



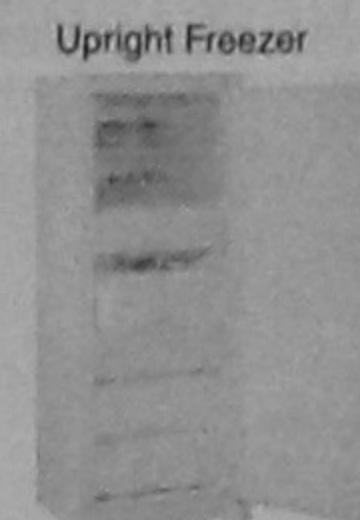
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## Down to Earth

### City's Midnight Traffic Nightmare

By A S M Nurunnabi

Dhaka city's traffic always presents a horrendous picture with its stupendous jams spreading in every direction. This is an everyday phenomenon characteristic of the metropolis. This deadweight of city traffic assumes another aspect daily from midnight. The reason for this dramatic change in the city's traffic pattern is that it is nobody's business to control Dhaka's midnight traffic.

As is usual with some cities in the developed world with high traffic density, there is almost an unending flow of traffic with cars, buses and trucks passing through some of the city's main thoroughfares. A view from the top floor of the BIRDEN building at Shahbagh Avenue is so spectacular and in some respects somewhat so mind-boggling that the midnight sight looks peculiarly staggering. There is, however, an obvious difference in the city's traffic outlook at this time. In other modern cities, observers with direct knowledge, have seen disciplined movement of traffic round the clock, be it midnight or early dawn.

When the traffic police pack up before 11 pm, and leave their stations, it is free for all on the Dhaka roads. Such roads, especially those connecting other districts, resemble racing tracks as soon as the traffic

constables leave their posts after eleven. The drivers of heavy vehicles, like trucks, buses and pick-ups race through some arterial roads like the Airport Road leading to Tongi and beyond and the road to Aricha, at breakneck speed giving no care about what they leave behind.

We are well aware of some tragic accidents involving speeding trucks and cars that took place at such hours in the recent past snuffing out valuable lives. It is noted with regret that almost no attention is paid by city fathers as well as the traffic authorities regarding proper control of the rashly speeding vehicles from midnight onward in order to ensure due safety on the roads.

According to current principle, city roads should have at least 25 per cent of the area, whereas in Dhaka city, according to current estimate, the city roads cover only 4 per cent of city space. This heavy constraint in expansion of city's road network may be viewed against the backdrop of the fast pace of growth of the metropolis, with new additions of modern means of living, including vehicles of every description. With the rapid increase in the number of vehicles of all descriptions, coupled with similar proliferation of the number of rickshaws on the roads, most of them unlicensed, it is plain to everybody that the existing

size and length of the city roads are facing a hazardous shrinking defying proper road security.

The worst feature of the road scenario, according to observers, is that vehicles of varied speed ply on the same road at the same time, causing lack of proper management by the traffic controllers. This also poses peril for all commuters.

Some observers also point to the lack of uniformity of the management spheres of the concerned authorities. In the existing complex system of roads management, some responsibilities lie with the Roads and Highways Deptt and some with the Dhaka City Corporation. It is alleged that the two bodies hardly agree over any issue of importance. The issue of midnight management of city traffic, on account of its overwhelming importance in ensuring road security, may not be allowed to be a bone of contention between the administering bodies.

It is a sad commentary on the present state of things that not only there is no traffic policeman to regulate the midnight traffic but there is no police patrol vehicle on the busy streets to monitor the traffic. In a city where speed limit is seldom observed during day time, the absence of any control of midnight traffic can be nightmarish.

**Match-fixing**

### Pak judicial report likely next week

KARACHI, May 5: A much-delayed judicial report on corruption in Pakistan cricket is expected to be published next week, a top cricket board official said today, reports Reuters.

No date has been fixed but in all probability the report would be released immediately after the conclusion of the first Test sometime next week," Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Taqir Zia said.

