

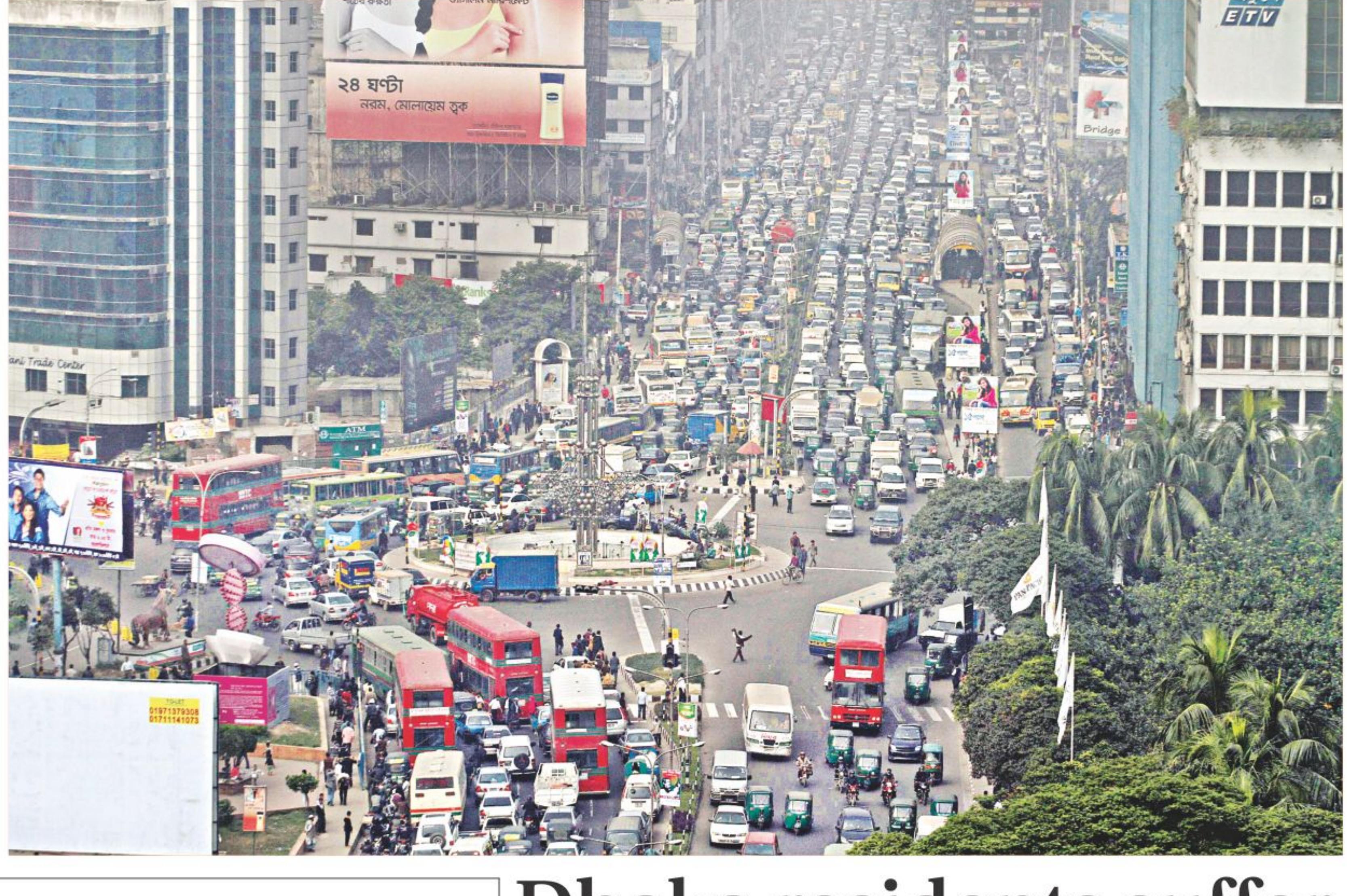
Duta polls on Dec 31

UNB, Dhaka

The Dhaka University Teachers Association (Duta) elections for the year 2012-2013 will be held on December 31 at DU Teachers' Club.

Two panels -- White Panel backed by BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami and Blue Panel backed by Awami League -- will contest in the polls.

From the blue panel, Dean of Science Faculty Prof Dr Farid Uddin Ahmad and Dean of Earth and Environmental Sciences Faculty Prof Dr ASM Maksud Kamal will contest in the polls for the posts of president and general secretary while from the white panel DU syndicate member Prof Dr Tajmeri SA Islam and Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Department's Prof Dr Mamun Ahmed will vie in the posts.



The Dhaka city roads were severely gridlocked amid a huge rush of traffic yesterday, the only day this week that had neither a scheduled hartal nor it was a holiday. The photo was taken at Sonargaon Hotel intersection.

PHOTO: STAR

Fog disrupts road, river communications

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dense fog and clouds enveloped the country, especially the northern region, yesterday, disrupting road and river communications and causing suffering to passengers.

