

Int'l confce on transport

Modernisation of transport services needed to overcome air pollution

Experts have called for modernisation of transport services in the city to contain congestion and environmental pollution caused by automobile emissions, reports APB.

A number of studies conducted over the past decade also underscored the need for providing affordable transport to the city residents, an international conference was told yesterday.

The two-day conference on "Bus transport in Bangladesh: a private sector procurement and financing initiative" has been jointly organised by Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), Ministry of Communications, Bangladesh Bank and the World Bank.

The conference will identify key issues and constraints facing the transport operation including regulatory, legal, financial and operational issues.

"Lack of coordinated and integrated planning for urban transport services led to sporadic growth in the number of personalised modes, which is compromising the very economic viability of the megacity," M A M Ziauddin, Executive Director of the newly set up Greater Dhaka Transport Planning and Coordination

Board (GDTPCB) said.

He said that over the past 20 years the city experienced a significant growth in auto-rickshaws and cycle rickshaws without any corresponding increase in mass transport system, particularly bus transport services.

The GDTPCB was established recently for preparation of overall transport plans and policies including plans for infrastructures, traffic management and clearance of transport related projects.

Ziauddin said the organisation has also been made responsible to oversee and coordinate the implementation of the US \$230 million Dhaka Urban Transport Project, with substantial assistance from the World Bank.

The project envisages building of fly-overs, construction, improvement and maintenance of roads, improvement of inter-sections, development of bus routes and terminals, improvement of traffic signaling and management, capacity building, personnel training, improvement of parking facilities and development of non-motorised transport route network.

Dhaka has an existing population of 9 million. But it is expected to become the seventh most populous city of the world by the year 2015 when its population is expected to reach about 16 million.

Experts pointed out that adequate investments in infrastructure and appropriate institutions will be needed to serve a megacity of this size.

According to Dhaka Integrated Transport Study, the estimated current demand for the city is more than 5,000 buses while there are only 1300 buses in service.

Presenting the keynote paper, A Quader Chowdhury, Managing Director of Phoenix Leasing Company, observed that slow-moving vehicles like rickshaws, vans and hazardous two-stroke vehicles like auto-rickshaw and tempos emit poisonous lead and other harmful substances and fumes which is hazardous for the city-dwellers.

Inaugurating the conference at a local hotel, Communications Minister Anwar Hossain urged entrepreneurs to invest in the country's transport sector.

The inaugural session was addressed, among others, by Finance Secretary Dr Akbar Ali Khan, World Bank Country Director Frederick T Temple and BRTA Chairman A N Hussain.



Jatiya Party brought out a mourning procession in the city yesterday for those who were killed in the 60-hour hartal.



A Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh procession mourning the deaths of those killed in the hartal yesterday in the city.



The Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) led by its newly-elected members of the executive committee paraded the main thoroughfares of the city yesterday.

Speakers at a seminar say Lack of coordination main cause of traffic congestion

Speakers at a workshop yesterday said lack of coordination among different bodies is the main cause behind the traffic congestion in the capital, reports UNB.

Dhaka Traffic Jam Prevention Committee (DTJPC) organised the training workshop for rickshaw and auto-rickshaw workers at the Photojournalists' Association office to find out ways and means to ease the unbearable traffic congestion in the city.

Speaking on the occasion DC (Traffic) Moshtaq Hossain claimed that there was no traffic jam in Dhaka City. He, however, termed the present situation as a traffic pressure, which has been created due to absence of coordination among different bodies like DESA, DCC, T&T and WASA.

He said that traffic jam is a usual phenomenon in Washington, London, Bangkok and other big cities across the world but the authorities there have taken alternate measures to ease the situation. But, here we are yet to take any effective step to solve problem, he said.

He said every day nearly one hundred vehicles are pouring into the city roads after getting licences from BRTA. The number of vehicles has been increasing unabated but city roads remain the same.

