

MY DHAKA

5 reasons why Dhaka is so rude

MH HAIDER

Let's neither beat about the bush nor indulge in sugar coating because we neither have the time nor the empathy for any of that. The plain fact is -- Dhaka is an impatient, mean, rude, cruel, and selfish city. Call it "cranky Dhaka" if you will!

If life was a video game and Dhaka was a level or chapter there, the screen would say, "Difficulty: High". It is not for beginners. Similarly, if Dhaka was a person and not a city, he would be the most ill-mannered and bad-tempered man you ever met!

Why though? What gives Dhaka such a character?

The Dhaka stress

One reason behind this -- encompassing several aspects -- is that the city itself is extremely stressful. Sometimes, you will feel that you are drained out of energy for no apparent reason. This not-so-apparent cause is the capital's harrowing traffic, noise and air pollution, and of course, price hikes every step of the way. All these accumulate stress, vented out through ill temper.

The "nobody-can-beat-me" attitude

It could be a matter of 10 takas but many would still haggle their lives out with a poor street vendor. Or, a driver would suddenly honk and speed up when another vehicle is trying to enter his lane in no wrongful way whatsoever.

These are examples of the "me-first" or "nobody-can-beat-me" attitude that is so prevalent in our metropolis.

I have a theory about where this kind of behaviour comes from. It arises from a sense of insecurity that the other guy is trying to deceive you or outsmart you in some way and hence you must



ILLUSTRATION: BIPOLO CHAKROBORTY

outrun him or "win" against him!

A desensitised Dhaka

Nothing surprises us anymore. An underprivileged child crying on the street out of hunger, people sleeping on foot over bridges, rowdy young men breaking into a violent brawl, buses and buildings on fire -- we have unfortunately seen them all.

It has arguably somewhat hardened our souls or completely robbed us of it. No matter what Dhaka throws at us, we would not be very shocked or feel those

emotions.

The burden of Dhaka

It is easy to blame our city or its authorities and citizens. And while a lot of improvements are indeed needed, have you wondered how much burdened our city is? An astounding population, not to forget the population density, and the demands of that population -- chiefly jobs and education -- put immense pressure on this city.

The great Dhaka race

We are in a race -- to earn a fatter pay cheque, to get that corner office, to buy a flat, and so on. In this race, we are not in the mood to slow down, stop and ponder, appreciate people or beauty. In order to attain what we are after we have become greedy and selfish.

Is there anything wrong with having ambitions? Of course not! But does that justify our greediness and selfishness? I wouldn't know. I am a Dhaka resident myself!

AI will take all our jobs: Elon Musk

CNN ONLINE

Elon Musk says artificial intelligence will take all our jobs and that's not necessarily a bad thing.

"Probably none of us will have a job," Musk said about AI at a tech conference on Thursday.

While speaking remotely via webcam at VivaTech 2024 in Paris, Musk described a future where jobs would be "optional."

"If you want to do a job that's kinda like a hobby, you can do a job," Musk said. "But otherwise, AI and the robots will provide any goods and services that you want."

For this scenario to work, he said, there would need to be "universal high income" -- not to be confused with universal basic income, although he did not share what that could look like. "There would be no shortage of goods or services," he said.

AI capabilities have surged over the past few years, fast enough that regulators, companies and consumers are still figuring out how to use the technology responsibly. Concerns also continue to mount over how various industries and jobs will change as AI proliferates in the market.

UN warns of rise in violence in Rakhine

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"We see clear and present risks of a serious expansion of violence as the battle for neighbouring Maungdaw town has begun -- where the military maintains outposts and where a large Rohingya community lives, including hundreds of displaced Rohingyas who moved to town from villages seeking safety," said OHCHR spokesperson Elizabeth Throssell.

The High Commissioner calls for an immediate end to the violence, and for all civilians to be protected without any distinction based on identity.

Rohingyas have faced persecution in Buddhist-majority Myanmar for decades. After escaping a military-led crackdown in 2017, nearly a million of them live crammed into refugee camps in Bangladesh's border district of Cox's Bazar.

In a joint statement, the United States, the European Union, Britain, Canada, Australia, and other nations cited credible reports of abuses committed against the civilian population.

"In Rakhine State, towns and villages have been consistently targeted by the military regime and armed groups... all populations are facing extreme levels of food insecurity," they said. "There must be accountability for all atrocities committed in Myanmar."



