

71pc rickshawpullers were farmers: Study

BSS, Dhaka

More than 71 percent of the city's nearly one million rickshawpullers were farmers prior to their migration to the capital when lack of earning opportunities forced them to this hardship and health waning profession.

Eighteen percent of these rickshawpullers were in abject poverty as they were landless before they decided to pull rickshaw in the capital, says a study of Social Science Research Council of Planning Ministry styled 'Livelihoods of the rickshawpullers of Dhaka city'.

'Good Earth', a non-government research organisation, under the supervision of the council, conducted the study.

Principal investigator of the study Dr Nurul Huda told

BSS that rickshawpullers in Dhaka city migrated from rural areas mostly the poor and landless who had nothing to earn for their livelihood in villages.

The study found that health condition of half of the rickshawpullers have been deteriorated as they are not physically sound for such kind of hard job.

The study revealed that most of the rickshawpullers are living hand to mouth condition although about 30 percent of them have earning of Tk 6000 to 7000 per month.

Although the rickshawpullers are earning higher migrating to the city, they used to enjoy better livelihood in villages.

Ninety-one percent rickshawpullers informed that they enjoyed open air facilities in their villages and

Hajj flights begin tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

This year's Hajj flights kick off tomorrow, State Minister for Religious Affairs Shahjahan Mia said at the secretariat yesterday.

He also said that Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will visit the Hajj camp at Ashkona in the city's Uttara today.

This year around 58,460 men and women have applied to perform Hajj. Of them, 8043 are going under government arrangement and others under supervision of the private Hajj agencies.

Meanwhile, Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister GM Quader yesterday asked officials of Biman Bangladesh Airlines Limited to remain alert while operating Hajj flights so that no Hajj pilgrim faces any difficulty.

He was speaking at a discussion on Hajj flights at the ministry conference room.

Expressing satisfaction over the Hajj flight operation, the civil aviation minister also asked the authorities concerned to take steps so that Hajjis can know the timetable of Hajj flights and have access to other information at the Hajj camp.



Such long tailback has become a regular phenomenon in the city. The picture was taken from Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue.

'Gridlock halts traffic for 7.5 hrs a day'

BSS, Dhaka

Gridlocks in the capital halt traffic for 7.5 hours a day, earning Dhaka a bad reputation of being one of the world's most congested cities alongside exposing it to huge economic losses, according to a survey report released yesterday.

Roads and Highways Department (R&H) conducted the study.

The respondents said tailbacks are growing longer day by day while a government order refixing office timing yielded little success in easing traffic jam.

"Our study estimated that economic loss only in terms of fuel cost amounts to Tk 10,000 crore a year due to traffic jam," R&H engineer Shantosh Kumar Roy, who carried out the study, told BSS.

The amount is one-third of the country's annual development expenditure.

According to previous reports, Dhaka has only seven to eight percent road infrastructure compared to 25 percent needed ideally as per universal thumb rule, but the study said the 'intersection' or street management problems are intensifying the crisis.

"In a four-lane road, a single traffic signal halts an average 24,000 vehicles... We immediately need to construct overpasses to ease the

situation alongside a campaign to reduce city population by distributing civic facilities elsewhere," Roy said.

The study report came a month after the police launched a 'clean street' campaign to ease traffic jam as the gridlock even halted the prime minister's motorcade on her way to office.

A police report last month suggested a series of steps, including construction of

underground and overground railway and elevated expressways alongside efficient public transport systems as Dhaka's traffic jam exceeds its own records in recent period.

"Expansion of road networks and construction of other requisite infrastructures is crucially important," said a Dhaka Metropolitan Police report on the city's traffic situation.

The report suggested fran-

chising of bus routes to introduce a modern public transport system, saying unhealthy competition among the city's 150 bus companies was one of the major reasons for the traffic congestion.

The report also stressed launching underground train and monorail system, elevated expressway alongside immediate steps to make major roads off-limits to rickshaws.

Project true history of liberation war: Zillur

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman yesterday laid emphasis on presenting true history of the Liberation War before the young generation so that they would be brought up being imbued with strong patriotism.

"Our rich history, tradition and true history of the great liberation war will have to be presented before the young generation," he said when an 11-member delegation of Bangabandhu Shishu Kishore Parishad, led by its President Khandaker Asaduzzaman MP called on the president at Bangabhaban.

