

What can we learn from London's radical move to curb air pollution?



KAMAL AHMED

LONDON Mayor Sadiq Khan has done something daring to tackle air pollution in his city. First, he experimented with an Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), with an area designated as a congestion charging area about 25 years ago. This experiment was launched in April 2019, and the rules were aimed at discouraging high-polluting motor vehicles from entering the area, with the imposition of penalties for violations. From October 25 this year, after two years of experimentation, the mayor extended the ULEZ to an 18 times larger area; the scheme is now known as Extended Low Emission Zone (ELEZ).

There's little doubt that Londoners are now adopting one of the most radical anti-pollution policies in the world. The government estimates the number of people killed by long-term exposure to air pollution in the UK to be as high as 30,000 a year. Reports suggest that many other cities in the UK are now planning similar low emission zones.

Under the new scheme, motor vehicles, except larger buses, lorries and specialised heavy vehicles, run by petrol and diesel and older than 15 years, are effectively banned from entering the ELEZ. Entering this restricted zone will warrant a fee of GBP 12.50 a day, and failure to pay will attract a GBP 160 penalty. Transport for London, the body entrusted to regulate and oversee transport in London, estimates that about 138,000 vehicles are likely to be affected. Official estimates suggest that four out of every five cars in these areas are already compliant with emission limits. Besides introducing penalties for non-compliant vehicles, the city authority has announced

grants for small businesses and the disabled to encourage scrapping non-compliant cars and motorcycles. These grants are separate from Britain's national initiative to subsidise people switching over to electric cars.

To clean up London's air, Mayor Sadiq Khan's transport strategy is to try to achieve 80 percent of trips across London through walking, cycling, and mass transport by 2040—the ULEZ experiment and ELEZ are parts of his long-term vision of the city by 2040. It's a hugely controversial move, as the Conservatives, who are in charge of the country, oppose it saying the move will adversely affect small- and medium-sized businesses and harm post-pandemic economic recovery. On the other hand, the Green Party alleges that it falls short of the needs as, according to them, one in 10 roads in London will remain toxic after the expansion.

The original Congestion Charging Zone was introduced to curb traffic congestion in the city, while the low emission zones are more focussed on cutting air pollution.



A vehicle passes a sign for the new low emissions zone in Coulsdon, London, UK.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

The government estimates the number of people killed by long-term exposure to air pollution in the UK to be as high as 30,000 a year. Reports suggest that many other cities in the UK are now planning similar low emission zones.

As a result, the ULEZ experiment did not cut traffic in a significant way—rather residents of the inner city switched over to low-polluting vehicles. Official figures show that ahead of the introduction of ULEZ, the number of cleaner vehicles in central London jumped from 39 percent in 2017 to 80 percent in 2020. Roadside levels of nitrogen oxide (NO₂) fell by 44 percent. Drivers are still liable to pay a congestion charge of GBP 15 a day for driving through central London. Therefore, driving costs in central London have become too exorbitant, making it three times costlier than travelling by underground and overground trains and five times costlier than the day-long unlimited bus journeys. About 700 cameras, capable of reading

the registration numbers and detecting non-compliant, older polluting vehicles, have been strategically placed in the city, and payments are taken online. Introducing the scheme, the city authority has spent about GBP 100 million, and it is expected to make GBP 1.9 million per day. The funds generated through the scheme are expected to be put back into transport schemes.

A few weeks ago, we heard Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Mayor Md Atiqul Islam calling for imposing additional tax on vehicles that ply the roads in "elite areas" like Gulshan and Baridhara. In a 24-hour news cycle, this story did not last long in the fast-paced media, despite some angry reactions among netizens. His proposal seemed to

be an attempt to imitate some successful schemes put in place in some Western cities, including London. Unfortunately, his language was divisive and offensive to millions of his constituents who reside outside his so-called elite neighbourhoods. When getting into such offices no longer requires credible and proper elections, such ill-judged comments coming from those occupying the offices are perhaps not that shocking.

The mayor's comments suggest that he was more concerned about controlling traffic numbers in the neighbourhoods of the rich and famous than curbing Dhaka's notorious air pollution. Even if his objective was to ease traffic congestion in the city, he should have focused more on helping businesses than on providing relief to the rich and famous who live in his elite bubble. Restricting public transports in Gulshan and Banani, except a few special ones authorised by the DNCC—a scheme introduced by his predecessor Annisul Huq—may have discouraged some people from entering those areas, but whether it has succeeded in cutting the number of cars or the rate of air pollution is debatable. When London introduced its Congestion Charging Zone, the aim was to ease traffic in business districts and not the poshest suburb of Hampstead.