Ferry services over Mawa-Kawrakandi and Paturia-Daulatdia routes remained suspended for over 10 hours and the sun became visible around noon in most places, reports our Munshiganj and Manikganj correspondents.

Our Rangpur correspondent reports, weather conditions might discourage a spontaneous voter turnout in the first-ever Rangpur city corporation election today.

The situation would remain unchanged for three more days in all six divisions, especially in river and port areas, while night temperatures might drop slightly, says the met office.

The cold wave may continue for five to six days but temperatures will not come down

below 10 degree Celsius, said Rasheduzzaman, a meteorologist of Bangladesh Meteorological Department. The first cold spell is likely to hit in the last week of December, he added.

Six ferries on Mawa-Kawrakandi route, carrying around 1,000 passengers, anchored in mid-Padma around 10:30pm on Tuesday due to poor visibility, said Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC) Assistant Manager Shekhar Chandra. This caused around 400 vehicles to remain stuck on both Mawa and Kawrakandi terminals till around 8:45am yesterday.

Four ferries on Daulatdia-Paturia route also anchored in mid-river around 10:00pm on Tuesday due to thick fog, said BIWTC Manager (commerce) Ashraf Ullah Khan. Four others waited at Daulatdia terminal while three at Paturia terminal till around 8:30am yesterday. Meanwhile, around 500 vehicles were stuck on both sides, he said.

Dhaka residents suffer day-long traffic jam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka city people suffered throughout yesterday as severe traffic jams had been crippling different routes since morning.

The traffic situation was so terrible that it took hours to travel even less than a distance of half a kilometre.

A staff of ETC, a bus plying the Pallabi-Gulistan route, said it took four hours and a half to reach Gulistan from Pallabi yesterday afternoon, which usually took around one hour.

Meanwhile, the ambassador of Russia, who was supposed to attend a discussion of the Awami League at Suhrawardhi Udyan, reached the venue some two hours late. The envoy sought apology to the AL leaders for his delay.

Deputy Commissioner (traffic south) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Alamgir Kabir said a huge number of vehicles were on the road yesterday compared to other days, which was the main reason of the terrible gridlock.

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Another official of traffic department of DMP said as yesterday was the lone working day without any hartal or public holiday in the week, crowds of people came out to do their necessary works, eventually leading to the traffic jam.

The city dwellers had a holiday on Sunday for Victory Day and underwent two hartals on Monday and Tuesday, and again they are going to face another hartal today (Thursday).

The severe congestion continued till the night.

A procession of Jamaat-e-Islami and Chhatri Shibir men at Banani in the morning protesting the recent arrest of their leaders, including Shafiqur Rahman and Tasneem Alam,

worsened things even further in Mohakhali and Airport area.

Meanwhile, hundreds of commuters had to wait at different bus stops across the capital for hours due to shortage of vehicles amid a huge rush of people since the afternoon.

Rayhan Ahmed, a businessman of Gulistan area, said he had to cancel an important meeting at his office as he reached there two hours late.

A housewife, Farida Akhtar, failed to get into any vehicle to ride back to Uttara from Dhanmondi around 2:00pm. So she came to Farmgate to catch a bus, but had to wait there for two and a half hours to get into one.

Farida said, "As there were too many people, I failed to get into any bus." She said any alternative vehicles, like CNG auto-rickshaw or taxi cab, were also not available.

Obituary

Bss, Dhaka

Selima Afroz Chowdhury, wife of noted journalist and litterateur Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury, died at the University College Hospital in London on Tuesday night after a prolonged illness. She was 71.

Selima was admitted to the hospital after having a heart attack on December 12. She was on life support as her condition deteriorated due to brain haemorrhage, said Rashed Chowdhury, press minister of Bangladesh Mission in London.

The body would reach Dhaka by a Biman Bangladesh Airlines flight on Sunday, he said, adding, "She will be buried either at Banani or Intellectuals' graveyard."

She left behind her husband, four daughters, one son and a host of well-wishers to mourn her death.

Hearing the death news, visiting Foreign Minister Dipu Moni, Sheikh Rehana, Awami League presidium member Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim and High Commissioner in London Mijarul Quayes went to the hospital.

In a message, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday expressed deep shock at the death of Selima. She prayed for her eternal peace and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved family members.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid, in a separate message, also mourned the death.

Harunur Rashid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Harunur Rashid, freedom fighter, former treasurer and organising secretary of Bangladesh Chhatra Union, died of cancer yesterday. He was 62.

He left behind his wife and a daughter, said a press release.

Kidnapped schoolboy murdered in Barisal

2 arrested abductors confess to killing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The decomposed body of an eight-year-old boy, strangled by kidnappers after the boy's father failed to provide the ransom, was found inside a sack floating in Meghna river under Hizla upazila of Barisal yesterday, said police.

Arafat, a student of class II and son of Liakat Ali, a small trader of the capital's Mirpur-14, was kidnapped from near his Kachukhet residence in the capital on December 12.

