

Pushing rickshaws into chaos



The more rickshaws are made off limits, the more lanes and by-lanes become congested.

BISHAWJIT DAS

Lanes and by-lanes in the city, already jammed with thousands of rickshaws, will plunge into more traffic tangles, as a move is on to phase out rickshaws from six major roads from November in the latest such attempt.

Rickshaw-pullers accused the authorities of forcing them out of their job by phasing out the slow-moving vehicles to clear space for motorised vehicles.

"We are trying to streamline traffic in the city of 120 million people. We have to create space for the motorised vehicles," said a Dhaka Transport Co-ordination Board (DTCB) official.

"We are also considering the transport cost the commuters bear every day. It is better to give more access to motorised vehicles than rickshaws," he added.

The official reasoned out that rickshaw-pullers are adding to overpopulation in Dhaka as many migrate to the capital in search of money and settle for rickshaw-peddling.

According to the DTCB, the capital is home to almost five lakh rickshaws for 10 lakh pullers, but only 87,000 of the vehicles are licensed.

Asked whether the authorities would slap a wholesale ban on rickshaws, the official said, "Not really. We will limit

the number of rickshaws to a minimum. One-third of the actual number will be enough for the city."

Rajabazar area is facing serious traffic tangles mostly of rickshaws as a trickle-down effect of the ban on rickshaw-plying on the Mirpur Road.

But Rajabazar is not alone. It is equally true of Tejkunipara, Tejgaon, Dhanmondi, Mohammadpur, Central Road, Old Dhaka, Jatrabari, Kamalapur, Malibagh, Moghbazar, Khilgaon and Bashabo.

Dhaka Metropolitan Traffic Police launched a hunt for illegal rickshaws in the city on September 9 and seized 728 rickshaws. "These rickshaws will not be returned to their owners as they are all illegal," said Ansar Uddin Khan Pathan, deputy commissioner traffic (north).

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) did not issue licences to new rickshaws after 1986 and the term of the licences issued before 1986 ended on June 30 last year.

The rickshaw-pullers described the ban as antihuman. "The government cannot take such a decision against us. We also voted the government," a rickshaw puller said.

"They cannot seize our vehicles. Rickshaws are the only means of our income," another rickshaw-puller said.



Authorities are installing meters on poles to charge slum dwellers for the electricity.

DESA and DESCO clip illegal electricity connections

Because of the temporary status of slums the two authorities had to provide electric connections on a temporary basis to the slum dwellers

AVIK SANWAR RAHMAN

Government is losing revenue from illegal electric connections that supply electricity to shanties in the city. The legal supply of electricity has been hampered due to the temporary nature of the shanties.

In a bid to reduce the systems loss caused by these illegal electric connections, the Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) and the Dhaka Electric Supply Company Ltd. (DESCO) disconnected the illegal connections to the slums and supplied legal ones with proper meters.

Because of the temporary status of slums the two authorities had to provide electric connections on a temporary basis to the slum dwellers.

"We can only supply electricity after the agreement has been signed on Tk.150 stamped paper where subscribers accept the temporary status of the provision," said a Superintendent Engineer of DESA.

DESA needs money from the subscribers of the shanties in advance, as it does not want to take the risk of further losses in case of sudden eviction.

The inhabitants of the shanties are not very confident about the permanency of their abode. They do not want to pay the subscription in advance due to the uncertainty of their stay in the slums.

"We want to have legal electric connections in our homes. But what would be our plight if we are evicted once the security money is paid," queried Kalam of Begunbari shanty.

Because of the temporary status of the

shanties DESA gives connections to a group rather than to individuals. Individual billing is maintained by the usage of lights and fans.

"We cannot provide individual connections, because the inhabitants of the slums will exploit the opportunity of legal rights by claiming the land," said Brigadier General AAMARob, the chairman of DESA.

Because of the requirement of advance payments and the fear of sudden eviction, electric connections to the slums are gradually decreasing in the city.

