

FedEx
Federal Express

Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.
Licensee Of Federal Express Corporation
Tel # 9565114; Fax # 9565112

CHITTAGONG
Hotel Hawaii Building
39, Agrabad C.A., Chittagong
Tel # 712127 Fax# 710106

CEPZ
Ctg. Export Processing Zone
Old Admin Building
Halishahar, Chittagong
Tel # 740108 Fax# 710106

KHULNA
K.D.A Building
Khan A. Sabur Road, Khulna
Tel # 725008 Fax# 731932

Whirlpool
Home Appliances USA

Upright Freezer

Chest Freezer

 Instalment
facility
available

 WARRANTY
The Day Test

TRANSCOM ELECTRONICS LTD.
Authorized Distributor for Whirlpool Appliances, USA
Dhaka: 8115307-10 CTG: 716353, 723578 Khulna: 720304 Bogra: 6215

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 BIRDEM 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 city 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 shrinkage 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 ever 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.



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

18 killed, hundreds homeless as quake hits Indonesia

JAKARTA, May 5: At least 18 people were killed and hundreds made homeless by the devastating earthquake and tidal waves that hit the Banggai islands off Indonesian Sulawesi, officials and reports said today, reports AFP.

Scores of coastal villages in the islands were reported to have been flattened by tidal waves following Thursday's quake, which measured 6.5 on the Richter scale.

The state Antara news agency, quoting Central Sulawesi Governor H.B. Palluju, reported from the provincial capital of Palu that 15 people had been killed.

"Based on the latest report from the head of districts, the death toll as of Friday morning has increased to 15 people," Palluju said.

He said the reports showed six people had been found dead in Banggai sub-district, six in Totikung sub-district, two in Tinangkung and one in Luwuk sub-district.

A secretary with Banggai's disaster command post, Zen Zubedi, speaking from the district capital of Luwuk told AFP late Friday that preliminary reports listed 13 dead.

"From our preliminary report, there were 13 people died since the earthquake took place yesterday. But there could have been reports that I haven't received from other areas," he said.

Zubedi said his own reports also showed 25 people had "suffered heavy and light injuries," adding that only one aftershock had been felt Friday.

"At approximately 1330 (1130 BST), we felt a small quick tremor... but it is not as bad as the big one yesterday."

Many residents camped out fearing further quakes but "since late last night there have been no aftershocks," the head of Central Sulawesi's social and political affairs division, John Tompong, told AFP by phone from Palu earlier Friday.

Palluju also said his office was preparing to send some 10 tonnes of rice to the hardest-hit areas.

The temblor, centered on Peleng island, a part of the Banggai group off Central Sulawesi, struck at 10:21am (10:21 BST), meteorology officials said.

Up to 80 percent of the district's coastal houses were ruined by the quake, Banggai islands district head Ali Hamid told AFP on Thursday.

Antara said 95 per cent of the buildings in villages along the shores of the Tinangkung sub-district on Peleng had been damaged by tidal waves.

Antara quoted police as saying at least 10 villages in the coastal areas of Tinangkung, Totikung, Banggai and Balantak districts were flattened.

On August 3 last year two districts in the islands were hit by a quake measuring 6.0 on the Richter scale which destroyed scores of houses, but claimed no casualties.

SUST Syndicate meets today

The Syndicate of the Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) sits in a crucial meeting today to take a decision on reopening of the university, reports UNB.

Asked if the Syndicate will declare any date for resuming classes, VC Prof Habibur Rahman told the news agency over phone, "This is why we are holding the meeting."

Prof Rahman, who has been awarded "death sentence" by rightist groups, avoided a direct reply when asked if they suffer from a sense of insecurity on the campus.

There is no student in the halls. Teachers are also not on the campus. I don't know what is the situation in the town (Sylhet)," he said.

Students of the SUST are eagerly waiting for the meeting.

They went on a fast-unto-death in Dhaka and broke it on the fourth day on April 26 after President Shahabuddin Ahmed assured them of all possible help to resolve the crisis.

The President didn't give any date but Prof Habibur Rahman assured the students that the Syndicate in its May 6 meeting will take a decision to reopen the university.

A deadlock has been prevailing in the university for a long time over naming of some buildings and halls after some personalities like Bangabandhu and Jahanara Imam.

Bounty

From Page 1

informed the meeting that their domain had been restored.

The meeting decided to secure the ISPs by identifying the BTTB lines which were used for hacking in the past, punish the miscreants under the existing law and enact cyber laws if necessary.

The emergency meeting was called in the wake of hacking of Brac Edmail domain by an unidentified cyber hacker.

On Saturday last, the hacker took control of the ISP and the mails of the subscribers returned undelivered with a message that the ISP's domain had been hacked.

The following day, the company tried to solve the problem by changing the domain address but to no avail.

ISP sources say that Brac has still not got back control of its lost domain and that the hacker has allowed the subscribers to send or download messages.

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 have 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.

"I want 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 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 years of misrule, corruption and mismanagement.

