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Integration the key

Say experts on synchronising Dhaka metro rail with conventional transport modes from north Uttara to Agargaon

TAWFIQUE ALI

Once the much-hyped metro rail starts operation between Uttara north and Agargaon later this year, it will not bring a significant change in Dhaka city's transport service unless it is integrated with conventional transport modes, experts said.

People heading to the city centre from Uttara would get off at Agargaon and they would need transport for which no traffic and transport management system has been planned. "The possible traffic disarray at Agargaon may even lead to the collapse of the traditional transport service there, as the area has not been prepared for handling an estimated 60,000 metro passengers every hour," said Prof Moazzem Hossain, a former director of the government-owned Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL).

The success and benefit of the metro rail primarily depend on its integration with other traditional modes, said the Buet civil engineering professor.

"Sadly, no such plan is there while the construction of metro rail is progressing fast."

With the promises of saving the city dwellers from the menace of perennial traffic chaos and protecting the environment, the DMTCL is going ahead at full throttle with the Tk 22,000 crore maiden metro rail project.

The 20km-long metro rail line-6 with 16 stations would

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Three-year old Touheed holds on to his visually-impaired mother Nasima's cane to guide her and act as her eyes on the streets. Every day, the duo takes a rickshaw from Manda to Motijheel, where Nasima begs for a living. The photo was taken near Purbani Hotel in the capital's Motijheel yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

FIRST PHASE 87 upazilas go to polls March 10

UNB, Dhaka

The first phase of Upazila Parishad election will be held on March 10.

At a press conference at the EC secretariat, Election Commission Secretary Helal Uddin yesterday announced the polls schedule.

The last date for submitting nomination papers is February 11, while that of withdrawal is February 19. The scrutiny of those will be held on February 12.

On January 10, the EC secretary said the polls would be held in phases starting from the first week of March.

The first upazila polls were held in 1985, while the following three were held in 1990, 2009 and 2014. The last one was organised in six phases.

Election to 87 upazila parishads in 12 districts under Rangpur, Mymensingh, Sylhet and Rajshahi divisions will be held in the first phase.

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SCC QUESTION PAPERS GAFFE

Those affected to be evaluated differently

Says education minister; govt probe body to look into the matter

STAR REPORT

Education Minister Dipu Moni yesterday in parliament said the answer scripts of SSC examinees, who were given the wrong question papers on the first day of the examinations, will be evaluated differently but did not specify how.

In response to lawmakers' queries, she said the government has formed an investigation committee and proper action would be taken against those responsible in line with the findings in the investigation report.

"We have already identified the students who were given wrong question papers and their exam papers will be evaluated in different way," Dipu Moni said.

Her proposal, however, drew flak from one of the MPs.

Jatiya Party MP Fakhru Imam criticised the minister for her proposal saying that it

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RIDE-SHARING SERVICE IN CAPITAL

Govt to shut door on outside vehicles

They won't be able to enlist with companies in city; ceiling of vehicles for each firm proposed

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Vehicles registered outside Dhaka city will not be allowed to enlist with any ride-sharing company operating in the city.

Besides, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) has been directed to propose the highest ceiling for the number of vehicles to be enlisted with any particular ride-hailing company.

The decisions came at a meeting held in the Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges on January 27, amid a sharp rise in vehicles, especially motorcycles, registered outside the capital hitting the city streets, exacerbating the traffic problem.

The meeting was presided over by Secretary of Road Transport and Highway Division Nazrul Islam while different stakeholders, including police high-ups, representatives of ride-sharing companies and BRTA officials, were also present.

"Our main objective [of introducing ride-sharing services] was to reduce traffic jam by using the vehicles that remain idle after one or two trips," said Nazrul while talking to The Daily Star yesterday.

"But a huge number of vehicles from other districts are entering the capital [to provide ride-sharing services], in contrast to our primary objective," he added.

There are also allegations that many of those vehicles are driven by unskilled drivers who are not familiar with the city roads.

However, the meeting sources could not confirm when and how the

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Yaba dealers using kids as mules

Two orphans held with 4,000 pills in stomach

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Yaba traders are adopting new techniques every day to bring the pills to the capital.

