

New bus route system facing hurdles

SHAHNAZ PARVEEN

The new bus route system, in which buses of one route will operate under one franchise company, has been facing hurdles since it was tentatively introduced last year on Uttara-Azimpur route, bus owners say.

Bus Route Franchise (BRF), the new system, was designed for more organised and faster travels in the capital.

However, bus service operators are getting permits to run their buses on that route, which hinders BRF functioning, the bus owners alleged.

The owners also blamed non-cooperation from government agencies concerned to get the minibuses, which should not be there on the first place, off the streets.

As per BRF, all bus companies with valid permits are designed to operate on one route under one company name.

The owners said a group of ruling party backed transport workers want BRF to fail, as it has stopped their scope for extortion.

BRF was introduced in April last year under Strategic Transport Plan (STP) for

Dhaka city, which aims to free streets by reducing minibuses and fragmented or individual ownership, and to cop street races among buses to get passengers. BRF is to be introduced gradually on all routes in the city.

Another major aim of the system is to eliminate extortion from buses, said Khandaker Rafiqul Hossain Kajal, managing partner of franchise company Shuchona.

Suchona is now executing the pilot project on Uttara-Azimpur route.

"Despite the government's commitment to prioritise BRF, the authorities concerned gave route permits to other companies to operate," said Kajal.

"There are also around 150 minibuses, many human hauliers, and some small four-wheelers plying illegally. The franchise system cannot work like this," Kajal said. "The effort is about to fail because of unauthorised transports."

Buses operating under BRF are supposed to set off every seven minutes, said Kajal, also the president of Association of Bus Companies (ABC).

But, the buses do not get good number of passenger and then get delayed, as

people prefer smaller vehicles for lower fares, Kajal added.

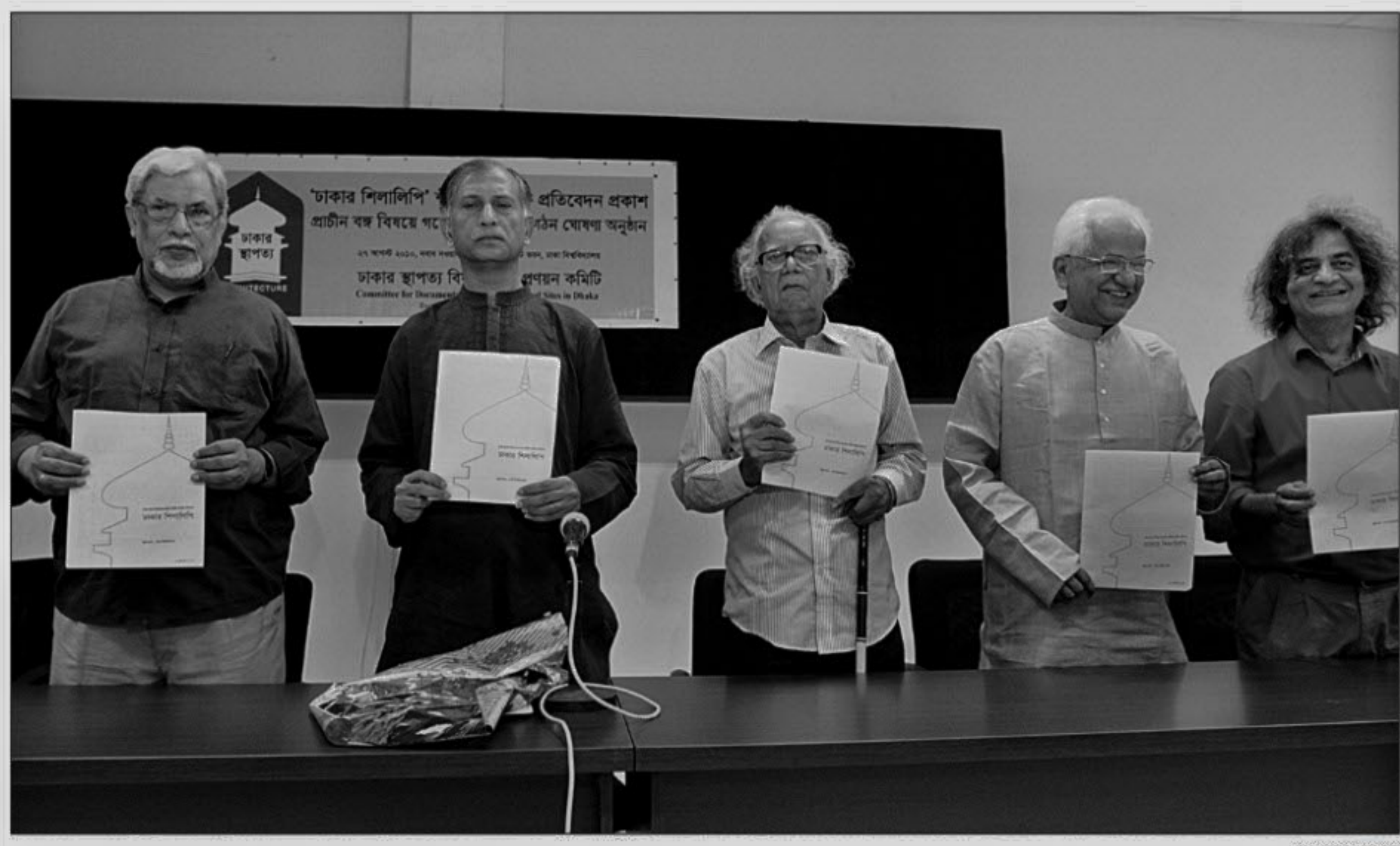
He alleged that Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) was supposed to provide 20 buses, but they gradually pulled out. "This means that providing buses is now entirely our responsibility."

