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Sound traffic management vital to make Dhaka liveable

Experts suggest at roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

City and communication planners yesterday emphasised the need for decentralising administration and industries and adopting both long- and short-term traffic management strategies to make Dhaka liveable.

They pleaded for not encouraging people to migrate to the capital if it is not possible to reduce its population of already over 12 million.

They were speaking at a roundtable titled "Making Dhaka Liveable: Focusing on Transport Problem", organised by The Daily Star at its office jointly with Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology Alumni Association.

Observing that proper traffic management will reduce majority

of the current problems, they put emphasis on a unified traffic management policy and increasing involvement of public transport.

"Think of decentralisation to reduce Dhaka's population and discourage people to come to the city from across the country," said Prof Nazrul Islam of Centre for Urban Studies.

Laying importance on walking facility, he said wrong policies were followed regarding economy and industry, which have ultimately put adverse impacts on the city life.

"We need mass rapid traffic (MRT) and bus rapid transport (BRT) to minimise the crisis and increase mobility of people but we should also create scopes for walking in the city," he said, referring to 15 lakh garment workers who walk for about an hour to reach their workplaces.

Prof Nazrul, also chairman of the University Grants Commission, suggested minimising use of private vehicles and setting up of schools in communities within students' walking distance.

Stressing the need for increasing people's mobility, the experts suggested relocating garment factories and other industrial units, setting up export processing zones outside the city, introducing MRT and BRT and integrating the traffic management system with urban planning and land management policy.

They regretted the unnecessary delay in approving the Strategic Transport Planning (STP) and implementation of other projects.

Transport planning expert Dr M Rahmatullah presented a paper at the discussion, detailing the city's traffic problems, managerial loop-

holes and steps and strategies so far taken in this regard.

"Only 250km arterial roads of Dhaka's 2,200km roads--of which 1,296km belong to Dhaka City Corporation (DCC)--are suitable for large-scale bus operation," said Rahmatullah, transport policy adviser of TSMR programme at the Planning Commission.

"Decentralising is a must and traffic congestion cannot be mitigated unless decentralisation is ensured no matter what steps we have taken to reduce traffic gridlock," he added.

In his paper, he mentioned a few features of Dhaka city and consequences of the present city transport system, and came up with suggestions on how to make the city liveable.

Bangladesh Road Transport
SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Brac University Vice-Chancellor Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury speaks at a roundtable on "Making Dhaka Livable: Focusing on Transport Problem" organised by The Daily Star jointly with Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology Alumni Association, yesterday. PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh may miss bus to Asian Highway

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

Bangladesh's chance of signing on to the Asian Highway Network (AHN) Agreement is fading fast as the government has been sitting idle on the issue for too long adopting a wrong policy, according to experts.

Although the communication ministry officials have been saying the country will sign on to the agreement after the proposed route the international super highway is amended, the experts say Bangladesh has no chance of amending the proposed route without becoming a member of the network.

AHN, a proposed network of 1,41,000 kilometres (km) of stan-

dard roadways crisscrossing Asian countries linking them with Europe, was conceived in 1959 with an aim to promote development of international road transport in the continent.

Bangladesh is not yet a member of the network as its successive governments failed to understand the highway's immense potential and importance, the experts allege.

Sources in the communication ministry, however, said the main reason behind Dhaka's reluctance to join the Asian Highway club is its reservations about giving transit to India.

They said the proposed route of the highway enters Bangladesh from India and exits back into it. "If Dhaka ratifies the agreement

with the present conditions in place, it will likely end up with providing transit facilities to India," an official said.

The proposed route of the Asian Highway that would run through Bangladesh, starts from Benapole and ends at Tamabil via Dhaka.

Another route is also on the draft map running through Banglabandha and Rangpur to Tamabil via Dhaka.

The officials said Bangladesh strongly wants to include a route connecting Dhaka and Yangon via Teknaf. They said an initiative is also already on to develop the route and construct a road up to Myanmar border.

"We've refrained from signing

CORRUPTION CASES ACC seeks to get court stay vacated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman Hasan Mashhud Chowdhury yesterday said the commission will seek in a couple of days resumption of legal proceedings in the cases filed by it and stayed by the High Court (HC) as the Supreme Court (SC) reopens today after its annual vacation.

"We want to have the HC stay orders vacated and the cases resumed. We will make the move in a couple of days," he told a press briefing at the ACC office.

In reply to questions, Hasan Mashhud said the government would decide whether politicians

convicted in graft cases would participate in the upcoming national election or not.

"The government will decide over the matter of convicted politicians taking part in the election. And it is not just taking a decision, the decision must be in accordance with law."

Asked about success of the anti-graft drive in the wake of convicted and graft-suspect politicians gaining bail ahead of the election, the ACC chief said, "A situation of stagnancy as regards our cases has followed the HC stay orders. And once we recover from it, you will see that we are moving ahead," he added.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Lankan president asks LTTE to surrender

41 LTTE cadres, 5 soldiers killed in clashes

PTI, Colombo

Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa yesterday asked the beleaguered LTTE to lay down arms and join the democratic mainstream as 41 Tamil Tiger rebels and five soldiers were killed in fresh fighting in the island's north.

Rajapaksa underlined that there was no military solution to the ethnic problem in the island nation.

The president said the rebels should enter the democratic process to ensure political rights for the Tamils in the embattled northern region.

"I wish to once again very clearly call on the LTTE to lay down their arms and surrender. They should act in this manner and enter the democratic political process. Our aim should be to ensure the democratic political rights of our Tamil brethren," he said.

The President was addressing the All Party Conference to apprise its members of the current developments with regard to the operations "to eradicate terrorism, establish peace and restore democracy" throughout the country.

