

GULSHAN TRAFFIC

Electronic signals blink signs of success

SABRINA KARIM MURSHED

Electronic traffic signals at Gulshan 1 and 2 intersections have smoothed the traffic flow there, most people believe.

Commuters using the major thoroughfare said the new signals introduced on Sunday eased traffic jam.

The two traffic signals are the first of Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP)'s 59 such signals to be installed in the capital. DUTP officials said the system includes the monitoring of traffic movement from a central control room.

"Earlier it took us a lot of time to cross the intersections, but now it does not take much time. Now we are relieved a lot," said Selina Ahmed, a teacher living in Gulshan 2. She said the manually controlled traffic and the large roundabouts led to traffic jam.

"In the manually controlled traffic system, the traffic police used to allow all vehicles on one side of the intersection to go and vehicles on the other three sides had to wait for hours," said Razi Haque, a resident of Gulshan 1.

Now the cars need not wait for long as the electronic signals allow vehicles on each of the sides of intersections to move after an equal break, she said. "As a result, the traffic flow is constant unlike before."

But some commuters do not find the new signal system quite helpful and said the vehicles stay in a queue for long once the new signal was introduced. They added the traffic flow was better when the roundabout was there.

They also said the duration of the



Pedestrians unaware that red light (circled) says stop cross the road obstructing moving traffic. The electronic push button (right) set up to request the green signal light for crossing.



SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

signals is not symmetrical. "I saw the red signal for a short period and the green signal came back soon after. Before hardly 10 cars could go, the red signal blinked back and stayed for almost half an hour," Tanim Ahmed said. He also added sometimes people tend to violate signals especially in early morning and late night.

Some salespersons of shops beside major roads said there has been a slump in the sale, as now people cannot stop the car for a moment and shop. But others said it quickened the traffic flow.

Pedestrians do not get the full benefit of electronic signals. Most of them do not know how to use the pedestrian signal and cross the

road while the red signal for pedestrians is on.

A senior DUTP official said the electronic signal system is being run on trial and the test run would be monitored for at least 15 days.

Asked about lack of symmetry on duration of the signals, he said it could not be the same at each of the corridors of the intersection.

"Traffic flow on each road is different in different times. If there is more rush of traffic in the morning at one side of the road, it would be opposite in the afternoon. The duration of signals will be decided once we collect initial data after the test runs of the signals," the official said.

SULTANA RAHMAN

The Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB) Act 2001 has become virtually inactive apparently because of lack of co-operation between the city's different governing bodies.

The Act was formulated with an aim to coordinate the city's transport system. It combined the capital's different governing authorities such as the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), Ministry of Communication, Rajdhani Unnayan Katiripakkha (RAJUK), Roads and Highways Department, Department of Environment, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) and Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA).

These organisations are represented at DTCB meetings when major decisions are taken. The mayor of Dhaka City Corporation, who is also the chairman of the board, presides over these meetings.

"When the DTCB takes a major decision, then there is no problem. But the concerned bodies usually do not inform the board regarding their respective activities," a senior DTCB official said.

According to the act the governing authorities should take prior approval from the DTCB before implementing any decision that concern the transport system.

"Before approving the construction of a shopping mall or a high-rise building, Rajuk must consult with the DTCB on whether the plan would create traffic congestion in that particular area. However not only Rajuk, but others too are

not bothering about the Act as the DTCB does not have the executive power to take action," another DTCB official said requesting anonymity.

"Structures like the under construction multi-storey supermarket near the Panthopath-Sonargaon crossing at Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue will create massive

traffic snarl-ups all over the area once it has opened," the official feared.

Sources claim that the DTCB had sent numerous letters to the Rajuk asking it not to approve any more shopping complexes in busy areas. But the Rajuk allegedly did not take the DTCB's concern seriously.

A good number of multi-storey markets were built on either side of the Mirpur Road over the last few years while the Rajuk silently observed. Mushrooming shopping malls on the Airport Road is seen as one of the major reasons for traffic congestion in Dhaka.

Lack of coordination between the DTCB and the CAAB (Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh) has already put Tk 2.5 crore in public funds to waste.

The DTCB has decided to demolish the newly constructed fountain on the roundabout of Zia International Airport crossing which the CAAB had erected last year.

The DTCB concluded in December 2003 that the 'technically faulty' roundabout and the fountain should be demolished to ensure smooth traffic flow on the busy road. Sources said the demolition could take place near the end of this year.

"When we were thinking of removing the roundabout within the shortest possible time, the CAAB was hurriedly completing the construction of the fountain on it without any plan or technical survey and permission of the DTCB.

This is simply a misuse of state funds," said a senior official of DTCB.