Farmers shout slogans against Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a protest to demand minimum crop prices on the outskirts of Gurdaspur in Punjab, India yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

2 MRT lines may miss deadline

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km metro rail network, comprising six lines, in and around Dhaka by 2030 to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution.

The MRT Line-6 is now operational on Uttara-Motijheel route and its extended part from Motijheel to Kamalapur is expected to be opened by June next year. The project's revised cost is Tk 33,472 crore.

DMTCL took more than six years, from September 2016 to December 2022, to make the country's first metro rail line, MRT Line-6, partially operative.

The physical work on MRT Line-1 and Line-5 (northern route) began in March and July last year respectively, more than three years after the projects were approved in October 2019.

The project authorities of MRT Line-1, the country's first underground metro rail line, have so far been able to hire contractors for only one out of 12 packages. The project deadline is set for December 2026.

Under the Tk 52,561 crore project, the authority will build 19.87km underground line from Dhaka airport to Kamalapur and 11.37km elevated line from Dhaka's Natunbazar to Narayanganj's Pitalganj.

Similarly, the project authority of MRT Line-5 (northern route) have so far hired contractors for only one out of 10 packages. The 20km line stretching from Hemayetpur to Bhatara will have underground and elevated sections. The deadline for the Tk 41,239 crore project is December 2028.

The authorities of MRT Lines-1 and 5 are now developing land for setting

up depots.

The feasibility study for the MRT Line-5 (southern route) has been completed and the Development Project Proposal (DPP) is now pending approval by the Planning Commission.

As per the DPP, Tk 54,618.96 crore will be needed to build the 17.20km line from Gabtoli to Aftabnagar (Dasherbandi). The project's proposed deadline is 2030.

MRT LINES 2, 4

While carrying out pre-feasibility studies, the metro rail authorities changed the preliminary routes of MRT Lines 2 and 4.

As per the preliminary plan, MRT Line-4 is supposed to be built from Kamalapur to Narayanganj underground.

But the metro rail authorities later changed the plan as Bangladesh Railway is expanding the existing lines from Dhaka to Narayanganj.

Its new 16km route will stretch from Dhaka to Narayanganj's Madanpur via Sigboard. The government in May last year signed a memorandum of understanding with South Korea for financing the project.

DMTCL MD Siddique said they hired a consultant this month under Korean financing to carry out the feasibility study for MRT Line-4.

Replying to a question, he said the study would not take much time because the line is not that long and the pre-feasibility study has already been done.

Another DMTCL official said a joint venture (JV), led by a Korean company, has been hired for the job and its officials will visit Bangladesh late this

month.

"We will be able to say when the study will begin after meeting with them [JV officials]," he said wishing anonymity.

As regards MRT Line-2, if the project is implemented with its revised route, the 35km line would be the longest metro rail of the country.

The project was supposed to be implemented under a government-to-government initiative with Japan, following the public-private partnership (PPP) model.

But the metro authorities later decided to implement the scheme under a government initiative because they found the conditions set by Japan "unacceptable".

The MRT Line-2 was supposed to be built on the 24km route stretching from Gabtoli to Chattogram Road via Mohammadpur, Nilkhet, Azimpur, Central Shaheed Minar, Gulistan, Motijheel, Kamalapur, Mugda, and Demra.

But as per the revised route, the line will be extended up to Narayanganj. Also, it will have a branch line from Gulistan to Sadarghat.

The DMTCL in September 2022 sent a preliminary development project proposal (PDPP) to the Planning Commission for the project's feasibility study.

The commission in August last year approved the PDPP in principle and sent it to the Economic Relations Division to look for a financier, shows a project document.

But there has been little progress in this regard, Siddique said.

Man beaten to death in benapole

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

A man was beaten to death and his brother injured allegedly by a local union parishad member and his supporters in Jashore yesterday.

The incident happened at Kanyadhaha village in Sharsha upazila following previous enmity, said police.

Police arrested the UP member, Hasan, 35, and his accomplices Taj Uddin, 40, and Kamruzzaman, 36.

Around 10-12 people led by Hasan attacked Saiful Islam Mukul and his brother Shariful Islam in the morning, said Sharsha Police Station Officer-in-Charge Sheikh Moniruzzaman.

They beat the two leaving them seriously injured, said the OC.