During the meeting, President Zillur Rahman said country's children would feel

proud for the nation if they could know its glorious history of independence as well as rich culture and heritage. "It's our responsibility to build up our young generation in the spirit of Liberation War."

He mentioned that the glorious history of "our long movement and Liberation War will encourage the young generation to perceive their responsibility towards the people."

He hoped that Bangabandhu Shishu Kishore Parishad would continue their work for presenting the life and works of father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and history of independence before the young generation with a view to building them as worthy citizens.

The president mentioned that he was fully involved with all activities of the Parishad and assured the delegation his all

out support to the Parishad.

Referring to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina-declared 'Charter of Change' for turning the country into an IT-based happy and prosperous Bangladesh by 2021, the golden jubilee of the independence, he urged all to work from their respective position to help implement the 'Vision-2021'.

On behalf of the delegation, Bangabandhu Shishu Kishore Parishad President Khandaker Asaduzzaman MP, its adviser and vice chancellor of Jagannath University Prof Dr Mesbahuddin Ahmed and executive member M Habibur Rahman Habib spoke.

Secretary of the President's Office Mohammad Shafiqul Alam, Military Secretary to the President Major General Abul Kalam Md Humayun Kabir and President's Press Secretary Abdul Awal Howlader were present during the meeting.

Allegation of misconduct by joint secy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A two-member team yesterday launched an investigation into gross misconduct by a joint secretary of the establishment ministry.

It was alleged that Joint Secretary Golam Mortuza, who stayed at Hotel Nice International on Saturday night, got drunk and assaulted a boarder and hurled abuses at him.

Following the directives of the ministry, Rajshahi divisional commissioner formed a probe committee with Additional Commissioner Nasim Khalilullah as its head.

The team visited the hotel yesterday afternoon and interviewed boarders, hotel employees and the owner.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Abdul Wadud, former justice of the Supreme Court and father of Prof Dr Nasreen Wadud of Psychology department at Dhaka University, passed away at Ibn Sina Hospital in the city yesterday at the age of 90, says a press release.

He left behind his daughter and a host of relatives to mourn his death. He was buried at Azimpur graveyard.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK



Today is the fifth death anniversary of Abdul Hamid, former senior assistant secretary of the Industry Ministry, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad and doa mahfil will be held at his village home at Kamalganj in Moulvibazar after Asr prayers.

Nurun Nehar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the second death anniversary of Nurun Nehar, the first Muslim woman singer from the then East Bengal at Akash-Bani Kolkata Centre of All India Radio, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad and doa mahfil will be held at Mirpur Jame Mosque in the city after Asr prayers.

NCTB godown

FROM PAGE 1

said Major Shahjalal, director operations of FSCD. There were no proper gaps in between the stacks and room between those and the walls and the ceiling, he said.

"Even the ventilation ducts of the warehouse were blocked with piles of paper," said FSCD Director General Brig Gen Abu Nayeem Md Shahidullah.

High officials of FSCD, army engineering corps and navy officers on fire fighting duty in one voice said stockpiling of books and papers in this manner was the foremost reason that made the fire-fighters' job tough.

The firemen had to struggle for two days to reach the centre of the fire.

At least five NCTB officials including the storekeeper, store officer, senior store officer, member (textbook) and the chairman are responsible in for the disorderly storing goods in the warehouse.

On safety precautions, NCTB Chairman Prof Md Mostafa Kamaluddin said, "The store officer would be able to say."

Prof Shafiqur Rahman, NCTB member (Textbook), said normally the store officer is supposed to ensure that proper stockpiling techniques are used.

When pointed out that it

was not done properly, Prof Shafiqur said he was not aware of the manner in which stocks have been stored.

"I do not visit the warehouses, as I am more concerned with policy-making and I have never visited this particular warehouse," he said, adding, "Neither do I know what conservation and safety measures should be taken to store goods in the warehouse... I am a teacher."

Senior Store Officer Nasim Haider said he needed to see exactly how the stockpiling was done.

"In fact, my work station is at the NCTB head office and I am not supposed to supervise warehouse management at the ground level."

Zahurul Alam, NCTB member (Finance) and head of the NCTB-formed three-member enquiry committee on the incident, said it was true that the stockpiling was not done in a proper way.

"We will try to find out what lapses occurred in this respect," said Alam.

Store Officer Fazlul Haq said, "I joined here only three weeks ago and I did not do the stacking."

Storekeeper of the warehouse Nazim Uddin could not be reached for his comment.

