

Franchising to change bus service

SABRINA KARIM MURSHED

Green Fuel Limited, an enterprise of Nitol Group has been selected for operating buses under a route franchise, the first of its kind in Dhaka, between Uttara and Azimpur.

Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB) officials said the Ministry for Communication had decided to lease out the 30-kilometre route between Uttara and Azimpur via Banani, Mohakhali, Bijoy Sarani, Khejuri Bagan, Manik Mia Avenue, Kalabagan and Science Laboratory.

Sources in the DTCB informed that a tender was floated in December 2003 following which three companies submitted their bids. Considering their financial capabilities, business status and the proposal, Green Fuel Limited appeared as the most reasonable bidder. The two others -- Green Arrow Express Limited and Amicus Transport Limited -- lost out.

Under the existing system, a large number of buses belonging to different private owners run on the same

route and this fragmented ownership prevent them from investing in the sector, believe DTCB officials. At present around 5,800 buses owned by at least 1,000 private owners ply the city roads.

"They never want to invest for enhancement of the service as their business is not ensured," said one of the top officials of DTCB.

The official said the DTCB planned to introduce route franchise for private owners to ensure quality service for the commuters.

"When a single company is given franchise of a particular route, it knows that all passengers of the route would commute in its buses and therefore would feel secured from a business standpoint."

The franchise is also expected to end the ugly competition that exists between bus owners.

"Buses are always seen blocking the paths of one another while they trying to lure commuters to get on board. We think the franchise system would put an end to this practice," said the official.

DTCB sources said the route franchise would be introduced as a

pilot project and if it proves to be a success, the remaining 105 bus routes would be leased out to private owners too in phases. Number of buses on a route would be decided according to the requirement of the people.

Officials said that they picked the route from Uttara to Azimpur for test runs because no buses currently ply on that route.

According to DTCB sources, an operator has to have a minimum fleet of 50 buses with half of them air-conditioned to bid for franchise of a route in future. At least half of the buses must be new and the rest of them can not be more than five years old. The routes will be leased out initially for seven years as the cost benefit ratio shows that at least six years were necessary to reach breakeven point. An agreement might be extended for a period not exceeding three years at a time depending on the performance of the bus company.

"Operators should be making profit from the seventh year," said one of the officials.

DTCB officials were also prompt

to quell fears of business monopoly.

"Operators will not be able to rip off the commuters as the agreement would prevent them from increasing fare for at least two years unless there is an unusual fuel price hike or unexpected devaluation of the local currency," said one of the officials.

The fare would differ according to the quality of service. The government has fixed a fare of 65 paisa per kilometre for average service. But Green Fuel Limited has proposed a flat rate of Tk 10 per passenger regardless of the distance they travel in non-AC buses.

Regarding the prospect of a large number of people involved with different private bus companies suddenly becoming unemployed because of the franchise, DTCB officials said they did not consider that a problem.

"The government can not introduce franchising on all the routes overnight. It is a long process," said an official who believed that workers of different bus companies will be easily absorbed in the new enterprises taking lease of routes as they would require more manpower.



The Uttara-Azimpur Road marked for test runs for the franchise awarded Green Fuel Limited, a Nitol Group enterprise.

SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

Mohakhali flyover now ready to open on Nov 7



SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

DU polls deferred in grenade attack fallout

CITY CORRESPONDENT

1:00pm at Teacher-Student Centre (TSC).

The elections to the syndicate, academic council and finance committee of Dhaka University (DU) have been rescheduled from August 30 to September 5 because of the grenade attacks on the Awami League (AL) rally on August 21.

Because of the strike called by Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) to protest the grenade attacks, the DU election commission could not send the list of candidates to the teachers on time, which is five days to the election date -- a procedure mandatory under the DU rule. Some 1,100 teachers are expected to cast their votes.

"We tried our best to send out the list. But most departments and institutes were closed because of the strike," said Syed Rashidul Hassan, DU treasurer and chief of the election commission.

The syndicate changed the elections date in a meeting on August 26. The two-year tenure of the syndicate expired in April. Although the authorities attempted to hold the elections several times, teachers' internal politics prevented all attempts.

DU teachers will elect six members to the syndicate in the voting that will take place from 9:00am to

UNB, Dhaka

The first flyover at Mohakhali crossing, aiming to ease traffic congestion in the capital, will be opened for traffic on November 7.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the flyover, costing Tk 113 crore, now at the final stage of construction. It is financed jointly by the government and the World Bank.