Pakistan's opening Test against the West Indies in Georgetown, Guyana, was starting today and ends on Tuesday.

"My meeting with President Rafiq Tarar has been rescheduled for Saturday morning during which I will take formal permission to publicise the report besides getting the document from him," said Zia, who has been scheduled to meet Tarar today.

"I will also ask him if he wants to review the penalties against the players. If he wants stiffer punishments they can be imposed," Zia said.

Pakistan's president is the patron of the PCB.

The investigation into alle-

**Sezer elected new Turkish president**

ANKARA, May 5: Parliament elected Ahmet Necdet Sezer, a staunch advocate of democratic rights, as Turkey's 10th president today, reports AP.

Sezer, the chief justice of the country's Constitutional Court, will be the only fourth civilian to hold the post of president.

The election raises hopes that as president Sezer will be able to help nudge Turkey toward carrying out the democratic reforms that are crucial if the country is to realize its goal of membership in the European Union.

"The roots of some of Turkey's problems lie in a lack of obedience to the law," said Sezer, who spoke of a need for reforms at a news conference after the election. "An understanding of democracy has not developed in social and political life, and a tradition of democracy has not been created."

A close inspection of public spending and the reduction of inflation to remedy the disparities in income and thus to bring about a social state of law is a must," he said.

Sezer, the government's nominee for the post, was a compromise candidate whose name emerged after the leading political parties were unable to agree on supporting a member of parliament for the post.

Parliament was unable to elect a candidate in the first two rounds of voting, in which a two-thirds majority would have been required. Sezer was elected in the third round, in which new rules required only a simple majority.

Sezer was elected with 330 votes in the 550-member parliament. His closest rival, Nevzat Yalcintas, received only 113 votes.

In Sezer's central Anatolian hometown of Afyon, a few dozen people reacted to the news by dancing in the streets to the sounds of drums and trumpets.

A case was filed with Tangail police in this connection.

**Telephone**

From Page 1

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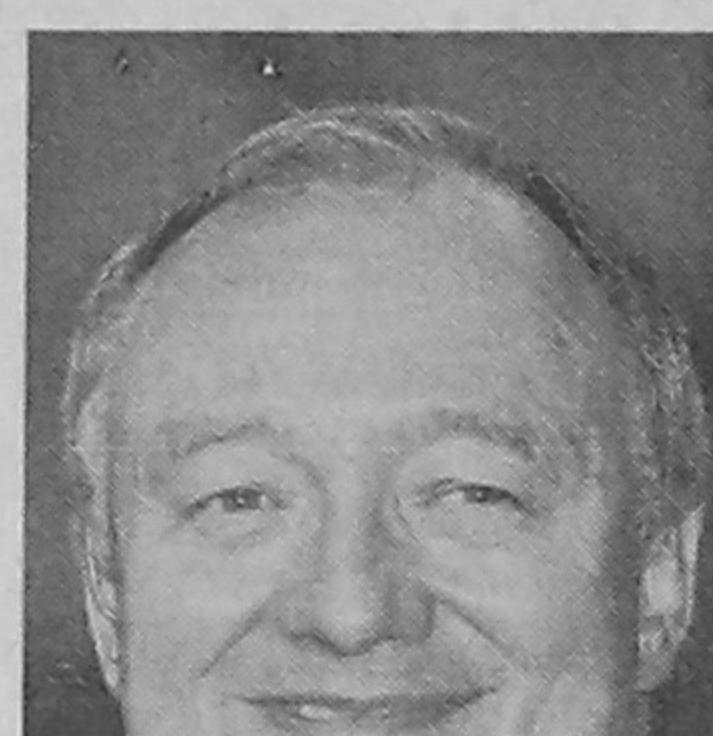
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**Livingstone first directly elected mayor of London**

LONDON, May 5: Rebel left-winger Ken Livingstone, 54, was declared London's first directly elected mayor today, reports AFP.

