

New vision for old town

Urban planners debate the old city's traffic and utility supply problems



A typically narrow old city street reveals the problems for city traffic planners.

CITY CORRESPONDENT

To save the old town from slipping into ruin, a seminar was held Monday evening organised by Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BAPA) at the Nagar Bhaban auditorium.

A keynote paper on 'Traffic Congestion and Air Pollution' was presented by professor Nazrul Islam of the geography department of Dhaka University.

In the keynote paper the speaker said that the area of old town extends from the northern side of Buriganaga River to the old Rail Line Street or the present Nagar Bhaban. Total area is 25 sq.km with about 20 lacs people living in this small area which gives a density of population in the old town of 80 thousand per sq.km.

The Old town of Dhaka City started its early development in the pre industrial age or pre automobile age in 1600. Therefore many streets are not suitable for automobile traffic. Whereas wholesale markets and Sadarghat, the only inland port, that are situated in the old town also have caused traffic congestion as trucks cue for goods and park on the narrow streets and roundabouts.

The two bridges on the Buriganaga have also increased traffic congestion as automobiles go through the old town in order to cross the river. Because of the traffic congestion people rarely visits the historical places like Lalbag Fort, Ahsan Monjil or Boro Kathra.

To solve the traffic congestion the speakers suggested renovation of the old town and to introduce an

underground railway and overhead expressway as it is almost impossible to get land for broadening the streets. Also some business places need to relocate in the new town from the old town to reduce traffic congestion.

The chief engineer of Dhaka WASA, Kazi Shish said in his paper on 'drinking water, sewage system and electric supply' that through time a city developed in to old and new towns. A city became habitable through the equal development of both parts. For example, Calcutta, Delhi, Seoul and Paris. The old part of Paris is more attractive to tourists than the new part.

He also said that water supply depends on proper electric supply. So development of old town needs a holistic approach rather than individual development.

Speakers also express deep concern on Buriganaga River. Mihir biswas of Buriganaga Bachao Andolon said that they would not rest until the Circular Water Way project is completed. Kazi Shish compared Hun river of Seoul with Buriganaga. Speakers also said that Buriganaga is becoming less a river day by day due to the absence of aquatic life.

Professor Abdullah Abu Sayeed, the vice president of BAPA said that Sadarghat should be relocating to save Buriganaga from the pollution of oil from launches and cargo vessels. Mayor Sadeque Hosain Khoka supported the opinion and suggested that this could be relocate at Shampur. Speakers also said that Buriganaga encroachment is still carrying on despite formation of a task force.

Break from child labour, strive for education

ABDUL KADER

Ten-year-old Javed, a motor workshop worker at Dholaikhal in Old Dhaka, got an opportunity to study.

Javed enrolled in a multipurpose centre at Sutrapur under the project titled "Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Form of Child Labour in the Urban Informal Sectors" of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Bangladesh chapter.

The project is based on an agreement between Bangladesh government and the ILO, with the Netherlands government financing the project of \$4.7 million and 2004 as the deadline for its completion.

ILO is working to bring back at least 20,000 children from the worst form of child labour by installing 92 multipurpose centres in Dhaka to provide non-formal education, skill-building opportunities and employment programme.

"I come here taking a two-hour break from work every day except Fridays," Javed said. "I earn Tk 150 a week and get Tk 15 a day for launch from my workplace."

Like Javed, Ripon, Sujon, Robin, Shahidul and Arif are all working children receiving education from the centre. Ripon works in a factory, Robin in a motor-parts shop and Shahidul and



Students from one of the new centers receive mechanical training.

Arif at a workshop.

"I work for money to help my family out. What we do is very hard," said one of them. They have to work from 8:00am to 10:00pm every day.

Each of the 92 multipurpose centres in Dhaka under the project is home to about 90 students on three shifts.

A recent visit, organised for the members of the steering committee of the project and journalists, revealed that the deprived children arrived at the multipurpose centre at Sutrapur

for non-formal study. And their guardians are receiving loans, which is one of the project targets.

