kalam Azad and general secretary Azizul Islam Bhuiyan in a joint statement also condemned the attack on the residence of editor of Daily Inquilab AMM Bahaudin.

The journalist leaders expressed their deep concern at the "oppression and harassment" on journalists in Dhaka and elsewhere of the country.

The BFUJ and DUJ leaders said that the government did not repeal the special powers act despite repeated demand. "Instead, the government is using this black law to arrest and harass journalists, editors and opposition leaders and workers," they said in the statement.



Police firing tear gas shells to disperse pickets at the city's Zero Point yesterday. — Star photo

### Special Invitation

The Dhaka YWCA new school building Inaugural Ceremony will be held on Friday, 1st March, 1996 at 4:00 p.m.

All YWCA students are invited to this programme. Students are requested to come by 3:00 p.m.

**YWCA of Dhaka**  
10-11, Green Square, Green Road, Dhaka-1205, Phone : 506601.

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### CAREER OPPORTUNITY

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