"However difficult it may be, it is my belief that the efforts to find political solutions to political issues should be continued. It is my

belief that there are no military solutions to political questions," he said.

Contending that the people have elected his government to realise their aims and aspirations, he said "it is our duty to ensure to the Tamil people of the North the same democratic rights as enjoyed by people in all other parts of the country."

He also said that military operations were necessitated in order to "eradicate terrorism" from the country and "enthroned" democracy throughout the land.

In fresh fighting, at least 41 LTTE cadres and five soldiers were killed

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

German first lady due tomorrow

UNB, Dhaka

Eva Luise Kohler, wife of German President Horst Kohler and patroness of German National Committee for Unicef, arrives in Dhaka tomorrow on a five-day visit to Bangladesh.

She will be accompanied by Dr Juergen Haeueus, the chair of Unicef Germany.

Zafirin Chowdhury, Unicef senior communication officer, told the news agency that Ms Kohler will visit Unicef projects in Narsingdi and Brahmanbaria and slums in Dhaka. Outside Dhaka, her visit will be mostly to see water, sanitation and hygiene projects and education for urban working children project.

Ms Kohler is interested in development issues. With her husband, President Horst Kohler who worked also as chairman of the International Monetary Fund, she visited many developing countries.

In August 2004, Ms Kohler assumed the patronage of Unicef Germany. Traditionally, the wife of the German president inherits this honorary office.

Girl crushed under train

UNB, Feni

A 17-year-old girl was crushed under the wheels of a train at rail crossing of the town yesterday morning.

The dead is Farida Yasmin, daughter of Shamsul Alam of Fulgazi upazila and also a first year student of Feni Government College.

Witnesses said Farida was run over by Dhaka bound Suborna Express from Chittagong while crossing the rail line at about 8:45am.

"She was talking over mobile phone when the accident occurred" says a witness to the accident.

Prayer Timing		
October 12		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-20
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-45	5-50
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation



Buses cut haphazardly through a road near Sadarghat in the absence of traffic police yesterday morning, resulting in traffic jam for hours. PHOTO: STAR

US, India strike historic nuke deal

AFP, Washington

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and her Indian counterpart Pranab Mukherjee signed a pact Friday to open up sales of civilian nuclear technology to India for the first time in three decades.

Nearly a week after the pair aborted a signing ceremony in New Delhi, Rice and Mukherjee signed a deal that highlights a strategic partnership not only in nuclear know-how but also in trade, defence cooperation and other areas.

Their signatures cap a three-

year political rollercoaster in both countries for an agreement that lifts a ban on US-Indian civilian nuclear trade imposed after India's first nuclear test in 1974.

"Many thought this day would never come, but doubts have been silenced," Rice told a gathering of diplomats and others in Washington just before she and Mukherjee inked the document at 4:15 pm (2015 GMT).

Mukherjee said the event marked an "important day for US-India relations," adding: "We have brought to fruition three years of

Obama expands lead over McCain

Palin abused powers as Alaska governor, reveals report

AFP, Juneau

Democrat Barack Obama opened a double-digit lead over rival John McCain in a key opinion poll yesterday while investigators found Republican vice presidential nominee Sarah Palin had abused her powers as Alaska governor.

Just over three weeks from the November 4 vote, Obama leads McCain 52 percent to 41 percent

among registered voters, according to the latest survey conducted by Newsweek magazine.

A similar poll a month ago showed the two candidates tied at 46 percent.

As many as 86 percent of voters said they were dissatisfied with the way things were going in the United States, and only 10 percent said they were satisfied.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

POLLS UNDER EMERGENCY Politicians point at state-manipulation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of both the Awami League (AL) and BNP have expressed the fear the upcoming parliamentary polls might be "manipulated" if held under the state of emergency.

AL president member Motia Chowdhury and BNP chairperson's adviser ASM Hannan Shah at a BBC Bangladesh "Sanglap" yesterday said fair polls cannot be expected under the emergency as the state can easily manipulate the results.

"The general elections might be state-manipulated under the emergency. The real public opinion won't be reflected in the polls in that case," Motia Chowdhury told the BBC dialogue.

On the other hand, Hannan Shah said, "I agree with Motia Chowdhury that it will be easy to manipulate the general election if the emergency state is not withdrawn."

Initiated by BBC World Service, the BBC Bangladesh Sanglap was

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

2 robbers die in gunfight with cops

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah

Two robbers were killed in a gunfight with the law enforcers near DM College at Padami under Shailakupa upazila of the district early yesterday.

The identity of the robbers could not be known as of 6:30pm yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, a police team from Shailakupa Police Station set out for Padami where a gang of robbers was felling a tree on Kushtia-Jhenidah road for committing robbery in night coaches.

As the police team reached near

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

N Korea off US blacklist after nuke inspection deal

AFP, AP, Washington

The United States yesterday removed North Korea from its terror blacklist after reaching an agreement on nuclear verification measures, a State Department spokesman said.

"The secretary of state has rescinded the designation of North Korea as a state terror sponsor," said spokesman Sean McCormack.

The agreement is intended to salvage a faltering nuclear disarmament accord in the short time before President Bush leaves office in January.

McCormack said at a news conference Saturday that the inspection deal was reached after negotiations between US and North Korean officials.

North Korea will allow atomic experts to take samples and conduct forensic tests at all of its declared nuclear facilities and undeclared sites, on mutual consent. The North will permit experts to verify it has told the truth about transfers of nuclear technology and an alleged uranium programme.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

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খুব বেশি-কেন সত্যিকার তথ্য ক্রয়কৃত আদায় বাতিল।

স্বাস্থ্য পরামর্শ : ০২৭ ৩০০০০২০২
কোম্পানি বিক্রয় : ০২৭ ৩০০০০২০৩
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দুর্নীতি দমন কমিশন