

Int'l confce on transport

Modernisation of transport services needed to overcome air pollution

Experts have called for modernisation of transport services in the city to contain congestion and environmental pollution caused by automobile emissions, reports APB.

A number of studies conducted over the past decade also underscored the need for providing affordable transport to the city residents, an international conference was told yesterday.

The two-day conference on 'Bus transport in Bangladesh: a private sector procurement and financing initiative' has been jointly organised by Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), Ministry of Communications, Bangladesh Bank and the World Bank.

The conference will identify key issues and constraints facing the transport operation including regulatory, legal, financial and operational issues.

'Lack of coordinated and integrated planning for urban transport services led to sporadic growth in the number of personalised modes, which is compromising the very economic viability of the megacity,' M A M Ziauddin, Executive Director of the newly set up Greater Dhaka Transport Planning and Coordination

Board (GDTPCB) said.

He said that over the past 20 years the city experienced a significant growth in auto-rickshaws and cycle rickshaws without any corresponding increase in mass transport system, particularly bus transport services.

The GDTPCB was established recently for preparation of overall transport plans and policies including plans for infrastructures, traffic management and clearance of transport related projects.

Ziauddin said the organisation has also been made responsible to oversee and coordinate the implementation of the US \$230 million Dhaka Urban Transport Project, with substantial assistance from the World Bank.

The project envisages building of fly-overs, construction, improvement and maintenance of roads, improvement of intersections, development of bus routes and terminals, improvement of traffic signaling and management, capacity building, personnel training, improvement of parking facilities and development of non-motorised transport route network.

Dhaka has an existing population of 9 million. But it is ex-

pected to become the seventh most populous city of the world by the year 2015 when its population is expected to reach about 16 million.

Experts pointed out that adequate investments in infrastructure and appropriate institutions will be needed to serve a megacity of this size.

According to Dhaka Integrated Transport Study, the estimated current demand for the city is more than 5,000 buses while there are only 1,300 buses in service.

Presenting the keynote paper, A Quadir Chowdhury, Managing Director of Phoenix Leasing Company, observed that slow-moving vehicles like rickshaws, vans and hazardous two-stroke vehicles like auto-rickshaw and tempos emit poisonous lead and other harmful substances and fumes which is hazardous for the city-dwellers.

Inaugurating the conference at a local hotel, Communications Minister Anwar Hossain urged entrepreneurs to invest in the country's transport sector.

The inaugural session was addressed, among others, by Finance Secretary Dr Akbar Ali Khan, World Bank Country Director Frederick T Temple and BRTA Chairman A N Hussain.

Speakers at a seminar say Lack of coordination main cause of traffic congestion

Speakers at a workshop yesterday said lack of coordination among different bodies is the main cause behind the traffic congestion in the capital, reported UNB.

Dhaka Traffic Jam Prevention Committee (DTCP) organised the training workshop for rickshaw and autorickshaw workers at the Photojournalists Association office to find out ways and means to ease the unbearable traffic congestion in the city.

Speaking on the occasion DC (Traffic) Moshtaq Hossain claimed that there was no traffic jam in Dhaka City. He, however, termed the present situation as a traffic pressure, which has been created due to absence of coordination among different bodies like DESA, DCC, T&T and WASA.

He said that traffic jam is a usual phenomenon in Washington, London, Bangkok and other big cities across the world but the authorities there have taken alternate measures to ease the situation. But, here we are yet to take any effective step to solve problem, he said.

They also demanded issuance of licences for all rickshaws and rickshaw pullers. They said rickshaws and autorickshaws are not alone responsible for causing traffic jam in the city roads as claimed by many quarters.

He said every day nearly one hundred vehicles are pouring into the city roads after getting licences from BRTA. The number of vehicles has been increasing unabatedly but city roads remain the same.

DC (Traffic) Abdul Jalil said obeying of traffic rules by the citizens would solve much of the problem.

DTCP leaders identified seven causes, which are responsible for traffic jams in the city. These are: occupying of city roads by hawkers, unplanned digging of roads by various agencies, keeping construction materials on the roads, disorganized parking of vehicles, plying of vehicles beyond the city road capacity, lack of required number of traffic personnel, negligence of duties by the traffic personnel, and stoppage of buses and minibuses at every turning point for loading and unloading of passengers.

They urged the authorities concerned to take necessary measures to solve these problems for smooth plying of vehicles on the roads and freeing the city dwellers from suffocating traffic congestion.

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