"We have so far supplied electricity to 14 shanty colonies beside the Rayerbazar embankment but now the numbers have reduced to six due to eviction and unpaid bills. DESA is earning a revenue of about Tk. one lakh per month from these slums," added the Superintendent Engineer.

In the Mirpur area, DESCO collects bills through an NGO. Bills are generally collected from the slum dweller by the owner of the room who charges individuals Tk. 40 to 50 for the use of one light or one fan for the month.

DESA and DESCO are billing the slum dwellers on a flat rate of Tk. 2.50 per unit.

There is an allegation that the moves of DESA and DESCO are hampered by hoodlums who gain from illegal connections.

"We have taken the policy of providing connections to the slum dwellers to reduce the systems loss from illegal connections. We are planning to stop taking advance payments from the slum dwellers to make the matter easy on them," said the Chairman of DESA.

Mishuk days are numbered

There are now 3,000 Mishuks plying on the city streets which is one third of the number of CNG-run three wheelers

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The three-wheeled Mishuks may be taken off the streets of Dhaka as their recently installed fare-meters are not working, according to Communications Minister Barrister Nazmul Huda.

"I have recently learned about the problems with the meters installed in the Mishuks. If the meters are not functioning, then I won't have any choice but to discontinue the Mishuks," said Huda during an interview with Star City.

There are now about 3,000 Mishuks plying on the city streets which is one third of the number of CNG-run three wheelers.

The Communications Minister revealed that initially he didn't want the number of CNG three-wheelers to exceed 10,000 as that could cause traffic congestion. But if Mishuks are banned, then they have to be replaced with CNGs.

"The CNG three-wheelers will eventually replace the Mishuks. That means that the city will have some 13,000 CNG three wheelers and that number won't be increased," said Huda.

Huda said that he would like to see a fleet of double-decker busses dominating the city's transport

system rather than the present monopoly enjoyed by mini-busses and small human-haulers.

"We are planning to import more double-deckers for Dhaka," informed Huda.

Regarding the controversial widening and narrowing of medians on some roads and streets, Huda said that it was being done for the greater interest of the city dwellers and commuters.

"The streets where the medians are being widened would be made off-limit to rickshaws in phases. When rickshaws are gone, the traffic situation will definitely improve.

"Adjustments are being made also to the medians that were unnecessarily wide. The benefits would be visible once the entire work under the Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP) is completed," said Huda.

Recently, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia expressed her displeasure at dismantling of medians on the Airport Road and ordered the work to be stopped. But Huda said that in order to follow the DUTP guidelines, there were no other alternatives other than breaking the medians.

"It was, in fact, a long-term plan

of the DUTP to widen the Airport Road. We plan to turn this road into a four-lane speedway soon. We will have to dismantle that same median while making this road a

four-lane one," explained Huda "Because of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) meeting scheduled to start on October 4, we have temporarily

decorated the area where the median was dismantled, with flowers and plants so that it does not appear odd to the foreign visitors," the minister added.



'Once the rickshaws are banned, the newly built medians would help good flow of traffic'.

Healthouting, taxicab & traintiming

HEALTH

- Hospitals**
Heart
 National Institute of Cardio Vascular Diseases (NICVD), - 9130800, 9122560-59
- Burn**
 Dhaka Medical College Hospital
 Burn Unit-8626812-6
- Cancer**
 National Cancer Institute-8014914, 8826561-65
 Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University-8612550-4, 861455-9
- Diabetes**
 Diabetic Research Hospital (BIRDEM)- 9661551-5, 8616641-50
- Mother & Child Care**
 Shishu Hospital- 9119119, 8116061-62
 Azimpur Mother & Child Health Training Institute- 8624827, 8624980