The victims were admitted to Jashore General Hospital where Saiful succumbed to his injuries in the afternoon.

The victims' mother filed a case with the police station.

Police are trying to arrest others involved in the attack, said the OC.

Youth held for attempt to rape minor

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Police yesterday arrested a man on charges of attempting to rape a minor at a village in Pirojpur's Indurkani upazila.

The detainee is Russell Hawlader, 28, said police. The victim is a class four student at a local primary school.

Her father said she was playing near their house in the morning when Russell, a resident from a neighbouring village, took her daughter to an abandoned house inside an orchard and tried to rape her.

As the girl started screaming, some locals rushed to the spot and caught Russell.

Later, they handed him over to police.

Md Kamruzzaman Talukder, officer-in-charge of Indurkani Police Station, said the girl's father filed a case with the police station in this regard.

Azim made some 'powerful enemies'

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texts from Azim's mobile phone that said there was no need to call him. On Wednesday, India and Bangladesh police said the MP was murdered in a flat in New Town, Kolkata.

Aktaruzzaman, now on the run, and Azim used to run a gold smuggling racket until they fell out over money late last year and Azim kept a stash worth over Tk 100 crore to himself, according to intelligence and police officers.

Detectives said Gopal, a gold trader in West Bengal, used to buy smuggled gold from Azim.

When contacted by the newspaper yesterday, Gopal said he was never involved in gold trade. He was also unaware of the partnership between Azim and Aktaruzzaman.

Sources in Kolkata police said Azim's remains were dumped near a bridge over Hatishala Waste Canal and several police teams had been looking for it since Thursday night.

West Bengal Criminal Investigation Department (CID) on Thursday arrested a 24-year-old Bangladeshi national named Jihad Hawlader, who used to live in Mumbai illegally and worked as a butcher.

A CID officer said Jihad admitted to smothering and killing the lawmaker along with four other Bangladeshis. He also told officers how he and the others dismembered the body.

"Jihad was brought to Kolkata two months ago by Aktaruzzaman," said the officer.

A court in Barasat placed him on a

12-day remand yesterday.

Jihad was probably the one who arranged a car and the triplex New Town flat for the other suspects, said an officer.

According to investigators in Dhaka, Celesty, one of the suspects, is a friend of Aktaruzzaman. She went to Kolkata with Aktaruzzaman on April 30 and returned with Amanullah on May 15.

Celesty, who is from Tangail, used to live at a flat in the capital's Uttara area.

[Our Delhi Correspondent contributed to this report]

Russia 'bogged down' in battle for border town: Ukraine

AFP, Kyiv

Russian forces have become "bogged down" trying to capture the Ukrainian border town of Vovchansk but have intensified their offensive elsewhere on the eastern front, Ukraine's top general said yesterday.

Kyiv has been battling a fresh Russian land assault on its northeastern Kharkiv region since May 10, when thousands of Moscow's troops stormed the border, making their biggest territorial advances in 18 months.

The Maldives suspends

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workers found other jobs, for instance, when they were not given the job they were promised.

According to the official, the Maldives reopened the market for Bangladeshi workers in December 2023, four years after the ban in 2019. Since the reopening of the labour market, the Bangladesh mission has certified paperwork for the hiring of more than 6,000 employees.

The mission, in a notice on Wednesday, said that as per Maldives' existing law, 100,000 workers from a single source country can work there.

Efforts from the mission are on to get an extension in the quota ceiling and relaunch of visa issuance, as per the notice.

Meanwhile, a good number of unskilled Bangladeshi migrant workers have been deported from Maldives following their arrests over the "free visa" issue, said the mission in the notice.

There's no such thing as a "free visa" and a worker must work for the

company he or she is entitled to as per visa, it said.

Violation of such law may result in legal action, arrest at any time, and subsequent deportation, it added.

In a report on Tuesday, Maldivian news portal SunOnline International said the Maldives Home Ministry states the recruitment of unskilled workers from Bangladesh has been halted in light of illegal recruitments.

Home Ministry spokesperson Fathimath Rifaath said recruitment of unskilled workers from Bangladesh was halted a month ago after observing some companies recruit workers after submitting fake documents and that an investigation has been launched into the matter, the report says.

According to the report, as of December, there were 90,642 workers from Bangladesh residing in the Maldives, which is lower than the cap of 100,000 outlined in the Employment Act for a single source market.