She said her party forged an alliance with the nationalist and Islamic forces to carry forward the nation.

Khaleda welcomed Mushfiqur Rahman to the largest opposition party and said the party and the country in general will benefit from his experience.

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.

Case against Joynal Hazari, 31 others

From Our Correspondent

FENI, May 5: A case was filed with Feni thana against 32 Awami League, Jubo League and BCL leaders and activists, including ruling party MP Joynal Hazari for their alleged bid to attack district BNP Secretary VP Joynal and eight others on the premises of the District Judge's court yesterday.

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 Bijoysingh 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.

Businessman murdered in Narsingdi

NARSINGDI, May 5: Unidentified assailants killed a businessman in his shop at Hatindia Bazar in Monohardi thana on Thursday night, reports UNB.

Police suspected Shahidul Islam, 35, of village Noadia was tortured and strangled. The body was sent to hospital morgue for autopsy. A case was filed in this connection.

N-policy: Cong inching towards favouring a minimum deterrent

From Pallab Bhattacharya

NEW DELHI, May 5: India's main opposition party Congress, led by Sonia Gandhi, has begun examining afresh its nuclear policy amidst indications that the party is inching towards favouring a minimum deterrent to be retained by the country.

The Foreign Affairs Department of Congress met here Tuesday evening to discuss the nuclear issue in the light of changed security environment taking into account nuclear weapons acquisition by Pakistan and the tests conducted by the BJP-led government in May 1998.

Congress sources said the party recognised that no nuclear power on the other side of the threshold can unilaterally declare disarmament, especially when its neighbours have gone in for nuclear weaponisation.

It also acknowledged that India having declared a stand of "no-first-strike", the second strike nuclear capability would obviously have to be more powerful, the sources said.

Under the circumstances,

Congress might end up formulating the minimum deterrent posture without using the same phraseology, they said pointing to the fact that it is the government of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee which spoke of deterrent after the 1998 tests in Pokharan (Rajasthan state).

What the Congress, according to the sources, is trying to do is to come out with a stand that meets the country's security concerns and needs without giving the impression of moving away from Rajiv Gandhi's plan to global disarmament enunciated in 1988, a plan updated last year by the party's foreign policy expert Mani Shankar Aiyar.

The immediate provocation for Congress to review its nuclear policy is the jibes it has been repeatedly subjected to in recent days by ruling Bharatiya Janata Party ever since contradictory versions were put out by the main opposition party on what Sonia Gandhi told US President Bill Clinton at a meeting here in March on the issue.

Briefing newsmen after that

meeting, senior Congress leader Pranab Mukherjee said Sonia Gandhi favoured India having a minimum credible deterrent. But it was denied the very next day by Congress spokesman Ajit Jogi.

Only last week, Vajpayee took a dig at the "contradiction" in Congress' stand and asked the opposition party to clarify it.

The Congress Foreign Affairs Department meeting was attended by Pranab Mukherjee, Manmohan Singh, former Finance Minister, R L Bhatia, former minister of state for external affairs, and Mani Shankar Aiyar and heard the views of former Foreign Secretaries Muchkund Dubey and M K Rasgotra and India's former ambassador to China C V Ranganathan.

Congress sources said the Foreign Affairs Department of the party is expected to prepare a draft which would be placed before Congress Working Committee, highest policy-making forum of the party, before going public formally with a new stand, if any.

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 publish 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 included," Zia said.

Pakistan's president is the patron of the PCB.

The investigation into alleged

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 only the 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.

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 Maznu, chairman of Baghil UP in Sadar thana, was attacked by 5-6 miscreants when he was returning home from a marriage ceremony at Khardo Jugni village. He died on way to hospital. His two companions escaped unhurt.

A case was filed with Tangail police in this connection.

Telephone

From Page 1

the local office of DCC that they would compensate for digging the pavement.

When asked, a DCC engineer said, "I told the official concerned at Mirpur exchange to bring the file from our local office with their opinion so that we can give permission immediately."

The official said that though it was not his duty to carry the file from one office of DCC to another, "considering the sufferings of subscribers, I went to Nagar Bhaban and talked with officials concerned."

But nothing has been done as yet, he added.

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.

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 too," Blair said.

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

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 Medhakochoparia 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 Khutakhali Union Parishad Akhter Ahmed, Sabir Ahmed, Nurul Huq, Rafiq Ahmed and Jalil Uddin.

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

Chickenpox!

Vaccination can now prevent it.
Ask your doctor how!

Issued in the interest of your child's health by

SB
SmithKline Beecham, Belgium

SK-F
Eskayef Bangladesh Ltd.

Editor: Mahfuz Anam

Published by the Editor from Transcruz Ltd, 229, Tejgaon Industrial Area, Dhaka-1208 on behalf of Mediaword Ltd., 52 Motijheel C.A., Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: 19 Karwan Bazar, Dhaka-1215. Telephone Numbers: 8124944, 8124955, 8124966, Fax: 8125155, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA. Internet address: http://www.dailystarnews.com and Email address: dstar@bangla.net