The loans are given to the guardians for an alternative income-generating purpose, as their children have been withdrawn from labour, a project official said.

Mita Begum, 45, who received a loan of Tk 5,000, is running a small business. Her children, who had enrolled in a multipurpose centre before, are now attending primary school.

She deposits Tk 125 in a weekly premium to get the

loan and Tk 10 out of it is saved in his account.

Rekha Begum and Nahid Begum sounded as happy as Mita but said they need more loans.

The project is being implemented by four NGOs, with Dhaka Ahsania Mission and Thengamara Mohila

Shabuj Sangha working on non-formal education, the Underprivileged Children's Education Programme providing skill-building training and employment programme and the Resource Integration Centre providing micro-credit.

Quick fix soul mate

Young hopefuls in love can easily succumb to the many commercial offers that have arrived with the advent of the internet

SYED TASHFIN

Give it a careful thought before you sign up for the friendship-love help line and buy a guide touted as the means of unlocking the door to soul mates.

In a conservative society, most people have a suppressed desire to meet new people and make friends. Their busy work schedule and limited access to entertainment, clubbing and socialising make it more difficult.

They would have gone to any lengths to make new friends, if they had any chance; and keeping this in mind, a group of people launched a new business cashing in on the idea of pen pals.

The love-friendship guide or *Patra-Mitali*, as popularly known, has been in

circulation since 1997 and claims to have more than 2,000 members.

The guide has attracted customers mostly through its advertisement in the Daily Ittefaq where it provides some phone numbers, known as help lines, for further information.

The advertisement also furnishes the website address www.love-friendship.com, from where interested people can get further information on the matter.

If a person checks the website, he will access more than hundred galleries each containing pictures of ten female members. The website has also sections like *phone-friends*, *love-bank*, *TV cinema stars*, *free female address* and *free male address*.

The group has enough on offer for overseas customers and posted a different section on the website providing information about how they can obtain a guide by a bank draft or money order of US\$20.

One may apply to the categories of male students (the lowest level) and of male 'respected people' and those living abroad the highest (highest level). The membership fees range between Tk 300-5,000 a year.

Interestingly enough, browsers may

encounter female members in a gallery in which at least two out of 10 are Tamil or Telugu actresses or models.

The browsers are suggested if they are convinced about authenticity of the guide to call the help line to buy the guide at Tk 160 from any newspaper stall like the kind on the ground floor of Anando Cinema Hall.

The back cover of the guide describes its contents like the numbers of at least 30 women and a membership form. But once the package is ripped open, the buyer will find a *love pongtimala* (love poems and one liners), a booklet certifying the authenticity of the love-friendship guide, a booklet defining love and the flimsy guide.

Friendship seekers will surely thumb through the pages of the guide to find pictures of males and their phone numbers, but those looking for women will get to his disappointment some female members' phone numbers with the last two digits missing.

How is he to get all the digits then? Simply by sending the Help Line Publication Tk 200 more with the filled-in membership form.

www.love-friendship.com

BOOK POST

ভালবাসা-বন্ধুত্ব

ভাব জগতের আন্তর্জাতিক ছাড়পত্র

হেল্প লাইন

জিপিও বক্স-৪৬০, ঢাকা-১০০০

ফোনঃ ৯১১৬২৭৮, ০১৯-৩৮৪৪৪১, ০১৭১-৩২৩১৩৯

ইন্টারনেটঃ www.love-friendship.com

ই-মেইলঃ info@love-friendship.com

TO./পাবেন....

