

Ministers blast

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Karim said just five percent overloading could reduce road longevity by 18 percent. Unless overloading is controlled, road life cannot be ensured.

He also mentioned that the soil of the country was also a major reason behind poor longevity of roads.

On maintenance, he said they receive only 15 to 20 percent of the money required for road maintenance every year. The RHD got Tk 2,228.91 crore against a demand of Tk 11,884 crore in 2018-19 fiscal for maintenance.

Blaming overloading for damage to roads and bridges, transport expert Prof Shamsul Haque said the government gave into the pressure of transport organisation and allowed overloading.

He said government allows two-axle vehicles (six wheels) to carry up to 22 tonnes, instead of global standard of 15.5 tonnes.

Besides, illegally modified trucks and lorries, mainly responsible for overloading, get fitness clearances.

Stopping overloading, ensuring proper drainage system, and introduction of performance-based road management system could help guarantee longevity of roads and bridges.

Ex RHD chief engineer Ebne Alam Hasan also blamed overloading for roads getting damaged sooner than they should. He called for giving more priority on maintenance.

State Minister Nasrul Hamid started with showing some photos of roads in his Keraniganj constituency. The photos showed an overpass without a necessary ramp, a bridge where tolls are collected haphazardly, bus stopping in the middle of the road.

He claimed that there were no signs on most roads, including Mayor Hanif Flyover.

“What you are doing?”  
There are faults in road design which could have been avoided if the officials involved worked sincerely, he said.

“The issues you have mentioned as challenges are not actually challenges. We are the main challenges,” he said hinting at RHD officials.

“Things will not change even if the budget was doubled,” he said.

Nasrul had shown a photo of a pillar of a bridge that had blocked water flow of Shubhadda Canal.

When an RHD official said they had stopped building bridges over the canal following the state minister’s objection, Nasrul said that what they had done before wasted public money.

He also questioned the services and fitness clearances given by the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority. He showed photos of the BRTA office in his area where brokers were present.

RHD officials then tried to respond to Nasrul.

The finance minister taking the floor said, “What we are discussing today has been discussed several times before ... We know everything but we don’t follow.”

The prime minister gave directives on several occasions and it seems she is little tired now, Mustafa said.

He said he gets criticised for the poor road condition in his Cumilla constituency.

“You’ll start crying if you see the roads in my constituency. People curse me every day. When I go there, I can’t roll down the window [of the car to avoid contact with people] and try to drive away fast. But I can’t drive away fast since the roads are so bad.”

“You get Tk 25,000 crore in every budget. But do you deliver [service] effectively. No, you don’t,” the minister said.

Roads are getting damaged due to overloading and modification of vehicles, he said, adding, “We will stop giving allocation and approval to new projects. You please cooperate with us.”

He blasted RHD engineers for blaming the soil and said many countries build roads under the sea and over hills and those remain useable for around 50 years.

Talking about long queues before toll plazas, the minister said he had asked the RIHD secretary at least 30 times to introduce a modern system so that there were no queues.

“I won’t conclude this meeting unless you tell me when you will do it,” RIHD Secretary Nazrul then said they introduced a modern system in Meghna-Gumti toll plaza.

Mustafa asked them to ensure quality instead of increasing the number of projects. “If necessary do not start work on new projects until you have finished the ones you started before,” he said.

Road safety campaigners, experts, transport leaders, officials from ministries also spoke at the seminar.

Thousands held

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vehicles were set on fire. About 20 people have been taken into custody, he added.

Tension ran high in some other areas, especially the Muslim-dominated Old City areas of Lucknow, the capital city of Uttar Pradesh, and police officials were having a tough time maintaining law and order.

Congress sources said state unity party chief Ajay Kumar Lallu was detained when he was leading a protest at busy Parivartan Chowk near the District Magistrate’s office.

Two buses were set on fire in Sambhal, Uttar Pradesh, where protesters and police clashed.

Several teachers of the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) took out a silent march opposing the act yesterday. The protestors, including a large number of women teachers, marched from the AMU Teachers Club to the Purani Chungi crossing and circled the campus.

Police fired tear gas in Lucknow while in Modi’s home state of Gujarat police said they baton-charged demonstrators and arrested 50 people.

In Bangalore, one of the 30 protesters dragged onto a police bus was globally renowned historian Ramachandra Guha just as he was giving an interview.

