

Dhaka Day by Day

A Two-wheel Ride to Freedom?

by Samia Islam

One cannot help but comprehend the need for a rapid solution of Dhaka's all-too-common traffic problems. Every one of us has his own opinion on what that ought to be. Some suggest subways and modern buses while others feel strongly about creating separate lanes for rickshaws, flyovers and other implausible things. What they lose sight of is the fact that we need a solution and very urgently. And what's even more thought-provoking is that we already have an avenue open to us that could combat the traffic woes most effectively and within the shortest time span. Know what I'm talking about? The bicycle, of course.

As these two-wheel wonders take up minimum space on roads, they will no doubt help to substantially decrease the frequency and magnitude of congestions. Thanks to this same feature, they are also able to freely get access to narrow lanes and by-lanes which are typical of most areas in Dhaka. They are low-cost, low-maintenance, light-weight, easy to manoeuvre

and easier still to learn how to ride. You don't need to get into a lot of hassle over parking space and security especially in the commercial areas. They are also safer in the sense that you are responsible for your own life and not handing it over to some share cropper who's had a run of bad luck and opted to migrate to the city to earn a living doing something he has never learnt how to do, in an environment that's as intimidating and foreign to him as New York is to any of us. In light of all the up-sides, it's hard to fathom why being a poor Asian country, we have an unexplained aversion to this mode of transportation which seems to have been custom-made for our society. Most other South Asian countries have bicycles ingrained in their cultural heritage. Imagine China without bicycles or any other Asian country for that matter. And even when these countries were moving to become Asian tigers, they did not leave their bikes behind. You can still see streets full of bikes in

Singapore, where traffic penalties are so severe that you are safer on a bicycle than in your car because any breach of a traffic law can cost you your license and more.

If the schools boys in Dhaka could only be taught or encouraged to commute to their schools on bikes, we could say goodbye to those horrific traffic jams that are created during school hours in say, Dhanmondi or Kakrail. But I suppose, kids would rather go to school in Dad's new ED or mom might think that biking is too risky for teenagers. But parents only consider it risky when it comes to putting some responsibility on their child's shoulders, otherwise the kids are never too young for loitering in fast food shops, going to private parties, eve-teasing or driving the family car at 15 to show off to friends and peers. Pity! Children in neighbouring countries have been navigating the streets for ages, if only our deshi parents have a thing or two to learn from their foreign counterparts.

Now, let's consider adults who are at least old enough to cope with the perils that come with the territory of biking. Could you possibly be seen in public paddling a bike to work? Wouldn't it hurt your image in society? Wouldn't the neighbours think that you are too poor to afford a car or even hire a rickshaw? Rickshaw rides with all the squabbles with the rickshawpuller over the fare and auto rickshaws with their constantly throbbing engines can give you a headache at the most. But a headache is far better than risking your social status and dignity by being seen on a bike around town. At least, by taking a rickshaw or opting to buy another car when the rising family errands demand it, you have your false sense of sophistication and a hollow pride in the knowledge that you choose not to stoop to manual labour even at the cost of your freedom of mobility. Let somebody else worry about the traffic, or carbon monoxide emissions or energy conservation. Chances are you won't be around to face the music anyway.



A section of the audience at a concert sponsored by Coca Cola, held at the Mirpur Indoor Stadium in the city yesterday.

—Star photo

What's on today . . .

Seminar on S&T: A day-long national seminar on 'S&T information infrastructures and services in Bangladesh', jointly organised by UNESCO and Bangladesh National Scientific and Technical Documentation Centre (BANSDOC), will be held. Chief guest: Minister for Education and Science and Technology A S H K Sadique. Venue: BANSDOC auditorium, BCSIR campus, Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi. Time: 10 am.

UNCHS seminar: Regional Community Development Programme for Asia of UNCHS and Nagar Gobesana Kendro have jointly organised a two-day seminar on 'Role of Community Development Programme in Housing and Settlement of Urban Poor People'. Chief guest: Afsar Uddin Ahmed Khan, State Minister for Housing and Works. Venue: Planning and Development Academy, Nilkhet. Time: 9 am.

Seminar on quality journalism: International University of Business Agriculture and Technology (IUBAT) has organised a seminar on 'Quality journalism in Bangladesh: Problems and prospects'. Now, let's consider adults who are at

Workshop on faculty development: A week-long faculty development workshop, organised by North South University and sponsored by American Institute for Bangladesh Studies and Centre for Development Research, Bangladesh will be inaugurated. Chief guest: State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abul Hasan Chowdhury. Venue: NSU, 12 Kemal Ataturk Avenue, Banani. Time: 10 am.

Lego building competition: A Lego toy building competition will be held. Chief guest: Karin Pedersen, regional manager (South Asia), Lego Overseas AS, Denmark. Venue: Toy Park, 23 Paribagh, Sonargaon Rd. Time: 3:30 pm.

Sidhu Bhai memorial lecture: Dr Anisuzzaman will deliver a lecture on 'Religion, Politics and statehood in Bangladesh'. The lecture has been arranged by Mokhesur Rahman Sidhu Bhai Sriti Sangsad. The Sangsad will also honour poet Sufia Kamal for her contributions. Venue: Biswa Sahitya Kendra auditorium. Time: 6:30 pm.