The BRF system was to introduce digital ticketing at all the stops, which also did not work, as making it available has been possible only at a few places.

The Uttara-Azimpur route covers about a 30-kilometre distance from Uttara Sector-12 (Khalpar) to Azimpur (Palassey) via Sobhanbagh, Manik Mia Avenue, Bijoy Sarani, Mohakhali, Khilkhet, Airport, and Azampur with 27 stoppages in all.

"We are aware of the problems and we agree that BRF will not succeed unless smaller vehicles are removed. It will be discussed in the next meeting," said Dr SM Salehuddin, additional executive director of Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB).

He said, "Bus owners are unwilling to work under one franchise because they do not understand its benefit."



The publishing ceremony of the report titled "Dhakar Shilalipi" (Inscription of Dhaka) by the Committee for Documentation on Architectural Sites in Dhaka was held at Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday. From left are architect Mir Mobasher Ali, DU Vice-Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, archeologist AKM Zakaria, President of Asiatic Society of Bangladesh Prof Sirajul Islam and artist Shahabuddin Ahmed.

54 inscriptions of Dhaka discovered

DU CORRESPONDENT

A total of 54 inscriptions on Dhaka have been discovered by a group of young researchers in the city.

The Committee for Documentation on Architectural Sites in Dhaka has discovered the inscriptions during its last two years of survey and disclosed them through a report yesterday. The publishing ceremony of the report titled "Dhakar Shilalipi" (Inscription of Dhaka) was held at Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban at Dhaka University (DU).

Most of the inscriptions are written in Persian language while some are in Arabic, Latin, Armenia, Portuguese and English.

Writers, researchers, translators, architects, artists, photographers and journalists involved in the committee led by DU Vice Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique jointly declared to establish a trust fund for conducting advance researches on ancient Bangla. Artist Shahabuddin read out the joint declaration paper for establishing the proposed trust fund on behalf of initiators.

Prof Arefin, also the chief adviser to the committee, unveiled the cover of the report that revealed the 54 inscriptions at the occasion chaired by committee chairman Pavel Rahman.

Reading out the declaration, artist Shahabuddin said history of ancient Bangla is still unclear, as much research was not done on it.

He said DU could play an important role in digging out the history of ancient Bangla. He added that the initiative of formulating the trust fund has been taken to introduce fellowship and scholarship for advance research on history, politics, architecture, language, literature, economics, philosophy and others in ancient Bangla.

