

# Level crossings unsafe

Govt plans to build 6 overpasses; but no immediate solution to chaotic traffic, reckless driving

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

The rapidly worsening traffic congestion in Dhaka city, which is eating up precious working hours of commuters, is unlikely to ease within a year or two, due to a lack of implementation of supportive city infrastructure projects, and a virtual breakdown of traffic law enforcement.

While an evolving urban culture has been adding increasing numbers of motor vehicles in the capital over the recent years, successive governments failed to urgently implement city infrastructure projects on time.

At the same time, an overwhelming number of recklessly driven public trans-

ports contribute to the intense traffic jams and the lack of road safety.

The government now has some short-term initiatives like construction of overpasses and underpasses for vehicles, connecting roads, bypasses, and east-west roads, but none of those initiatives has been implemented so far, and might also take years to be completed.

Against such a backdrop, officials involved in traffic management sat for a meeting in the communications ministry yesterday to discuss ways to ease the nagging traffic jam immediately. The meeting was held a day after a speeding train rammed into a bus at Moghbazar level crossing, leaving eight people

severely injured.

Railway officials said had there been an overpass or underpass, the accident could have been easily avoided. "We've decided to construct six overpasses for vehicles, at six risky level crossings in the city," said Belayet Hossain, director general of Bangladesh Railway.

The level crossings where the overpasses or underpasses will be built are at Moghbazar, Staff Road of Dhaka Cantonment, FDC, Malibagh, Jurain, and Sayedabad.

"There are several other risky level crossings where overpasses or underpasses should be built, but initially we are

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A day after a train reduced four vehicles to scrap at Moghbazar level crossing, this car became stranded on the railway lines at the same spot due to a traffic jam. PHOTO: SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

JS DISCUSSION District-wise budget, low GDP growth target slated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling Awami League (AL) lawmaker Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir has termed 'unconstitutional' the finance minister's proposals for unifying revenue budget and development budget, and district-wise budget from the fiscal year (FY) 2010-11.

Participating in the budget discussion on the second day yesterday in the House, he also criticised 'low target' of gross

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PUBLIC PROCUREMENT RULES

# Changes may hinder loans, support: ADB

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON

After the World Bank's (WB) objection to the government's proposed amendments to the Public Procurement Act/Rules (PPA/PPR), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has also cautioned that it may hinder ADB's loan and budget support.

"These changes could create significant implementation issues under our 50 loan projects and have serious implications for future ADB operations, including planned budget support, if enacted," ADB Country Director Paul J Heytens said in a letter to the Economic Relation Division (ERD) on

Wednesday.

Copies of the letter have been sent to the finance minister, planning minister and prime minister's finance and planning adviser.

Earlier, WB Country Director Xian Zhu had sent two letters to the government, and objected to six of the proposed amendments.

The government seeks amendments to about 50 articles of the PPA and PPR. Once the PPA and PPR are amended, it will allow the government to award contracts involving up to Tk 2 crore through lottery, and select contractors without any pre-qualifications.

The ADB country director in his letter also

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It's EC's job to scrap JS membership Says Suranjit about SQ Chy issue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The speaker can do nothing to scrap or retain BNP lawmaker Salauddin Quader Chowdhury's membership, Suranjit Sengupta, chief of a parliamentary body, said yesterday.

According to the constitution, the decision rests with the Election Commission, and the speaker may only render his opinion, he observed.

Asked about the ruling Awami League lawmaker's comments, Speaker Abdul Hamid said, "Let my words be spoken by many."

He also said he has yet to read the Wednesday's letter where the EC asks the Parliament Secretariat to scrap Salauddin's House

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# Clock goes 1-hr ahead tonight

Daylight saving time kicks off to save electricity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh pushes forward the clock an hour at 11:00pm today (Friday night) to better utilise daylight and save electricity.

This means Bangladeshis would practically begin their work an hour earlier than usual. Consequently, many establishments that run till sundown would actually close before sundown and thus reduce pressure on power demands.

With the clock running an hour ahead, Bangladesh tonight becomes GMT+7 from GMT+6. Prayer times for Muslims would move forward by an hour while timing of different offices, schools and other institutions would remain unchanged.

Shops and malls that traditionally remain open till 8:00pm would now use one extra hour of daylight. These would now use less electricity.

It cannot be precisely forecasted how much energy can be

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Khaleda likely to go abroad to meet sons

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia may go abroad soon for medical treatment and to visit her sons, sources said yesterday.

According to the sources Khaleda will visit Saudi Arabia,

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Road mishap kills 1 in city, sparks protest 20 vehicles vandalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Death of a minor boy in a road accident at Mirpur in the city last night sparked off a violent protest by locals who damaged at least 20 vehicles disrupting the road communication for about an hour.

Agitated people damaged

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Problems of newspaper industry to be resolved: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister (PM) Sheikh Hasina has said the government would look into the problems prevailing in the country's newspaper industry.

She gave the assurance when leaders of the Newspaper Owners Association of Bangladesh (Noab) met her at the PM's Office yesterday.

During the meeting, the Noab leaders apprised the PM of the prospects and problems of the newspaper industry of Bangladesh.