BBC Buzz from Oct 23

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BBC World Service Trust is going to launch a new youth entertainment show titled 'BBC Buzz' from October 23 highlighting the best of what is happening in Bangladesh today.

The weekly show will be aired in the private television channel ATN Bangla at 9:20pm every Friday and will be re-telecast on every Monday at 3:10pm.

The BBC Buzz will be a show about career, politics, fashion, music, the known and less known, seen and unseen and many other topics.

At a press conference at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel yesterday, Allan Freedman, country director of BBC World Service Trust, Bangladesh said, "We invested our time to find out what the young people would like most from the media. The result is BBC Buzz, a programme that truly reflects the interests and aspirations of young audience."

It is a show about the best of what is happening in Bangladesh today, but also where people want to be tomorrow, he added.

Features on the country's undiscovered heroes and places, debate on the topics and events that matter the youths, reports on personal passions of celebrities, films on inspirational Bangladeshis living abroad and animation to help speak English are some of the highlights of the programme, said Azra Mahmood, one of the hosts of the programme.

DU JOURNALISM DEPTT 8 students awarded scholarships

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eight students of the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Dhaka University were awarded scholarships yesterday for their outstanding results in different exams.

DU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique distributed the scholarships among the recipients at a ceremony at the university's RC Majumder auditorium as the chief guest while Mafizur Rahman, acting chairman of the department, presided over the programme.

Prof Arefin said the scholarship would encourage the recipients to do better in the future.

He also urged all the students to develop their interpersonal skills.

Students who have won Touhidul Anwar and Ali Haider Memorial Scholarship for becoming first in the first year final exams are Kajalie Shehreen Islam (2001), Abonti Mehtaz (2002), Sajeb Kumar Sarker (2003), Kazi M Anisul Islam (2004), Rifat Ferdous (2005), Hasan Mahmud Faisal (2006), Marzia Rahman (2007) and Rezaul Islam (2008).

Students who have won Tazim Memorial Scholarship for becoming first in the first year final exams are Abonti Mehtaz (2002), Sajeb Kumar Sarker (2003), Kazi M Anisul Islam (2004), Rifat Ferdous (2005), Hasan Mahmud Faisal (2006), Marzia Rahman (2007) and Rezaul Islam (2008).

Kazi M Anisul Islam also won Novera Deepita Memorial Scholarship for becoming first class first in the BSS (Honours) exams in 2007.

Dr Sheikh Abdus Salam, acting dean of Social Science Faculty, Prof Sakawat Ali Khan, Syeda Farida Parveen, wife of late Prof Touhidul Anwar and Adila Bakul, mother of Novera Deepita, also spoke on the occasion.

EC cleared Jasim on army opinion

FROM PAGE 1

In his opinion the judge advocate general said the ineligibility stipulated in the electoral laws regarding retirement from service did not apply to Jasim since his premature (compulsory) retirement was not a punitive measure.

Jasim was sent on compulsory retirement on August 30, 2004 from the army. According to the section 12 (1) (G) of the Representation of the People Order (RPO), he was ineligible to contest the December 29 polls.

The apex court asked EC to hold a by-election to the constituency of Bhola-4 from where Jasim was elected defeating Hafizuddin.

Interestingly, the officials at the EC Secretariat suggested before the polls that Jasim Uddin be declared ineligible.

But an election commissioner made EC seek opinion from the judge advocate general on the issue, insiders say. As a result, before scrutiny of the candidates' applications EC sought opinion of the judge advocate general.

"We wrote to the judge advocate general following an

Jasim to contest the ninth parliamentary polls following a writ filed by Hafizuddin.

The Appellate Division on Sunday upheld the HC verdict that also declared illegal the parliament membership of Jasim, proving he was ineligible to contest the December 29 polls.

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"We wrote to the judge advocate general following an

application of Jasim Uddin to the chief election commissioner," Sohul said.

The judge advocate general sent the opinion to EC on November 23, while the dates for scrutiny were December 3 and 4.

Based on the opinion, EC asked the returning officer, who sought opinion of the commission to decide about Jasim's application, to accept his candidacy, officials say.

The acceptance of Jasim's candidacy led BNP leader Hafizuddin to file an appeal with EC challenging its legality.

The EC heard the appeal and rejected it on December 10, citing the opinion of the judge advocate general.

Dissatisfied at the EC's rejection, Hafiz filed the writ arguing that if anyone is sent to compulsory retirement, they cannot contest parliamentary elections within five years since their retirement.

