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Down to Earth**Dwindling Facilities for City's Bus Passengers**

By A S M Nurunnabi

The city's bus services provide a sad reminder of the steady deterioration in the standard of their operation, particularly in matters relating to provisions of basic facilities and passengers' convenience. The woes of the bus passengers have many aspects.

First, these buses routinely carry many more passengers than their certified capacity. Many of them have eye-catching slogans painted on their sides and the rear to the effect that they provide seating arrangement, non-stop journeys with breaks only at prescribed stops, and gate-lock system during their journeys.

In fact, these are empty slogans; passengers are carried beyond seating capacity; there is no non-stop service as passengers are taken in at random without caring for the prescribed stops. The bus conductors turn rough and rude when passengers desire to get down at the designated stops. When the buses cannot move for any reason, say traffic jam, some passengers are hustled to get down near the middle of the road, thereby enhancing the risk of accident. The gates are not usually locked when they are on the move in order to entice more passengers to get in, as and when needed.

Some buses find it more convenient to stop at the cross-roads for the purpose of embarking and disembarking. The traffic police normally take an indifference to such goings-on.

About a decade ago, the BRTC started building passengers' waiting sheds at some important points on the main roads with financial sponsorship from certain organisations needing publicity. They were expected to give shelter to passengers from heat and rain, besides providing designated stops for the bus passengers. In course of time, those purposes were lost in oblivion. Instead, we find small shops of various kinds ranging from fast food joints to impromptu tea stalls under these sheds. The concrete benches built there provide excellent resting places for beggars and vagabonds. The operating buses normally avoid such passenger sheds, preferring instead to stop at such points where more passengers are readily available.

The city's growing traffic turmoil has become so desperate in some areas, particularly where large-scale business and trading activities are conducted, that we observe private trading managers operating with voluntary financial support from affected parties in those areas. When buses are caught up in such situations, the passengers suffer greatly with patience till traffic tangles ease.

Lately we have seen operating on the less congested routes in the city Metro and Nirapod A/C coaches. Since the span of operation of these coaches is limited, many commuters cannot benefit from their services.

The one-way traffic system, lately introduced on certain routes in the city, has helped to improve the traffic situation somewhat, but at peak hours in the morning and evening, the system goes awry. At such times, the bus passengers become helpless until the pressure of traffic eases.

The recent introduction of some double-decker buses has been a helpful step, but it may be remembered that, in view of the limited road capacity in the capital, any expansion process in respect of road transports is severely constrained.

Thus on account of infrastructural inadequacies in the road sector, any amelioration of suffering of the bus passengers is hard to achieve in the near future in view of the fast growing city population with their concomitant transport needs.

No consultant, anaesthetist Surgery at Sylhet Medical College may come to a halt

From Iqbal Siddiquee

SYLHET, Sept 1: Routine surgery at Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital may have to be suspended any time due to the absence of consultant physician and anaesthetists.

Currently, only five anaesthetists are managing emergency operations, but the routine operations are being hampered seriously. The number of emergency operation theatres (OT) has been reduced to two from three weeks ago due to shortage of manpower.

The situation has become so unmanageable that the authorities may even have to stop operations, sources said, adding that patients are being advised to move to private clinics.

At least 30 patients are operated upon every day apart from emergency operations. The hospital has no permanent post of consultant even 35 years after its inception in 1965. Works were being 'managed' with the physicians of different Thana hospitals brought here on deputation, the sources also said.

Three consultant physicians were brought to the hospital on deputation from different Thana health complexes four years ago, but were transferred suddenly on June 26 last year without bringing in any replacement. The situation became serious with the transfer of three at a time. There are only five anaesthetists working against six posts.

It has become almost impossible to manage the six OTs by only five anaesthetists, said a source. The number of physicians did not increase even during the last 35 years, officials said.

The hospital authorities informed the DG, Health during his recent visit to the hospital about the shortage of physicians, but actions are yet to be taken, sources alleged.

At least 20 physicians (anaesthetists and consultants) are needed for the routine and emergency operations at the hospital, said a senior hospital official, adding that at present, there are only three consultants and five anaesthetists.

The director of hospital admitted the shortage of anaesthetists and the recent transfer of the consultants, but claimed that things were going on smoothly. He also said the 500-bed hospital has about 1000 patients and that it has been operating under-staffed for years.

Ten years ago, a shigella dysentery epidemic could be easily controlled with cotrimoxazole, a drug cheaply available in generic form. Nearly all shigella bacteria strains are not responding to the drug any more, one of the studies said.

