

# Passenger sheds turned business houses

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Makeshift shops, hawkers and agents of floating sex workers force the passengers to get off board onto the streets instead of the designated sheds. According to the estate department of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) these elements occupy almost 66 percent passenger sheds in the city.

The situation is similar for passengers waiting to get on board a bus. They have no place for shelter during the heavy rains.

Sheds at Khilgaon, the Paltan intersection, Guli-

stan, Baitul Mukarram, Kamlapur, Motijheel, Sayedabad, Farmgate, Newmarket, Gulshan, Mohakhali, have all been turned into small business bazaars, leaving little or no use to commuters.

Shahnaz Parvin, a regular Shayamoli-Motijheel passenger, said she waits for a bus on the footpath by the bus stand in front of Shishu Mela, as the three sheds have been turned into a snack and juice bar, and a newspaper stall.

"The existing sheds are safe havens for shopkeepers, hawkers, muggers and even floating sex workers," said Nazmul



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Alam, a private bank officer. He also said that the DCC must take action to rid the sheds off unwarranted people.

"Whenever a few passengers wait inside the shed, shopkeepers ask them to leave as the crowd hampers their business," said Nazmul. He said that more sheds must be installed before the rains.

Enamul Haque, the owner of Saddam Store at the Khilgaon Rail Gate, said he paid the police regularly to operate his business in the shed. The scene of other sheds in the area is the same.

Fazlul Haque, the

lessee of Fair Snacks at a shed in front of Tejgaon College at Farmgate has set up kerosene stove in the snack bar.

He said: "We are not permitted to use the space outside the store but as I needed to cook I set up the burner here."

Between 1985 to 1989 DCC leased out some spots for construction of sheds to three private companies. Rang Group, BlueXame time.

"Maintenance of these sheds too were given to these three companies for 25 years under certain terms and conditions," said a high official, of the state department of DCC.

Although the DCC did not build any passenger sheds since 1989, it gave Standard Chartered Bank permission to set up six sheds, which were built by 2003. In the meantime, the DCC has also bulldozed nearly 50 sheds for various reasons.

"We pulled down few sheds of two companies as they violated some terms and conditions of the agreement and a few others for the extension of roads," said the official.

"The two companies filed a writ petition to the High Court, which in turn issued a stay order on pulling down the sheds," he added.

DCC authorities however, said they would fight the order, but on the other hand do not have any plans to construct any new sheds at the moment.

Sources of state department said that DCC has received a few offers from three or four other companies interested to construct sheds. It plans to renovate and evict encroachers from the existing sheds to make them passenger/commuter friendly.

14x6

12x2