

CTG-10 BY-POLLS AL candidate meets Hefazat leader, seeks blessings

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Mohiuddin Bacchu, Awami League candidate in Chattogram-10 by-polls, met Hefazat-e-Islam top leader Mufti Harun Bin Izhar, alias Harun Izhar, and his father Mufti Izharul Islam on Wednesday and sought blessings and votes.

The meeting took place at the mosque of Jamiatul Ulum Al-Islamia Madrasa, known as Lalkhan Bazar Madrasa.

Mufti Izharul Islam is the founder and principal of the madrasa. His son Mufti Harun Izhar was the education and cultural affairs secretary of the now-dissolved central committee of Hefazat.

AL insiders confirmed Bacchu's meeting with Mufti Izhar and his son.

The Daily Star obtained a photo of the meeting, in which Lalkhan Bazar ward councillor and AL leader Abul Hasnat Md Belal was also present. Mufti Izhar, Bacchu and Belal were sitting together in a row.

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PM to open Matarbari power plant in December

Officials say; 600MW to
be added to nat'l grid

UNB, Dhaka

The first unit of Matarbari coal-fired power plant in Cox's Bazar's Maheshkhali is likely to go into production by December this year, adding 600MW of electricity to the national grid.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to inaugurate the plant, project officials told reporters recently.

A ship carrying 64,300 tonnes of coal arrived from Indonesia on June 23.

While visiting the area recently, it was seen that the project implementing company, Coal Power Generation Company Bangladesh Limited (CPGBL), is going ahead with the work of the mega project. The work on the jetty and the power plant is almost complete.

According to sources, 95 percent of the jetty and physical infrastructure work has been completed and 90 percent of the overall physical infrastructure work has been done.

Nazmul Huq, executive director of the power plant project, said the prime minister will inaugurate it in December.

He added that the second unit will be commissioned in next July.

Here is food for thought: does Dhaka deserve so much blame? Just imagine the burden this one city has on its shoulders. Think of the population alone! And yet, Dhaka does not say no to anyone. Dhaka welcomes. Dhaka accommodates. Dhaka endures.

