

PADMA BRIDGE

Bike ban to stay: Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Right now, the government has no plans to allow motorbikes to ply the Padma Bridge, due to safety reasons, said Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday.

Initially, there was no restriction on motorbikes. But certain issues led to the decision to disallow the vehicles. “Everyone [bikers] goes at such high speeds,” he said.

Quader said this at a dialogue organised by Bangladesh Secretariat Reporters’ Forum at the secretariat.

Bridges Division banned motorcycles on Padma Bridge on June 27, as thousands of bikers overwhelmed the toll-plaza employees and two bikers died in a crash on the bridge.

Asked whether the government will lift the ban, Quader said, “We need to accept the reality... The number of vehicles will increase [if the ban is lifted], and these will move at high speed... After considering all these things, we'll think about it later.”

He said they were successful in enforcing helmets for bikers in the capital, but rural areas still need more work in this regard, he added.

Asked whether authorities will reduce metro-rail fare, the minister said they have fixed a reasonable fare. “When people begin travelling on metro rail, reaching the station in three minutes and the destination in 40 minutes, I hope they will accept the fare easily.”

PM’S VISIT TO INDIA

Replying to a question, Quader, also general secretary of Awami League, said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina’s

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Without any safety gears, two youths weld metal beams of a building on Tajmahal Road. Hundreds of construction workers die every year in accidents that are preventable with a little bit of attention to workers’ safety. This photo was taken in Mohammadpur area recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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Tk 3 per km

Demands civic org for metro rail fare

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Committee to Protect Shipping, Roads, and Railways (NCPSRR) yesterday demanded that the government cut the metro rail fare by 50 percent.

The organisation made the demand a day after Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader announced that the government has set the metro rail fare at Tk 5 per kilometre.

From Uttara to Motijheel, the entire 20.10km length of the service, the fare would be Tk 100 while the lowest price of a ticket would be Tk 20.

A statement issued by NCPSRR president Md Shahid Mia and general secretary Ashis Kumar Dey criticised the government decision.

Leaders of the civic organisation said when the minimum fare of private buses is set at Tk 10, almost double the fare for state transport facility

EC trying to hold staged nat’l election

Says GM Quader

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Chairman GM Quader yesterday alleged that the Election Commission is trying to hold a staged national election.

He said most people in the country think that the electronic voting machine (EVM) is a “rigging machine”.

“Many doubt whether the EC will be able to hold a free, fair and acceptable election. It seems that it is planning to implement an agenda,” said Quader, also deputy leader of opposition.

He said this while talking to reporters at the party chairman’s Banani office.

In response to a question about forming an electoral alliance, Quader said a decision will be taken after discussing the matter in the party forum, before election. “However, now we are preparing for elections in all 300 constituencies.”

In response to a query, Quader said there is no crisis inside Jatiya Party, and it is not on the verge of splitting.

About JP chief patron Raushad Ershad’s recent move to hold the party’s council, Quader said the party thinks she was forced to do so under pressure. “Those who are not members of Jatiya Party,

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RED ZONES

off-limits to hawkers

One more attempt by DSCC to free footpaths

HELEMUL ALAM

After repeatedly failing to prevent hawkers from taking over the capital’s roads, Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) is set to introduce a new system, in a bid to reduce traffic congestion.

DSCC will be dividing city roads into three categories -- red, yellow and green.

Red zones will be completely off-limits to hawkers. They will, however, be able to set up their stalls on footpaths and roads in yellow and green zones on conditions based on time and weekday.

At a programme yesterday, DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh said hawkers will not be permitted to set up stalls in red zones from next week.

Besides, the mayor said they will start construction of the planned 10-storey hawkers’ market. “We will then shift them to the market.”

The authorities will start a drive to remove hawkers from the red zones next week, he said.

Md Abu Nasher, spokesperson of DSCC, said their work to categorise the roads is ongoing.

In the last 15 years, different moves were taken, but they did not work.

In 2007, Dhaka City Corporation started “holiday markets”, specific markets for hawkers that would be open during the weekends at 20 places in the city. However, that initiative turned into a flop within a few months.

In 2017, DSCC prepared a list of around 6,000 hawkers in different areas and allocated Tk 3 crore for shifting them.

However, this plan failed as well. Evicted hawkers from different



DSCC TO DIVIDE ROADS IN THREE CATEGORIES -- RED, YELLOW AND GREEN

- RED ZONE: off limits to hawkers
- Drives to remove hawkers from red zones begin next week
- YELLOW, GREEN ZONES: hawkers can stay there based on time, weekday
- Construction of 10-storey hawkers’ market to start soon

footpaths in places like Gulistan and Motijheel returned.

DSCC at that time fixed 10 designated spots for hawkers -- such as Baitul Mukarram mosque area, Segunbagicha, Dilkusha and near Ideal School and College -- for holiday markets. But hawkers did not show much interest, as they wanted more crowded places, said a DSCC official.