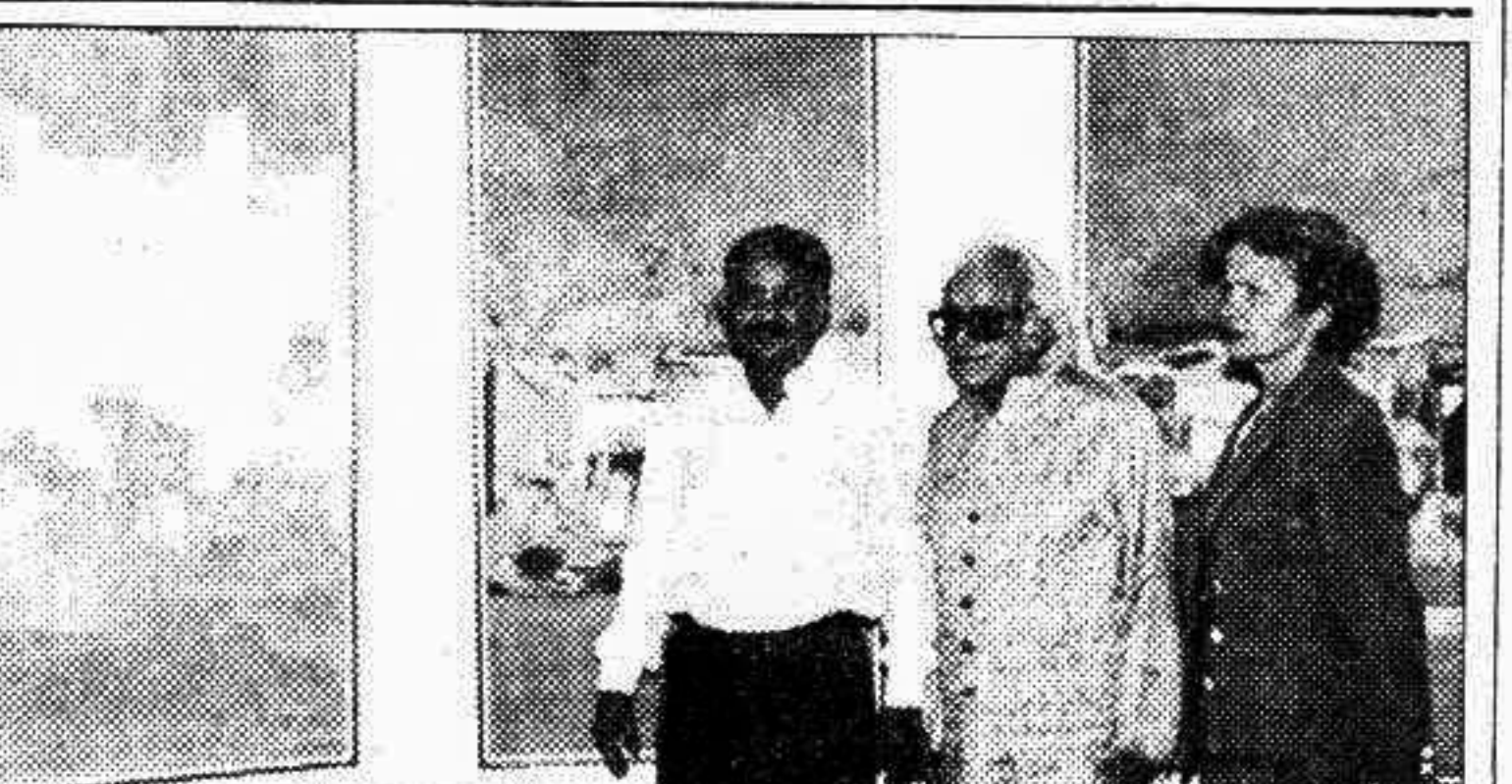
DC (Traffic) Abdul Jalil said obeying of traffic rules by the citizens would solve much of the problem.

DTJPC leaders identified seven causes, which are responsible for traffic jams in the city. These are: occupying of city roads by hawkers, unplanned digging of roads by various agencies, keeping construction materials on the roads, disorganised parking of vehicles, plying of vehicles beyond the city road capacity, lack of required number of traffic personnel, negligence of duties by the traffic personnel, and stoppage of buses and minibuses at every turning point for loading and unloading of passengers.

They urged the authorities concerned to take necessary measures to solve these problems for smooth plying of vehicles on the roads and freeing the city dwellers from suffocating traffic congestion.