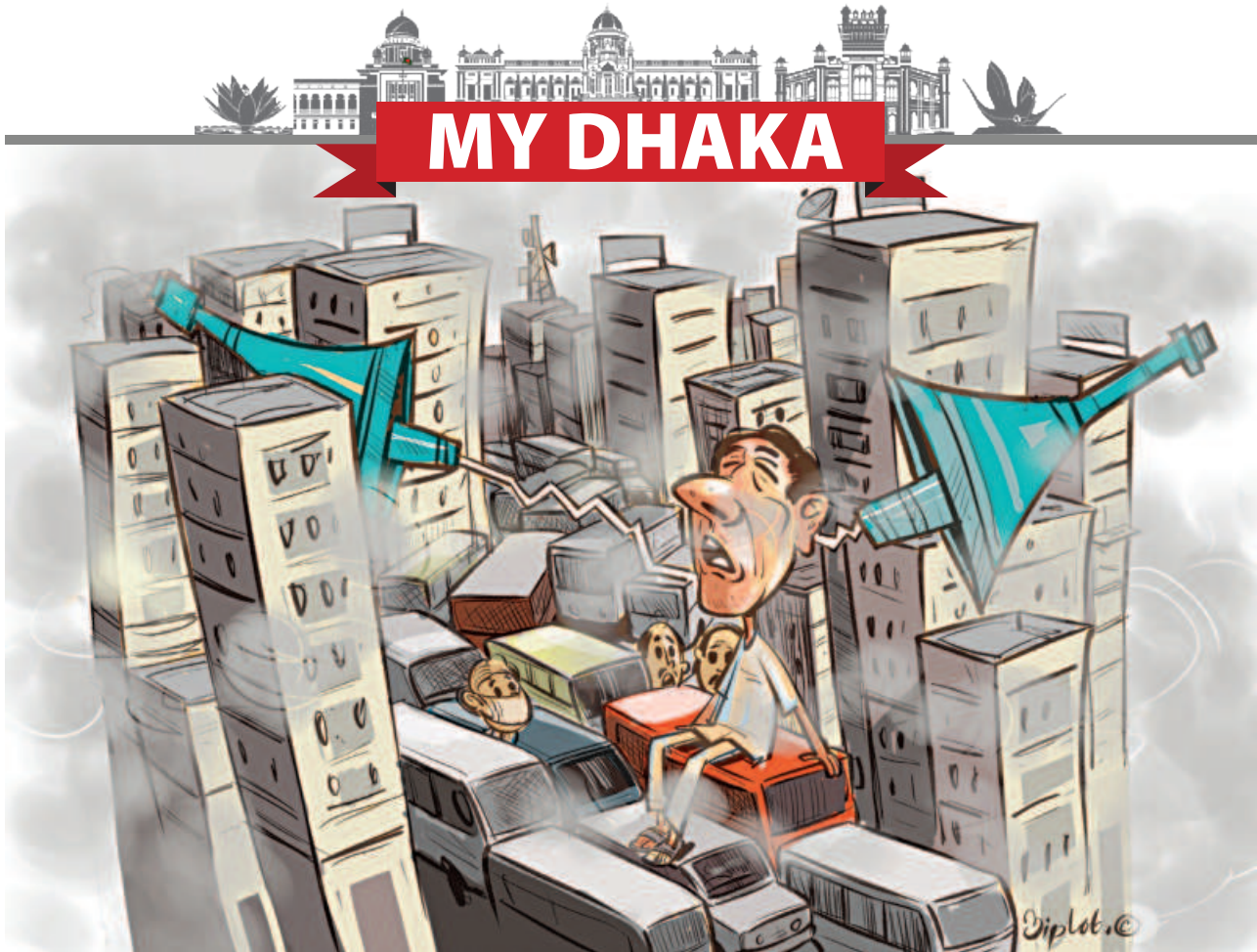


ILLUSTRATION: BIPLOB CHAKROBORTY

Making sense of the ‘impossible city’ that is Dhaka

MH HAIDER

So, you live in Dhaka? Must be so awful with the traffic! You are from Dhaka? It is so costly! Is it even safe? The air pollution, sound pollution, crowd, so much crime...

These are among the common complaints and concerns a lot of people who do not live in Dhaka raise about this city. Not that they are wrong, but they cannot look beyond these issues. “Why would anyone want to live in such a miserable city?” they ponder.

I listen to them with a smug smile, because, you see, if you are from outside the capital, you will never understand the love we have for it. You can never fathom the power this seemingly ugly city has over us.

In other words, you will never be able to make any sense of Dhaka if you have never lived here.

One may say that this city has a bad PR; a terrible reputation. Just turn on

the news, and Dhaka is often portrayed as a horrible, impossible place.

Even Dhakaites rant on Dhaka; but when we are outside for a few days, we get homesick and also get bored soon enough.

Since you do not live here, all you can make of it is traffic congestion, politics, and high-rise buildings. But there is so much more!

Granted, our city has its problems but Dhaka is not without charms: diverse people from all over the country with so many ideas, thoughts, and tastes, and preferences; the old part of the city bearing history; the vibrancy; the pace, even the hustle and bustle.

At first impression, Dhaka has a hardened character – somewhat rude, at times cruel as well. It is like that cranky fellow nobody likes in their first meetup, but eventually, like an old soul, it grows on you, slowly starts to show generosity, and guides you with its wisdom.

Here is food for thought: does Dhaka

deserve so much blame? Just imagine the burden this one city has on its shoulders. Think of the population alone! And yet, Dhaka does not say no to anyone. Dhaka welcomes. Dhaka accommodates. Dhaka endures.

Perhaps, ironically the biggest challenge of Dhaka is not related to Dhaka itself: one may claim that what our country needs is extensive decentralisation. It is unjust that so much pressure is put on just one region.

I personally see Dhaka as a city still under construction, a project that bears the label or status of work-in-progress. The optimist in me can visualise a dream city but the sceptic in me gets frustrated. There are myriad problems to solve. It is far from perfect, but it is our home and we should not give up on it.

And as for the naysayers who reside anywhere in our country albeit Dhaka, stop bickering about our city. Dhaka has a pulse of its own, and only those who live here can resonate with it!

Journos to blame

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many ambassadors in Dhaka are ‘extra active’ and ‘boss [us] around’ on different internal matters. As result of your [journalists’] work, it has become a culture.

“Many foreign diplomats make these remarks whenever someone [journalist] approaches them ... Sometimes the nature of their comments depends on whether and from where they are getting funds.”

Addressing the book launch, Momen commented on how many countries are ignorant about Bangladesh's long history in upholding democracy, human rights and justice, and how 30 lakh people made the ultimate sacrifice to achieve those.

