



Dncc Mayor Annisul Huq speaking at a views-exchange meeting with editors of national dailies at Sonargaon Hotel yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

5 companies to run city buses

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Replying to a query, the mayor said there were nearly a million rickshaws in the capital but only 85,000 of them, including 29,000 in the north city corporation areas, had licence.

However, the illegal rickshaws could not be taken out of the road overnight without ensuring an alternative means of transport for the city dwellers, he pointed out.

He claimed that he had been relentless in making some crucial roads and bus terminals at Tejgaon, Mohakhali, Gabtoli and

Mohammadpur areas free from illegal parking.

Talking about his future plans, Annisul said 1,100 CCTV cameras would be installed in several places by June under the jurisdiction of DNCC to check crime.

As many as 90 such cameras had already been set up and it would require a total of 2,500 cameras to ensure a proper monitoring of DNCC areas.

Several corporate houses were ready to finance the project to be supervised by the police, he claimed.

The mayor said they had also

planned to distribute 5,000 bins across the city corporation area to prevent garbage dumping on the streets.

Apart from this, around 46,000 street lights would be replaced with LED lights in future.

On the city's water-logging problem, Annisul said 23 of the total 43 canals in the capital always remain clogged with solid waste, stopping the water from flowing into lakes and rivers.

Responding to another question, he said thousands of people would become unemployed if hawkers were

evicted from the footpaths.

At one point, he called upon the editors to encourage his "civic campaign" by "dedicating some space in their newspapers" for raising public awareness. "No such goal can be achieved without public awareness."

Janakantha Editor and Publisher Atiqullah Khan Masud said illegal structures on pavements were the main reason behind the perennial traffic congestion in the capital.

The daily Samakal Editor Golam Sarwar said that development of any civic services was impossible without a city governor.

Was Netaji travelling with treasure?

ZEE NEWS ONLINE

the fate of Netaji and the whereabouts of his treasure are two of the India's biggest political mysteries.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday made public digital copies of 100 secret files relating to Bose on his 119th birth anniversary.

One of the files mentions that the Netaji Inquiry committee made under Shah Nawaz Khan made some observations regarding the treasure collected from the airfield when a plane, allegedly carrying Netaji, crashed.

When Rangoon (the capital of Japanese-occupied Burma and headquarters of the Azad Hind Bank) fell to the Allies, Netaji retreated to Bangkok on April 24, 1945, carrying with him the treasury of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. From Bangkok, Netaji departed to Saigon.

Here are some of the points Shah Nawaz committee mentioned in its report:

Since Netaji did not want to depend much on his Japanese allies, he and his team raised funds from Indian residents in South East Asia. A Netaji fund committee was formed in this regard. The funds of Azad Hind Government were handled by the Azad Hind Bank. Most of the donations were in gold.

There are conflicting accounts on how much gold he took while leaving Rangoon.

According to Indian National Army (INA) comrade Debnath Das, while

leaving Rangoon, Bose withdrew treasure valued at Rs 1 crore, consisting mostly gold bars and ornaments, from Azad Hind Bank and packed in 17 small sealed boxes. Before leaving Bangkok, contents of 17 small sealed boxes were packed in two large leather suitcases, added Das.

General Jagannath Rao Bhonsle of the INA said Netaji brought to Bangkok six steel boxes. He added the contents in six steel boxes were repacked into two canvas bags at the time of Netaji's departure.

Azad Hind Bank chairman Dinanath told British intelligence that Netaji left Rangoon with 140 lbs of gold.

A leader of the Indian Independence League (IIL) in Bangkok, Pandit Raghunath Sharma, said Netaji took with him gold and ornaments worth Rs 1 crore. He added the valuables were in 10-12 steel boxes.

Netaji's personal valet Kundan Singh told the committee that the treasure was in "four steel cases which contained articles of jewellery commonly worn by Indian women, chains of ladies watches, necklaces, bangles, bracelets, earrings, pounds and guineas and some gold wires". It also included a gold cigarette case gifted to him by Adolf Hitler.

