

Pulling down of billboards halted for a week

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court has ordered the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) to suspend for a week dismantling of advertising billboards and outdoor advertisement signs.

The court issued the order on Tuesday following a writ petition by the Outdoor Advertising Owners Association.

Hearing of the writ will be held on July 28, sources said.

A leader of the association claimed the DCC has already caused a loss of about Tk 1 crore by bulldozing billboards, neon signs and box advertisements without any notice.

But the owner of an advertising firm said billboards installed haphazardly really look indecent and cause vision pollution. These should be dismantled, he added.

Both however sought anonymity.

The DCC started dismantling billboards on July 19 on expiry of contracts with the advertisers in a move to beautify the city and reduce

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Flood condition betters, not river erosion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The overall flood situation has improved with the fall of water level of the major rivers, but most of the affected areas are still submerged.

People in the flood-hit areas are facing a very difficult situation as floodwaters have washed away their homes, standing crops and cattle.

Though the government claims that the relief operation is going on in full swing, the local sources alleged that the government aid is inadequate and thousands of people are living under the open sky with scant or no supply of food.

Severe erosion by the rivers Padma and the Jamuna continued to render hundreds of people homeless in 26 northern districts.

Local administration sources said river erosion rendered about

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
July 24		6-46 pm
July 25	5-24 am	
Prayer Timings		
July 24		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-55	7-00
Esha	8-15	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		



PHOTO: STAR

A signpost prohibiting parking is not enough when cars are illegally parked only to create gridlock on the busy road at Bijoy Nagar in Dhaka, often dubbed a city of traffic jam.

New launch terminals underway to ease load off Sadarghat

RAFIQ HASAN

The government has started construction of a big launch terminal and is mulling another in Dhaka to take pressure off Sadarghat terminal.

The terminal at Amin Bazar near Gabtali is being built under the Dhaka circular river route project and the other at Ali Bahar char is now under consideration of the planning ministry.

The Ali Bahar char terminal, around three kilometres off Sadarghat, will cost around Tk 11 crore, and the Amin Bazar terminal will be built with Tk 5 crore, sources in the shipping ministry said.

"We hope we would be able to complete the construction of both terminals by this year," said Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain.

The Ali Bahar char terminal to be built on three acres will have four pontoons with the capacity of

around 30 double-decked launches to anchor at a time.

Sources in the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) said two pontoons have been set up at Amin Bazar with the capacity of 20 big launches to anchor.

A building will also be constructed at Amin Bazar on three acres to house a number of warehouses, two gangways, a waiting room for passengers and adequate parking space.

The BIWTA sources said the Amin Bazar terminal will be used for mooring of long-distance vessels that could load passengers from Sadarghat and Ali Bahar char.

A number of local launches will also ply between Amin Bazar and Ali Bahar char to carry passengers and goods. Some long-distance vessels bound for Patuakhali, Bhola and Barisal will call at Ali Bahar char.

The sources said the Dhaka circular river route project is being implemented at a cost of Tk 35 crore, Tk 20 crore of which will be spent on dredging and the rest on nine landing stations and the Amin Bazar terminal.

Two landing stations have recently been inaugurated at Sawari Ghat and Kholamora for small vessels and another landing station was opened to passengers at Basila in Ramchandrapur.

Around 120 big and medium-sized launches now moor at Sadarghat terminal, clogging the Buriganga, and more than 50,000 passengers use Sadarghat terminal a day.

Earlier, the rocket service of the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport

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DU students march in silence to mark one year of attack on hall students

DU CORRESPONDENT

One year after the police atrocities on female students of Shamsunnahar Hall of Dhaka University (DU), different student organisations yesterday held various programmes on the campus to press their demands for immediate publication of the judicial probe body report on the incident and punishment of the accused.

On the night of July 23 last year, police entered the female dormitory and swooped on the students. The incident followed agitation by residents of the hall protesting illegal stay of some leaders of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) at the hall. The police atrocities triggered massive protest by students and various other quarters.

Several hundred residents of the hall brought out a silent procession

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BNP urges Speaker to initiate talks with opposition parties

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling BNP has urged the Speaker to initiate dialogue with the opposition parties in parliament to settle important national issues and bring qualitative reforms in politics.