When Bangladesh's much-awaited mass transit systems—the metro rail and rapid bus transportation routes—become operational, we will have a great opportunity to opt for tougher measures to phase out high-emitting vehicles and cut traffic numbers. Such measures should not be discriminatory, a privilege for some and a disadvantage to the rest. Learning from other megacities are always welcome, but applying those lessons should benefit all.

Kamal Ahmed is an independent journalist. His twitter handle is @ahmedka1

PROJECT ■ SYNDICATE

Our Common Agenda and the Road to 2023

MADELEINE ALBRIGHT and IBRAHIM GAMBARI

NOT since World War II has the international community confronted as monumental a test as the intertwined crises of Covid-19 and climate change, and the profound social and economic inequalities they have exposed. Yet, precisely when global, collective action is most needed to address these crises, exclusionary nationalism and rising great-power tensions, including a new Cold War-like

by a new Emergency Platform to respond to complex global crises; the appointment of a Special Envoy for Future Generations; and innovations involving digital transformation, data analytics, and strategic foresight.

We also applaud Guterres's call for an "investment boost" for the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and for a green and just recovery for all countries (complementing the upcoming UN climate conference in Glasgow). His proposal to hold a biennial summit of world leaders representing

to one empowered to coordinate international responses and mobilise resources for conflict situations that are not on the Security Council's agenda. This Peacebuilding Council could also monitor early warning indicators to avert the outbreak or recurrence of deadly violence.

Implementing Guterres's ambitious proposals will necessitate government buy-in, which in turn will require a dedicated intergovernmental reform process to rejuvenate the global governance system. Time is of the essence; before

related series of UN ambassador-expert roundtables should be created to channel additional ideas into the PrepComs about how to strengthen the global governance system's capacity to address major current and future threats.

Lastly, the 2023 summit must be preceded by broad agreement that its outcome document will emphasise select, concrete, time-bound, and measurable reform commitments to aid near-term and longer-run

results that are, at the very least, as ambitious as the 2005 (LIN60) outcome document.

These ideas and related proposals for global governance innovation are elaborated in the recent Stimson Center report titled "Beyond UN75: A Roadmap for Inclusive, Networked, & Effective Global Governance." Combined with "Our Common Agenda" and countless good ideas advanced by past commissions, scholars, and advocacy organisations,

they can help rebuild the trust and regenerate the solidarity needed to restore and strengthen people's confidence in their multilateral institutions. Now it's time to get to work.

Madeleine Albright is a former US secretary of state and ambassador to the United Nations. Ibrahim Gambari, a former Nigerian foreign minister and ambassador to the United Nations. Copyright: Project Syndicate, 2021 www.project-syndicate.org (Exclusive to The Daily Star)



The world today needs a more inclusive and networked multilateralism in order to successfully respond to complex global crises.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

standoff between democracies and autocracies, are eroding essential multilateral cooperation.

In his path-breaking new report titled "Our Common Agenda," UN Secretary-General António Guterres argues that "humanity faces a stark and urgent choice: a breakdown or a breakthrough." Guterres underscores the fundamental values of trust and solidarity—and the need for a new social contract between citizens and their institutions at all levels of governance—in seeking a just and sustainable global recovery from the current pandemic. These values must inform a politically savvy yet ambitious strategy for long-overdue institutional and legal changes to the post-1945 multilateral system.

The United Nations member states gathered under the leadership of Abdulla Shahid, president of the General Assembly, on October 25 in New York, where they were urged to come up with a coordinated response to initiate follow-up action on many of Guterres's proposals. Among his most timely ideas for building more inclusive and networked multilateralism are an updated Agenda for Peace, supported

the G20 and the UN Economic and Social Council, alongside the heads of the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is the right way to shepherd this process. The report of the 2015 Commission on Global Security, Justice & Governance, which we co-chaired, made a similar recommendation: a "G20+" that would convene the group's leaders and all UN member states every two years in September during the General Assembly's High-Level Week, with a lightly staffed G20 secretariat to sustain and manage the relationship.

Given the urgent need to improve governance of the global commons, including the high seas, Antarctica, the atmosphere, and outer space, we support Guterres's suggestion to repurpose the UN Trusteeship Council. But effectively delivering global public goods and managing global public risks will require authorities that go beyond the reconfigured body's proposed "advice and guidance" role. In our 2015 report, for example, we proposed upgrading the UN Peacebuilding Commission from an advisory body

the year concludes, UN member states should endorse a follow-on "modalities resolution" supporting Guterres's call for a Summit of the Future in September 2023.

Several steps should be taken to maximise the summit's impact. For starters, preparatory committees (PrepComs) should be convened around the world to consider and advance global governance innovations in peace, security, and humanitarian action; sustainable development and Covid-19 recovery; human rights, inclusive governance, and the rule of law; and climate governance. They should also consider how to promote integrated, system-wide reforms based on the ideas that emerge.