The published report compiles 63 inscriptions, including the new 54.

Before starting the present survey, as many as 17 structures and 21 inscriptions were translated during the past one hundred years. But the committee, on a two-year survey, discovered 30 inscriptions in 2008, nine in 2009 and 24 in 2010. All inscriptions were discovered in 2008 and 2009, excluding those in Armenia languages, have been translated in the

meantime and work for translating inscriptions discovered in 2010 is underway.

The report said eight inscriptions discovered in 2008 were published in a book written by Mohammad Yusuf Siddique, teacher of Panjab University in Pakistan and edited by former director general of National Museum Enamul Haque. But it did not mention any source.

Invention and translation of inscriptions are important, the report said, adding that more inscriptions will be lost with the passage of time.

VC Prof Arefin said DU would provide all out cooperation in discovering and translating the inscriptions of the oldest capital of Bangladesh.

President of Asiatic Society of Bangladesh Prof Sirajul Islam, archeologist AKM Zakaria, architect Mir Mobasher Ali, Shamsul Wares, historian Prof ABM Hossain, artist Samarjit Roy, among others, were present at the ceremony moderated by Member Secretary to the committee Zannatul Ferdous Tanvi.

Two killed, one injured in road accidents

METRO DESK

Two people were killed and another was injured in separate road accidents in Kishoreganj and Manikganj yesterday.

Our correspondent from Kishoreganj adds: One person was killed and another injured in a road accident at Sarachar of Bazitpur yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Sheikh Abdullah, 50, an assistant of advocate of Nitarkandi in Bazitpur Sadar. Injured Farikul, a rickshaw puller, was sent to local health complex.

Police said the accident took place when a speedy truck hit the rickshaw near Kulani bridge on Kishoreganj- Bazitpur Road at around 10:00am, leaving the rickshaw passenger Abdullah dead on the spot.

Later, police arrested the truck driver Jakir with the truck.

Our correspondent from Manikganj adds: An unidentified woman was killed in a road accident on Dhaka-Aricha highway at Jagir in Manikganj yesterday. The accident occurred when a speedy vehicle ran over her at around 3:30am leaving her dead on the spot, said Azizul Haque, officer-in-charge of Manikganj Sadar Police Station.

The deceased was sent to Manikganj Sadar Hospital for autopsy.



This agitating woman, claiming to be a local leader of Awami League, quarrels with a policeman in front of the New Market in the city yesterday when the law enforcer stopped their rickshaw from going against traffic.

UN to aid 14,000 Aila-hit families

UNB, Dhaka

United Nation's (UN) bodies -- WFP, UNDP and Unicef -- have extended support to 14,000 families, affected by cyclone Aila, still living on embankments in Bangladesh.

Drawing assistance from the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), the UN agencies will work to distribute food, assist with shelter and implement basic water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and nutrition interventions, said a press release.

The initiative is aimed at reducing vulnerability of people during monsoon season and helps them improve their temporary dwellings to complement the government's on-going response efforts to cyclone Aila affected families. The regions are Dacope and Koyra upazilas and Shyamnagar and Ashashuni upazilas, under Khulna and Satkhira districts respectively.

The joint UN response to cyclone Aila has a proposed budget of US \$4.6 million, approximately Tk 32.2 crore.

WFP will assist 14,000 households with a monthly family food ration consisting of 30kg rice, 5kg of pulses and 3kg of vegetable oil. Households with pregnant and lactating women and children (under 2 years of age) will be provided with an additional allocation of micronutrient fortified blended food to guarantee an adequate diet during this critical period of development.

A total of about 3,000 metric tonnes of food is planned for distribution for a period of five months.

While UNDP will distribute shelter packages to those 14,000 families, which includes plastic sheets, ropes, nails, hammers, knives, umbrellas and bamboo. This shelter package is now being distributed in partnership with Bangladesh Scouts.

Unicef will support those 14,000 vulnerable displaced households with basic water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and nutrition interventions.

It will equip families with knowledge, skills and hygiene kits to enhance community capacity for proper operation and maintenance of the facilities.

