

Check private cars to ease gridlock

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday said controlling private cars and increasing facilities for walking would play an effective role in reducing traffic jam in the city.

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) Chairman Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said a jam-free balanced transportation system might be established by controlling private cars, increasing facilities for walking and incorporating rail and waterways in the system properly.

"Below five percent people in the city own a private car. It would turn out to be negative in bringing opposite result if elevated expressway is built considering such a low number of people," said Dr Mahbubul Bari, a communications expert.

In his keynote paper, Dr Bari said this at the roundtable 'Unbearable jam of Dhaka metropolitan city: An outline



Prof Muzaffer Ahmad speaks at a roundtable on 'Unbearable jam in Dhaka city: An outline for practical solution' at Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday. Bapa and WBB Trust jointly organised the event.

for a practical solution' organised by Bapa and WBB Trust at Cirdap auditorium.

Citing examples from foreign countries, he also suggested for not implementing the elevated expressway as the government has approved building the way spending Tk 80,000 crore.

Prof Mahbub-Un-Nabi of Buet said the effort to build such a way would lead to the downfall of the country's economy.

Dr ATM Nurul Amin said the first step to reduce traffic jam should be to control private cars.

Prof Shakil Akhter of Buet said the recent move titled 'Operation Clean Street' to curb traffic jam has caused sufferings to millions of people as bus service has been reduced.

Vice Chancellor of Ahsanullah University Prof Anwar Hossain and Director of Accident research Centre Dr Shamsul Haque also spoke.

ORPHANAGE CASE

Khaleda to appear before court today

COURT CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia will appear before a Dhaka court today in connection with a case filed on charges of embezzling Tk 2.10 crore through forming Zia Orphanage Trust.

One of her lawyers said Khaleda would appear before it at 1:00pm.

On August 30, Judge ANM Bashir Ullah of Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court asked Khaleda and four others to appear before it today.

The court will give its decision whether the charges would be taken into cognisance in presence of the accused.

The other accused are Khaleda's son Tarique Rahman, former BNP lawmaker Kazi Salimul Haque and Sharfuddin Ahmed, her nephew Mominur Rahman and former principal secretary Kamal Uddin Siddiqui.

But the latter two have been absconding since Deputy Assistant Director of Anti-corruption Commission Harunur Rashid, also the investigation officer, filed the case on August 5.

The trial against Tarique will be continued in his absence as he earlier went to London for treatment with permission from the Supreme Court.

The complainant alleged that on June 9, 1991, a grant of \$1,255,000, equivalent to about Tk 4.45 crore at the time, was transferred from United Saudi Commercial Bank to prime minister's orphanage fund—a fund that was created by the then premier shortly before the transfer—as part of the embezzlement scheme.

AL OFFICE BOMB

ATTACK CASE

Mufti Hannan, Jewel remanded for 7 days

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Harkatul Jihad (Huji) leader Mufti Abdul Hannan and Swechchasevak Dal leader Shahadat Ullah Jewel have been remanded for seven days in Narayanganj Awami League office bomb attack case.

Chief Judicial Magistrate Arifur Rahman granted the remand when

Mufti Hannan was produced before the court in Narayanganj amid strict security yesterday.

A large number of police personnel were deployed at different points on the court premises.

Earlier Public Prosecutor Advocate Asaduzzaman Asad, Narayanganj District Bar Association President Abdur Rashid, General Secretary Advocate Anisur Rahman Dipu appeared for seven-day remand for Mufti Hannan and Jewel.

As there was no lawyer for Mufti Hannan, he himself told the court that he is a convict for hanging to death, and questioned whether such an accused can be remanded or not.

He said he was tortured during his previous remand for 318 days.

Mufti Hannan said his relatives are supporters of Awami League and he also attended the janaza of Bangabandhu.

Advocate Sakawat Hossain appeared for Jewel.

In the bomb attack on Awami League office at Chasara on June 16, 2001 a total of 20 people were killed and more than 100 injured.

Most of the casualties were Awami League leaders and workers.

3 youths held for alleged link with militants

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Police arrested three youths, including two schoolboys, at Hossainpur in the town early yesterday for their alleged involvement with militant outfits.

The arrestees were identified as Omar Faruque, 20, a class ten student of Barhatta CKP Pilot High School, Sheikh Parvez, 18, a student of class nine of the same school and Anik Ahmed, 20.

Superintendent of Police of Netrakona Nazmul Alam said the arrestees might have connection with a militant outfit.