When reporters later asked about the comment, pointing out that some ambassadors in Bangladesh make remarks about the state of democracy, he said, “The prime minister held a meeting with all Bangladeshi ambassadors to European countries.

“As many people in other countries have limited knowledge of our country, we have prepared 10 special briefs on various issues like human rights, democracy, election process, the election commission and more.”

He said the missions in different countries will share the briefs to let them learn about Bangladesh. “The Bangladeshi diplomats have a big role to play here so that they [foreigners] can act sensibly.”

About the 13 missions in Bangladesh, including the Italian one, making a joint statement condemning the attack on Hero Alom and whether the issue was raised during Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's recent Italy visit, he said, “No, we did not raise any such issue during her visit for the sake of decency.”

“Such rubbish should not be discussed and they should understand that.”

About many politicians themselves going to foreign diplomats, Momen said, “This culture has been going on for years and we don't like it.”

BNP plans big push

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Mirza Abbas, another standing committee member, held a meeting with the Dhaka city unit leaders and then talked to journalists. He thanked the police for allowing the party to hold the rally.

“I hope the police will ensure safety and security of our rally. We hope our party leaders and activists will not face obstructions on their way to the rally,” he said.

On July 22, the BNP announced it will hold a rally on July 27, but police did not give it permission citing public sufferings. Police asked the party to hold the rally at Golapbagh instead, but the BNP declined to go there and deferred the rally to Friday.

Party leaders said the government was forced to give the permission yesterday as pressure from the international community is mounting.

“The attitude of the police and the government is undemocratic, unpolitical, and unconstitutional. Dillydallying over permission never helps to create a congenial atmosphere; it rather creates a tense situation,” Khosru said.

Unease in Dhaka before rivals’ rallies

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Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal yesterday said anyone attempting to create anarchy will face action.

He also requested all political parties to refrain from violence, and said the government would ensure public safety and security during these events.

The minister also discouraged political parties from holding rallies on streets.

Over the last two days, police raided different hotels and homes in the city.

At least 50 BNP leaders and activists were arrested at Midway Hotel in Nayapaltan while the Detective Branch (DB) of police early yesterday picked up Aktaruzzaman, former joint secretary of Chuadanga BNP, and 12 others from a house in Dhanmondi.

An eight-member team from Tejgaon Police Station searched all 51

A senior BNP leader wishing not to be named said that most of the party leaders were in favour of non-stop street programmes, but not hartals.

He said the programmes are likely to continue till August 10 and there will be a pause ahead of the National Day of Mourning on August 15, the day Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was killed along with most of his family members in 1975.

“Programmes may resume from August 20 and the movement will intensify after that,” said the leader.

Party sources said many BNP leaders who came to Dhaka to join the Youth Rally on July 22 did not leave. Many others have reached the capital early to avoid police obstructions at the last minute.

Party activists living in districts adjacent to Dhaka is expected to arrive today.

To ensure a large gathering, BNP top brass instructed their district-level leaders to join today's rally.

The party men were setting up the stage and installing loudspeakers at different points adjacent to the office last night.

hotel rooms of the New Grand Hotel Wednesday afternoon and asked the boarders why they were in Dhaka.

Police also instructed the hotel management not to let more than five people check-in together and check the NID cards and phone numbers of people getting rooms.

Our correspondent from Savar reported that police were checking vehicles entering the capital.

Our Gazipur correspondent reported that police yesterday raided at the houses of BNP leaders.

Akbar Ali Khan, officer-in-charge of Kalliakoir Police Station, however, said police did not such thing. Md Shah Alam, officer-in-charge of Tongi Pashchim Police Station, said police nabbed two men from a “secret meeting” on Wednesday night.

At least 458 people were produced before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka yesterday

Floods displace hundreds in Punjab

AFP, Lahore

Hundreds of people were displaced when at least 50 villages were inundated after the Chenab River burst its banks in Pakistan's Punjab province, officials said yesterday.

Authorities evacuated more than 14,000 people from villages elsewhere in the province earlier this month because of flooding caused by monsoon rains.

“You can say the seasonal rains are the cause of the rising water levels,” said Aung Zai, an official at the Chiniot Flood Control Room.

“Due to river erosion, the low-lying villages have been affected by flooding,” he told AFP.

River levels have also been affected by neighbouring India opening sluice gates to release pent-up water into the Indus tributary.

hours after they were arrested in the city. Of them, 362 were arrested in 54 political cases while 96 were shown on papers as arrested under Section-54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, under which cops can arrest individuals without a warrant.