"We sincerely want to take decision on all vital issues collectively. So, we have taken the initiative by requesting the Speaker to hold dialogue first with the main opposition Awami League (AL) on issues ranging from parliamentary stand-

off to hartal," said BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday.

Addressing the press corps at a city hotel, he said the government also plans to call all political parties to settle the issues that upset development endeavours and constructive politics.

Bhuiyan said his government wants to strike an understanding with the opposition parties to run Jatiya Sangsad affairs as per the rules of procedure and make parlia-

ment centre-point of all activities.

"It will be easy to reach a broad-based national consensus on vital issues if we can develop an understanding first in parliament," said Bhuiyan, urging the AL to respond to the Speaker's letter and join parliament.

Quoting Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's recent statement, Bhuiyan, also the LGRD and cooperatives minister, said the BNP sincerely wants to make politics people-

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When death looks greener than starvation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Tormented by poverty, a mother killed her two small daughters with pesticide and then attempted to take her life by taking poison.

The tragic incident occurred at Ujan Khalshi village in Durgapur upazila on Tuesday.

Police and other sources said that on Monday night, Dukhimon

Begum Shahana, 40, had a quarrel with her poor husband over buying a saree for her niece on the occasion of the latter's marriage. Both did not take food that night.

Next morning, Dukhimon's husband Manik Chand, a rickshawvan-puller, went out for work starving. Then she also went out along with her daughters

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SHAZNEEN CASE

CID official cross-examined

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Additional Superintendent of Police, CID, Mojibur Rahman, the 23rd prosecution witness and also the investigation officer (IO) in the Shazneen case, was cross-examined for about four hours yesterday.

The cross-examination took place in the Second Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression, Dhaka.

Lawyers of the accused Hasan, Shaniram, Badal, Minu and Parvin cross-examined the witness.

Judge Kazi Rahamat Ullah then

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PHOTO: STAR

JUSTICE DENIED: Students of Shamsunnahar Hall, Dhaka University, yesterday carry a black banner to protest the July 23, 2002 overnight police attack on the female students' dormitory.

New building code likely in Oct to check highrise growth

ABDUL KADER

The new Dhaka Metropolitan High-rise Building Construction Code 2003 is likely to take effect by October this year to check mushrooming of high-rises in Dhaka city, Rajuk officials said.

Rajuk submitted the draft of the code to the housing and public works ministry in August 2002 and hopes to get approval soon.

The draft of the code that deals with high-rises, buildings upwards of six-storey or 20 metres, incorporates the provision of 'floor area ratio' to determine the ratio between open space and building space to protect the physical environment of the city.

The construction code also makes adequate car parking space, fire safety facility and electrical and mechanical services along with necessary utilities mandatory for a high-rise.

Currently there is no rule for the construction of high-rises in Dhaka. The Building Construction Law of 1956 which was revised in 1996, does not lay down any guideline for

the construction of multi-storey buildings.

The high-rise boom in Dhaka began in early 90s.

Six months within the enforcement of the new code, all constructed and under-construction high-rises will have to take re-approval for their 'as built drawings' to enable Rajuk to make a database of total high-rises, an official said.

"As high-rises are mushrooming in the city improperly for lack of specific guidelines, we hope the new code will help the authorities check the trend and take action against illegal constructions," said Rajuk Chairman Iqbal Uddin Chowdhury.

The organisation hopes to get approval for the code in September or October this year, he said.

Welcoming the 'floor area ratio' code, Sanaul Haq, general secretary of the Institute of Architects of Bangladesh (IAB) said it was a welcome move, but opinions of p r o f e s

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3 killed as bus ploughs through crowd

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three people were killed and another one was injured when a passenger bus ploughed through a crowd while overtaking another vehicle at Amtoli in city's Gulshan area at about 6:30am yesterday.

Police quoting witnesses said the bus driver lost control of the vehicle after hitting a Jeep, and later knocked down Shah Alam, 26, Kawsar Hossain, 30, and Chan Mollah, a 60-year-old rickshawvan puller from Tongi, who were among a crowd of people waiting on the footpath for the bus.

Chan Mollah died on the spot while Shah Alam and Kawsar, both security guards of Rupayan Real Estate in Gulshan, died on way to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

An unidentified man of about 33 was also critically injured in the accident and is now undergoing treatment at the DMCH.

The driver fled the scene abandoning the vehicle on the roadside. Police has seized the bus.