Slack coordination worsens

FROM PAGE 16

Rahmatullah, a policy adviser of transport sector management reform of the planning commission, said the agencies responsible for traffic management have to deliver their duties accordingly.

The government must introduce an effective and quality public transport system for mass transit to find a way out of the situation, said Rahmatullah, who also worked as an expert of strategic transport planning.

He regretted that none of the experts' recommendations made in this regard has so far been implemented.

Ever increasing number of vehicles in uncoordinated manner and illegal occupancy of roads and footpaths with parking in front of big commercial establishments, vendors and construction materials create obstructions to public movement, experts said.

It is the duty of the DCC to keep the city footpaths free from obstruction while the DMP will keep the thoroughfares free for smooth traffic movement and the Rajuk will punish errant builders who have no required parking facilities.

DCC Chief Executive Officer Md Nurul Haq said the Dhaka city corporation does not have any designated officials for traffic management or traffic police.

"We have approved posts for only two magistrates while we need at least ten magistrates to carry out frequent drives against illegal occupancy of footpaths and roads."

Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka said the city corporation requires traffic police department at its disposal to deliver its duty in traffic management.

"We requested consecutive governments either to assign the traffic police department under the Dhaka City Corporation or authorise it to form a similar force," said Khoka. "But none of the governments had addressed the issue."

Rajuk Chairman Md Nurul Huda said they do not have adequate manpower to enforce the Building Construction Act, pointing finger at other relevant agencies that they too do not enforce the law accordingly.

Joint Commissioner (Traffic) of DMP Md Shafiqur Rahman said most of the influential motor vehicle owners

flout laws and indulge in violation of traffic rules and wrong parking.

"We cannot always enforce the law equally," he said adding, "Though police are supposed to sue the offenders at once for illegal parking."

Traffic police officials said they do not have adequate number of wreckers nor dumping grounds to remove thousands of illegally parked vehicles.

It has only six wreckers, 1,500 manpower against 2,002 approved posts while 440 sergeants against approved 600 posts, said the joint commissioner (traffic).

Besides police cannot act accordingly in the areas like Gulshan, Banani, Baridhara and Dhanmondi as most of the offenders are influential persons, sources said.

Chief Town Planner of DCC Sirajul Islam said, "It is the duty of Dhaka City Corporation to free footpaths from illegal occupancy but they cannot constantly do that for lack of adequate manpower."

Shafiqur Rahman said he did not find any justification for the DCC's move to lease out a number of city roads for commercial car parking.

FORGED VISAS 40 workers return from Dubai today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Forty Bangladeshi workers who were detained in Libya on Saturday on charges of travelling with forged visas would be arriving in Dhaka today.

"They will be flying to Dhaka by a flight of GMA Airlines from Dubai," Expatriates Welfare and Overseas Employment Secretary Elias Ahmed told The Daily Star yesterday.

The workers went to Libya on Saturday by a Libyan Airlines. The immigration police detained them at the Tripoli Airport as they were travelling with forged visas and sent them to Dubai by another flight on Sunday.

These workers went to Tripoli via Delhi, Karachi and Dubai. They had no immigration clearance from the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET).

Neither the Bangladesh Embassy in Libya nor the authorities in Bangladesh could say how the workers crossed the immigration in Bangladesh.

"We are trying to find out how these people forged the visas and crossed the immigration police in Dhaka," said BMET Director General Khorsheed Alam.

DHAKA TODAY

Workshop

EEE Undergraduate Project Workshop and Industrial Exhibition of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) will begin. Venue: Central auditorium, Buet. Time: 3:00pm.

Roundtable

Nokia and Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) will jointly organise a roundtable on 'Progressing Bangladesh toward an Information Society'. Venue: Hotel Sheraton. Time: 11:00am.

Workshop

International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Dhaka in association with UNIFEM Bangladesh will organise a workshop for Labour Attachés posted in Bangladesh missions abroad. Venue: The Westin. Time: 8:30am.

Workshop

The TVET Reform Project of International Labour Organisation (ILO) will organise a workshop on 'Introduction to computer literacy for the people who are blind and visually impaired'. Venue: Baptist Mission Integrated School, Mirpur-10. Time: 9:00am.

View exchange meet

Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh and The Financial Express will organise a view exchange meeting on US-Bangladesh trade and investments relations - issues and prospects. Venue: Express House, Banani Road No 10/A. Time: 3:30pm.