According to the DTCB Act, any new construction on a road requires DTCB's permission which is mandatory for public or private sectors.

"The fountain is a classic example of the inactive nature of the of DTCB Act. Many organisations do not even know what the DTCB is doing," one of the senior most members of the Board said.

GET SPOILED BY BIRIYANI!

Fakruddin comes to Gulshan

FAIZUL A TANIM

The name Fakruddin has become synonymous with mouth-watering *biriyani* and the restaurant is one of the most popular eateries in town.

Recently, Fakruddin has responded to the ever-increasing demand from city dwellers and opened its second branch in Gulshan. Walking past Gulshan-1 circle, you are bound to get attracted to the red and white banners and its traditional *biriyani* house ambience.

"Our journey began in 1966 and it was in a small scale inside the Vigarunnisa Noon School compound. Haji Mohammed Fakruddin was the pioneer and his two sons carried on the heritage after their father had passed away. Labour was our main capital because it was goodwilt that we dwelled on. My father Mohammed Rafique and uncle Mohammed Shafique now look after the

business.

"The popularity of our food has spread to foreign countries and they have already made several overseas trips to satisfy the taste bud of important people," said Khaleque, the grandson of Mohammed Fakruddin.

Kachchi, the usual favourite form for *biriyani* lovers, originated from Mohammad Fakruddin's hands, informed Khaleque.

"The reason behind opening a branch in Gulshan was that we used to cater a lot of customers from this area. For many, our *biriyani* was only available at weddings and special occasions. That's why we decided to arrange something for *biriyani* lovers who wished to eat at the restaurant or preferred to take it home. Through this, we hope to maintain the grand family legacy," said Khaleque.

The first thing one will notice at the Fakruddin Biriyani and Restaurant in Gulshan is the

huge amount of people constantly moving in and out. The place is jam-packed with people enjoying plates of steamy magic or waiting patiently for their *biriyani* parcels. As the outlet is still pretty fresh, the launching ceremony decorations of colourful balloons and ribbons can be spotted hanging on the walls. Despite the rush, the restaurant is a relatively cozy place for eating with friend or talking business over lunch.

The busy restaurant staff welcomes the guests at the entrance and once they have found a free table for you, you are reminded of the universal appeal of their food with framed photos on the walls of Fakruddin's stalls at various Bangladeshi food festivals abroad.

The set of choices range from main courses, kebabs, drinks and desserts. *Kachchi*, chicken *biriyani*, beef *tehari*, *jali* kebab, prawn *dupeyja* etc. each qualify as delicacies and at lunch or

dinner they are a food connoisseur's definite delight.

"One may choose a set menu of *kachchi biriyani*, *jali* kebab, *borhani* and salad. That is scrumptious," says Masud, a regular customer.

According to the chef, *kachchi* is the most sought-after treat with beef *tehari* in second.

"The beef *tehari* with a glass of *borhani* is truly superb. I just have to come back here," said an excited Jayson, a foreigner who just had his first taste of Fakruddin.

Dessert items also draw gasps of content from the customers.

"The flavour of *firney* straight from the clay pot is heavenly," says Imran.

Some people might think that the food at the restaurant is a bit more expensive than some of the other *biriyani* shops in the city but a genuine food critic would definitely find value for money at Fakruddin.



SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

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

Islamia 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-
83111731-25
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib
Medical University Hospital-
8612550-4, 8614545-9
Bangladesh Medical College &
Hospital- 8115443, 9118202,

Shamarita Hospital- 9131901
Suhrawardy Hospital -- 9130800,
9122560-69
Salimullah Medical College
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 College 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,

Gulshan 1, 2 markets-Friday
Elephant Road-Friday
Bishal Center-Friday
Baitual 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
Muktijuddha 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

Palki 0171052500

Cab I 7113282

Jatri 0171540074

Nipun 9572277

R-Cab 8914782

Star Cab 9571919

Shihab 018202477 & 018228675

KGN 8620011

TRAIN TIMING

Subarna Express
Mahanagar Prabhati
Mahanagar Godhuli
Turna
Parabat Express
Joyantika Express
Upaban Express
Tista Express
Ekata Express
Apkul Express
Agni Beena Express

Leaves Dhaka at 4:30 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 7:30 am
Leaves Dhaka at 3-15 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 11-00 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 6-40 am
Leaves Dhaka at 12-45 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 9-45 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 7-00 am
Leaves Dhaka at 5-00 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 8-00 pm
Leaves Dhaka at 9-20 pm

Reaches Chittagong at 10:35 pm
Reaches Chittagong at 1-55 pm
Reaches Chittagong at 10-55 pm
Reaches Chittagong at 6-40 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 11-15
Reaches Noakhali at 5-00 am
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