

Dhaka Day by Day Eccentric Bus Ride

by Chandra Shekhar Das

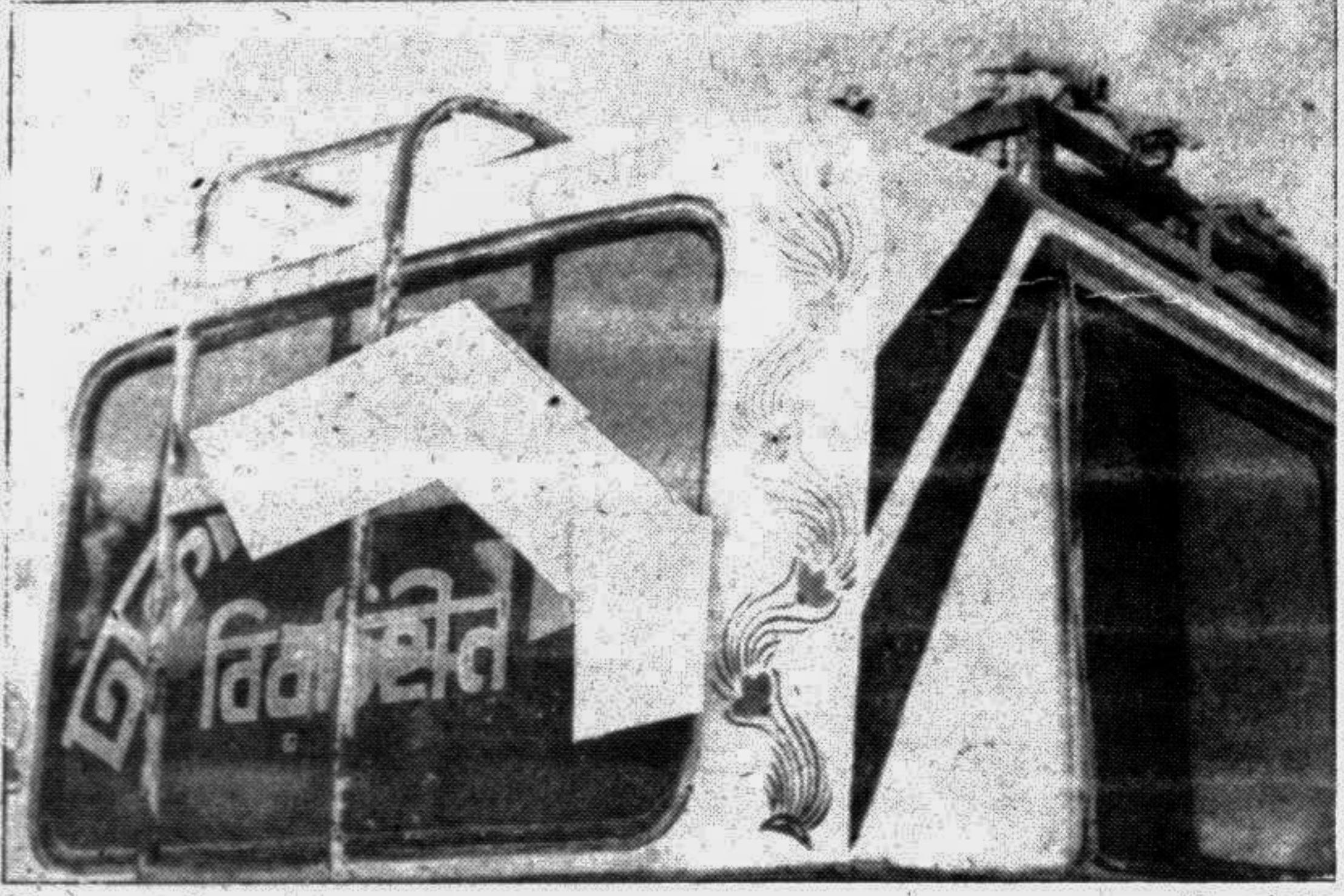
With his torso leaned out to left and the left hand caught in an act of tireless thumping, the helper turned janitor attracts the huddled commuters at different pockets. Signaling to the prospective passengers, he continues his persuasive assault on your ear drums, gatelock, gatelock! Piercingly audible in the repetitive chants of the crew, who has been graduated overnight from the school of observation and reciprocal necessity, and barely visible in the handwork on the gates of the private buses and minibuses 'gatelock' is a word that like many others in our vocabulary continues to exist — albeit far and long removed from the context of its origin.