Under the nutrition intervention, Unicef will distribute multiple micronutrient supplements (iron/folate) targeting 10,000 children aged 6 to 23 months and 10,000 pregnant and lactating women to reduce acute malnutrition.

Moudud hails verdict on Ershad's rule

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP standing committee member Moudud Ahmed yesterday said the seventh amendment to the constitution was made to reinstate democracy bringing an end to military rule.

Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, another member of the standing committee, said issues like amendments to the constitution should be resolved in parliament rather than in the court.

The two leaders were talking to reporters about the High Court verdict on the seventh amendment to the constitution.

The HC on Thursday declared illegal the constitutional amendment that had legitimised the military rule of HM Ershad.

Earlier the court declared the fifth amendment of the consti-

tution illegal but the main opposition BNP did not react to it. It had legitimised all successive governments following the coup of August 15, 1975 till April 9, 1979, including late president Ziaur Rahman's rule.

BNP leaders said the party will formally react to the cancellation of the fifth and seventh amendments later.

Moudud, once a close aide to Ershad, said the HC verdict on the seventh amendment came in line with that on the fifth amendment.

"Now is a challenge for the government as to how the court verdict on the constitutional amendments would be implemented and it is also important how the parliamentary special committee considers this verdict," Moudud said while talking to reporters at his Gulshan residence.

MA Wadud's anniversary of death today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 27th death anniversary of language movement hero MA Wadud, father of Foreign Minister Dr Dipu Moni and noted surgeon Jawadur Rahim Wadud.

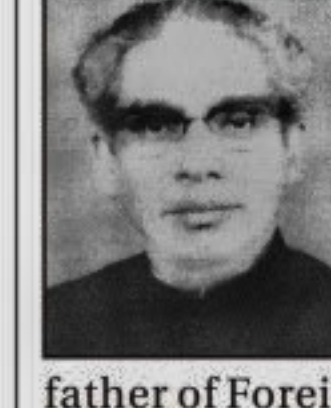
Wadud was a close associate of Bangabandhu and Hossain Shahid Suhrawardy and played key roles in different democratic movements since 1947 till last day of his life, said a press release.

He was the founder member of Gonotrantik Jubo League in 1948, East Pakistan Muslim League in 1948, East Pakistan Awami Muslim League in 1949, the Weekly Ittefaq in 1949, the Daily Ittefaq in 1953 and Kendrio Kachi Kachar Mela in 1956.

He was the general secretary of provincial Chhatra League during 1953-54.

He served imprisonment for involvement in language movement in 1948 and 1952 and for refusing the charge of ministry of military government in 1978.

He had to go into hiding in 1949 to avoid torture of the then government for leading the movement of fourth-class employees.



Kazi Abu Nasar

METRO DESK

Today is the 45th death anniversary of Kazi Abu Nasar, a close associate of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil and Iftar will be held at his son, Kazi Shamsuddin's residence, at 6-B, Periwinkle, CES (E) 12, Road #126, Gulshan.

Friend, relatives and well wishers are requested to attend the doa mahfil and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

FAO consultant killed in road crash

BSS, Barisal

A UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) consultant was killed and five people were injured in a road crash at Ashukathi of Gournadi here on the Dhaka-Barisal highway yesterday afternoon.

Police and witnesses said FAO consultant Mohammad Kabir Mallick and the five others were injured when a microbus carrying them was hit by a passenger bus from behind.

As the injured were being rushed to a health facility in Barisal, Mallick succumbed to his wounds, officer-in-charge of Gournadi highway police station Mozammel Huq said.

The five injured people included two children aged between 10 and 12.



These two young women voice out their protests, as they became victims of striking by youths when they came to New Market in the city yesterday for shopping.

100 plus ordinances should be examined

FROM PAGE 1

Suranjit Sengupta, co-chair of the special committee, said they will examine the ordinances.

Law Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shafique Ahmed said the government will move to change the ordinances ratified by the 5th amendment, if those are inconsistent with the current constitutional provisions.

The first extra-constitutional regime promulgated those ordinances between August 15, 1975 and April 1979, some of which replaced existing laws.