They also demanded issuance of licences for all rickshaws and rickshawpullers. They said rickshaws and auto-rickshaws are not alone responsible for causing traffic jam in the city roads as claimed by many quarters.

Presided over by DTJPC convener Shukkur Ahmed the workshop was addressed, among others, by Babu Ramesh Chandra, Md Shah Alam Chowdhury and Insur Ali.



Artist Shafuddin Ahmed yesterday inaugurated the 11-day long solo exhibition of painter Mahmudul Haq at the Shilpangan gallery. Poet Shamsur Rahman was the special guest on the occasion.

JCD mourning procession in city

By DU Correspondent

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of opposition BNP, brought out a mourning procession in the city yesterday to protest the killing of Sajal Chowdhury, Mamun and Yusuf during the country-wide 60-hour hartal.

The procession started from the Dhaka University campus in the morning and concluded in front of National Press Club after parading different city streets.

JCD also organised a protest rally in front of the Press Club which was addressed, among others, by its president Habib-un-Nabi Sohel and leaders — Munsil Mazlul Basit Anjum, Hasan Jakir Tuhin, A B M Mostafizul Hossain, Mostafizul Islam Mamun and Harun-or-Rasheed.

BCL observes death anniversary of Basunia

By DU Correspondent

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) yesterday observed the 14th death anniversary of shaheed student leader Raufin Basunia in a befitting manner, reports BSS.

Police killed Basunia on this day of 1985 when he was participating in an anti-autocracy agitation against General Ershad.

Leaders of the BCL central executive committee in the morning placed wreaths at the bust of shaheed Basunia constructed near Mohsin Hall of Dhaka University. They observed one-minute silence in front of the bust.

Later, addressing a rally on the campus in observance the day, the BCL president Bahadur Bapary said, "the autocratic force became united now with the vote dacoits and rajakars to destroy the national economy and positive trend of our politics."

Weather Temperature may fall

Weather is likely to remain dry across the country in the next 24 hours till 6 pm today, reports APB.

Night temperature may remain nearly unchanged during the period over the country, Met Office forecast.

Country's lowest temperature 13.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Srimangal and the highest 33.7 degrees at Teknaf.

The sun sets today at 5:53 pm and rises on Monday at 6:32 am.

Maximum and minimum 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	19.0	31.5	64	62
Chittagong	18.8	31.0	71	84
Rajshahi	15.7	31.0	71	62
Khulna	15.4	31.0	76	52
Barisal	14.8	30.5	81	70
Sylhet	16.6	33.5	63	62
Cox's Bazar	20.4	32.5	65	60

Death anniversary of Bhola Mia today

The second death anniversary of Al-Haj Rezauddin Ahmed (Bhola Mia), a freedom fighter and eminent politician, will be observed today, says a press release.

Bhola Mia started his illustrious political career in the then undivided India. He was deeply involved in the independence movement in 1971. He served as a state minister under the Bangabandhu government and cabinet minister under the government of late Ziaur Rahman. He also served as deputy speaker of the parliament from 1988 to 1990.

Quarankhwan will be held at his graveyard at Banani and a *milad mahfil* will be held after Asr prayers at 207, New DOHS, Road # 10.



Death anniversary of Asafuddowla today

By Staff Correspondent

The 16th death anniversary of former executive editor and news editor of The Daily Ittefaq Asafuddowla Reza will be observed today.

A reputed radio and television broadcaster, Reza was also involved with different social and charity organisations.

Various organisations have chalked out programmes to observe Reza's death anniversary. A *milad mahfil* will be held at his 267/2, East Rampura Police Camp Road residence after *Magrib* prayers today. Another *milad* will be held at his 42, North Kamalapur Bazar Road residence after Asr prayers.

A memorial meeting and *milad* will be held at the Motijheel Colony Night School today.

Milad mahfil and *Quran-khwan* will also be held at his graveyard in Chandaikona under Bogra.

A discussion will also be held in Sherpur of Bogra in observance of Reza's death anniversary.

