

Move to ease growing gridlock in port city

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Life comes to a standstill on the commercial capital's roads during the rush hour in the morning and in the evening due to mismanagement in the traffic system.

To ease the gridlock, Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) has taken an initiative recently to shift the bus terminals of different routes from the central city.

The CMP traffic department decided to shift the terminals of south and north region-bound buses from the heart of the city by August 15 and September 15.

It was decided after discussion with the owners of buses of different routes, including Chittagong South Region, Chittagong North Region, Chittagong-Dhaka (air conditioned service) and Chittagong-Dhaka (non-AC).

Over 150 buses and minibuses leave the city everyday for south region, including Satkania, Lohagara, Chakania and Cox's Bazar from different temporary terminals and counters at Cinema Palace, Bahoddarhat intersection, GPO intersection, Karnaphuli Shah Amanat Bridge and other city areas.

Besides, about two lakh rickshaws ply the city roads, but only 50 thousand have legal numbers. This gigantic number of rickshaws is causing more problems.

These vehicles create serious traffic jam at Station Road, New Market, Kotwali, Anderkilla, College Road, Chawk Bazar and Badurtala areas.

The counters and terminals for the routes will be shifted to the Bahoddarhat Bus Terminal, sources said.

The buses and minibuses will not enter the city with the start of



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The inter-city buses are parked haphazardly at key points of the city roads causing serious gridlock everyday due to lack of terminals. The picture was taken from Station Road.

new plan, said CMP (Traffic) Assistant Commissioner Abu Baker Siddique.

There are two bus terminals for north region routes (Rangamati, Khagrachhari, Fatikchhari and Hathazari) — one at Muradpur intersection and the other near the Sholashahar Rail Station.

"We have asked the owners to shift two terminals to a suitable place near Oxygen under Bayezid Police Station by September 15 that cause severe congestion on the highway from Sholashahar Gate No-2 to Bahoddarhat daily," Baker said.

The inter-city (Chittagong-Dhaka) bus terminals will be shifted to Kadamtali and Garibullah Shah Mazar (AC) areas from BRTC Station (non-AC). The owners have also been

asked to find an alternative site for their services (both non-AC and AC) somewhere in-between Olankar Intersection and City Gate areas under Pahartali Police Station, around five-kilometres from the existing counters in the city.

Md Munir Hossen, deputy commissioner (DC Traffic), said traffic jam will be reduced to a remarkable extent if they can prevent the buses from entering the city.

The traffic department will not be able to meet the deadline of August 15 as the owners already have sought more time for shifting the terminals, sources said.

Besides, the department might face legal problem in implementing the new plan in some cases as the owners of the north and south region routes

obtained the present places as lease from Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) for which they are paying charges every year.

Baker said a letter has been sent to Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury in this connection.

Baker said they have already shifted some counters and a temporary terminal of south-region-bound buses from the Bahoddarhat intersection area to the Bahoddarhat terminal.

Alamgir Md Sirazuddin, director of Silk Line AC Bus Service, said the inter-city passengers might face transportation problem due to new plan.

He urged the authorities concerned to set up terminals at a suitable and convenient place so that nobody faces unwanted

Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) has decided to shift the terminals of south and north region-bound buses from the heart of the city by August 15 and September 15 to ease gridlock

trouble while travelling to and from the city.

Hasanuzzaman Chowdhury, a businessman, hoped that it would reduce congestion in the city.

Dr Mezbauddin Ahmed, a regular passenger of the inter-city buses, however, said passengers might face problems as they would have to spend extra money for going to their residences.

Around 40 members of community police have been recruited for different terminals to help the traffic police, Munir said.

There are around 30 counters of different services and over 200 hundred buses gather at the BRTC Station everyday.

Ruling party 'in a hurry' to open Toiler Dwpip Bridge

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR

Much-awaited Chanpur-Toiler Dwpip Bridge on the river Shankha at Banshkhalia upazila is likely to be opened to traffic on August 29 with 40 per cent work of the approach roads on both the ends of the bridge remaining incomplete.

Local people believe that as it was an election pledge, the ruling party is in a hurry to inaugurate the bridge this month to take benefit in the upcoming election.

The ruling party high-ups in Chittagong on several occasions announced several dates for inaugurating the bridge but all their declarations haven't come into reality yet, much to the displeasure of the people of South Chittagong region.

Construction work of the bridge started during the tenure of Awami League government in 2000 and was scheduled to be finished in 36 months that ended in April, 2003, sources said.

The AL government took the project of 521.23 metre two-lane

concrete bridge with a view to developing communication in between Cox's Bazar, Chittagong and Banshkhalia and entrusted M/S Al Amin Associates Overseas with the work, they said.

Though construction work of the bridge has been finished few months ago, the approach road is yet to be connected with the bridge, sources said.

Meantime, some cracks have developed in some pillars of the bridge ahead of the formal opening for vehicular movement.

On the other hand, lessees of the lone ferry for crossing the river allegedly started extracting tolls illegally from the vehicles that venture to cross the bridge by driving over muddy and earthen approach roads.

They extract toll as many of the vehicles try to avoid the ferry for crossing the river, sources said.