Some of the ordinances were later repealed while many went through amendments during successive governments.

According to the constitu-

tion, the ordinances were supposed to be placed in the second parliament during its first sitting on April 2, 1979, and were supposed to be ratified through separate bills within 30 days of the House's first sitting, for retaining effectiveness.

But the then military government led by Gen Ziaur Rahman did not follow that constitutional direction.

Instead the second parliament, dominated by Zia's nascent political party BNP, passed the 5th amendment act on April 6, 1979, ratifying all actions of the martial law regime between August 15, 1975 and April 9, 1979, without placing separate bills for the ordinances.

Moreover, the original constitution did not allow

the president to promulgate such an extensive number of ordinances on such a wide spectrum of matters.

But the martial law regime, through an amendment to the constitution by a proclamation in 1978, gave the president sweeping power to promulgate ordinances on any matter in absence of the parliament dissolved by the same regime on November 6, 1975.

Another constitutional expert, on condition of anonymity, said except some of the ordinances on financial matters, almost all the rest are likely to face doom if examined in light of the original constitution.

The second martial law regime led by Gen HM Ershad, who grabbed the

Dolphin dies in Bhairab river

A CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

A gangetic dolphin died in the Bhairab River in Sadar upazila of the district yesterday.

Fisherman Hamij Uddin said the dolphin was caught in his net in the morning. It was found dead, he added.

The dolphin was six feet long and 125 kg in weight. The fishermen recovered the dolphin and buried it in the afternoon.

DHAKA TODAY

Inauguration
Paribesh Bachao Andolan will inaugurate website. Venue: Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, Time: 11:00am.

Meeting
Bangladesh Jubo Union will organise a meeting. Venue: Prograti auditorium, Mukti Bhaban 2, Comrade Moni Singh Road, Time: 3:00pm.

Meeting
Sri Sri Ramna Kali Mandir will organise a meeting. Venue: Sri Sri Ramna Kali Mandir, Ramna, Time: 10:00am.

Exhibition
Budgerger Society of Bangladesh will organise an exhibition. Venue: National Press Club, Time: 10:30am.

Human chain
Anti-Tobacco Women's Alliance will organise a human chain. Venue: National Press Club, Time: 11:00am.

Publication ceremony
Jatiya Lekhok Forum will organise a publication ceremony. Venue: Conference lounge, National Press Club, Time: 3:00pm.

Prize distribution ceremony
Ananda Bhuban will organise a prize distribution ceremony. Venue: Conference room, Bell Tower, Time: 11:00am.

Prize distribution ceremony
Ananya will organise a prize distribution ceremony. Venue: Hotel Abakash, Time: 3:30pm.

Discussion
Noukar Natun Projonmo will organise a discussion. Venue: Dhaka Reporters Unity, Time: 10:30am.

Mehedi utsab
Dhakabashi will arrange a mehedi utsab. Venue: TSC cafeteria, Dhaka University, Time: 12:00noon.

Meeting
Rotary Club of Dhaka Central will hold its regular meeting. Venue: Porijat, House #43, Road #8, Dhanmondi RA, Time: 5:30pm.

Discussion
Shahjalal Islami Bank will organise a discussion. Venue: Celebrity hall, Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, Time: 5:00pm.

Discussion
Bangladesh Water Development Board will organise a discussion. Venue: Council hall, IDEB Bhaban, Kakrail, Time: 4:00pm.

Roundtable
Green University will organise a roundtable meeting. Venue: Seminar room, Green University, 220/d, Begum Rokeya Sarani, Time: 11:00am.

Meeting
People's Forum on MDGs (PFM), Bangladesh will organise a meeting. Venue: 17d auditorium, Chameli house, 17, Topkhana road, Time: 2:00pm.

Meeting
Greater Faridpur Charirjibi Kalyan Parishad will organise a meeting. Venue: Bangladesh National Museum, Time: 11:00am.

Discussion
Bangladesh Cultural Council will organise a discussion. Venue: Dhaka Reporters Unity, Time: 10:00am.