The committee was told that Netaji made heavy payments at Bangkok and Singapore. It was, however, not known that how much Netaji withdrew, paid, spent and how much gold he took with him.

Strike to go on

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be filed only after a team of experts found the allegations to be true.

Replying to a question over patients' sufferings due to the protest, Chittagong BMA President Mujibul Haque Khan said doctors were giving healthcare services at government and private medical college hospitals round the clock.

They only stopped working at private clinics and diagnostic centres.

"Even at the private clinics, ICU and CCU facilities have remained open," Mujibul said.

Earlier in the day, doctors formed human chains in front of hospitals, including Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) and the University of Science and Technology Chittagong.

Meanwhile, many doctors expressed different opinions on the movement spearheaded by BMA leaders.

Some, preferring anonymity, told The Daily Star that they did not support sufferings of thousands of patients brought on by the protest.

"I cannot say that I am hundred percent right in all the cases when I treated patients," said an assistant professor of CMCH.

"I think, as per the law of the land, anyone can go to court for remedy if he thinks he was affected by someone," he added.

On January 10, Meherun Nesa, 22, niece of the expatriate welfare

minister, died at a private clinic in Katalganj following a caesarean operation.

Her family filed a case against Shamima Siddiqua Rosy and Mahbubul Alam, of the gynaecology department at CMCH, saying their negligence in treatment caused the death.

According to the other case, Assistant Registrar Rana Chowdhury of CMCH mistakenly left a bandage inside the body of Nur Absar during a recent surgery.

Like in the previous two days, patients were refused tests at diagnostic centres, and appointments of consultants and admission at private clinics and chambers yesterday.

Laila Haque went to Chevron Clinical Laboratory in the morning for blood and urine tests but found the main entrance closed.

"I came from Lohagara upazila.... I have to go back as I have no place to stay in the city. Moreover, no one can say when the strike will be withdrawn," she told The Daily Star.

Subhash Lala came from Fatikchhari upazila to the Centre for Specialised Care and Research for an appointment with a medicine specialist but the receptionist told him that he would not be able to see any doctor there.

"I have been suffering from gastro-intestinal problem and now it has become complicated," he said, adding that he had to see a consultant urgently.

57 Faridpur schools shut for 2 days

102 students fall sick in last 3 days

A CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

The Faridpur district administration yesterday closed 57 secondary schools in Sadar upazila for Saturday and Sunday, after 102 students and an employee of two of these schools fell sick over the past three days.

Of the schools, 55 are private and two are government-run institutions located in 11 unions of the upazila. However, primary schools and colleges remain open.

The decision came following the report of an investigation committee, which believes that the students are suffering from psychogenic illness, said Sardar Sharafat Ali, deputy commissioner (DC) of Faridpur.

Although such complaints were reported from just two schools, all the 57 secondary schools in the upazila were closed to stop spread of panic, he added.

Between Tuesday and Thursday, 99 female and three male students and staff of Shibrampur RD Academy and Khalilpur High School were admitted to Faridpur Medical

College Hospital after they complained of breathing problems, said District Education Officer Porimol Chandra Mandal.

After the incident at Shibrampur RD Academy, the district administration formed a three-member committee headed by Executive Magistrate SM Shahin on Wednesday.

The committee visited the hospital and the academy and its surrounding areas and submitted its report on Thursday.

Fahim Hasan, executive engineer of the district Public Health Engineering Department and also a member of the committee, said although the school building was old and damp, they did not find anything that can cause breathing problem.

"We think it is psychogenic illness," he added.

The DC said they expected that things would return to normal when the schools opened on Monday. The next course of action will be taken after observing the situation.

Gas crisis hits city

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earthen stoves, "both too much of a hassle in the city life," he said.

