

Give democracy permanent shape
Khaleda urges people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia urged all to be united to give the democracy a permanent shape through resisting undemocratic ill forces.

"Our democracy was obstructed for several times. But the democracy lover people cleared the way of its journey," she said in a message given last night to mark the December 6, 1990.

HM Ershad ousted from the power in December 6, 1990 following a mass upsurge.

Khaleda, the leader of the opposition, said the democracy, which the nation achieved by sacrificing blood of many martyrs, is not unafraid. Undemocratic evil forces want to grab the rights of the people, which are preserved by the constitution.

Gridlock slows city life

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Arifa, a private jobholder, left her Shahjahanpur residence at 9:00am to attend a very important meeting scheduled to be held at 10:00am at her Shahbagh office.

But she failed to reach her destination on time as she reached the office at 12:00 noon due to huge traffic congestion yesterday.

It took CNG run auto-rickshaw driver Almas around two hours to come to Farmgate from his Motijheel residence, which usually takes 30 to 50 minutes.

Like Arifa and Almas, city dwellers experienced huge tailbacks at almost all intersections and busy areas in the capital from morning to noon yesterday.

Though traffic congestion in the city is a regular phenomenon, yesterday's congestion was far more severe than the usual days, which made city commuters suffer huge problems like Arifa.

According to Dhaka Metropolitan Police, due to movement of some VIP and the parliamentary session scheduled to resume yesterday, vehicular movement needed to be restricted at intervals at different points in the city, resulting in huge tailbacks.

Deputy Commissioner Traffic (West) Selim Mohammad Jahangir of Dhaka Metropolitan Police said once a tailback is created at some point

in the city, its impact falls on surrounding areas.

He added that the situation needs several hours to come back to normalcy.

"We face huge traffic congestion on Sunday regularly as this is the first working day of the week after two days of weekly holiday but yesterday's traffic congestion was more severe," said Almas.

Police sources said severe traffic congestion took place at Farmgate, Banglamotor, Bijoy Sharani, Jatrabari, Malibagh, Mouchack, Shahbagh, Mohakhali, Gulshan, Banani and Uttara areas.

At many level crossing, it was seen that its guard kept the bars down to keep the rail tracks free from traffic as the apparently unending long tailbacks tended to stretch onto the rail track due to unusual stoppage periods at traffic lights.

On duty rail guard at Tongi Diversion road level crossing of Moghbazar kept the bar down, stopping vehicular movement over the tracks as traffic came to a standstill at Moghbazar intersections for over half an hour around 1:00pm.

Contacted, the guard said if he did not keep the bar down the queue of vehicles will come onto the rail tracks. With no rooms to go forward or backward, the vehicles would be caught on the path of oncoming trains, resulting in an accidents, he added.