The decision was taken at an inter-ministerial meeting yesterday at the communications ministry on the progress of different projects under the Annual Development Programme. Communications Minister Nazmul Huda presided over the meeting.

The meeting was informed that almost 95 percent of the construction of the one-kilometre Mohakhali flyover was complete until last month under the Dhaka Urban Transport Project.

Fixing a Shock Transmission Unit (STU) would be completed in October to save the flyover from earthquakes, the meeting was told.

First Metallurgical Construction Company of China is constructing the 17.9-metre wide and 1.12-km long bridge.

The flyover will have four lanes on each direction and is expected to ease traffic congestion at the busy Mohakhali intersection.

The meeting also decided to start the construction work of Kalurghat road-cum-rail bridge as well as the fourth Karnaphuli bridge at a cost of Tk 410 crore.

Construction of an alleviated expressway is expected to begin in the capital before 2006 with the financial and technical cooperation of the Thai government.

useful telephone numbers

COURIER SERVICES

International
Air Borne Express- 9561371, 9561372, 9550724
Air Couriers Int'l (BD) Ltd.- 8815970
Aramex International Courier- 9558003, 9559582, 9560575
Airspeed Express- 9563494
Asian Courier Services Ltd.- 8313543
Baishakhi Courier Service- 9558606
Banngladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
Bangladesh Courier Service- 9563989
Bengal Express- 9560642, 9552666
Bangladesh Int'l Courier- 953636
Continental Service Ltd.- 9552948, 9558425
DHL Worldwide Express- 9881703-7, 9886305-9, 9882057
Enem Express- 9330699
Fedex Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
Modhuban Courier Service-

9550884
Overseas Courier Service- 9352431, 8321169
Pacific Courier- 9568446
Reliance Express Service- 9551727, 9569759
Probashi Courier Services- 9346359
Sky International service- 9660442
Skynet world Wide Express- 9558062, 9560258, 7114787, 7113184
TNT Express- 9566662, 9558239, 8618155
Union Courier Service- 9341722
United Parcel Service Air alliance Ltd- 8826429, 8810223

National
Asian courier Service Ltd- 8313543
BAE- 9884851
Central Courier Service- 9881118
Confidence Courier Service Ltd.- 9567036
Chisty Courier- 7110177-9, Cosmopol Services- 9552793, 9557975
Dhaka Courier Services- 7236222

TIPS

Do you know according to Dhaka City Corporation, you must deposit your waste at the collection site between 4pm and 10pm



LIBRARY & INFO-

Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers
Central Public Library- 8626001-4, Shishu Academy- 9564128
Shilpakala Academy- 8614673
Bangla Academy- 8619550
Islamic Foundation- 9550280, 955640
The American Centre (IRC)- 8813440-4,9886395
The 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

OUTING

Museum and Zoo
National Museum- 8619396-9
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday 3 pm- 8 pm, Thursday closed
Muktijuddha Jadughar- 9559091
Open: 10:30 am 6:30 pm, Sunday Closed
Bangabandhu Smiti Jadughar- 8110046
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Wednesday closed
Ahsan Manzil
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday: 3 pm - 7 pm, Thursday Closed
Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library- 8615096
The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314
Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412

CITY BUS ROUTE

Bus No. Route
1 Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 10, 11, 12
2 Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 1, 2
3 Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mahakali-Airport-Azimpur
4 Shyampur-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Airport-Tongi
5 Sayedabad-Kamalapur-Motijheel-Airport-Joydebpur-Gazipur
6 A Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulshan 1, 2
6 B Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulshan 1, 2
6 C Motijheel Shapla chattar Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2
7 Sadarghat-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2
8 Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtoli
9 Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12
10 Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Malibagh-Rampura-Biswa Road-Tongi Bridge
11 Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakali-Tongi Bridge
11/A Sayedabad-Khilgoan-Malibagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge
12 Shanir Akhra-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammedpur
13 Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Jhigatola-Shangkar-Mohammedpur
14 Signboard -Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 12
15 Chittagong Road-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mirpur 12
24 Gulistan-Maghbazar-Mohakali-Airport-Uttara-Bipole

Starts from
Golap Shah Mazar
Phoolbaria bus station
Phoolbaria bus station
Shyampur
Sayedabad
Kamalapur
Kamalapur
Motijheel Shaplachattar
Sadarghat
Chittagong Road
Demra Ramimahal
Sadarghat
Sayedabad
Syedabad
Shanir Akhra
Motijheel
Signboard (Chittagong Road)
Chittagong Road
Gulistan