Since the winter set in, similar crisis has been reported in many areas of the capital including Mirpur, Pallabi, Shukrabad, Indira Road, Gendaria, Jatrabari, Mirhajirbagh, West Rampura, Rajabazar, Moghbazar, Tejkunipara, Bashundhara Residential Area, Kazipara, Kalabagan North Circular Road, Uttara and Jafraabad.

Production fall, coupled with an increased demand, is adversely affecting the gas supply in the capital, said a Titas official.

"We are suffering a lot. Please, do something for us," Khurshid Alam, a resident of Indira Road area, pleaded with the authorities through this reporter.

His family often makes the next day's breakfast and lunch along with the dinner to save themselves from worrying over the gas supply which becomes normal around 10:00pm, but only for a few hours every day.

To cope with this, Shabnur Sultana of the same area has started using an induction cooktop and an electric rice-cooker. "But this is likely to significantly increase the electricity bill, which may become a financial burden for a middle-income family like ours."

The gas crisis is also hurting the businesses, the city's refuelling stations in particular.

"Our income has been halved by the crisis," said Omar Faruk, manager of Navana Filling Station in Jatrabari.

"Most of the time, the gas supply stops at 7:00am and resumes only around 3:00pm every day. The same happens between 9:00pm and 12:00am."

There are 11 filling stations between Jatrabari and Jurain and all of those have been hit by the crisis.

Insufficient pressure of supply forces the refuelling stations to keep the services shut for as long as five to 10 hours a day.

"Though at least 8 PSI (pounds

per square inches) gas supply is required to run the station, we don't get it most of the time," said Md Enamul Kabir, engineer of Sanji CNG Station at Dholaipara in Jatrabari.

"Since the winter began, our daily sale has dropped to Tk 70,000-80,000 from around Tk 1.5 lakh a day."

The government order to keep the gas stations shut from 5:00pm to 9:00pm every day was aggravating their sufferings, said Kabir. "The restriction should be lifted, especially in winter."

There's already a demand-supply gap in the country. The total gas production currently stands at 2,700 million cubic feet per day (mmcf) against the demand for 3,250mmcf.

But this has nothing to do with the existing crisis in Dhaka city, claim the authorities of the Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution Company Ltd, which is responsible for supplying gas to the capital.

Rather, HM Ali Ashraf, director (operations) of Titas, blames the crisis on the "seasonal rise" in the demand.

For the capital, they supply 1,800-1,900mmcf gas which, he claims, is enough to meet the regular demand.

But during the winter, the gas consumption increases by 10 percent which causes the crisis for the city dwellers, he says.

Asked why household gas consumption increases in winter, another Titas official said this happens because city-dwellers widely use their gas stoves to dry clothes and boil water for everyday use.

However, the problem is not so simple, he added.

"The 30-inch-diameter Siddhirganj-Bakhrabad pipeline has been dysfunctional for about the last 25 days, reducing gas supply by 100-120mmcf," he said, wishing anonymity.

"However, we are working to solve the problems," he said.

Titas Director Ashraf also gave similar assurance.

Gazipur factory fire

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son of Abdur Razzak of Madaripur district.

Two seriously injured workers, Abdur Kadir, 65, and Kamal Hossain, 50, were being treated at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital last night. They suffered nearly 100 percent burns, Dr Partha Shankar Paul.

Bazlur Rahman, ward-41 councillor of Gazipur City Corporation, claimed owner Iman Uddin had been running the factory for four to five years illegally despite warnings from city corporation officials.

Iman went into hiding following the incident, he said.

While visiting the spot around 8:30pm, local lawmaker Meher Afroz Chumki said the administration has to take action after identifying this type of factories, reports our Gazipur correspondent.

Contacted, Gazipur Superintendent of Police Harun-ur-Rahim too said the factory was illegal and they were preparing to file a case against its owner.

Locals and fire service sources said the factory, Smart Metal and Chemical, produced a "liquid substance" used for road carpeting by burning expired tyres.

