



## The daily bus ride ADVENTURES IN DHAKA



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Do you remember those school days when you had to memorise an essay about a journey by bus? Sure, you must have had experiences of bus travels, but none compares to the commutes by bus within the capital city.

### Which one is my bus?

The most important question, and one that often gets the city dwellers in a bit of conundrum — which bus do you take? The confusion is for obvious reasons. There are so many buses, and they all have their own route and indeed, unique styles. Even buses companies that run up and down the same route do not behave the same. Anyone who is a regular commuter knows this and subconsciously, they choose their buses based on these patterns.

### My precious

Standing at a bus stoppage in Dhaka makes you feel like you are the “one ring”. They might as well be calling you “my precious”. Everyone wants you. Even if you show no interest in a bus, they will take it upon themselves to make you their person of interest. In some stoppages, the conductors will practically herd you into their bus. But don't get excited just yet. This adoration for your presence only lasts till you get on the bus. Everything goes downhill from there I'm afraid.

### There's room in the back. Or is there?

“Come on, there's plenty of room in the back,” is the universal dialogue of the bus conductors and hence, they continuously say “Mama, chap den. Jayga ase toh.” Is that true? Well, depends on who you ask. The bus conductor sees nothing but an empty bus while the passengers can barely

breathe in the congestion, let alone find a seat. Some frustrated passengers scold the conductor by saying “Boshabi koi? Tor mathai?” roughly translated to “Where are they supposed to sit? On your head?”

### The question of the hour

The question of fare gets the passengers as well as the conductor excited in the blink of an eye. It happens frequently, and there is a difference of opinion about what the right fare is. Most of the time, the difference is not more than TK 5 to Tk 10, but that doesn't hold back either party from going at each other with vehemence. As a quiet third party, one is often called for their opinion about the fare and other important questions such as “Bhai, ere ki kora uchit kon to?”

**Don't you dare stop. Unless it's for me**  
A common tendency amongst most



of the passengers is that they get very annoyed whenever the bus halts to pick up new passengers. They will verbally abuse the driver and conductor, both of whom couldn't care less about the curses aimed at them. However, this sentiment evaporates whenever it's time to get off the bus. Regardless of where the bus is and how far away it is from the stoppage, most passengers expect that the bus will drop them off exactly where it is convenient for them. A tendency which is arguably one of the reasons for congestions in Dhaka.

Holding onto a metal bar and hanging on for the entire ride is no fun way to ride a bus, but it's the daily reality of Dhaka residents. It's a routine task, one that comes with stories, and is nothing short of an adventure. Let's applaud Dhaka residents for such adventures, multiple times a day and every day of the week.

## Sunamganj takes out procession demanding MA Mannan's release

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of students from different educational institutions in Sunamganj's Shantiganj yesterday took out a procession demanding the release of former planning minister MA Mannan.

The procession started around 11:00am and students blocked the Sylhet-Sunamganj highway for around half an hour to press home their one-point demand, reports our Sylhet correspondent.

Under the banner of general students, students of Abdul Majid College, Textile College, Dungria School and College participated in the protest.

They termed the case and arrest against Mannan “politically motivated” and demanded his prompt release.

Mannan was arrested on Thursday night from his home in the upazila in a case filed over the clashes on August 4.

The next morning, he was produced before a Sunamganj court which sent him to jail.



## Mob kills man accusing him of theft

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

A 45-year-old man died in Rajbari yesterday afternoon after being severely beaten by a mob on suspicion of theft.

Locals beat Md Nazmul Mollah, of Madhukhali upazila in Faridpur, when he was allegedly trying to steal an electric transformer in Madhabpur market area of Kalukhali upazila around 2:00am yesterday.

According to locals, Nazmul was beaten up and left seriously injured. He was later taken to Kalukhali Upazila Health Complex where he died.

Md Mehdi Hasan, a medical officer at Kalukhali health complex, said Nazmul arrived at the hospital on his own after being dropped off by some individuals.

“His condition was critical ... We informed the police immediately and began treatment. However, we could not refer him elsewhere as no attendant accompanied him.”

Kalukhali Police Station Officer-in-Charge Md Zahedur Rahman said, “Nazmul's wife filed a case against 100 unidentified individuals in connection with the mob beating.”

The police later sent Nazmul's body to Rajbari General Hospital for an autopsy.

