

Kabul demands quick end to US bombing

REUTERS, Kabul

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to seek shelter with allies there, rendering further US bombing pointless.

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"We demand America stop its bombing of Afghanistan after this goal is achieved."

Habeel said al-Qaida, the terrorist networks of Laden, had largely been driven from the Tora Bora mountainous area in the eastern province of Nangarhar. Only limited numbers of its fighters remained there.

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A S M NURUNNABI

Everyone knows that city traffic is awful and there are as many as 18 railway level crossings in the city. What do they exist for? They are there for the smooth flow of traffic. But their purpose is defeated altogether when we see that they create traffic jams on both sides of the rail gates with duration of three to three and a half hours. Such traffic jams inevitably cause loss of working hours with its implications of financial loss. Traffic jams in the city constitute one of the gravest problems of the metropolis. The suspension of traffic with the closure of rail gates only serves to compound the existing chaotic traffic situation.

The railway tracks run over the main part of the Dhaka city. On the stretch of the tracks starting from the Dhaka (Kamalapur) railway station to the Cantonment station, the number of level crossings, big and small is said to be 18. Of these, ten level crossings are said to be located important areas. The important level crossings include the Khilgaon-Shahjahanpur rail cross-

ing, Malibagh rail crossing, Maghbazar rail crossing, Nakhalpara rail crossing, Mohakhali rail crossing, Khilkhet rail crossing etc.

It is understood that everyday 52 outgoing and incoming trains use the Kamalapur railway station terminal. Of these, 26 are inter-city trains, 20 are mail trains and six are passenger trains. Besides these, some freight trains use this stretch of railway track. Of the total 52 trains, 40 trains operate between 8 am and 10 pm. During this period, traffic jams are mainly created. Analysts have estimated that for

every train, at least 10 minutes are required for giving it passage at a level crossing, thus creating traffic convergence at both ends of the gate, with its fallout spreading all over the city. It is estimated by analysts that on these accounts for about three to three and a half hours, traffic is stuck up on two sides of the rail crossing.

According to experts, such traffic jams could be avoided if fly-overs are built at important points in the city. It has been seen in other developed cities of the world that railway tracks are positioned either below or over such fly-overs. This does not

affect the road traffic. Since rail communication facility is vital to serve the interest of city commuters, rail tracks of necessity will have to run through the city. Such is the current picture in all developed cities around the world. They have found answers to chronic traffic mess.

At the present stage of our development such facilities are a mere pipe dream for us on account of resource constraints. Recently, there is a glimpse of silver-lining in the gloom of traffic turmoil when it

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DOWN TO EARTH

Railway level crossings add to traffic chaos

'Food wrapped in polythene causes cancer'

BSS, Dhaka

An estimated 342 crore polythene shopping bags are being dumped in Dhaka city alone per year, posing serious health hazards including blockage of sewerage system of the capital, a report of Environment and Social Development Organisation (ESDO) said yesterday.

Talking to BSS, Executive Director of ESDO and a polythene expert Dr Hossain Shahriar, quoting findings of a research on polythene conducted by the Korean Institute of Health Research, said workers at polythene factories are more exposed to cancer, skin disease and other fatal health problems.

He said polythene-wrapped fish and meat generate a kind of heat that creates radiation which ultimately makes the food poisonous.

Besides, the polythene-wrapped

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Despite a ban on production and sale of polythene bags in the city from January 1, some unscrupulous traders are still carrying on with the business of recycling discarded polybags. The poor and the destitute are washing bags in the Buriganga (left) prior to spreading them on the riverbank for drying (right). They say they are yet to be told anything about the ban.

Amnesty International chief tells workshop in city

World needs a culture of peace, not war against terrorism

UNB, Dhaka

The post-September 11 actions just banded with globalisation as a new rogue to curtail more human rights abuses by their allies", she told an elite audience here in her first visit to her homeland after being elected Secretary General of AI.

Irine Khan, who visited Pak-Afghan borders recently to see plights of the Afghan people, cited many countries in the West, and also in Asia and Africa, adopting measures curtailing human rights amid a turmoil in a backlash to the attacks in USA.

"Governments around the world, whether they happen to be in the West or the South, in established democracies or emerging ones, have jumped on the bandwagon of anti-terrorism drive that curtails fundamental freedoms."

