

Standing with Palestine is a moral duty

Says Serajul Islam Choudhury

DU CORRESPONDENT

Standing with Palestine is no longer the duty of 1.5 billion Muslims alone but a moral responsibility of all seven billion people, said eminent academic and Dhaka University Emeritus Professor Serajul Islam Choudhury yesterday.

He made the remarks while addressing a solidarity rally at the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka, organised by the Palestinian Solidarity Committee Bangladesh.

Criticising the indifference of the United Nations, he said, "The conscience of the world no longer exists. The world is now split -- on one side stand the powerful, exploitative oppressors; on the other, the powerless, oppressed victims."

He described Israel's actions as "not a war, but genocide," carried out with "chilling brutality and premeditated cruelty." He said global capitalism has now transformed into fascism and is complicit in the ongoing massacre.

Also speaking at the event, noted economist and academic Prof Anu Muhammad were present.

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Prominent citizens under the banner of "Palestine Solidarity Committee" form a human chain in front of the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday, protesting against the ongoing Israeli atrocities in Gaza. Among others, Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury and noted economist Anu Muhammad were present.

PHOTO: STAR

Battery-run rickshaw drivers clash with locals over ban

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Battery-run rickshaw drivers engaged in sporadic clashes with locals in Gulshan and Banani yesterday while protesting a ban on their vehicles in the area.

The protests disrupted traffic in both neighbourhoods, with drivers blocking roads and marching in procession. Tensions flared as scuffles broke out between the protesting drivers and locals, including pedal-rickshaw pullers and ride-sharing motorcyclists.

The ban, which took effect yesterday morning, was jointly enforced by the Gulshan and Banani Society, Dhaka Metropolitan Police, and Dhaka North City Corporation, following complaints from residents about unregulated traffic and road safety concerns.

Under the new

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ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The high-powered task force, led by Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) chief Additional Inspector General Md Mustafa Kamal, has failed to submit any report to the High Court in connection with the murder of journalist couple Sagar Sarwar and Meherun Rumi, despite the six-month deadline given by the court expiring over two weeks ago.

The HC on September 30 last year ordered the home ministry to transfer the responsibility of the investigation from the Rab to a new task force comprising experienced personnel from various law enforcement agencies. The directive came after years of delay in the investigation by Rab, which had taken over the case in 2012.

The newly constituted task force was instructed to complete the investigation and submit its report by March 31 this year.



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Advocate Mohammad Shishir Manir, counsel for the complainants in the case, said he would bring the matter to the attention of the HC bench when it reopens today.

The bench of Justice Farah Mahbub, now a judge of the Appellate Division, and Justice Muhammad Mahbub Ul Islam had fixed April 6 for the next hearing, which was deferred due to the court's annual vacation.

Contacted, Mustafa Kamal, who heads the taskforce, said the investigation is ongoing but the killers have not yet been identified. "We will submit a report updating the court on the progress of the investigation after the Supreme Court reopens," he added.

On April 2, Additional Superintendent of Police Azizul Haque, the current investigation officer involved with the taskforce, said, "I am conducting the investigation under the supervision of the taskforce. We are interrogating people concerned."

Regarding submission of the report, he added, "That decision will be taken by the taskforce chief."

Speaking to reporters on February 11, lawyer Shishir Manir said the current government had formed the taskforce with the

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Registration of bus with torn-off roof suspended

Owner sued

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority yesterday suspended the registration of a passenger bus that continued travelling for several kilometres even after its roof was torn off in a series of collisions on Dhaka-Mawa Expressway in Sreenagar upazila of Munshiganj on Thursday night.

BRTA also served a notice yesterday to owner of the Barishal Express bus seeking an explanation as to why its registration should not be permanently cancelled.

Md Sanaul Haque, deputy director (engineering) of BRTA's Dhaka Metro 2 Circle (Ekuria), issued the notice.

According to the letter, the speeding bus rammed into a private

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End contractual appointments in civil admin

Demands govt officials' platform

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A section of government officials under the banner of "Baisanya Birodh Karmachari Oikya Forum" has demanded cancellation of all types of contractual appointments across all levels in the civil administration.

The demand was made at a press conference held at Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

ABM Abdus Sattar, president of the forum and a former secretary, placed five additional demands aimed at ensuring a neutral administrative structure, including: appointing all officials who have been subjected to discrimination to important positions in ministries, including the role of secretary, and in other agencies and departments; granting promotions to those deprived; and holding those who patronise fascist collaborators and corrupt officials accountable in matters of promotion and posting.

"To make the administration effective and to ensure a fair and impartial upcoming national election, all contractual appointments must be immediately cancelled," said Abdus Sattar.

To establish a transparent and accountable administration, officials who were loyal to the ousted ruling party, act as political lackeys, or are undue

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The stellar duo -- Mabia Akhter Shimanta, left, and Afsana Luqman, right -- at a gathering at bti Celebration Point in Gulshan-2, Dhaka recently.

AIR POLLUTION

Govt plans 24 roadside monitors in Dhaka and Ctg

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government is set to install roadside monitoring stations at 24 locations in Dhaka and Chattogram to curb air pollution caused by motorised vehicles, with technical and financial assistance from Japan.

Dhaka is among the worst cities in the world in terms of clean air, with vehicular emissions being one of the main contributors. According to the global AQI, Dhaka frequently tops the list of cities with the worst air quality. Chattogram also experiences similar conditions due to heavy vehicular movement.

To address the issue, the environment ministry will today place a Tk 103 crore project proposal at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne).

Under the plan, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) will provide a Tk 68 crore grant, with the remaining funds to be covered by the government.



AT A GLANCE

- Dhaka, Ctg to get 19, 5 stations respectively
- Tk 103cr project to be placed at Ecne meeting
- Jica to fund Tk 68cr as grant
- Stations to monitor vehicle emissions
- Project aims to cut transport-related air pollution

Once implemented, the roadside monitoring stations will operate continuously. The project will also introduce vehicle-customised monitoring stations aimed at tracking vehicle emissions and drivers' behaviour.

Nineteen of the stations will be installed in Dhaka and five in Chattogram.

The objectives of the project include identifying the sources and levels of air pollution from road transportation, formulating effective policy guidelines and strategies for mitigation, and reducing health hazards caused by pollution.

Currently, the Department of Environment has 31 air quality monitoring stations, of which 16 function continuously. The department publishes real-time data based on readings from these stations.

According to the proposal, although motorised vehicles are a major source of air pollution, the country currently has no roadside monitoring system in place.

The air pollution control project is among five projects totalling Tk 1,090 crore that are expected to be placed at today's Ecne meeting. The other four focus on making urban areas more

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Bti-*Star* honour two stellar women

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Way back in the year 2023, bti and The Daily Star came together to launch the "bti The Daily Star Stellar Women" initiative -- a unique platform created to honour and celebrate women from diverse walks of life for their contributions to society.

The second season of the initiative began in September 2024, with the first two awards being presented in November.

Recently, a gathering was held at bti Celebration Point in Gulshan-2, Dhaka, where two more extraordinary women were recognised for their achievements.

National weightlifter Mabia Akhter Shimanta received the award in the "Sports" category

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