The tin-roofed one-storey factory had no boundary walls, added fire service sources.

According to witnesses, a boiler exploded with a huge bang around 4:00pm, causing the fire. About 30 workers were at the factory then and most of them rushed outside to save their lives.

Jebunesa, an assistant teacher of Baroibari Government Primary School, was walking along the road at the time of the blast. As the factory is right beside the road, the fire could reach her and burned her to death on the spot, said Hasibur Rahman, station officer at Joydevpur Fire Service.

A little while after the first explosion, two more boilers exploded, said locals.

It took about one and a half hours' effort by six fire engines of Gazipur and Tongi fire stations to douse the flames.

Deputy Assistant Director Aktaruzzaman of Gazipur Fire Service said they recovered five bodies from the spot. He added the fire might have been originated from boiler explosions.

Police said the bodies were kept at Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmed Medical College Hospital in Gazipur.

The injured workers, Kadir and Kamal, were first rushed to the Gazipur hospital. They were sent to the DMCH burn unit in the evening, said Khandaker Rezaul Hasan, officer-in-charge of Joydevpur Police Station.

MK Alamgir's rejoinder

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analysis: First, there is no truth in the report that Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Accounts has formally enjoined or requested the Comptroller and Auditor General to conduct a special audit on the functions of the Central Bank. It was not an agenda of the meeting of the Standing Committee on January 17, 2016 as mentioned by you nor recorded in the proceedings of the meeting.

Second, the Farmers Bank does not come under the purview of the Public Accounts Committee. Only government organisations and parastatals or outfits having government's savings or investments are to be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General. The Farmers Bank has no relevance or does not constitute an element in functions and duties of the Comptroller and Auditor General as prescribed under the Constitution of the country.

Therefore, there is no room for conflict of interest in my role as Chairman of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and as Chairman of the Board of Director of this private bank.

given a licence to operate as a Bank when I was the Minister of Home Affairs of the Government. I did not serve or act as the Chairman of The Farmers Bank when I was the Minister of Home Affairs either.

The other issues and matters pertaining to litigation are matters of record and sub-judice and may not call for any comment or suggestion from any non-judicial person or body. I would request you therefore to publish these in your esteemed daily to remove any doubt or misconception.

OUR REPLY

Mr Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir's claim that the parliamentary standing committee has not "formally enjoined or requested the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) to conduct a special audit on the functions of the Central Bank" contradicts the official press release issued by the parliament secretary.

The official press release issued by the parliament secretary following the committee's meeting held on January 17 clearly stated that the committee has asked the audit office [CAG] to submit a report after conducting a special

audit on the functions of Bangladesh Bank.

The Bangla media release reads: "বৈঠকে দেশের বিভিন্ন জাতীয় দৈনিকে বাংলাদেশ আওয়ামী লীগের সাধারণ সম্পাদক সৈয়দ আশরাফুল ইসলামের বক্তৃতার উপর ১৭ জানুয়ারি ২০১৬ খ্রিঃ তারিখে 'বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক ও অর্থ মন্ত্রণালয় জড়িয়ে ভূগছে' শিরোনামে প্রকাশিত সংবাদের উপর আলোচনা হয় এবং সে আলোকে বিষয়টি সম্পর্কে বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংকের কার্যক্রমের উপর অডিট অফিসকে একটি বিশেষ অডিট পরিচালনা করে রিপোর্ট প্রদানের সুপারিশ করে কমিটি।"

Alamgir's second claim is that there is no room for conflict of interest between his role as chairman of the standing committee on Public Accounts and as chairman of the board of directors of his bank.

Although he is technically correct, the fact remains that the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) asked the CAG office to conduct a special audit on Bangladesh Bank within four days after the central bank appointed an observer to the Farmers Bank (FB). The central bank's appointment of an observer came after it was found that the FB had broken rules in approving and giving loans.