The namaz-e-janaza of former finance minister Saifur Rahman was held at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

BELA LEGAL NOTICE TO AUTHORITIES

Call for action against ship-breaking activities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association sent a legal notice to the authorities concerned yesterday asking for immediate actions against all the ship-breaking activities running without environmental clearance.

Bela also demanded financial compensations for the families of workers who were killed and injured in an accident at Sitakunda ship-breaking yard on Saturday.

A total of 16 high officials are made respondent. Of them, 14 are government

officials and the rest two are the president of Bangladesh Ship Breakers Association and the manager of Kabir Steel Yard, Sitakunda. The government officials include secretaries of shipping, environment and forest, home, labour and employment ministries.

Five workers sustained severe burns while they were cutting a ship at Kabir Steel Yard. One of them died in hospital.

The accident happened due to utter negligence of the shipyard owners to the laws and court directives, the notice said.

The notice also asked for legal rights and safe working conditions of the worker.

Advocate Iqbal Kabir of Bela said that if the respondents don't take any action or give reply within five days after receiving the notice, legal actions would be taken.

The notice said as per the law, all the ships imported for breaking have to be free from hazardous materials before entering the country and those ships must be certified by the directorate of environment and the directorate of explosives.

Information Commission holds meet with N'ganj journo

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Information Commission yesterday held a view exchange meeting with the members of the Narayanganj unit of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ).

Chief Information Commissioner Azizur Rahman said democracy would be established if justice is ensured and people would get necessary information if journalists carry out their duty objectively.

Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) President Hasanuzzaman Shamim presided over the meeting at the Narayanganj Union of Journalists (NUJ) office.

HATIRJHEEL PROJECT

Follow old design Landowners demand

Staff Correspondent

Landowners in Maghbazar and Shiddeswari areas, whose lands are to be acquired by the government to implement the Hatirjheel-Begunbari Canal Development Project, yesterday demanded to bring changes in the design of the project so that their land does not need to be acquired.

They said the design prepared during the caretaker government for the project encompassed their land, but previous designs did not.

They demanded to execute the project based on the previous designs.

Hatirjheel Prokalpe Bastutirya Odhigrahan Protirodh Committee placed the demand at a press conference at the

National Press Club.

The committee also demanded that they should be given at least Tk 50 lakh for per Katha if the lands needed to be acquired for the project.

In a written speech at the press conference, Md Nuruzzaman said the government did not think about their rehabilitation before acquiring their lands.

He said that they have gone to the local lawmaker and state minister for housing and public works with their demands. Though they have given us assurance, but no steps were taken for us.

President of the committee Md Salahuddin, landowners of the area Giasuddin, Wahed Khan and Akash, among others, were present at the press conference.



Members of the cabinet and high officials receive Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Zia International Airport in the city yesterday on her return from World Climate Conference-3 in Geneva.

PM returns home from Geneva climate confce

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina returned home yesterday after attending the World Climate Conference-3 in Geneva.

Deputy Leader in Parliament Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury, Health Minister Dr AFM Ruhul Huq, Chief Whip Abdus Shahid, chiefs of the three services, diplomats and high civil and military officials were present at the airport to receive the prime minister who alighted from Biman Bangladesh Airlines at 1:00pm.

Hasina went to Geneva on September 1. On September 3 she made a country statement at the conference seeking financial and technological assistance from the rich nations to help Bangladesh adapt to climate threats.

'Pay salaries, bonuses to workers by Sept 15'

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh National Council of Textile Garments and Leather Workers yesterday demanded payment of salaries and bonuses to workers of all industries, including garment factories, by September 15, says a press release.

Its called on all concerned to pay workers' wages and bonuses within the fixed date to help workers celebrate the upcoming Eid ul-Fitr with festivity as well as to ensure peace in the sector.

The council leaders placed the demand at a meeting in the city with labour leader Abul Bashar in the chair.

They said paying salaries and bonuses to workers on time is a responsibility of the owners as well as BGMEA, adding that they cannot avoid it on any excuse.

Plan to set up multi-storey parking places

BSS, Dhaka

Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan yesterday said the government is planning to set up multi-storey parking places in the city's major important areas to avoid illegal car parking leading to reducing traffic jam.

"In this respect, an expert committee has already been formed," he said while addressing a discussion on 'Traffic jam and solutions' organised by Gono Odhikar Bastabayan Forum (GOBF) at Moni Sing-Farhad Trust in the city.

State Minister for Home Affairs advocate Shamsul Haque Tuku was present at the programme as the special guest.

GOBF convener and freedom fighter Syed Aftabul Alam chaired the function, which

was joined, among others, by a number of leaders and workers of GOBF.