For the inexperienced bus riders, the word is a decoy capable of disappointment and exasperation. Those who are taken in by this unpaid ad are generally left with the feeling of travelling in a local train deemed earlier as a maltrain. It stops, stuffs and slithers. Most people do not mind such hypocrisy.

Those who do, generally believe in the spirit of asides. And if on occasions one or two of that tolerant audience hit out at the aberrating vehicle managers, the huge drone of the automobile demon, nonchalance and broad smile of the passengers in appreciation of a comedy of acrimony and above all, the slang-happy conductor's inarticulate often angry at-

tempt at justifying his ways bring down the curtain on such edifying enterprises.

If the conductors and helpers are adept in taking the mickey out of you, drivers, the quieter and more technically advanced components of the crew of private buses are capable of producing dooms-day visions. Theirs is a feat meriting to be described as an improvement upon static strategy vis-a-vis man's competitive instinct. More often than not, the driver of a third bus behind the two arrived earlier at a stoppage, would bring his monstrous toy to a halt right in front of the still, small and shimmering queue of automobiles. The touch of ingenuity is not in the act of giving a damn to the norm of letting the first arrived the privilege to leave the stoppage first but in the diabolical idea of thwarting that possibility. Normally the bosses of these lately arrived buses stop the vehicles dangerously and diagonally right in front of their front-runner at the stoppages. Half of the body blocks any attempt of movement in a straight line and half, precisely the posterior, is left to occupy what little room for passage is left on the road in a manner so that no other 'rival' can steal its thunder by getting round it. For all the fits of annoyance, you cannot deny that the Bengalees are an innovative race.



Playing pranks. — Star photo



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina addressing a delegation of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists at her office in city yesterday. — PID photo

BFUJ team meets Hasina

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said, her government believes in total freedom of the press to help establish a true democratic system in the country, reports BSS.

The Prime Minister was talking to a delegation of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and its federal units at her office in the city yesterday.

BFUJ president Iqbal Sobhan Choudhury led the delegation. Leaders of Dhaka, Chittagong, Jessore, Bogra, Khulna, Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Mymensingh unions of journalists and Dinajpur Press Club were also present.

What's on today....

Workshop on agri technology: A three-day national workshop on 'Transfer of Agricultural Technology' will begin. Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (BARC) has organised the workshop in cooperation with Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE). Minister for Agriculture, Food, Relief and Disaster Management Begum Matia Chowdhury will inaugurate the workshop as chief guest. Venue: BARC auditorium. Time: 9 am.

Film show: Two British films, 'Shadowland' and 'Widow's Peak' will be screened. Venue: British Council auditorium. Time: 4 pm and 6:30 pm respectively.

Workshop on medical edn: A national level workshop on Examination System in Medical Education will be held. Health Minister Salahuddin Yusuf will inaugurate the workshop. Professor Usha Nayar, Chairperson, Centre for Medical Education and Technology, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi will speak. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 8 am.

Rotary Club of Dhaka North: The installation ceremony of office bearers 1996-97 of the club will be held. Chief guest: Vice-Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University Prof Amirul Islam Chowdhury. Venue: Sasakawa auditorium, ICD-DRB, Mohakhali. Time: 7:30 pm.

Rotary Club of Gulshan: The regular weekly meeting of the club will be held. Venue: Sajna restaurant. Time: 4:30 pm.

Rotary Club of Dhaka Central: The regular weekly meeting of the club will be held. Venue: Dhaka Club. Time: 1:30 pm.

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

..... and tomorrow

Seminar on Irrigation: The Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh has organised a seminar on 'Towards Sustainable Minor Irrigation Development in Bangladesh'. Dr Ainun Nishat of BUET will present the keynote paper. Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury will attend the seminar of chief guest. VC of BUET Dr M Shahjahan and president, IEB M Anwarul Azim will be present as special guests. Venue: IEB auditorium. Time: 10 am.