Dean of Pharmacy Faculty at Dhaka University Prof Choudhury Mahmood Hasan, when contacted, said, "Indiscriminate use of drugs, lack of knowledge, self-prescription and strength less than the specified dose are the main reasons behind drug resistance."

Prof Hasan, who was director of drug administration earlier, said, "There are many doctors in the country who serve the interest of pharmaceutical companies. They prescribe expensive antibiotics even when these are not needed."

Asked about this, a leading physician said, "Sale of sub-standard drugs is also equally responsible for drug resistance. Most of the drug companies are producing low quality drugs, cheating both doctors and patients."

In any case, Bhattacharya has been shouldering much of the workload of Basu for the past several months, especially since the latter had taken ill in the midst of a party central committee meeting in Delhi last month.

Bhattacharya's elevation to chief ministership is most unlikely to face opposition from other constituents of Left Front which have recognised that it is the prerogative of the single largest party CPI (M) - of the combine to choose its leader.

A final decision on Basu's retirement is likely to be taken at a meeting of CPI (M) West Bengal committee meeting in Calcutta on September 15.

Anti-biotics

From page 1

Among the bacteria causing hospital-acquired infections, salmonella, pseudomonas and klebsiella are showing high levels of resistance, doctors said.

Malaria, a dreaded disease mainly in Chittagong Hill Tracts, is reappearing in many areas. Resistance to chloroquine used in treatment of it is widespread. Unfortunately, many new drugs for malaria are expensive and have serious side effects, they further said.

Tuberculosis is 'staging a major comeback' with increased resistance to anti-TB drugs. "There are a number of drugs which simply proved useless for TB. The greatest problem is with multi-drug resistant TB," said a senior doctor at the chest diseases hospital in the city.

Recent World Health Organisation studies have shown four-fifths of patients with respiratory infections worldwide are unnecessarily treated with antibiotics which also led to drug resistance.

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Koreas hold an extra day of talks

SEOUL, Sept 1: High-level officials of North and South Korea held an extra day of talks today in the North's capital Friday in an attempt to make a preliminary deal on sensitive military matters, reports AP.

The negotiations in Pyongyang were called to follow up on an agreement reached at a historic inter-Korean summit in June, at which leaders of both sides pledged to work toward reconciliation and reunification.

The two sides made significant progress in economic and other non-political sectors during three days of talks that began Tuesday. But they extended their sessions by one day after failing to agree on a broadly worded plan for military cooperation.

"The negotiations are in throes over military matters," said pool reports from 10 South Korean reporters in Pyongyang. No foreign media are allowed to cover the talks.

One major hurdle, the reports said, was the issue of when and how to tackle military issues such as Seoul's proposal to open a military hotline and a regular channel of dialogue between defence leaders of the two countries.

"The South wants to specify the issue of building military confidence and easing tension in a joint statement, but North Korea is reluctant to take a firm stand on it," the reports said.

Easing military tension is essential to peace on the divided Korean peninsula. The Koreans fought a three-year war in the early 1950s which ended in an armistice, not a peace treaty. They share the world's most heavily armed border.

Despite the impasse on military matters, negotiators at the Pyongyang talks agreed to hold two more temporary reunions of some separated family members by year's end. Reunions involving 200 family members were held last month in Seoul and Pyongyang.

Negotiators also agreed to work out a legal system to accelerate trade and investment, and decided to start separate working talks in September to reconnect a cross-border railway that was cut off shortly before the start of the Korean War.

Pool reports said South Korea modified its position on military issues and was urging North Korea to agree to discuss those issues at another round of talks, possibly in a month.

AL meeting
from page 1
The party in different areas of the country.

Intra-party bickering resulted in bullet injury to an AL lawmaker in greater Sylhet region while a local leader was murdered in Bagerhat where police seized posters which said a ruling party lawmaker was behind the killing.

Two murdered in Jhenidah
From Our Correspondent
JHENIDAH, Sept 1: Two people were murdered in two upazilas of the district yesterday, police said.

Sohrab Hossain, 35, of village Rathkhola under Harinakundu upazila was chopped to death by a gang of armed men at about 5:30 pm yesterday.

His body was recovered from Kakoli beel area this morning. The reason behind the killing could not be known till filing of this report at 7 pm today.

Jahangir Mandal, 28, of village Hazibari Naodagram under Mohespur upazila succumbed to his injuries at a local hospital.

Hosiery factory at Narayanganj gutted

By Staff Correspondent

One hosiery factory was gutted at Narayanganj yesterday afternoon. Fire Brigade sources said.

One fire fighter was injured while extinguishing the blaze on the fifth floor of the six-storied building located at Naya-mati under Narayanganj sadar thana, police and fire service sources said.