Shahjahan said necessary steps would be taken soon to ease the gridlock that caused immense sufferings to the people here.

The minister held incoming of vehicles from outside Dhaka, rural migration and violations of rules and regulations by the drivers as mainly responsible for the jam.

Tuku underscored the need for creating village-based employment opportunities for rural people so that they could stay at home in their respective areas.

Speakers at the discussion urged the government to take immediate steps to evict illegal occupiers from the city markets and other important establishments to ease congestion.



Moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at many places over Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and at a few places over Dhaka and Sylhet divisions in next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 7:11pm today and rises at 6:42am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 34.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 24.6 degrees Celsius at Chuadanga.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.0	26.5	79	72
Chittagong	31.4	26.0	76	80
Rajshahi	30.0	26.0	92	92
Khulna	31.5	25.0	93	96
Barisal	31.4	26.0	82	78
Sylhet	34.0	25.0	93	76
Cox's Bazar	32.0	25.3	96	83



Diabetic Association of Bangladesh organises a free diabetes test programme at Shahbagh in the city yesterday on the occasion of the 20th death anniversary of founder of the association Dr Mohammad Ibrahim.

Ozone: Climate change boosts ultraviolet risk for high latitudes

AFP, Paris

Climate change will disrupt Earth's precious ozone layer, boosting ultraviolet (UV) radiation in the deep southern hemisphere and reducing UV in far northern latitudes, a study warned yesterday.

By century's end, UV levels in Antarctica could rise by up to 20 percent at seasonal peaks while average exposure in northern Scandinavia, Siberia and northern Canada could fall by almost a tenth.

The shift could have worrying impacts on human health,

as high exposure to UV is linked to cancer, cataracts and crop damage just as low exposure causes vitamin D insufficiency.

"Our study is showing that there is a new threat to the ozone layer, and this is climate change, which will either increase or decrease UV depending on the region," said atmospheric physicist Michaela Hegglin of Canada's University of Toronto.

"And while too much UV exposure is known to be a bad thing, too little UV exposure can also have detrimental

effects, though these are much less explored."

The ozone layer refers to the thin sandwich of triatomic oxygen molecules in the stratosphere, between 10 and 50 kilometers (six and 30 miles) in altitude, which filter harmful UVB light from the Sun.

Awareness of the layer's importance emerged in the 1970s, when scientists discovered it was being depleted by chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) chemicals used in aerosols and refrigeration.

'Saifur's death irreparable loss to nation'

DU CORRESPONDENT

Condolences poured in yesterday on the sudden death of former finance minister and BNP leader M Saifur Rahman.

Terming Saifur's death an irreparable loss to the nation, leaders of different organisations in separate messages said he was a dedicated and patriotic political leader and people of the country would recall his contributions to the society for long.

They also prayed for the salvation of the departed soul and conveyed sympathy to his bereaved family members.

Saifur Rahman, also a member of BNP standing committee, was killed in a road crash on Dhaka-Sylhet highway at Ashuganj on Saturday while he was returning to Dhaka.

Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) leaders also condoled the death of Saifur. They said the nation would always remember his contributions to the country's economic arena.

DCCI President Zafar Osman also condoled the death of Saifur Rahman. He prayed for the salvation of the departed soul.

Bangladesh Human Rights Commission, Bangladesh Economic Association, Economic Reporters' Forum, Bangladesh Jatiya Party, Bangladesh Tarikat Federation, Bangladesh Reconditioned Vehicles Importers and Dealers' Association, Bangladesh Jatiya Congress and Gazipur District Reporters' Club also condoled the death of the former finance minister.

Death anniversary of Dr Ibrahim observed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 20th death anniversary of Dr Mohammad Ibrahim, founder of Diabetic Association of Bangladesh, was observed yesterday amid different programmes.

The day began with offering fateha and placing wreaths at his grave at Banani graveyard, says a press release.

Commemorative meeting, free diabetes screening in different points in the city, discussion between doctors and diabetic patients were organised to mark the day.

Addressing the commemorative meeting the speakers vowed to ensure treatment for all the diabetic patients in the country.

AK Azad Khan, president of the association, chaired the memorial meeting while Health Minister AFM Ruhul Haque attended the programme as the chief guest.

Free testing of diabetes were held from 8:00am to 11:00am at different points in the city, including Shahbagh, National Press Club, and Karwan Bazar.

Bangladesh Gonotantik League and Bangladesh Nari Mukti Andolon also organised separate discussions on the occasion.