Steps taken to strengthen local govt : Hasina

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Thursday said her government had already taken steps to update and strengthen the local government system as per its election pledge, reports UNB.

"The aim of this government is a balanced development of all regions of the country," she said talking to 13 Union Parishad chairmen of Chandanaisa and Sankaria thanas of Chittagong district, who called on Hasina at her Parliament chamber.

She said the two-month-old government had already started taking measures to fulfil its election pledges, the Prime Minister told the local government representatives.

The UP chairmen extended their support for strengthening the local government under the government of 'national consensus'.

The delegation members are: A K M Nazimuddin, Ahmed Nabi, Ahmed Syed Chowdhury, Syed Ahmed, Abdul Mannan, Abul Kashem Rezu, Abdul Zabar, Nurul Afsar Chowdhury, Ahmed Kabir Chowdhury, Rafiq Ahmed, Advocate Mohammad Yonas and Rashed Hossain Dulu.

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GCO urges govt to free DU halls from terrorists

By DU Correspondent

The Ganatantrik Chhatra Oikya (GCO), a platform of some left-leaning student fronts, has urged the government to free the residential halls from the grip of armed terrorists.

At a press conference held at Madhu's canteen on Dhaka University campus yesterday evening, GCO also urged the government to take necessary steps, in consultation with the university authorities, for restoring congenial academic atmosphere in the campus.

GCO leaders said the government should take immediate action against the terrorists, irrespective of their political affiliation, to root out terrorism from the campus.

The GCO press conference was attended, among others by Aslam Khan and Hasan Hafizur Rahman Shohel of Chhatra Union, Obaidur Rahman Chunnun of Chhatra League (K-C) and Salfur Rahman Tapan of Samajtantrik Chhatra Fronts.

Weather

Moderate rainfall likely

Light to moderate rain accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over Chittagong, Sylhet, Rajshahi divisions and at one or two places over Dhaka, Barisal, Khulna divisions in the next 2 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Met office says day temperature may rise by 1 to 2 degree Celsius across the country.

Meantime, Jessore experienced the highest 26 mm rain during the last 24 hours till 6 am yesterday. Rajshahi and Barisal each had 9 mm rain, Sylhet and Khulna 7 each, and Faridpur and Cox's Bazar 3 mm each during the period.

Country's highest temperature 33.0 degree Celsius was recorded at Dhaka and Jessore yesterday and the lowest 23.0 degrees at Rangamati.

The sun sets today at 6:24 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:38 am. Maximum and minimum temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in percentage
	max	min
Dhaka	33.0	25.5
Chittagong	31.6	25.0
Rajshahi	32.2	25.2
Khulna	32.7	24.6
Barisal	32.5	23.3
Sylhet	31.0	24.5
Cox's Bazar	31.0	24.3
		morning
		evening
		78
		72
		75
		88
		83
		77
		74
		78
		71

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Executive Engineer
Facilities Department, Ministry of Education
Chittagong Zone, Chittagong

Tender Notice No: 03/GOB/CTGZ/FD/1996-97

Dated: 13-08-1996

Name of Project: Renovation & Development of selected Non-Govt Secondary Institute at thana level.

Sealed tenders in Bangladesh Form No-2908 are hereby invited from the enlisted A1 Contractors of this Department and also from the bonafide Furniture manufacturers for supply of furniture (High & low benches, Chair & Tables) to the selected Non-Govt. Institute under the Project Renovation & Development at thana level. Tender documents may be obtained from the office of the undersigned and also from the office of the Zonal Executive Engineer under Chittagong Circle, Ctg, during office hours upto 07-09-1996.

Tenders will be received in the above mentioned office on 09-09-1996 upto 12-00 Noon and will be opened on the same date at 12-30 PM in presence of the tenderer if any.

'Particulars of the works are shown below'

Gr. No.	Numbers of Institution	Price of tender document (Non-refundable)	Time for Completion (Month)
1	2	3	4
01.	10 (Ten) Nos.	400/=	05 (Five)
02.	10 (Ten) Nos.	400/=	05 (Five)

For the contractors other than Enlisted contractors of this Department, Tender documents may be obtained on producing the following documents:

- Upto date trade licence of the Firm.
- Upto date income tax payment certificate.
- VAT registration certificate.
- Work order & completion certificate (Attested by an officer not below the rank of Executive Engineer) for supplying of furniture amounting of Taka 50% (fifty per cent) of quoted amount in a single work order under any Govt/semi-Govt Department.
- VAT and it will be realised as per Govt. rule.

Earnest money @ 2% (Two per cent) of quoted amount in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order from any scheduled Bank of Bangladesh, will have to be submitted with the tender in favour of the Executive Engineer, Facilities Department, Ministry of Education, Ctg. Zone, Ctg.

The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

DFP-18547-20/8

G-982

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Executive Engineer.

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3. Have completed and been awarded atleast a Master's degree or equivalent at the time of application; and
4. Carry out the research under the tutorship of an academic supervisor in a host institution.

Applications must be submitted in the prescribed forms which can be obtained from the Bank's Administration and HR unit at the following address. Completed forms should be returned by 1 December, 1996 for onward submission to Washington DC. Closing date at Washington DC is 31 December, 1996. Late receipts will not be processed.

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