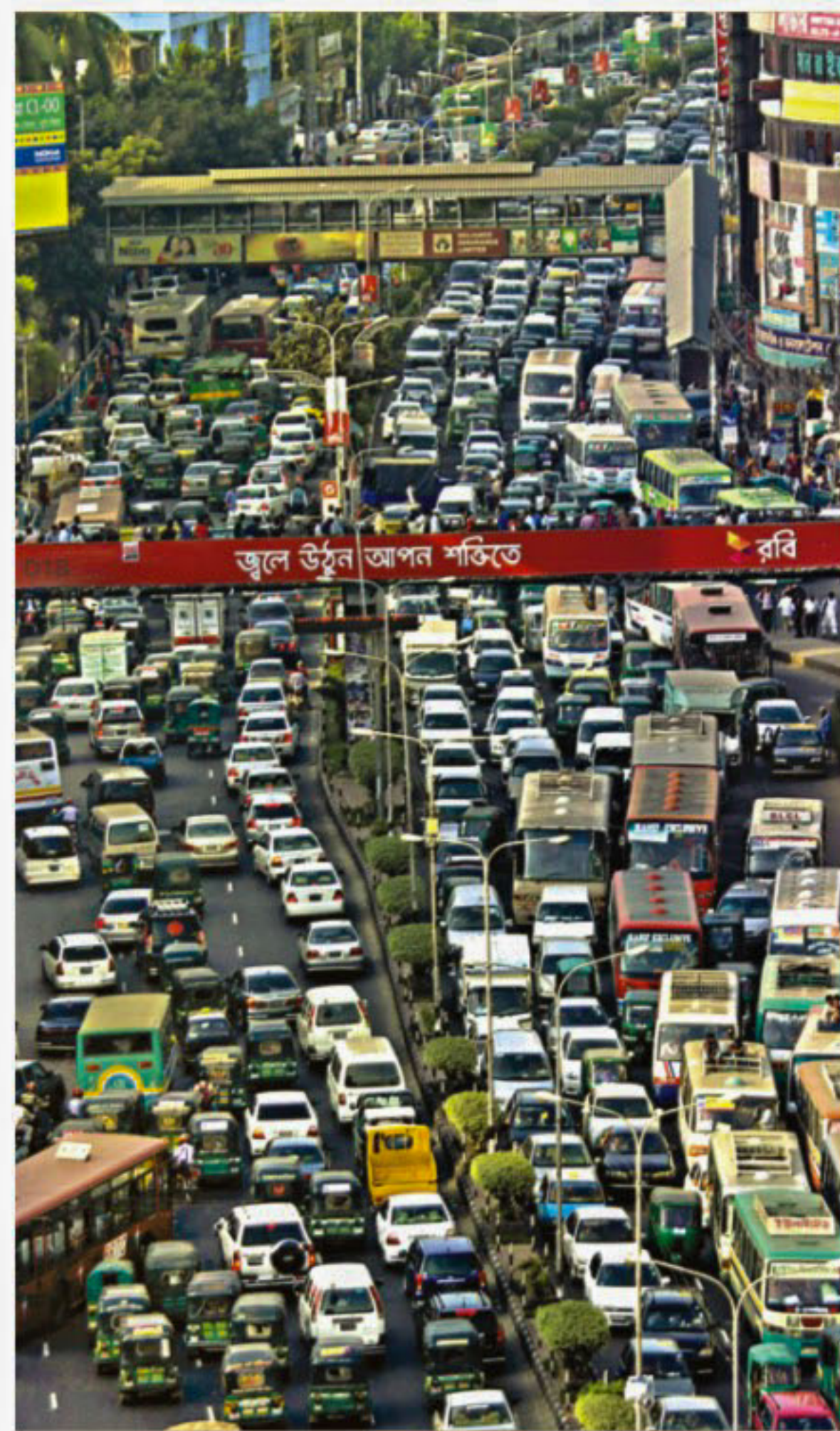


PHOTO: STAR

Extreme traffic gridlock has become a common phenomenon in the city.

Law to be made more effective to rein in hoarding

Faruk Khan tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-hoarding law should be made more effective in order to control prices of essential commodities and to maintain stability in the market, said Commerce Minister Faruk Khan in parliament yesterday.

"Intelligence agencies are collecting market information each week so that hoarders cannot stockpile illegally to create artificial crisis of goods," he said in response to lawmakers' queries.

The minister however, denied the existence of the much-hyped market syndicate which has been blamed for the instability in the market of essential goods.

Ruling Awami League lawmaker Nurul Islam said the minister himself had repeatedly blamed market syndicates for the price hike of essentials ahead of Ramadan and Eid-ul-Azha.

Lawmakers of both ruling AL and opposition BNP expressed their concern over the unprecedented price hike of essentials and enquired about the government measures to control it.

In response, the minister mentioned various measures taken by the government, including adequate supply of commodities in the market, strengthening the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh and increasing detective vigilance to control the market price of essentials.

"The government will remain vigilant so that a handful of unscrupulous traders cannot create crisis in the name of business," he stated.

Regarding the bilateral free trade agreements (FTA), the commerce minister said preparation of policy guidelines of the FTA is at its final stage.

"Once the guideline has been finalised, discussion will take place among the countries to sign the FTA," he said.

The minister said plans to set up new trade missions in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia; Milan, Italy; Montreal, Canada; Tashkent, Uzbekistan and Agartala in India to increase exports are afoot.



PHOTO: STAR

(From left) Liberation War Museum Trustee Dr Sarwar Ali, Dr AKM Mahibulla, Chhayanaut's President Sanjida Khatun, Prof Anisuzzaman, Planning Minister AK Khandker, Liberation War Museum Trustee Akku Chowdhury and Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman at the publication ceremony of a book titled "Periye Elam Antobihin Path" written by Dr Sarwar at city's Chhayanaut Sangskriti Bhaban yesterday.