Hundreds of students, activists and supporters of opposition parties - carrying flags and banners - hold protest rallies in Mumbai’s August Kranti Maidan.

Meanwhile, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee yesterday dared ruling Bharatiya Janata Party to go for a UN-monitored referendum on the contentious act and NRC, reports our New Delhi correspondent.

Addressing a rally in Esplanade East in Kolkata, she said “if the BJP has



PHOTO: AFP

Protesters hold placards during a demonstration against India’s new citizenship law in Siliguri yesterday.

guts, it should go for a UN-monitored referendum on amended Citizenship Act and NRC.”

Mamata, who led street marches for the last three consecutive days, steadfastly refused to implement the act and NRC in West Bengal.

In the northeast, where the protests began last week -- albeit for different reasons -- around 20,000 people took to the streets in different locations. No violence was reported however after last week’s deadly clashes.

Curfew imposed in Dibrugarh was relaxed for 14 hours since 6:00 am yesterday but mobile internet services remained suspended, officials said.

Vice-Chancellors of about 20 universities in Assam yesterday appealed to students not to endanger their future but help in maintaining peace and harmony in the state.

Five persons were injured as crude bombs were hurled at a protest march taken out in North Dinajpur district, a police officer said. The agitators had

blocked NH 34 for two hours against the incident.

Modi has insisted that his government does not aim to marginalize Muslims, tweeting this week that the new law “does not affect any citizen of India of any religion.”

But many in India’s 200-million-strong Muslim minority fear that they will be the main target of Modi’s plans to implement a national “register of citizens” to remove all “infiltrators” by 2024.

The radio man

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his shop to repair a rare kind of radio back in 1982.

Curious, Mofazzal asked the freedom fighter how the radio broke and why he wanted it repaired after so many years.

In response, he heard the story of how a stray bullet hit him in the middle of an operation and the radio dropped from his hand and broke. The old fighter was repairing the radio as it carried memories of his months in battle.

The idea consumed Mofazzal ever since and he began collecting to immortalise their stories of bravery.

His father, Abdul Faruque, was also a freedom fighter and he grew up hearing tales of how the radio was their only source of information and news.

“It occurred to me that freedom fighters will not live forever but if I can preserve these radios, the history of the Liberation War will be preserved,” Mofazzal told The Daily

Star recently on the side lines of the three-day Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) Radio Asia Conference and Radio Song Festival 2019 at Hotel Intercontinental in Dhaka.

“Today’s smartphones and gadgets do not have the same charm as the radio.”

A father of two sons and a daughter, Mofazzal currently has a collection of around 1,000 radios of different companies including Grundig, Hitachi, Citizen, Zenith, Murphy, national, Panasonic, Philips, Philco and many other local and international brands.

Mofazzal has had to sacrifice a lot in the last 37 years to chase his passion. Amid resource and space constraints, he has been living in a rented home in Mirpur since the 80s.

He recalls an incident in the 90s when he got news of another rare radio in Sylhet. Upon reaching his destination, the seller demanded Tk 1,500 for the radio, but Mofazzal had

only Tk 1,000 on him.

“I was adamant to return with that radio even though I was Tk 500 short. I could not borrow the sum from anyone either as I did not know anyone in that city,” he said. “I decided to earn some money and I so I took up work as a day-labourer for a few days.”

Mofazzal, who has very little educational background, said every radio has a story and history.

“I have two families -- one is my wife and kids, and the other is my collection of radios. My wife was annoyed by my passion at first, but now she understands and helps me in my pursuit.”

Sharing another anecdote, he said he once went to Jinjira to buy a radio in the year 2000. However, the seller was having second thoughts about selling the piece.

“I spent the whole day, talking and pleading, trying to convince him to part with it. At last, he agreed to sell it for Tk 1,200, but I had only Tk 800,”

Major reshuffle in police

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This major reshuffle came as a surprise to many in the police force, said insiders, seeking anonymity.

SM Rashidul Haque, superintendent of Lalmonirhat police, was ordered to replace Noor-E-Alam Mina of Chattogram, who was transferred as Additional Deputy Inspector General of Dhaka Range.

Two deputy commissioners of Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) -- Md Abdul Warish and Harun Or Rashid Hazari -- were transferred to Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) and T&IM section in Dhaka respectively.