Mahfuza Akhter, wife of a drugstore owner, said her husband Shafiqul Islam Shaheen was arrested at his pharmacy in the capital's Jurain on Wednesday.

“Around 10 or 12 years ago, he was a BNP activist. But he is no longer involved in politics.”

Police produced Shafiqul before the CMM court of Dhaka yesterday as an arrestee in two old cases – one filed in March this year and the other in 2006.

Yesterday, anxious family members of many arrested BNP leaders and activists gathered in front of the court as police brought the opposition leaders and activists in prison buses.

AL to be on guard

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that they would hold the rally on July 27. But the DMP on Wednesday denied them permission, saying that such an event on a weekday would cause public suffering.

Chhatra League then sought permission from the Dhaka University authorities for a rally either on the gymnasium ground or at the Central Shaheed Minar.

The AL's associate bodies then rescheduled their rally for today at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

Eventually, the three associate

178 dead in July alone

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hospital admission if there are signs of deterioration.

Medical experts also said that many patients have a misconception about treatment and believe getting platelet transfusion is a necessity.

Parveen Akhter was anxious when her two-year-old daughter Alsanah's platelet count dropped to 36,000.

“I was very worried until I admitted her to hospital on Monday. However, she has been recovering with fluid management.”

HM Nazmul Ahsan, associate professor at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College Hospital, said, “Only five to 10 percent of dengue patients need blood transfusions,” adding that they prescribe blood transfusions to patients who have active bleeding or are in a critical stage.

“If a platelet is stable with even a 5,000 platelets count, we do not prescribe transfusion ... Patients experiencing dengue shock syndrome are first given crystalloid fluid and then colloid fluid. If the patient's blood pressure or hematocrit [volume of red blood cells] do not improve from those, then we move on to blood transfusion.”

Prof Ahmedul Kabir, additional director general of DGHS and secretary general of Bangladesh Society of Medicine, said, “Rather than platelet count, blood pressure is a more significant parameter for a dengue patient to know the extent of severity. It's possible for people to get treatment

SEVERING OF JL LEADER'S HAND

2 AL leaders get bail, another sent to jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Natore*

A Natore court yesterday granted bail to two local Awami League leaders in a case filed for the severing of a local Jubo League leader's hand.

In the morning, District AL General Secretary Shariful Islam Ramzan, Municipal AL President Syed Mostak Ali Mukul, and District AL Joint General Secretary Syed Mortuza Ali Bablu submitted their bail petitions in court.

Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Md Rawsan Alam approved the petitions of Ramzan and Mukul, while Mortuza was denied bail and sent to jail.

They were key accused in the case filed against 30 named and eight to 10 unnamed persons.

According to the case statement, followers of Ramzan attacked the victim Mithun Ali, general secretary of Natore municipality ward-3 Jubo League in Balaripara of the town around 9:30pm on Sunday and cut off his hand from the wrist.

At the time, Ramzan and Bablu were allegedly present at the spot.

Schoolteacher killed in road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Tangail*

A schoolteacher was killed after a truck hit his motorcycle on the Dhaka-Tangail highway in Tangail's Gharinda area early yesterday.

The deceased, Aminul Islam, 51, was an assistant teacher at Jashihaty Government Primary School in the district's Basail upazila.

Abdul Latif Manju, a cousin of the deceased, said Aminul used to live in Sabalia area of Tangail town.

In the morning, he was on his way to his village home in Jashihaty from the district town by motorcycle.

When he reached Gharinda around 6:30am, the truck hit his motorcycle from behind, leaving him dead on the spot, said Manju.

Jahid Hasan, officer-in-charge of Elenga Highway Police Station, said police recovered the body and sent it to Tangail General Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

Police seized the truck but its driver managed to flee.

Foreign liquor seized from Maitree Express

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate (CIID) seized 162 litres of abandoned foreign liquor from Maitree Express in Dhaka.

A CIID team carried out a drive after the train arrived at Dhaka Cantonment station from Kolkata around 4:15pm on Tuesday and recovered the illegal liquor from under some seats and the false ceiling of the staff coach of the train, CIID Deputy Director Sanjida Khanam told The Daily Star on Wednesday.

The team also recovered an additional 27 litres of liquor from a locked room at the station and 15 litres from an Indian national, she said.

The CIID official said they will soon write to the Indian authorities concerned informing them about the issue.