PERIYE ELAM ANTOBIHIN PATH

A witness to glories of student politics

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Writer, Dr Sarwar Ali, has travelled along with the winding path of history to portray the birth of Bangladesh in his book, commented Planning Minister AK Khandker while speaking at the publication ceremony of the book, yesterday, in the capital.

The book titled "Periye Elam Antobihin Path" written by Dr Sarwar Ali, a trustee of the Liberation War Museum, was unveiled at the function attended by a number of noted citizens and cultural activists.

Presiding over the programme, at the Chhayanaut Sangskriti Bhaban, educationalist Prof Anisuzzaman said different aspects of country's rich history have been brought into the book in a unique way.

"The book took me back to the glorious days of student politics in the decade of 1960s," Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury said as she recalled her memories with the writer during their student days.

Matia also pointed out of the significant role of Sarwar Ali during the liberation war in generating support of international communities in favour of the war.

Dr Sarwar Ali, who was involved in student

politics, professional movement, cultural movement, liberation war of 1971 is affiliated with several important institutions of the country including Chhayanaut.

He has written the book to share his memories and experiences with the people of the country.

Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman said he felt as though he made brief visits to his student days while reading the book.

"The memories of the 1960s are still very much alive within us fuelling us with passion and strength," he added.

Akku Chowdhury, a trustee of Liberation War Museum, recalled the writer's contribution to the museum saying, the idea of establishing a museum was originally proposed by Sarwar Ali.

Chhayanaut President Sanjida Khatun said the book is an asset for the nation.

Sarwar Ali, who started writing the book in January this year, said he has written the stories of a simple person who had opportunities to work with some of the greatest individuals and institutions of the country.

The book will be available at bookstores in Aziz Super Market in the capital and Sammar Spring Garden at Chittagong.

30th BCS written test begins Jan 11

UNB, Dhaka

The written test of 30th BCS will begin in six divisions from January 11.

The test will be held simultaneously at centres in Dhaka, Rajshahi, Chittagong, Khulna, Barisal and Sylhet, said a PID handout.

Other information about examination hall and detail schedule will be notified through newspapers later.

Maple Leaf to join German language programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Maple Leaf International School is about to become the third Bangladeshi school to join the German Language Partner School Programme (PASCH).

PASCH is a worldwide network of 1,500 schools sharing a common platform of German language and culture.

The school will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Goethe-Institut, an international German cultural institution in the city, today, says a press release.

The school Principal Zeba Ali and Goethe-Institut Director Angela Grunert will sign the MoU on behalf of their respective institutions.

PASCH is a worldwide initiative providing selected schools in partner countries the opportunity to provide their students German language classes.

Students from the partner schools will also have access to an exclusive international school exchange programme.

Oxford International School; South Point School and College of Dhaka; and Mastermind International School in Chittagong are already participating in the programme.

Adulterated medicine recovered: One held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday recovered some adulterated medicine and arrested its supplier from Khilgaon of the capital.

The arrestee Mohammad Abdus Sobhan, 35, has been carrying out this trade in spurious medicine identifying himself as a medical representative for the last three years, said police.

Mohammad Asaduzzaman, sub-inspector of Khilgaon Police Station, told The Daily Star that a team of police, on information, raided Sobhan's flat in the area around 2:00pm and arrested him with two hand machines used for adulteration.

Police also recovered various adulterated medicines including 26 ampoules of injection, 20 empty bottles of G-Pethidine, 200 empty packs of Pethidine, 150 herbal tablets, some empty containers of inhaler and some more from the spot.

Sobhan, in preliminary interrogation, admitted that he and five others are involved in producing adulterated medicine that they used to supply to different pharmacies of Babu Bazar and Mitford.

However, police did not disclose the names of his associates as an investigation is going on in this regard.

The sources from where Sobhan collects the ingredients for this purpose are yet to be known, said police.

Islamic Foundation DG sued in Ctg

UNB, Chittagong

A case was filed in a court yesterday against Samim Mohammad Afzal, Director General of Islamic Foundation for allegedly hurting religious sentiment of Muslims recently.

Morshedur Rahman Chowdhury Rokon, a lawyer of Chittagong, filed the case with Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court against him yesterday.