Second, building on the far-reaching UN75 Global Conversation dialogues and surveys, global and regional peoples' forums and e-dialogues should be established to increase global public awareness and channel civil-society perspectives into the PrepComs and summit.

Third, a High-Level Advisory Board, comprising public intellectuals and former heads of state, and a



Janata Bank Limited

Divisional Office, Chattogram

27 SK Mujib Road, Agrabad, Chattogram- 4100
Tel: 2520169, 715391, 715392 Fax: 880-31-715390,
E-mail: chittagong@janatabank-bd.com Website: www.jb.com.bd

INVITATION FOR RE-TENDER

Sealed tenders are invited under the provisions of the Public Procurement Rules-2008 for the Goods and related Services and under the terms and conditions outlined below and detailed in the Tender Document:

- Tender Ref. : DO-CHATTO/IT/COMP-KROY/RE-TENDER-01/OTM-01/2021
- Tender Name : TENDER FOR PROCUREMENT OF COMPUTER HARDWARE & ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT FOR DIFFERENT COMPUTERIZED BRANCH UNDER CONTROL OF JANATA BANK LIMITED, DIVISIONAL OFFICE, CHATTOGRAM.

3. Brief description of Goods/services: The items shall be internationally renowned brand item while the UPS must be at least BSTI/ISO certified. No clone/Assembled items will be accepted:

Lot	Item	Quantity
Lot-1	Computer Workstation	85 units
Lot-2	Laser Printer	48 units
Lot-3	MICR Cheque Scanner	03 units
Lot-4	Off-Line UPS 650VA	110 units
Lot-5	Scanner	40 units

4. Time for completion of delivery : 4(four) weeks for all lot, the date of contract signed.

5. Eligibility of Tenderers : 5.1 The Tenderer shall be the manufacturer/authorized dealer/distributor/reseller/bonafide supplier having minimum 2 (two) years of overall business experience and at least 1 (one) year specific experience of supplying, installing, commissioning, operating of similar goods and providing support service to different organization/banks in Bangladesh in multi-user environment.
5.2 Must have strong presence and support offices in Chattogram (should mentioned full address) with well equipped service cell manned by adequately qualified technical personnel for maintenance and support for the proposed Goods and Services. Floating or home address shall not be considered as established offices.
5.3 The participating company may offer proposals for the items in any or all lots and must quote all the items in that/those lot(s). Evaluation will be done Lot by Lot basis and contract will also be awarded Lot by Lot basis. Partial offer for any lot will not be accepted.
5.4 The offers should have validity for at least 90 (Ninety) days from the date of opening the tender.

6. Name and address of the Office(s) Selling Tender Document : Janata Bank Limited, Divisional Office, Chattogram, Janata Bank Bhaban (3rd Floor), 27 SK Mujib Road, Agrabad, Chattogram-4100 between 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. on all working days. Interested Tenderers may view the document at the website of the Bank. (Website: www.jb.com.bd)

7. Price of Tender Document : TK. 1000/= (One Thousand) only (non refundable) in the form of pay order favoring "Janata Bank Limited" from any scheduled bank in Bangladesh for a single lot. Interested tenderers have to purchase different tender document for different lots.

8. Amount of Tender Security : A tender security favoring Janata Bank Limited shall be required for :
Lot-1:- BDT 1, 53,000/- (One Lac Fifty Three Thousand) Only.
Lot-2:- BDT 29,000/- (Twenty Nine Thousand) Only.
Lot-3:- BDT 7,000/- (Seven Thousand) Only.
Lot-4:- BDT 9,000/- (Nine Thousand) Only.
Lot-5:- BDT 6,500/- (Six Thousand Five Hundred) Only.
The Tender Security must be valid till: 14-02-2022.

9. Last Date and Time for Selling Tender Document : 14-11-2021 within 3:00 P.M.

10. Last Date and Time for Submission of Tenders : 15-11-2021 within 3:00 P.M.

11. Name and address of the Office(s) Receiving and Opening Tenders : Assistant General Manager, Janata Bank Ltd., Divisional Office, Chattogram, 27 SK Mujib Road, Agrabad, Chattogram-4100

12. Date and Time for Opening of Tenders : 15-11-2021 at 03:30 P.M.

13. Special Instructions : a. The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the Tender proceedings without showing any reason.
b. The Bank shall not be under any obligation to accept the lowest quotation.
c. If any force Major situation arises in the specified date mentioned in the tender data or/and invitation for tender, the event will take on the next working date.

(Md. Siddique Akbor)
Assistant General Manager