She said that in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks there has been a severe backlash against human rights. "The campaign

hold the top portfolio.

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She said that in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks there has been a severe backlash against human rights. "The campaign

against terrorism has been used to justify increased repression in some countries."

The Amnesty Secretary General described some of the actions in some countries around the world.

In Egypt, people have been arrested for their links with Islamist groups. In China the government has clamped down on Uighur Muslims. In India, anti-terrorist legislation has severely curtailed civil liberties.

In the UK, the government has passed emergency legislation to detain foreigners on mere suspicion, without charge or trial, and has sought to suspend the European Convention on Human Rights first time ever that this has been done by any European government.

In the United States, more than a thousand persons have been

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'Ctg Mayor not invited to 3 PM's functions'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Absence of Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury from all the three recent functions of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in the port city has evoked question among many citizens.

The Prime Minister attended as chief guest a passing out parade at the Bangladesh Naval Academy on December 20.

On Thursday, she took salute at a passing out parade at the Bangladesh Naval Academy in the morning and attended the inaugural ceremony of the 10th Chittagong International Trade Fair.

Mayor of Chittagong City Corporation Mohiuddin Chowdhury was reportedly not invited to any of the functions, sources claimed.

Talking to this correspondent, many city dwellers said presence of the Mayor was desirable at functions of the executive head of the government because he is part of it and has certain responsibilities in such events.

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Rickshawpuller killed in crossfire in city, housewife murdered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A housewife and a rickshawpuller were killed in separate incidents in the city yesterday.

A b u S a y e e d, 25, a rickshawpuller, was killed in crossfire during a shootout between two groups of drug traders near the rail gate at Tejkunipara in the city's Tejgaon area at about 3am yesterday.

On Wednesday night also, an alleged drug peddler was chopped to death by rivals during a clash in the same area in front of the Railway Colony.

In another incident yesterday, the body of a young housewife was recovered from Kuril Bishwa Road in the city's Badda area yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Aklima Begum, 22, wife of Amir

the garage and headed for home. But shortly afterwards, unidentified gunmen fired shots at him, which hit him in the chest.

The victim lay bleeding at the spot for some time before some local people took him to the DMCH, leaving him at the emergency ward.

Hospital employees admitted him to ward 30 at the hospital where he died at about 5am.

The duty officer of Tejgaon police station however said he was not aware of the incident.

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Fazle Hasan Abed awarded Olof Palme Prize

AP, Stockholm

Fazle Hasan Abed was awarded the Olof Palme Prize on Thursday for his work as a founder of the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, which has taught thousands of refugees to read and write.

"BRAC has played an important role in the transition of Bangladesh from a war-torn society, marked by division and hatred, to an outward-looking society... in which the role of women and girls was improved,"

Pierre Schori, chairman of the fund, stated in a news release.

In 1972, Abed formed BRAC with the aim of helping the thousands of refugees who returned to Bangladesh after the 1971 war of independence from Pakistan. BRAC today runs about 34,000 schools.

A prize ceremony will be held in Stockholm on Jan 30, Olof Palme's birthday.

The prize, which consists of a

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UNB, Bagerhat

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Feni

A man was beaten to death by a gang of terrorists at village Char Shah Bekhuri under Sonagazi upazila morning.

Lolite Mohan Das, 50, was

forcibly taken out of his house at around 8 pm on Thursday by a group of terrorists.

They beat up Das mercilessly and left the scene.

Local people sent him to Sonagazi Health Complex where he succumbed to injuries at about 8 am yesterday.

A case was lodged with Sonagazi thana accusing Ale Taher, his father Aminul Hoque and eight of their accomplices.

10 injured as rival BNP men clash over collection of toll in Bagerhat

UNB, Bagerhat

At least 10 people were injured in a clash between rival groups of BNP over collection of toll at Chitalmari thana headquarters yesterday.

Police said the clash ensued at about 11am when Kalam brother of the ruling party's local MP, and his supporters chased Chhatra Dal leader Shafiqul Islam Babu and his associates who allegedly demanded toll from a contractor.

At one stage one group took shelter at Chitalmari thana and another group pelted brickbats on the thana building.

Police raided the area immediately after the trouble and arrested four youths along with a revolver and 13 bullets. They were identified as Pavel, Tarikul Islam, Helal and Zakir.

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