They are now using mostly homeless children, aged between 10 and 15 years, as drug mules. They pay the children to take the risks.

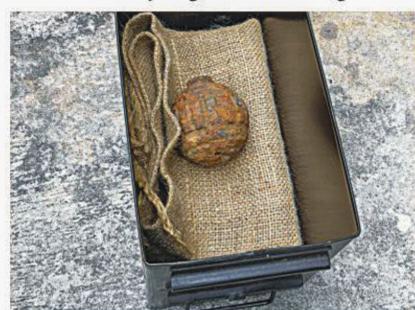
Around 40 to 50 pills are wrapped in sticky tapes and inserted inside bananas. The children eat those bananas on way to Dhaka from Teknaf and are not allowed to eat anything else.

Once the children reach a safe place in the capital, they are given laxatives.

The Detective Branch of police received this information after arresting three suspected members of a yaba smuggling gang and

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WW1 grenade finds its way to a crisp factory



AFP, Hong Kong

A German World War I hand grenade was found among a shipment of French potatoes imported for a Hong Kong crisp factory, police said.

The device was safely detonated after it was discovered at the Calbee snacks factory Saturday.

"The grenade was in an unstable condition because it has been previously discharged but failed to detonate," Superintendent Wilfred Wong Hohon told reporters.

Police detonated it on site, Wong said, with a

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Sending army to Venezuela 'an option'

Says Trump

AGENCIES

President Donald Trump yesterday reiterated that a US military intervention in Venezuela was "an option," as international pressure ramps up on embattled head of state Nicolas Maduro to step down.

Asked in an interview with CBS's "Face the Nation" what could lead the United States to use military force in the crisis-wracked country, the president

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PRAYER TIMING FEBRUARY 4
Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 5-30 12-45 4-15 5-52 7-15
JAMAAT 6-05 1-15 4-30 5-56 7-45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Road crashes claim 9 lives in four dists

STAR REPORT

At least nine people were killed and 19 injured in separate road accidents across the country yesterday.

In Chattogram's Patiya upazila, a bus collided with a microbus around 8:30am on Chattogram-Cox's Bazar highway, leaving four people dead.

The dead were identified as Shahjahan, 50, Anwar Hossain, 48, Sakib, 22, and Nazim Uddin, 18. All of them were passengers of the microbus, said Inspector ABM Mizanur Rahman, in-charge of Patiya Highway Police Outpost.

Of them, Anwar Hossain died on the way to hospital while three others died on the spot. Both the vehicles skidded off the highway and fell into a roadside paddy field after the collision, he added.

Alauddin Talukdar, assistant sub-inspector of CMCH Police Outpost, said 12 passengers were admitted to

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The shockingly mangled carcass of a microbus speaks volumes of the intensity of the accident when it collided head-on with a bus on the Chattogram-Cox's Bazar highway in Chattogram's Patiya upazila yesterday. The incident left four people dead. Inset, a relative of a victim breaks down in tears in Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

A crime beyond comprehension

Private tutor strangles third-grader for resisting rape attempt in Rangamati; mother of three, 10-year-old girl raped

STAR REPORT

A 10-year-old girl was strangled to death as she resisted a rape attempt by her tutor at Kaptali upazila in Rangamati on Saturday.

Police found the accused Aung Baching Mong Marma, 40, when he was trying to dump the body in a nearby jungle, said Muhammad Ashraf Uddin, officer-in-charge of Chandraghona Police Station.

Police sent the body to Rangamati General Hospital morgue for autopsy and filed a case against Aung, he added.

Aung attempted to rape the girl around 10:00am at his home when she went there for tuition. As she resisted and started screaming, he strangled the girl, said the OC, quoting the victim's family members.

The accused admitted his crime during primary questioning in custody, said police.

The victim's father informed the law enforcers after her daughter did not return home Saturday night.

Meanwhile, a mother of three was allegedly raped by a man near her home in Bogura's Sherpur upazila early Saturday.

The accused is Md Fotik, 40, a coworker and neighbour of the victim.

A written complaint was sent to Sherpur Police Station after the incident but police neither filed a case nor arrested the accused, alleged the victim's family.

Asked, Humayan Kabir, officer-in-charge of the police station, said they would file a case after primary investigation.

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