Livingstone, standing as an independent after being thrown out of the ruling Labour Party for running against its official candidate, took 776,427 votes, ahead of opposition Conservative candidate Steven Norris with 564,137 votes, according to official results.

To cheers, Livingstone began his victory speech: "As I said before I was so rudely interrupted 14 years ago," a reference to his leadership of the Greater London Council, the regional authority abolished by then Conservative prime minister Margaret Thatcher in 1986.

"I believe in regional government, I've believed in it all my life."

Livingstone pledged to heal the rift between himself and Prime Minister Tony Blair's Labour Party and vowed to work with the other mayoral candidates to bring about improvements for the people of London.

Earlier Blair, speaking in Northern Ireland where he is taking part in peace talks, said he would work to make the role of the new London mayor a success.

"We must do everything we can to ensure this works for London and works for Londoners, and he (Livingstone) must do so," Blair said.

Turnout for the mayoral vote was 33.6 per cent of the more than five million people eligible to cast ballots.

They said Salamatullah Mazru, chairman of Baghul UP in sadar thana, was attacked by 5-6 miscreants when he was returning home from a marriage ceremony at Khardi Jugni village. He died on way to hospital with his two companions escaped unhurt.

A case was filed with Tangail police in this connection.

**UP chairman shot dead in Tangail**

TANGAIL, May 5: A Union Parishad chairman was shot dead by unknown assailants at village Jugni in Sadar thana this afternoon, police said, reports UNB.

They said Salamatullah Mazru, chairman of Baghul UP in sadar thana, was attacked by 5-6 miscreants when he was returning home from a marriage ceremony at Khardi Jugni village. He died on way to hospital with his two companions escaped unhurt.

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**Police-terrorists clash in Cox's Bazar: 20 hurt**

COX'S BAZAR, May 5: At least 20 people, including two policemen, were injured in a gunfight between police and terrorists at a shrimp farm in Chakoria thana today, reports UNB.

Police said the armed goons, including 18 wanted criminals, opened fire on them while they (police) raided their den at a shrimp farm in Medhakoccha area at about 11.00 am.

About 53 police personnel took part in the operation and fought for two hours.

Police arrested five of the terrorists while others fled away. The arrested are UP member of Khutakhal Union Parishad Akther Ahmed, Saber Ahmed, Nurul Huq, Rafiq Ahmed and Jalil Uddin.

Local people said both sides fired more than 1,000 rounds of bullets during the clash.

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Under the circumstances,



Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote took out a colourful procession in the city yesterday, marking the birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore.

— Star photo

**Former secy joins BNP**

### People no more want AL in power

By Staff Correspondent

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia said yesterday the people no more want Awami League in power because they had enough of it.

The ruling party is now wielding sticks to scare the judges, said the BNP chief while speaking at a reception at her official residence in the evening.

"It wants to make the judiciary act its way since it has no faith in democracy and rule of law." The reception marked joining of Mushfiqur Rahman, former secretary and alternative executive director of the World Bank in BNP.

Khaleda said Awami League has turned the country into a "bottomless basket" immediately after the independence. However, Ziaur Rahman made it self-reliant. Later, BNP had to do the cleaning act when it came back to power in 1991 after 14 years of misrule, corruption and mismanagement.

She asked BNP activists in Kashba and Akhaura as well as greater Brahmanbaria to work with Rahman and to strengthen the party.

The function was addressed, by among others Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain M.P., Chowdhury Tanveer Ahmed Siddique and M.K. Anwar M.P.

Party sources said Mushfiqur Rahman will contest in the next parliament polls from Brahmanbaria-4 (Kashba and Akhaura) constituency on BNP ticket.

The BNP leader and activists were produced in the court in connection with a case filed under Public Safety Act (PSA).

According to Feni thana sources, one Saiful Osman of village Bijoy singh who claimed himself as a JCD activist filed the case.

Police made a GD entry against the AL men but said they would record the case if they were found guilty in investigation.

Police welcomed Mushfiqur Rahman to the largest op-

position party and said the party and the country in general will benefit from his experience.

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