## AL man lynched

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political rivalry. The area is still flooded and we had to navigate water-logged streets to recover the body. The body is currently in the police station and will be sent to the Laxmipur Sadar Hospital for autopsy in the morning.”

Arif claimed that local BNP men, and one Khokon, was involved in the attack.

## Govt employees Section 144 withdrawn in hills

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Mokhles told The Daily Star that the announcement was made before journalists so that the message promptly reaches all quarters and a gazette notification would be issued soon.

The Right to Information Act-2009 will not be applicable to the employees' wealth statements, he added.

Prior to this amendment, the 1979 conduct rules did not specify when and where to submit the wealth statement and what would be the consequence for non-compliance, said several officials involved in the process of amending the rules.

Public administration expert Firoz Mia also lauded the move, but added that unless the wealth statements are verified, the move will be of little significance.

In India, there is an officer dedicated at every office to scrutinise the wealth statements, he said.

On August 25, Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus in his first address to the nation said government employees should regularly submit their wealth statements.

“All our advisers will publish their asset details as soon as possible. Regular asset disclosure will be mandatory for all public servants,” he said in his address.

Meanwhile, the public administration ministry last night uploaded to its website a form which should be filled out by the employees to submit their wealth statement.

Currently, there are around 15 lakh government employees against over 19 lakh posts.

The original 1979 rules mentioned that public servants must disclose their assets every year, but provision was rarely enforced. Through an amendment in 2002, the annual requirement was changed to a five yearly one. No government successfully implemented it.

The original Government Servant (conduct) Rules, 1979, mentioned that on entering the service, government servants shall provide the authorities with information on their property, shares, savings certificates, securities, insurance policies, and jewellery worth Tk 50,000 or more owned by them or their spouse, children, stepchildren, and dependents.

After the latest amendment, non-compliance will be deemed “misconduct” with punishments ranging from a formal reprimand to dismissal from service and six levels of disciplinary action in between.

However, the method of verifying the wealth statements and identifying undisclosed wealth is yet to be determined.

Mokhles said multiple ministries, including the finance and law, are working on a verification process.

“We are trying to initiate a system in which any abnormal increase in wealth beyond a predefined threshold will automatically trigger an alert,” he said.

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The three are Md Shakil, 27; Rafiqul Alam, 55, AL leader and former mayor of Khagrachhari municipality; and his brother Didarul Alam, 50, organising secretary of district unit AL and ex-chairman of Sadar Upazila Parishad.

None was arrested yet, the OC said. Locals said Rafiqul and Didarul went into hiding after the AL government was toppled on August 5.

Mamun was beaten to death in Shalban area of Khagrachhari Sadar upazila on September 18.

Violence erupted on Thursday afternoon over the killing. Around 100 shops and other business establishments in the Larma Square market were torched.

On Friday, four indigenous people were killed and at least 72 others injured as violence flared up in Rangamati town and Khagrachhari's Dighinala and Sadar upazilas. Section 144 was imposed to curb violence there by the local administrations.

### MAMUN'S MURDER

In the case statement, Mamun's wife Mukta said her husband, a furniture trader, went out of home for his shop around 6:00pm on September 17. He

was supposed to spend the night there as some guests were at home.

She added that the next morning she came to know that Shakil, along with some unknown others, on the instructions of AL leaders Rafiqul and Didarul picked up her husband from his shop around midnight.

“We searched for him in different places. At one stage, we learnt that Mamun was killed and a video clip of his murder was on Facebook,” she said, adding they later found his body at Khagrachhari Sadar Hospital.

She also mentioned that shop employee Shahin was also picked up around 5:00am and beaten up mercilessly.

Talking to The Daily Star, Mukta said the two AL leaders were accused as they used to torture her husband, a Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal activist, and threatened him with life on several occasions.

“My husband could not come to our home and used to live in Chattogram and elsewhere. So, I suspect that Shakil and the two brothers in collusion with some indigenous and Bangalee people killed my husband.”

It is the responsibility of the police to find the killers and ensure justice,

Mukta said.

The case was filed on September 19 night, but the information was revealed late Saturday night after three advisers visited the region.

Ahsan Habib Palash, Chattogram range DIG, told this newspaper, “Police didn't even get any chance to start investigating the Khagrachhari case. No one involved in the murder will be spared.”

### ANOTHER CASE

On Friday, the violence from Khagrachhari spread to Rangamati. During clashes between groups of indigenous people and Bangalees, 19-year-old Anik Chakma was beaten to death. Doctors declared him dead after he was taken to Rangamati Sadar Hospital.