But the transfer order for these three posts will be affected after the end of Chattogram-8 by-elections, which is scheduled to be held on January 13 next year.

Hasibul Alam, special superintendent (SS) of Special Branch (SB) in Dhaka and AHM Abdur Raqib, deputy commissioner (DC) of DMP, were transferred as SP of Sirajganj and Chapainawabganj respectively.

These two officials were instructed to take briefings from the home ministry on December 24 before joining their duties as they were going to work in district areas for the first time, said officials.

Besides, SP of Khagrachari Mohammad Ahmar Uzzaman was transferred as SP Mymensingh,

SP of Munshiganj Mohammad Jayedul Alam as SP Narayanganj, SP of Shariatpur Abdul Momen as SP Munshiganj, Assistant Inspector General (AIG) of Police Headquarter (PHQ) Abdia Sultana as SP Lalmonirhat, SP of Nilphamarai Muhammad Ashraf Hossain as SP Jashore, SS of SB SM Ashrafuzzaman as SP Shariatpur, DC DMP Mukhlesur Rahman as SP Nilphamari, SS SB Jerin Akhter as SP Bandarban and AIG PHQ Abdul Aziz as SP Khagrachhari.

Along with them, SP of Sirajganj Tutul Chakrabarty was transferred as DC DMP, SP Bandarban Jakir Hossain Majumder as DC Barishal Metropolitan Police (BMP), SP T&MI Sarwar Morshed as DC DMP, SP Anti-Terrorism Unit (ATU) Md Walid Hossain as DC DMP, DC BMP Moazzem Hossain Bhuyan as DC DMP, SP of Police Bureau of Investigation Julfikar Ali Hayder as DC BMP, SP from Mali mission Md Faruq Hossain as SS of SB Dhaka, SP Highway Police Jahangir Hossain as SS of SB Dhaka, DC Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP) Hemayetul Islam as Commander 16-APBn, DC Khulna Metropolitan Police Md Saiful Hoque as DC DMP, SP of Railway police Md Nazrul Islam as DC DMP and SP of Police Staff College Md Al-Mamun Ansari as SP CID.

PM warns of stern action

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migrant workers.

Besides, Hasina gave Commercially Important Person (CIP) awards to two non-resident Bangladeshis (NRBs) as the government conferred the awards upon 42 Bangladeshi expatriates on the occasion of the International Migrants Day 2019.

Later, the PM opened the migration fair at the venue.

Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment Minister Imran Ahmad presided over the programme.

Chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on the ministry Anisul Islam Mahmud, MP, President of Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA) Benjir Ahmed, MP, Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment Secretary Md Salim Reza, and IOM Bangladesh Chief of Mission Giorgi Gigauri also spoke at the event.

The PM urged the Bangladeshi workers and the recruiting agencies to work sincerely to uphold the bright image of Bangladesh abroad.

Spelling out different activities taken by her government for manpower export and welfare of the expatriate Bangladeshis, Hasina said her government was now giving greater attention to proper trainings of overseas jobseekers.

She said it was seen earlier that many were registered for trainings, but did not receive that. “But now it’s a must.”

The PM directed the ministry to give more attention so that Bangladeshi workers could go abroad after imparting proper trainings, or else they would be repressed.

“We want trained workers to go abroad from our country. If we can export trained workers, they would be able to earn more and demonstrate their expertise abroad. And when they would return home leaving overseas jobs, they can be engaged in the country’s development or they can get jobs here.”

The government will create skilled manpower in every upazila to export them abroad, Hasina said.

Mentioning that her government established Probashi Kallyan Bank for the expatriates’ welfare, the PM said her government’s goal was to ensure safety, job security, and proper arrangements for the overseas workers so that they could perform their works properly and competently.

Noting that the expatriates are making a significant contribution to the country’s economy, she said the government was paying attention so that their hard-earned money was used for the country’s wellbeing.

“We want them to remit the money through legal channels ... So, we’re providing two percent cash incentive for sending money through legal channels,” said Hasina, adding that the government kept aside some Tk 3,500 crore in the national budget for providing the cash incentive for inward remittance.

The Daily Star

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and enlightened by the Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS).

Nomination seekers submitted their details by November 20. An independent jury panel evaluated the nominations and selected the winners in five categories.

The categories are: ICT Solution Provider of the Year (Local Market Focus), ICT Solution Provider of the Year (International Market Focus), Digital Commerce of the Year, ICT Startup of the Year and ICT Business person of the Year.