Obituary

Musammat Paribanu, mother of Shafiuddin Chowdhury Moti, general secretary of the Ward 59 of the city committee of the Awami League, died in the city yesterday. She was 86, reports BSS.

Wife of late Hafez Musa, former president of the city Awami League, Mrs Paribanu left behind two sons and six daughters.

The *namaz-e-janaza* of Paribanu will be held today and she will be buried at her family graveyard.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in a message, condoled the death of Paribanu and prayed for the peace of the departed soul.

Qulkhwani

The *qulkhwani* of Mofassera Begum, wife of Mohammad Walullah, a retired election officer, will be held after Asr prayers at the deceased's Shamoly residence, family sources said, reports BSS.

A *milad mahfil* has been arranged on this occasion.

Mofassera Begum died in the city on Friday at a clinic after renal failure.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers have been requested to attend the *qul* and *milad* at House No 16-C, Road No 2, Shamoly.

ICMAB denies report

By DU Correspondent

The ICMAB has denied allegations raised in Daily Star report on "Misuse of fund led to the stalemate at ICMAB" published on Tuesday last.

The Institute said in a rejoinder that the story was "baseless, motivated and done with a mala fide intention of tarnishing the image of the institute."

"At present there is no stalemate as the institute is now functioning peacefully. Based on an understanding between management and agitating students, the latter have called off their programme much earlier," it added.

"It was mentioned in the report that Tk 12 lacs was spent instead of Tk 3 lacs by sending a ten-member delegation to SAFA seminar in Sri Lanka in place of a three member team. The information is not correct as the institute sent only three member team — not to speak of spending Tk 12 lacs," the rejoinder added.

It also added that the institute spent all the money provided by the government as per the plans and procedures.

Our reply: The report was based on the documents obtained by The Daily Star and annual report of the institute. It was proved the ICMAB misused funds and raised tuition fees as the students had agitated for more than one month, highlighting these two major allegations.

SASTAC meet begins in city

A two-day meeting of the South Asia Technical Advisory Committee (SASTAC) of the Regional Water Partnership, under the Global Water Partnership, began in the city on Saturday, says a press release.

The mission of GWP is to support countries in the sustainable management of their water resources. GWP has a major long-term task in working with the organisations and institutions active in the water and other related sectors like agriculture, industry, eco-system, water supply, sanitation and energy.

The SASTAC meeting was presided over by its chairman Dr M A Chitale. Jacques Rey from Global Water Partnership Secretariat, Stockholm was also present in the meeting. Other members from SASTAC who participated in the meeting were Prof B Bhadra, Nepal, Prof D B Gupta, India, Nanda Abeywickrema, Sri Lanka, Iswor Onta, Nepal, Dr Ramesh Bhatia, India and Quamrul Islam Siddique, Chairman, Bangladesh Water Partnership (BWP). Khalid Mohtadullah, member SASTAC and Executive Secretary designate of the Global Water Partnership also attended the meeting.

Member Secretary of Bangladesh Water Partnership Mr Tauhidul Anwar Khan and other leading national water experts were also present.

BNP holds milad today

By Staff Correspondent

A *milad mahfil* will be held at BNP central office at Naya Paltan after the Zohr prayers today to pray for the salvation of the party activists, who were killed during the 60-hour hartal which ended on Thursday.

BNP and its front organisations' activists Sajal Chowdhury, Mamun and Yusuf were killed in clashes during the hartal hour.

BNP will also distribute food among destitutes on the occasion.

ORCA holds blood donation programme

By Staff Correspondent

Old Rajshahi Cadets Association (ORCA) arranged a blood donation programme and a cultural programme at the Planning and Development Academy in the city yesterday to mark its 33rd founding anniversary.

This was the 73rd blood donation programme of ORCA after its inception in 1966.

The programme was followed by recollection of memories by the cadets.

Valentine's Day special at Sheraton

Dhaka Sheraton Hotel has taken measures to observe the Valentine's Day in a befitting manner, says a press release.

The hotel will serve a romantic buffet lunch and buffet dinner today with hearty surprises at the Bithika Restaurant. Female guests will be welcomed with roses.

At the Vintage Restaurant, a romantic Valentine's Day Set Dinner menu will be featured while guests will be welcomed with a glass of complimentary wine.



