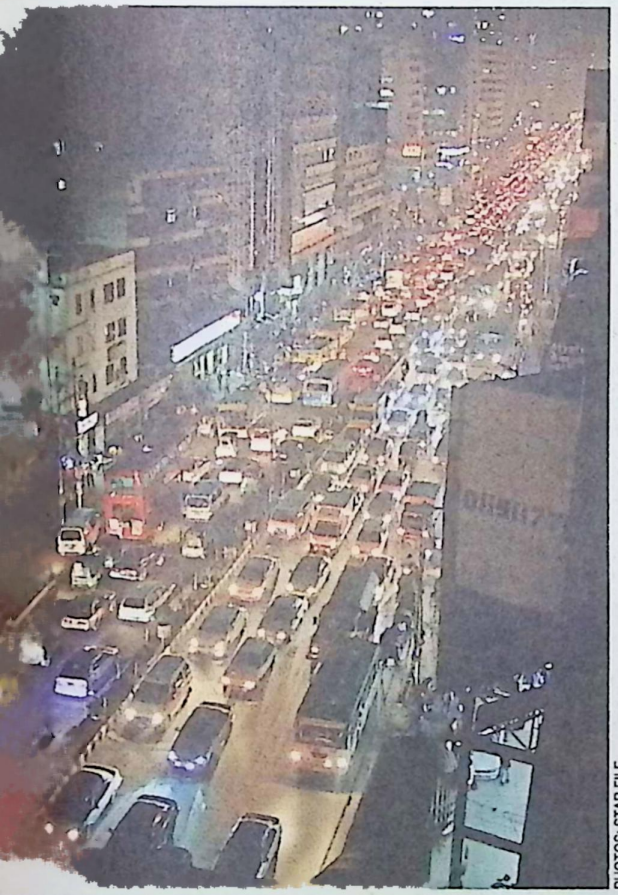
The second thing that is impacting people's quality of life in a big way is traffic congestion. This is particularly true for everyone in Dhaka city. The amount of time that we spend everyday sitting in traffic is not only frustrating but also extremely unproductive. The total amount of output of goods and services that we are producing as a nation is vastly reduced due to so much time being wasted idly. This affects business efficiency and production costs, and as a result it affects the final prices that we have to pay for everyday products.



PHOTOS: STAR FILE

Thankfully, a number of flyovers have been built within the city over the last couple of years, but severe congestion problems still persist. There are some simple cost-effective and sustainable measures that can be taken to address the problem. For instance, improving the public transport system within the city. Currently, local bus service is extremely cheap but the service is so poor that most people avoid using buses. Since the cost of private transport has skyrocketed so much in the last few years, it would be cheaper for most people to pay a higher fare for an improved bus service. Better quality buses, which follow fixed schedules, would greatly reduce the number of cars, CNGs and rickshaws on the road during peak hours. Another factor that contributes to traffic congestion is the large number of people who are compelled to walk on the sides of roads due to lack of usable footpaths. Most pedestrians also cross roads incorrectly. Such things cause unnecessary hassle and delays for road traffic. Providing pedestrian crossings on roads at frequent intervals and improving the quality of footpaths and would free up a lot of road space for vehicles. This would be a relatively inexpensive way of reducing traffic jams. Also, improving the quality of the existing roads would allow cars to travel at an improved speed and further lessen the congestion problem. Lastly, the malpractice of blocking off entire routes of traffic so that political leaders can commute easily needs to be stopped. This causes a lot of difficulty for the general people. Our leaders need to be respectful of citizen's right to road space.

The government needs to take a strong stance against crime, firstly through "self-evaluation". We cannot eradicate something in our surrounding environment as long as that same quality resides within us.

Over the last few years we have seen an improvement in electricity supply but the demand for electricity is continuously increasing due to the technological advancements taking place. Ensuring stable supply of electricity to meet growing needs remains a challenge for the government due to our limited resources. Unfortunately, domestic gas supply is also becoming irregular, although just a few years back we had ample number of unexplored gas fields. When it comes to providing these essential public utilities, the government needs to take strong measures to stop pilferage and increase the efficiency and transparency of the process (through use of information systems, like e-tendering etc.). We also need to emphasise on reducing pollution of land, water and air, place more effort to reduce industry waste and improve recycling. Since these things affect quality of life of all citizens, figuring out how to provide these services should be a priority for the government. Instead of fighting over different ideologies, let us start working on the things that everyone upon.

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