- Eye**
 Istamia Eye Hospital-9110794, 9119315
 National Eye Hospital- 8117202, 8114807
- Dental**
 Dental College -9002035
- Orthopaedics**
 National Orthopaedics (Pangu) Hospital- 9114075, 9112150
- General**
 Dhaka Medical College Hospital- 8626812-6
 Rushmono General Hospital- 8317819
 Holy Family Hospital- 8311731-25
 Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital- 8612550-4, 8614545-9
 Bangladesh Medical College & Hospital- 8115443, 9118202, Shamari Hospital- 9131901
 Suhrawardy Hospital -- 9130800,

- 9122560-69
 Salimullah Medical Collage Hospital -- 7310061-4, 7319002-6
 Cholera Research Hospital (ICDDR) - 8811751-60
 Monowra Hospital 8319802, 8318135
- Blood Bank**
 Red Crescent Centre- 9116563
 Sandhani (DMCH)- 8624040
 Sandhani (SMCH)- 7310061, 7310061,7319022
 Dhaka Medical Collage Hospital- 8626812-9
- Eye Bank**
 Sandhani International Eye Bank- 8614040
- Ambulances For Dead Body**
 Anzuman Mafidul Islam (Kakrail) 9336611, Gandaria 7319808, 7318166,
 Al-Markajul Islam 9127867,

MARKET CLOSED

- Gulshan 1, 2 markets-Friday
 Elephant Road-Friday
 Bishal Center-Friday
 Baitul Mukarram Market-Friday
 Polwell Market-Friday
 BCS Computer City-Friday
 Isha Khan Shopping Complex-Friday.
 Rajlaxmi Complex-Friday
 Stadium Market-Friday
 Bangabazar Market-Friday
 National Museum--Thursday
 Ahsan Manzil--Thursday.
 New Market-Tuesday
 Gausia Market-Tuesday
 Mouchak Market-Sunday
 Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesday
 Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesday
 Eastern Plaza-Sunday
 Farmview Super Market-Sunday
 Muktiyuddha Jadughar-Sunday
 Dhaka Zoo-Sunday
 Shishu Jadughar-Sunday

TAXI CAB

- Yellow Cab**
 Navana 9558065
 Salida 9344477, 0171620881
 Cosmo 9112959 and 8127191
 Cab One 7113282-3
 Nihon 8624741-2
 Orion 9347277
 Anudip -- 8125285 and 8127611
 Capital 9352847
- Union** 8130485
Kool 0171826731
Black Cab
 Cab Ex 9358401
 Cabline 8321162
JBS Cab 019364575
Sajan 018126036
Anudip -- 8125285 and 8127611
Cab One 7113282-3
- Subarna Express** Leaves Dhaka at 4:00 pm
Mahanagar Prabhati Leaves Dhaka at 7-30 am
Mahanagar Godhuli Leaves Dhaka at 3-05 pm
Turna Leaves Dhaka at 11-00 pm
Parabat Express Leaves Dhaka at 6-30 am
Joyantika Express Leaves Dhaka at 12-30 pm
Upaban Express Leaves Dhaka at 9-30 pm
Tista Express Leaves Dhaka at 7-00 am
Ekata Express Leaves Dhaka at 5-00 pm
Upakul Express Leaves Dhaka at 6-00 am
Padma Express Leaves Dhaka at 9-20 pm

TRAIN TIMING

- Palki** 0171052500
Cab I 7113282
Jatri 0171540074
Nipun 9572277
R-Cab 8914782
Star Cab 9571919
Shihab 018202477 & 018228675
KGN 8620011
- Reaches Chittagong at 10:15 pm
 Reaches Chittagong at 2-55 pm
 Reaches Chittagong at 9-11 pm
 Reaches Chittagong at 7-05 am
 Reaches Sylhet at 2-30 pm
 Reaches Sylhet at 9-20 pm
 Reaches Sylhet at 6-40 am
 Reaches Bahadurabad at 1-05 pm
 Reaches Bahadurabad at 11-55
 Reaches Noakhali at 1-35 pm
 Reaches Jagannath at 2-30 pm

LIBRARY & INFO

- Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers**
Central Public Library- 8626001-4,
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