A two-day meeting of the South Asia Technical Advisory Committee (SASTAC) of the Regional Water Partnership began in the city yesterday. Sitting from left Quamrul Islam Siddique, Chairman, Bangladesh Water Partnership, Dr M A Chitale, Chairman, SASTAC and Khalid Mohtadullah, Executive Secretary designate, GWP.

Nasim says in Khulna Rupsha Bridge Project to be implemented soon

KHULNA, Feb 13: Post, Telecommunications, Housing and Works Minister Mohammad Nasim said here today that the Rupsha Bridge Project would be implemented during the period of the present government, reports BSS.

The minister was speaking at a function held in connection with the opening of the KDA Outer Bypass Road constructed by the Khulna Development Authority (KDA) today.

Presided over by the President of Khulna City Awami League advocate Monzurul Imam, the inaugural function was also addressed, among others, by Sheikh Nurul Huq MP, President of Khulna district Awami League and former whip of Jatiyo Sangshad Sheikh Harunur Rashid and Chairman of KDA Brigadier Monzurul Alam.

Referring to the present political situation, the minister

said that the present government would hold parliamentary polls in the country after handing over power to the caretaker government within the scheduled time. He also said that people would decide through election who would remain in power which can not be changed by agitation or any foul means.

The minister called upon the people of Khulna to extend their cooperation to the Khulna Development Authority in beautifying Khulna by bringing about necessary development.

Later, the minister reviewed the progress of work of various project of KDA.

Later, the minister visited Khulna and Khalishpur telephone exchange, office of post master general and a cable factory at Shirmoni. During his visit the minister was accompanied by the Awami League leaders.

Call to free local govt system from bureaucracy

KURIGRAM, Feb 13: Speakers at a rally of Trinomul Janasangathan' here today called for freedom of local government system from the control of bureaucracy, reports BSS.

Removal of poverty and empowerment of people are possible only through development and democracy imbued with the spirit of the War of Liberation, they observed.

Addressing the huge gathering of poor men and women, the ADAB chairperson and president of Proshika Manobik Unnyan Kendro Dr. Kazi Faruq Ahmed said the nation, which earned independence through a war, is yet to attain social and economic emancipation.

Referring to the presence of a huge number of people at the ADAB organised rally, Dr Faruq said the people are now getting organised to fight poverty, social injustice and disparity, the present struggle would be against those who exploit and oppress people in the name of religion, he said.

Presided over by central committee member of the Trinomul Janasangathan and eminent freedom fighter Abdul Mannan, the rally was addressed, among others, by poet Syed Shamsul Huq, Zila Awami League President advocated Nazir Hossain Sarkar, General Secretary of District Bar Association and Gono Forum district President Advocate Emanuel Huq Chowdhury (Chand), President of Zila Communist Party Nurunnabi Babu and local press club president Channal.

The rally was also addressed by treasurer of ADAB central committee Abdul Matin, ADAB director Shamsul Huq, director of Jibika Manik Chowdhury and director of Samata Abdul Kader.

Earlier addressing the rally as the special guest poet Syed Shamsul Huq, who hails from the area, said he felt proud to see the people of Kurigram rising to fight poverty, exploitation and injustice.

Commentary

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been taken a prisoner, which is literally what happened here. And yet he was shot, in cold blood, in an open place under the bright light of an 11.30 morning winter sun with clear blue sky. There were people scattered all over including police at a distance who saw the whole thing. Other members of the anti-hartal convoy, of which this killer was part, were close at hand.

According to us Sajal was executed. Unfortunately none of our photojournalists were able to capture it in their cameras. But let us assure the ruling party that a powerful 'photo' has been etched in our mind and heart with all the attendant emotion that it can, and will, generate if these brutal executioners are not caught and punished.

Who were these killers? Almost all newspapers identified these people as alighting from the anti-hartal motorcade led by the local MP Alhaj Maqbul Hossain that suddenly appeared on the scene. This newspaper, on the basis of several eyewitnesses gave a detailed description of what happened that leaves no doubt as to the identity of the group that the assailants belonged to. The question is what are the authorities doing about it? Till the writing of this comment we are not aware of any move by the government to catch Sajal's killers. Does it mean because Sajal belonged to BNP that his killers are not to be pursued? We think the Home Minister has some real answering to do in the case of the PJBK.