Two men -- Nasir, Arafat's neighbour, and Badal -- arrested in this connection on December 14 confessed that they strangled the boy and dumped the body in the river after failing to get the ransom, said police.

Nasir called Liakat over phone on December 14 and demanded a ransom of Tk 2 lakh.

"Nasir threatened to kill his son if the money was not paid through bKash by December 14 evening," said Sub-Inspector Nurul Amin of Kafrul Police Station, quoting Liakat.

Police tracked the telephone and raided a launch terminal in Hizla to make the arrests.

The duo confessed that they had strangled the boy just an hour before being arrested at the launch terminal, said Officer-in-Charge Shawkat Anwar of Hizla Police Station.

Visibility level fell significantly as a blanket of dense fog descended on the capital yesterday. The photo was taken at Farmgate around 4:00pm.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



Lower migration cost stressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's economic development can be intensified through exporting skilled manpower if the cost of migration is reasonable, said speakers at a discussion yesterday.

They were speaking at a mock parliament held in the capital's Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment and Debate for Democracy jointly organised the programme on the third day of celebration of International Migrants Day.

Different study reports have shown that Bangladesh's cost of migration is twice or thrice that of Pakistan, India, Nepal and other countries, said Expatriates' Welfare Secretary Dr Zafar Ahmed Khan.

Hasan Ahmed Chowdhury Kiron, chairman of Debate for Democracy, said the government is adding a large amount of the expatriates' remittance to the national economy without investing any mentionable capital.

Kiron recommended forming a high level coordinating committee to combine government and private entrepreneurs to export a large number of manpower.

Green University, a private university, and Jahangirnagar University took part in the mock parliament as ruling and opposition parties respectively.

Selim Reza, additional director general of The Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training, addressed the discussion among others.

Improving nutrition status needs joint effort Seminar told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A combined effort by the government, NGOs, and civil society organisations is needed to improve the nutrition status of the country's people, said Health Minister AFM Ruhal Haque yesterday.

A single ministry or an agency alone will not be able to improve the nutrition status as it is a multisectoral issue, he said.

The minister was addressing a seminar titled "Nutrition Programs in Bangladesh: Lessons Learned and Way Forward" organised by Bangladesh Civil Society Network for Promoting Nutrition (BCSNPN) at Cirdap auditorium in the capital.

Dr Khurshid Talukder, consultant of Centre for Women and Child Health, read out a keynote paper.

About half of the children and a quarter of the mothers suffer from malnutrition in the country, he said.

Member of Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health Md Murad Hassan; Secretary of the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development Dr Mihir Kanti Majumder; and the Directorate General of Health Services director general also spoke.

The speakers said sharing of research findings and experiences among development organisations can help the country reach the nutritional goal.

CTG-12 BY-ELECTION Deceased lawmaker's son Javed gets AL ticket

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Saifuzzaman Chowdhury Javed, son of recently deceased Awami League lawmaker Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury Babu, has won the AL nomination for the Chittagong-12 (Anwara-Paschim Patiya) by-election slated for January 17.

Party sources said seven persons from the ruling party applied for the nomination, while the AL parliamentary board chose Javed, a former president of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry, at a meeting on Tuesday night, which was chaired by AL President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Moslem Uddin Ahmed, general secretary of Chittagong south district unit AL, yesterday said Javed was given nomination unanimously at the parliamentary board meeting.

Javed told The Daily Star last night that he was nominated by the party.

The Chittagong-12 constituency fell

vacant after Akhtaruzzaman, also a president member of the AL, died on November 4.

One of the nomination seekers, Shahajada Mohiuddin, said party chief Sheikh Hasina had a meeting with the seven nomination aspirants on Tuesday, and she asked all to work for Javed to help him win the election.

Shahajada Mohiuddin was a former leader of Bangladesh Chhatra League.

The other nomination aspirants were Wasika Kaiser, a banker and daughter of late president member of the AL Ataur Rahman Khan Kaiser; Abul Kalam Chowdhury, joint secretary of Chittagong south district unit AL; Shamsuddin Ahmed Chowdhury, former president of Anwara upazila AL; Abul Mansur Chowdhury, former general secretary of Anwara upazila AL; and Nurul Kaiyum Khan, a businessman involved with the AL.

The last dates for submission and withdrawal of nomination papers are December 20 and December 31 respectively.

President, PM praise BGB's performance

BSS, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday praised the members of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) for their role in protecting border areas of the country with utmost sincerity.

In the messages, they greeted the members of BGB marking the 2nd founding anniversary and the BGB Day today.

Zillur Rahman urged the BGB members to do their duties with utmost sincerity for protecting the country's bordering areas by preventing smuggling, human trafficking, combating terrorism, and maintaining discipline.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said her government has taken several measures to make the BGB a modern force.

The command structure of the BGB has been decentralised under four regions in the country for bringing dynamism in its activities, she said.

The government has also approved setting up of four new more sectors along with 11 battalions, Hasina said.

Recalling BGB's role in 1971, she said the 200-year-old force participated in the country's Liberation War following the appeal of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.