Typical matter supplied by a commercial company which offers "love and friendship" to young hope fulls in love

useful telephonenumber

COURIER SERVICES

- International**
- Air Borne Express- 9561371, 9561372, 9550724
 - Air Couriers Int'l (BD) Ltd.- 8815970
 - Aramex International Courier- 9558003, 9559582, 9565075
 - Airspeed Express- 9563494
 - Asian Courier Services Ltd.- 8313543
 - Baishakhi Courier Service- 9558606
 - Banmgladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
 - Bangladesh Courier Service- 9563989
 - Bengal Express- 9560642, 9552666
 - Bangladesh Int'l Courier- 953636
 - Continental Service Ltd.- 9552948, 9558425
 - DHL Worldwide Express- 9881703-7, 9886305-9, 9882057
 - Enem Express- 9330699
 - Fedex Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
 - Modhuban Courier Service- 9550884
 - Overseas Courier Service- 9352431, 8321169
 - Pacific Courier- 9568446
 - Reliance Express Service- 9558515, 7110249
 - Sky International service- 9660442
 - SkyNet world Wide Express- 9558062, 9560258, 7114787, 7113184
 - TNT Express- 9566662, 9558239, 8618155
 - Union Courier Service- 9341722
 - United Parcel Service Air alliance Ltd.- 8826429, 8810223
- National**
- Asian courier Service Ltd- 8313543
 - BAE- 9884851
 - Central Courier Service- 9881118
 - Confidence Courier Service Ltd. 9567036
 - Chisty Courier- 7110177-9, 7100842-4
 - Cosmopol Services- 9552793, 9557975

TIPS

Do you know according to Dhaka City Corporation, you must deposit your waste at the collection site between 4pm and 10pm

LIBRARY & INFO-

- Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers**
- Central Public Library-** 8626001-4, 8614673
 - Shishu Academy-** 9564128
 - Shilpakala Academy-** 8614673
 - Bangla Academy-** 8619550
 - Islamic Foundation-** 9550280, 9556407
 - Nazrul Institute-** 9114602
 - Ford Foundation-** 8116133
 - Alliance Francaise-** 8611557
 - British Council-** 8618867-8, 8618905-7
 - Community Development Library-** 8113769, 8113604
 - Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka-** 9126525-6
 - Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library-** 8615096
 - The Russian Cultural Centre-** 9116314, 9118531, 9118314
 - Drik Photo Gallery-** 9120125, 8112954, 8123412

OUTING

- Museum and Zoo**
- National Museum-** 8619396-9
 - Open: 10 am - 5 pm, Friday 3 pm - 8 pm, Thursday closed
 - Muktijuddha Jadughar-** 9559091
 - Open: 10:30 am - 6:30 pm, Sunday Closed
 - Bangabandhu Smiti Jadughar-** 8110046
 - Open: 10 am - 5 pm, Wednesday closed
 - Ahsan Manzil**
 - Open: 10 am - 5 pm, Friday: 3 pm - 7 pm, Thursday Closed
 - Shishu Jadughar-** 9666466
 - Open: 10 am - 6 pm, Sunday Closed
 - Sonargoan Jadugha**

CITY BUS ROUTE

Bus No.	Route	Starts from
1	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 10, 11, 12	Golap Shah Mazar
2	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 1, 2	Phoolbaria bus station
3	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mahakhali-Airport-Azampur	Phoolbaria bus station
4	Shyampur-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Airport-Tongi	Shyampur
5	Sayedabad-Kamalapur-Motijheel-Airport-Joydebpur-Gazipur	Sayedabad
6A	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulistan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6B	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6C	Motijheel Shapla chattrar- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2	Motijheel Shaplachattrar
7	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2	Sadarghat
8	Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtolli	Chittagong Road
9	Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12	Demra Ranimahall
10	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Malibagh-Rampura-Biwa Road-Tongi Bridge	Sadarghat
11	Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Tongi Bridge	Sayedabad
11/A	Sayedabad-Khilgoan-Malibagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge	Syedabad
12	Shanir Akhra-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammadpur	Shanir Akhra
13	Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Jhigatola-Shangkar-Mohammedpur	Motijheel
14	Signboard -Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 12	Signboard (Chittagong Road)
15	Chittagong Road-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mirpur 12	Chittagong Road
24	Gulistan-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Airport-Uttara-Bipile	Gulistan