According to sources under the direct and indirect supervision of local influential ruling party backed politicians, including an UP chairman of the area, they charge a CNG-run auto-rickshaw Tk 50, microbus Tk 150 and truck and bus Tk 300.

M/S Taher and Brothers, the firm for constructing the approach roads, filled the connecting point by sand instead of soil, sources said.

Locals living close to the bridge said once the bridge is inaugurated the remaining work would never be completed.

"We prefer the formal inauguration of the bridge only after completion of whole work and we are ready to wait for few more months," Kutubuddin, a local businessman, said adding that "We don't want to see an incomplete bridge just for political consideration by a certain quarter or party."

UP Chairman Zahangir Hossain, also a local Jubo Dal leader, denied the allegation of extracting tolls from vehicles for allowing them to cross the river over the under-construction bridge.

Roads and Highways Department (RHD) officials said the construction of approach roads will be completed by August 29 when Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is scheduled to inaugurate the bridge.



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Toiler Dwpip Bridge at Chanpur union in Banshkhalia.

theweekthatwas



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Artists perform at the certificate giving ceremony of a training course at the Theatre Institute in the port city on August 11. The Institute organised the course.

IUB orientation

Orientation programme of Autumn Semester of Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) Chittagong was held on the university campus on Tuesday.

Speakers at the programme advised the students to be serious with their studies from beginning of every semester for better result.

They also requested the guardians to look after the studies of their children and inspire them.

IUB Chittagong campus Coordinator Prof Dr Syed Safdarul Haque, Prof Dr M Nuruzzaman, Prof Dr M Ayub Islam and Tahilil Azim spoke.

Later, a video footage on the campus was screened on a multimedia

projector.

Meet demands of teachers: CPB

Leaders of Bangladesher Communist Party (CPB) at a rally here on Friday expressed solidarity with the agitation of teachers and urged the government to meet their demands.

The rally was held on the Central Shaheed Minar premises with CPB member Faridul Islam in the chair. District unit General Secretary Shah Alam, members Ujjal Shikder, Monti Boishnab and Nandita Boishnab also

spoke at the rally.

The speakers said the four-party coalition had promised before the last general election to meet all the demands of the teachers but after assuming power they forgot it.

"Although the government agreed finally to meet the demands, they are still dilly-dallying on the issue," they said.

Shop employees demand wage hike

Leaders of Reazuddin Bazar Shop Employees' Association at a meeting

on Thursday demanded enhancement of wages for general employees and staffs who are working at different shops and business firms in the market.

"The employees are poorly paid and hardly enjoy other basic benefits such as provident fund, festival bonus and leaves," they said. Association President Joyal Abedin chaired it.

President of Metropolitan Sramik League and Shop Employees' Federation Bakhtair Uddin Khan was present as chief guest in the meeting. Workers' leaders Akhtar Hossain, Abdul Matin Master, Pradip Barua, Ali Anwar and Sirajul Islam also spoke.

Seminar on Derivatives held

Speakers at a seminar here on Wednesday said capital market of Bangladesh will get a new dimension in the near future when the derivatives will be added to the existing equity products.

Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) organised the seminar on "Derivatives" for the high officials of the CSE brokers at its office.

CSE Chief Executive Officer AB Siddique formally inaugurated the seminar.

AB Siddique in his speech said the derivative products, which do not exist in our stock market, are the most popular investment instruments for the corporate investors as well as for individuals in the developed countries.

"India has national stock exchange

with total trade volume of Tk 88,364 crore in June in 2006 and out of that 79 per cent traded by derivatives products and rest 21 percent traded with the equity products," Siddique told the seminar.

"It is the first step to aware our members and very soon the trade will take place in our trading system," he added.

Later, Market Operations and Compliance Head Atiquzzaman elaborately discussed on the forwards, futures and options of derivative products.

Call to plant medicinal trees

Speakers at a discussion here on Friday called upon all for planting tree with a view to ensuring ecological balance and getting advantage from the tree.

University of Science and Technology, Chittagong (USTC) organised the meeting on the occasion of the tree plantation programme at Maulana Bhasani auditorium in the university.

The Purbokone Limited Chairman Yusuf Chowdhury was chief guest in the meeting with Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Nurul Islam in the chair.

Yusuf Chowdhury in his speech said tree plays a vital role in reducing unemployment and poverty in our country.

Dr Nurul Islam emphasised the need for plantation of medicinal plants like Neem and called upon all to come forward in this regard.

Prof Dr Rezaul Karim, Dr Mohammed Solaiman, Ranajit Kumar Chakrabarty, Dr Kazi Rafiqul Haque and M Mohiuddin were present at the meeting.

Sewing machines distributed

World vision Bangladesh distributed sewing machines and certificates among the members of its development team here on Friday.

Former lawmaker Mohammed Kafil Uddin was present as the chief guest at the distribution ceremony with the organisation's ADP Manager Pradip D Kosta in the chair.

A total of 79 sewing machines and certificates were distributed among the members of 10 ward of the Chittagong City Corporation (CCC).

Bakalia Ward Commissioner Shahidul Alam and the organisation Customer Service Officer William Gomez were present as the special guests while Programme Officer Zuzin

Prima, a cultural organisation, takes out a mourning procession in the port city on Saturday marking the second death anniversary of eminent writer Prof Humayun Azad.



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