Adil Mohamad Khan, former general secretary of Bangladesh Institute of Planners, said in different studies found that the efficiency of Dhaka’s footpaths has gone down by 30 percent due to the presence of hawkers.

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DSCC’s current move can lead to good management, as it is not possible to evict hawkers from everywhere, he said.

Ward-based and area-based hawker management plans are also necessary, he added.

There is no form of identification for the city’s present hawkers, which is crucial. The authorities will have to introduce biometric identification so that no new hawker can sit anywhere, he explained.

There is a politicised economy based on hawkers and the government will have to look

Caught on camera!

Cop gets recorded while framing man in drug case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A plain clothes police officer reportedly put yaba pills into the pocket of a pedestrian and then showed him arrested in a narcotics case in the capital’s Khilkhet area.

The arrestee, Khalilur Rahman (35), was sent to jail in the case yesterday.

The incident took place at a passengers’ shed near Cantonment Rail Station on Tuesday afternoon and was recorded on camera by a private TV channel.

Mahbubul Alam, an assistant sub-inspector of Pallabi Police Station, was seen putting yaba pills in Khalil’s pocket through one of his informants.

Talking to this correspondent yesterday, Mahbubul said he was instructed by senior police officials not to talk about the matter. He also refused to comment on why he was in plain clothes in Khilkhet despite being posted at Pallabi Police Station.

Contacted, Jashim Uddin Mollah, Dhaka Metropolitan Police’s Mirpur division deputy commissioner, said they heard about the incident and are working on finding out more.

The footage recorded by the TV channel showed ASI Mahbubul stopping Khalil and scuffling with him.

At one point, Mahbubul took a packet of yaba pills from a police informant and put it into Khalil’s pocket.

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‘It was a cold-blooded murder’

Says IO in charge sheet filed over Shimu murder case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

On the night of January 15, Khandaker Shakhawat Alim Nobel, husband of the slain film actor Raima Islam Shimu, decided to kill his wife over a family feud and called his friend SMY Abdullah Farhad at their flat on Green Road.

Later, Farhad also helped Nobel destroy the evidence, said Md Shahidul Islam, inspector of Keraniganj Model Police Station and also the investigation officer (IO) of the murder case in the charge sheet submitted to Dhaka Chief Judicial Magistrate’s Court.

The IO described the incidents of the night by quoting Nobel and Farhad’s confessional statements.

The charge sheet will be placed before the court on September 18.

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Will continue to be a dev partner

Says Japanese envoy at event marking golden jubilee of Shapla Neer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Japanese Government will keep contributing to Bangladesh on its journey towards turning into a developed country, said Ito Naoki, Japanese ambassador to Bangladesh, yesterday.

The Japanese envoy made the remarks during his chief guest speech at a programme marking the golden jubilee of Japan-based NGO Shapla Neer in the capital’s The Daily Star Centre.

“We can further elevate the partnership between Japan and Bangladesh to new heights, until the day Bangabandhu’s dream of “Sonar Bangla” comes true,” said the ambassador.

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Ethnic minorities

to get jobs in Korea

JAMIL MAHMUD

Persons belonging to ethnic minority communities in Bangladesh will be getting employment opportunities as “seasonal” workers in South Korea’s agriculture and fisheries sectors.

State-owned recruiting agency Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited (Boesl) will send workers belonging to the ethnic minority communities, each of whom can earn about Tk 1.20 lakh a month from the job.

A Boesl official said they called for an interview of a group of candidates yesterday at the Boesl office in the capital.

So far, Boesl has received a demand for 200 Bangladeshi workers. This will be the first time that Boesl is sending workers to Korea’s agriculture sector.

At present, South Korea hires workers from Bangladesh under its Employment Permit System (EPS) in the manufacturing sector.

A Boesl circular published on August


10 said people belonging to different ethnic communities, including the Chakma, Marma, Garo and Santals, will be prioritised for jobs in South Korea.

However, an official at Bangladesh embassy in Seoul said the Korean authorities did not mention prioritising people belonging to ethnic minority communities but Bangladesh is trying to send workers from these communities as their skill sets in farming match the requirement of South Korea, the official added.

Mokima Begum, first secretary (labour welfare wing) at Bangladesh embassy in Seoul, said they are expecting that the workers will start arriving in South Korea from this month.

Under the seasonal category, the workers will have the opportunity to work for five months in Korea as South Korea’s peak farming season usually remains active for five months starting from September because of its weather

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Dengue death toll **31**

Total number of patients **7,676**

889 still undergoing treatment

Number of recovered patients **6,756**

279 more hospitalised yesterday

SOURCE: DGHS

PRAYER TIMING

SEPTEMBER 8

Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 4:35	12:45	4:30	6:20	7:45
JAMAA 5:10	1:15	4:45	6:25	8:15

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Friends taking an afternoon stroll is a common scene on the Postogola Bridge. However, a part of the railing was damaged after an accident and has been left unfixed by the authorities concerned for a while now. A moment’s lapse could turn this enjoyable walk into a tragedy. This photo was taken yesterday.