On this day

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their allegiance to Bangladesh today – Ehsanul Kabir, economic minister of Pakistan embassy in London; Muslehuddin Ahmad, commercial councillor in Paris, and Khairul Anam, second secretary in Brussels.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto takes over the presidency of Pakistan. In a radio speech he proudly declares a fight to reclaim “East Pakistan”.

Many army high officials including former president Yahya Khan, his chief of staff General Abdul Hamid Khan and security secretary Gulam Umar Khan are sent to retirement.

BCL men

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His brother Delwar Hossain Akand lodged a case with Jamalpur Police Station accusing six, including the councillor and his son.

Ensure Khaleda’s

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organisation that the government had refused to disclose her official medical reports to them, which is deeply concerning and also inconsistent with the UN rules, the statement mentioned.

The rules provide: “... all prisoners should be granted access to their files upon request. A prisoner may appoint a third party to access his or her medical file.”

According to Rule 24, “provision of health care for prisoners is a State responsibility and that prisoners should enjoy the same standards of health care that are available in the community and without discrimination,” said the statement.

Amnesty also said that some charges against her are not consistent with international law and standards -- such as hurting religious sentiments, making “defamatory statement” on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, celebrating her [Khaleda Zia’s] “fake” birthday, undermining national flag, and for commenting on the number of liberation war martyrs.

Stating that she has secured bail in 34 cases that have yet to proceed to the trial stage, the statement said there were concerns regarding infringements of Khaleda Zia’s right to a fair hearing.

“... a High Court division bench granted bail in the Charitable Trust case on 12 March 2018, taking into consideration the severity of the sentence, her age and medical condition. However, the bail order was hastily stayed by the Appellate Division of the Bangladesh Supreme Court, led by the chief justice, on 14 March 2018 without hearing the defendant’s lawyers and by only allowing the prosecution to present their case.”

Khaleda Zia’s counsel declared such a step unprecedented, it said, adding that excluding a defence lawyer from a hearing where the prosecutor is present is violation of the principle of “equality of arms”.

China calls EU rights prize-winning Uighur ‘a terrorist’

AFP, Beijing

China called jailed Uighur intellectual Ilham Tohti a “terrorist” yesterday and refused to confirm whether he was still alive, after his daughter accepted a European Parliament human rights award on his behalf.

Tohti -- a former economics professor sentenced to life imprisonment in 2014 by Beijing for “separatism” -- was announced as the winner of the Sakharov Prize in October.

UN calls for lifting restrictions on Iran diplomats

AFP, United Nations

The United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday called on the US -- which hosts the organization’s headquarters -- to lift restrictions on Iranian diplomats.

The resolution also condemned the denial of visas to Russian diplomats.

Since the summer, Iranian diplomats and ministers have been under strict movement restrictions when they are in the US. They are limited largely to the area around the UN headquarters in New York, the Iranian mission and the ambassador’s residence.

The UN resolution, proposed by Cyprus on behalf of Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica and Ivory Coast, was approved by consensus without being put to a vote.

Unlike those passed by the Security Council, General Assembly resolutions are not binding but do have political weight.

Without naming specific countries, the text was mainly aimed at the restrictions imposed on Iran, as well as the visa denials to Russia’s delegation during last September’s General Assembly, diplomats said.

The resolution said the UN “urges the host country to remove all remaining travel restrictions imposed by it on staff of certain missions and staff members of the Secretariat of certain nationalities.”

The UN “takes seriously” the travel restrictions and arguments of the “two Missions” that say they are hindered in their functions, the text added.

Tensions between the US and Iran have risen

since May last year when President Donald Trump abandoned a 2015 multinational deal with Iran aimed at curbing its nuclear program and began reimposing sanctions.

In September, while participating in the annual General Assembly, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif complained he was unable to visit the country’s UN ambassador in a US hospital.

The UN also “expresses serious concern regarding the non-issuance of entry visas to certain representatives of certain Member States,” the resolution said, referring to 18 Russian diplomats who were denied US visas, also in September.

They were supposed to participate in various UN committees until December.

**RFP Ref. No.: LRPS-BAN-2019-9155186**

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The deadline to submit proposal is **Wednesday, 8 January 2020; Time: 11:00 Hrs**

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