Can the ruling party avoid taking moral responsibility for Sajal's death? Can the AL leadership, in clear conscience, say that it feels in no way connected with what members of an AL MP led motorcade did? Can any ruling party leader say, with a hand on his or her heart, that the country can be benefited by their 'activists' imposing anti-hartal programmes even by killing the opponents if necessary. Shouldn't the minimum of moral teaching make them speak out against the way Sajal was killed?

The second death we want to talk about today is of Mohammed Ali, a rickshaw peddler on an old Dhaka street called Puri Das Lane. The incident occurred on the 26th of January, the day of BNP's hartal to prevent the submission of nomination papers for the municipal polls. A group of pro-hartal BNP picket stopped Mohammed Ali's rickshaw, forced the passengers down and then set fire to the rickshaw. They quite unbelievably, these pickets attacked and pinned the rickshaw peddler to the ground and after dousing him with kerosene, set his body on fire. Immediately fire engulfed his whole body and burnt him all over. After eight days of fighting for life, Mohammed Ali died on February 3. He left behind his wife, only son and two sisters of marriageable age.

What perverted sense of political activism propelled this murderous outburst? What made these pickets think that they have a right to kill a man? What sort of political ideology have they been taught that include burning to death an innocent and poor citizen of this country. What was Mohammed Ali's crime for which he has been 'executed'? He is among the lakhs of rickshaw peddlers who eke out a meagre existence from daylong arduous labour of rickshaw peddling.

Can the BNP and its leaders avoid the moral responsibility of Mohammed Ali's death? Can they, in clear conscience, say that they have nothing to do with this or the other deaths that have been caused by their activists? Can they, with a hand over their heart say that the country can really benefit by their 'activists' enforcing hartal even by killing people who dare to 'disobey' them? Shouldn't the minimum of moral teaching make them speak out against how Mohammed Ali was burnt to death?

As in the case of Sajal, the burning of Mohammed Ali was deliberate and carried out in cold blood. In both cases it were the political activists of the two major parties, so very dedicated to promoting democracy, who committed these crimes. They did whatever they did, in the name of carrying out party programmes — one of imposing hartal, and the other of setting up 'hartal free areas.'

When deaths like the above occur our leaders' grief seem reserved only for their party men. Just because they belong to the other side, are they not human beings deserving the same compassion and consolation as their own supporters? Khaleda Zia visits Sajal's house but does not spare a moment for Mohammed Ali. Sheikh Hasina has no time for Mohammed Ali's and Sajal's grieving families. The Home Minister went to see the poor rickshaw peddler and promised his family the moon. The poor fellow died unnoticed. Looking back at similar incidents in the past and we will discover the selective and cynical nature of expression of grief by our leaders. If the identity of the dead is unclear, and as long as there is a chance to claim the dead as your own, only then there is outpouring of 'grief' from both sides for the same person. Grief must bear party colours. Genuine human feelings have taken flight in our country.

Surely these two 'executions' must wake up our two leaders. Surely they cannot desire this type of politics. Surely they must be horrified, as we are, as to how politics is being reduced to mob murder and Mafia style executions. Surely they must understand that once the genie of criminalisation of politics is let out of the bottle it will be many many deaths before it can be put back again. Surely, have their own children as mothers they can feel how the death of Sajal and Mohammed Ali have devastated their families. Who better than they should understand the tragedy of Sajal's mother and Mohammed Ali's wife?

We want to end this sad piece with an appeal to both leaders. Please realise that the killers that you let loose on your opponent will make your own people their targets when the tables will be turned. How quickly will both condemn the violence of the other side, and how immorally you remain silent about your own. You both have a historic chance to change positively the destiny of our teeming millions. Can you both not rise up to the occasion? This country has given you both the highest honour and dignity that it can. What do we need to do to make you realise your moral and ethical obligation to this nation? Both your parties have strong public support. Let the public be your strength and not the goons.