Hasina gave a patient hearing to them and gave the assurance of her government's right

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# Keep export option, build green city

Expat experts suggest at discussion on coal

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA, back from Tangail

A panel of non-resident Bangladeshi experts yesterday suggested that the government formulate a coal policy with an option to export the surplus fossil fuel.

It talked about merits and demerits of open-cut and underground methods of coal extraction, but did not recommend any.

At a post-workshop press conference at Jamuna resort in Tangail, the energy experts said the government should build 'green cities' near the coal mines to ensure locals are safe from environmental hazards.

They also stressed the need for arranging alternative means of livelihood for the people affected by coal mining.

Nafis Ahmed, a panel member, said they

have asked the government to develop a database through geographic information system for a 30-year land management in the mining localities.

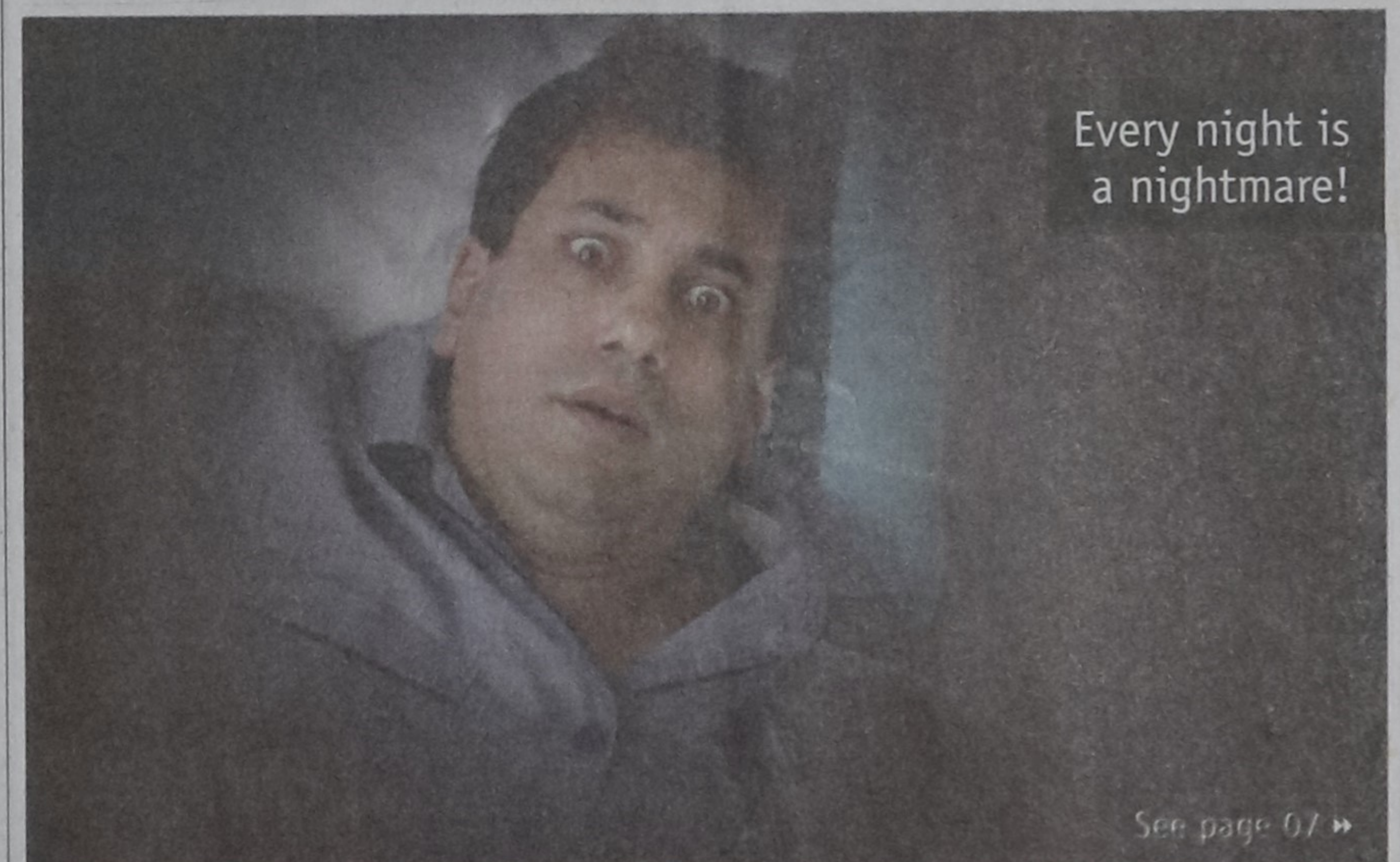
"We have also suggested regular dialogue between the government and experts on protection of the environment from the perils of extraction," he added.

The panel observed that the country would be able to have four 500-megawatt power plants if coal mining at Barapukuria and Fulbaria runs on full throttle.

It said it favours exporting the coal in excess of the domestic demand because extraction, once underway, cannot be stopped.

The experts drew up a draft coal policy during the workshop titled 'Brainstorming with

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Every night is a nightmare!

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Bangladesh is moving  
**One** hour ahead...

The world is moving forward  
So is Bangladesh

We'll have to start working early to keep this journey on  
We need the highest utilization of day light  
The hour pin is moving ahead by One hour  
Let's begin our tomorrow at 11 p.m. tonight

Inspired by Salvador Dali's painting  
The Persistence of Memory

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