Goethe Institut: The Zahir Raihan Film Society will present a 3-day Krzysztof Kuslowski Retrospective (Part 1). Venue: Institut auditorium. House-10, Rd 9, Dhanmondi. Time: 5 pm.

Prize-giving ceremony: Awards will be distributed among winners of the S M Sultan Gold Medal Painting Competition 1996. Chief guest: Rafiqun Nabi. Venue: Shilpakala Academy auditorium. Time: 5 pm.



The Bangladesh Awami Krishak League brought out a procession in the city yesterday to protest the removal of a portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from the Cabinet Room of the Jatiya Sangsad recently. — Star photo

Konak's parents seek trial of his killers

By Staff Correspondent

The parents of a college student who was killed in an armed attack in the city, have sought the arrest and trial of the persons responsible for the killing.

Nafis Sadik Konak, a Dhaka College B.Com (Honours) first year student, was gunned down by miscreants at the city's New Elephant Road April 21. Some of his friends were also injured in the incident.

Konak's father, Foruq Ahmed, a retired divisional engineer of T&T Board, and mother Jahan-Ara Faruq, an associate professor of Viharun Ncassa Noon College, alleged that the killers of their son were now roaming around in the city freely.

Even after three months of the incident, police have not arrested any of the accused. A case was filed with Dhanmondi police station in this connection.

Konak's parents alleged that pressure was on them to withdraw the case. They also alleged that when contacted, the police told them the accused persons were in hiding.

The investigation officer of the case at Dhanmondi thana was not available for comments on the progress of the case.

Water shortage in Shantibagh

Thousands of people in Shantibagh area of the city have been facing acute scarcity of drinking water for the last three weeks.

However, the water scarcity has been prevailing for the last two months, local residents informed UNB.

They said, people of Central Road and Masjid Road were the worst-hit in the last few days, many families have reportedly left their houses at Shantibagh and taken shelter with relatives and friends in other areas of the city.

Many others were said to be taking their meals at nearby restaurants as home-cooking had to be stopped for want of water.

The residents alleged that despite repeated complaints, the WASA authority has failed to arrange emergency supply of water in the area.

When contacted, a WASA official in the complaint section told UNB yesterday that water projection of the Gulbagh Pump house fell sharply in last few days, causing water scarcity in the area. Steps are being taken to solve the problem, the official said.

He said that water was being supplied to some parts of the area on emergency basis, but the shortage was so acute that many parts could not be covered by WASA.

The WASA official, however, assured that the situation is likely to improve within two to three days.

SCI election

A 19-member executive committee with Dr Maswoodur Rahman and Mian Akbar Hussein as the president and the national secretary respectively of Service Civil International (SCI)-Bangladesh was elected at its biennial general meeting held Friday in the city, according to a press-release, reports BSS.

The other executives are: vice presidents — Asaduzzaman, Anwar Hossain, national treasurer — Shamsuddin Bahar Mojumder, assistant national secretaries — Kazi Khairul Hasan Masum and Quazi Wazed Hossain Papan.

Former information minister and president of SCI-Bangladesh Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelley presided over the meeting. The election was conducted by Md Mozammel Hoque as the election commissioner.

Indian HC calls on Razzak

The Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Dev Mukharji called on Minister for Water Resources Abdur Razzak at his office yesterday, reports BSS.

They discussed matters of mutual interest and exchanged views on various aspects of water resources of both the countries.

Screening suspended

Bangladesh Film Censor Board has suspended the censor certificates of two English feature films due to their illegal exhibition with obscenes at two cinema halls of Khulna, reports UNB.

The suspended films are — 'Spiritual Super Cop' imported by Nandan Trade International and 'Fatal Mission' imported by Screen Films Distributors, said a PID handout yesterday.

2 killed in road accidents

By DMCH Correspondent

At least two persons were killed in separate road accidents in Narayanganj and a young man was stabbed by toll collectors in the city 'Sun day, hospital sources said.

An accident occurred at Fatullah bus stand in the morning when a speeding truck ran over a pedestrian. He was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where he died just after arrival. The victim, aged about 60, could not be identified immediately.

In another road accident, a passenger was killed when a bus suddenly overturned at Arathazar thana, Narayanganj, in the afternoon. The victim was identified as Shamsuddin, 45.

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