Judge Farida Yasmin issued summons on the Islamic Foundation DG asking him to be physically present in the court on January 10.

According to the case statement, foreign dancers performed obscene dance on November 28 at a function organised by the Islamic Foundation, tarnishing its image and hurting religious sentiment of Muslims.



PHOTO: STAR

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal forms a human chain in front of the National Press Club in the city yesterday in protest of 'indecent' behaviour of police on the women leaders of BNP during hartal hours.

WEATHER TODAY

Fall in temperature likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light rain may occur at one or two places over Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions in next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country and light fog may occur over the river basins of the country during morning, Met Office said.

Night temperature may fall by 1-2 degree Celsius over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:11pm today and rises at 6:29am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 31.0 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and lowest 11.3 degrees Celsius at Srimongal.

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	27.8	15.6	57	67
Chittagong	28.0	19.8	77	78
Rajshahi	27.5	12.7	84	80
Rangpur	26.9	13.8	66	70
Khulna	25.8	15.6	83	79
Barisal	26.7	16.0	95	60
Sylhet	30.8	16.3	55	68
Cox's Bazar	31.0	21.6	70	78

GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN MEDIA

FM for role of women in decision-making

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni yesterday said that women should play roles in decision-making in media to bring a significant change in society.

"The women have to come forward in making decisions in media, otherwise, the ongoing problems of the media could not be solved," she said at a seminar at the National Press Club in the city.

The South Asia Women and Media, Bangladesh Chapter, organised the seminar titled "Gender Mainstreaming in Media" with South Asia Women and Media President Rasheda Amin in the chair.

Former adviser to the caretaker government Mahbub Alam, President of South Asia Free Media Association Reazuddin Ahmed and Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelly among others spoke at the seminar.

Dr Kaberi Gayen of Dhaka University presented the keynote paper at the seminar.

Dipu Moni said although women's participation in the media has increased nowadays,

the portrayal of women remains unchanged, depicting them with less importance.

Termining language a strong tool in neglecting women in media, she said there are so many words in Bangla language to neglect women, but these words are fewer against male.

The foreign minister said many significant changes have come in society over the years and more changes will come in the future. "Some 13 thousand women were elected to local government bodies in 1997 and this is a mentionable change in our country."

Dipu Moni said women will have to come in journalism to change the mindset of the people as well as society.

"If the point of view of both men and women are not similar, no decision will be fulfilled," she said.

Kaberi Gayen in her paper said "Bangladesh places women and men unequally at different levels of social organisations. The issues of women are not different, and media in Bangladesh have contributed significantly to the promotion of stereotypes of women as a sex object or a passive homemaker," she said.

WAR CRIMES TRIAL

Call for national consensus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Industry Minister Dilip Barua yesterday said there should be national consensus on the issue of war crimes trial and it is surprising that there is difference in opinion regarding it.

He said, "This is not an issue of the Awami League or the grand alliance. This is a national issue."

"This is a demand of every patriotic citizen -- an issue where there is no scope for taking an intermedicate stance."

The minister said these at a press briefing organised by Bangladesher Samabadi Dal (ML) at a city hotel yesterday.

He noted that the opposition party is trying to confuse the general people in the issue and assured that the government, as per its electoral pledges, will ensure that the war criminals face trial at any cost.

"The BNP are trying to make a non-issue into an issue to divert general people from the issue of war criminals' trial," he said.

Hartal is the most radical form of democratic tool. But the hartal called by BNP to hold on to a cantonment house was neither democratic nor on a political issue, said Dilip who is also general secretary of Bangladesher Samabadi Dal (ML).

"The hartal impeded industrial production and foreign investment. Only the war criminals would benefit from the hartal," he said.

Dilip called on the opposition party to avoid destructive campaigns that create suffering for the general people.

Bangladesher Samabadi Dal (ML) will hold a central conference of party workers at the Dhaka Mahanagar Natya Mancha on Wednesday.

Obituary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Abdullah Mridha, a social worker and businessman of Barisal, passed away

at a hospital in the city yesterday morning due to brain hemorrhage at the age of 85, says a press release.

He left behind his one daughter, one son, daughter-in-law and son-in-law.

He was buried at family graveyard after namaz-e-janaza held at the premises of Banaripara High School.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to pray for salvation of the departed soul.