The fire originated from electric short-circuit of the factory at about 1:40 pm and soon engulfed the nearby areas, causing damage to another hosiery factory and a printing press.

The factories were locked when the fire incident took place, said Narayanganj police. The fire was extinguished within two hours of the incident, said police and fire brigade officials.

CPI (M)
From page 1

that he could be projected to the voters as well as dispel the impression that the state's ruling Left Front could not do under a leader other than Basu, party sources said.

In any case, Bhattacharya has been shouldering much of the workload of Basu for the past several months, especially since the latter had taken ill in the midst of a party central committee meeting in Delhi last month.

Bhattacharya's elevation to chief ministership is most unlikely to face opposition from other constituents of Left Front which have recognised that it is the prerogative of the single largest party CPI (M) - of the combine to choose its leader.

A final decision on Basu's retirement is likely to be taken at a meeting of CPI (M) West Bengal committee meeting in Calcutta on September 15.



BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia along with senior party leaders offering munaajat after placing wreath at the mazar of President Ziaur Rahman, founder of the party, at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city yesterday in observance of the 22nd founding anniversary of BNP. - Star photo

SP Badsha's silent exit

From Staff Correspondent

KHULNA, Sept 1: Failing to get extension of service for the third time, SP of Khulna Ataul Gani Badsha, an alleged beneficiary of Ershad Shikder, has finally retired.

No farewell was arranged when he left office yesterday after handing over charge to Additional SP Golam Faruque.

Known here as 'Badsha Mia', his name appeared in newspapers several times not only as one of the alleged financial beneficiaries of Ershad Shikder, but also as a harbourer of a notorious Ward Commissioner Asaduzzaman Litu and Mahmud Hasan Shimul, a terrorist.

Litu's cousin married the daughter of Badsha Mia. Taking that advantage, Litu created a reign of terror in Khulna city and in almost all the thanas of the district in the last four years.

Litu and other armed cadres of his gang reportedly escaped arrest allegedly because of Badsha Mia. Khulna Metropolitan Police could never succeed in any operation against wanted terrors of Litu's gang as advance information was leaked to Litu.

Different newspapers also published several reports in this regard in last one year. Hailing from Gopalganj district, Ataul Gani Badsha was OC of Khulna thana from 1973 to August 15, 1975.

He played an active role in the massacre by the so-called 'Lal Bahini' at Khalishpur industries belt in 1973. As SP of Khulna, he addressed several political meetings of the ruling party, promising to crush the opposition.

He is the fortunate police officer who was spared from any punishment for being one of the beneficiaries of Shikder.

Dengue
From page 1
With the admission of 12 new patients the total number of dengue cases now stands at 2,863. A total of 48 people have so far died of dengue fever.

The government control room was virtually inoperative yesterday and could not give proper information on dengue patients.

"Information did not reach the control room due to weekend," an official of the control room said.

The Blue Panel backed by the ruling Awami League and the White Panel backed by opposition BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, are contesting in the polls. Left leaning Pink Panel is not in the race this year.

A total of 1,060 teachers of the university are expected to exercise their franchise to elect their representatives to the Senate, the highest policy making body of the university, for the next three years.

The elected teachers along with other members of the Senate will choose a new Vice Chancellor after the tenure of Prof. AK Azad Chowdhury expires on September 29.

Meanwhile, hectic campaigning is going on for the polls.

BNP's founding anniversary observed

By Staff Correspondent

The 22nd founding anniversary of BNP was observed throughout the country yesterday.

In the capital, the day's programme began with hoisting of national and party flags at the party's central office at dawn.

BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia along with other central leaders went to the mazar of Ziaur Rahman, founder of the party and placed wreaths at 10 am. Leaders of BNP's front organisations also placed wreaths at the mazar.

They also offered munaajat seeking divine peace of the departed soul of Ziaur Rahman.

The main opposition will also hold a grand rally and bring out a procession from Paltan Maidan at 4 pm tomorrow to mark the founding anniversary. BNP chairperson and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Khaleda Zia will lead the procession.

BNP's city and other district units have also chalked out a two-day programmes to observe the founding anniversary.

Liton murder
Message sent to airports, border checkpoints to arrest Moina

From Staff Correspondent
KHULNA, Sept 1: Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) has sent urgent messages to all airports and border checkpoints to stop industrialist Monirul Islam Moina from leaving the country.

Officials of airport immigration said page 11 col 6



Garments workers staged a demonstration in the city yesterday. They demanded fire safety measures at their workplaces. - Star photo

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