On Saturday, Anik's father Adar Sen Chakma filed a case with Kotwali Police Station against unidentified individuals.

Shah Md Imran, additional superintendent of Rangamati police, told The Daily Star, “Anik's father filed a case. We are trying to identify the suspects and arrest them.”

[Our correspondents from Chattogram and Rangamati contributed to this report.]

Curzon Hall areas, waiting to take the students to their destination after class.

Although academic activities have resumed, the first-year classes have not started yet. Freshmen will begin classes next week.

Yet, a group of freshmen were seen hanging out with their friends at the Madhur Canteen which saw a huge presence of students throughout the day.

When asked about the expectations of the university, Syed Jahed Iqbal, a first-year student, said, “Our expectation from this university is that the campus will be free of session jams and politics.” Before the start of classes at 9:30 in the morning, the university authorities observed a minute's silence in memory of the martyrs who died in the uprising. The program was held in front of Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban.

DU VC Prof Niaz Ahmed Khan said the decision to resume classes was taken after discussing with all the participants of the university, including teachers and students.

He said that necessary measures will be taken to make up for the learning loss.

At present DU consists of 13 faculties, 83 departments, 12 institutes, 20 residential halls, 3 hostels, and more than 56 research centres and 37,000 students.

## Gas crisis shutters

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since February, according to officials of the Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC).

Gas supply to fertiliser factories has been stopped by the government decision, said Mohammad Saidur Rahman, chairman of BCIC.

“There is a huge demand for urea fertiliser from December to March. So, we have planned to import the fertiliser as a preliminary preparation. But due to shortage of dollars in banks, we are struggling to open LCs,” he said.

As of September 18, foreign currency reserves stood at \$19.4 billion, enough to meet four months' imports, according to the Bangladesh Bank's latest published statistics.

On September 1, the concerned department of BCIC sought to open a letter of credit with Sonali Bank for the import of about 3.5 lakh metric tons of urea fertiliser.

Then on September 18, the government procurement advisory committee approved the import

of 60,000 tonnes of bulk granular urea fertiliser against two separate proposals from Saudi Arabia and Qatar at a cost of Tk 236 crore.

“Had all the fertiliser factories operational, no import would have been needed at this moment,” Rahman said.

The five government-owned factories can produce 20 lakh metric tonnes of urea against the annual demand of around 32 lakh metric tonnes.

The acute gas crisis means the five factories could produce 245,671 metric tons of urea until September 18, said BCIC officials on the condition of anonymity.

Some BCCI officials said a huge amount of foreign currency is being wasted only on fertiliser imports due to the lack of foresight from the government.

It costs Tk 50-55,000 to import a tonne of urea from abroad. If produced in the country, the cost is Tk 32-33,000, they said.

## Govt committees

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According to the circular, the district-level committees will receive the application for withdrawal of cases. The application must be submitted to the district magistrate with a certified copy of the charge sheet.

Within seven days of receiving the application, the district magistrate will send the application to the public prosecutor or metropolitan public prosecutor for their opinion. The prosecutor will provide the opinion within 15 working days.

Within seven working days of collecting the opinion of the prosecutor, the district magistrate will present the application in the meeting of the district committee, and if it appears to the district committee that the case has been filed to harass the accused, the committee shall make a recommendation for withdrawal of the case.

The district magistrate shall send the recommendation, case statement, charge sheet, and information to the home ministry within 45 working days of the receipt of the withdrawal application.

At the ministry level committee, the senior secretary of the public security division of the home ministry, the additional secretary (law and order) of the home ministry,

the joint secretary (law) of the home ministry, and a member from the law, justice, and parliamentary affairs (not of a level below joint secretary) will act as the members.

The deputy secretary or senior assistant secretary or assistant secretary (law-1) of the home ministry will be the member secretary.

The circular reads that upon receiving the recommendations from a district committee, the ministry-level committee will examine the recommendations and identify the cases to be withdrawn, prepare a list, and take steps to withdraw the cases.

The ministry-level committee will make a list of political harassment cases filed under the Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2004 as those cannot be withdrawn without a written order of the commission as per the provisions of section 10 (4) of the Criminal Law Amendment Act-1958.

For this reason, such cases should be identified and listed. The course of action in such cases will be determined later, the circular added.

Asked whether there is any limit in terms of how old the cases can be, Abdul Momen, the senior secretary of the home ministry, said, “I don't know anything about that.”