

30 speed detectors in city to catch fast drivers

277 accidents a year in the capital make DMP wary

KAUSAR ISLAM AYON

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has decided to install 30 speed detectors in Dhaka to check the speed of motor vehicles from next January with a view to reducing road accidents in the city.

As the number of fatal accidents in the city is increasing day by day and most of these are due to uncontrolled speed, the DMP will install the devices very soon, sources said.

According to the DMP traffic department, 277 accidents took place in the capital in one year till October 2004, that left more than a hundred people killed and many more fatally injured.

A mother and her daughter were run over by a speeding bus on Airport Road on November 16, a day after Eid-ul-Fitr.

DMP officials said there are some roads in the city including the Airport Road where there is a chance of speedy and reckless

driving and most of the accidents take place on these roads.

"Whenever the drivers get roads little free they run their vehicles fast and cross the speed limit that often causes fatal accidents. It is necessary to control the speed of vehicles to check such accidents," said Ansaruddin Khan Pathan, DC (Traffic-South) of DMP.

Initially, 30 portable speed-detecting devices will be installed at different points in the city. Training of the traffic police personnel who will operate these machines has already started.

The detectors with high performance satellite receivers will measure acceleration, detect the over-speeding vehicles and give alarm immediately.

"Vehicles crossing the speed limit will be caught then and punished. DMP will take action according to existing traffic rules," said Pathan.

He said the machine could be installed anywhere as it is small

in size and the installation process is very simple.

According to traffic law, speed limit for the motor vehicles within the city is 40 km per hour and on the highways it is 60 km/hour. But most of the drivers are not aware of the speed limit.

"I never heard this. I always try to save time wasted for traffic jam in the city by accelerating the speed specially on New Airport Road," said Jasimuddin a bus driver of Gulistan-Airport route.

Pathan said they have requested traffic engineering department of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) to mark the roads under its authority with signs of speed limit for the convenience of drivers.

"We hope DCC will set up the signs before we install the devices in January. If there is no such signs, the drivers will get an excuse to avoid punishment for breaking the speed limit," said Pathan.



DMP is going to install 30 speed detectors to catch fast driving vehicles, which often cause fatal accidents in the city.



A foggy morning in Dhaka -- the winter has set in a little early this year.

City experiences early winter

SABRINA KARIM MURSHED

The lazy sun unwilling to glow in full, trees shedding old leaves little by little and dusty, misty roads are announcing the advent of winter in the city.

Although the concrete jungle that is Dhaka, does not offer much room to nature to show her features distinctly, residents can still feel the winter creeping in.

The arrival of winter is evident in the open spaces of the city where a thin layer of fog gather, especially in the early morning.

"It is still not shivering cold but I feel a little chilly when I go for my daily morning walk at Zia Uddyan," said Zakia Alam, a housewife living in Shyamoli.

Low temperature during the night is another sign of the coming winter.

Md. Akram Hossain, Director, Bangladesh Meteorological Department, said the country is experiencing early winter this year.

"Usually, we expect winter to start from December to February. But this year it arrived in November," he said, adding that the city would experience foggy weather this time with early cold waves.

"It starts to become cold from midnight and it is quite chilly at dawn," said Shahidul Alam of Pallabi. "You do not feel comfortable unless you wrap a *kantha* (thin traditional quilt)," he added.

Shahidul can find comfort by getting under a *kantha* but winter is not so charming for people like Kasimuddin who was spotted lighting a fire by the roadside in order to keep himself warm.

"I do not even have a gunny sack to cover myself. You will not realise how the winter wind can chill you to the bone when you live in the open," said Kasimuddin, a vagrant sitting on the footpath at Sobhanbagh.

The bedding stores in the city are warming up with the mercury going down. "This is the time when quilts and mattresses are on high demand," said Abdul Jalil Khokon, owner of a bedding store in Nilkhet.

There are around 3,000 bed-

ding stores with at least 15,000 workers in Dhaka, claimed the sellers. There are quilt makers known as *dhunuri* also who go from door to door to make and mend quilts, blankets and mattresses. With the arrival of winter, all of them are expecting to do brisk business.

Change is evident in wayside food stalls which are selling popular local winter cakes like *bhapa pitha* and *puli pitha*.

However, the change in the weather is bringing in the seasonal viruses too. Those prone to asthma due to cold and dust are particularly vulnerable during winter. Besides viral fever and seasonal cold is also on the rise.

Buriganga protection plan delayed again

AVIK SANWAR RAHMAN

The plan to permanently protect Buriganga from re-encroachment has been delayed again as the shipping ministry wants to include a harbour for vessels at Kamrangir Char and exclude a dockyard at Mirerbag.

The harbour has been delayed again as the shipping ministry wants to include a harbour for vessels at Kamrangir Char and exclude a dockyard at Mirerbag.

"We are re-casting the project concept paper (PCP) to include the harbour and exclude the dockyard," said Syed Monwar Hossain, director of ports and transportation of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA).

The harbour was included in the plan as vessels at Sadarghat need separate berthing to unload garbage and change oil, which is now being done in the river polluting the Buriganga.

"This will help reduce pollution in the river," said Rakibul Islam, superintendent engineer of the BIWTA.

The harbour will be constructed where a channel of the Buriganga once flowed.

The harbour will reduce pollution as vessels would dump their garbage into floating tanks and then these will be emptied on the shore. The vessels will also use pipes to pump oil on to the shore.

There will be a 60-bed rest house at the harbour for launch employees.

The BIWTA submitted the

PCP to the shipping ministry on May 19. But it remained stuck there for two months because a query about the estimated cost of dredging the river.

The PCP has to be placed before the Planning Commission for inclusion in the Annual Development Program (ADP) of the next fiscal year. Total cost of the project has been estimated Tk 94.36 crore to be financed by the government.

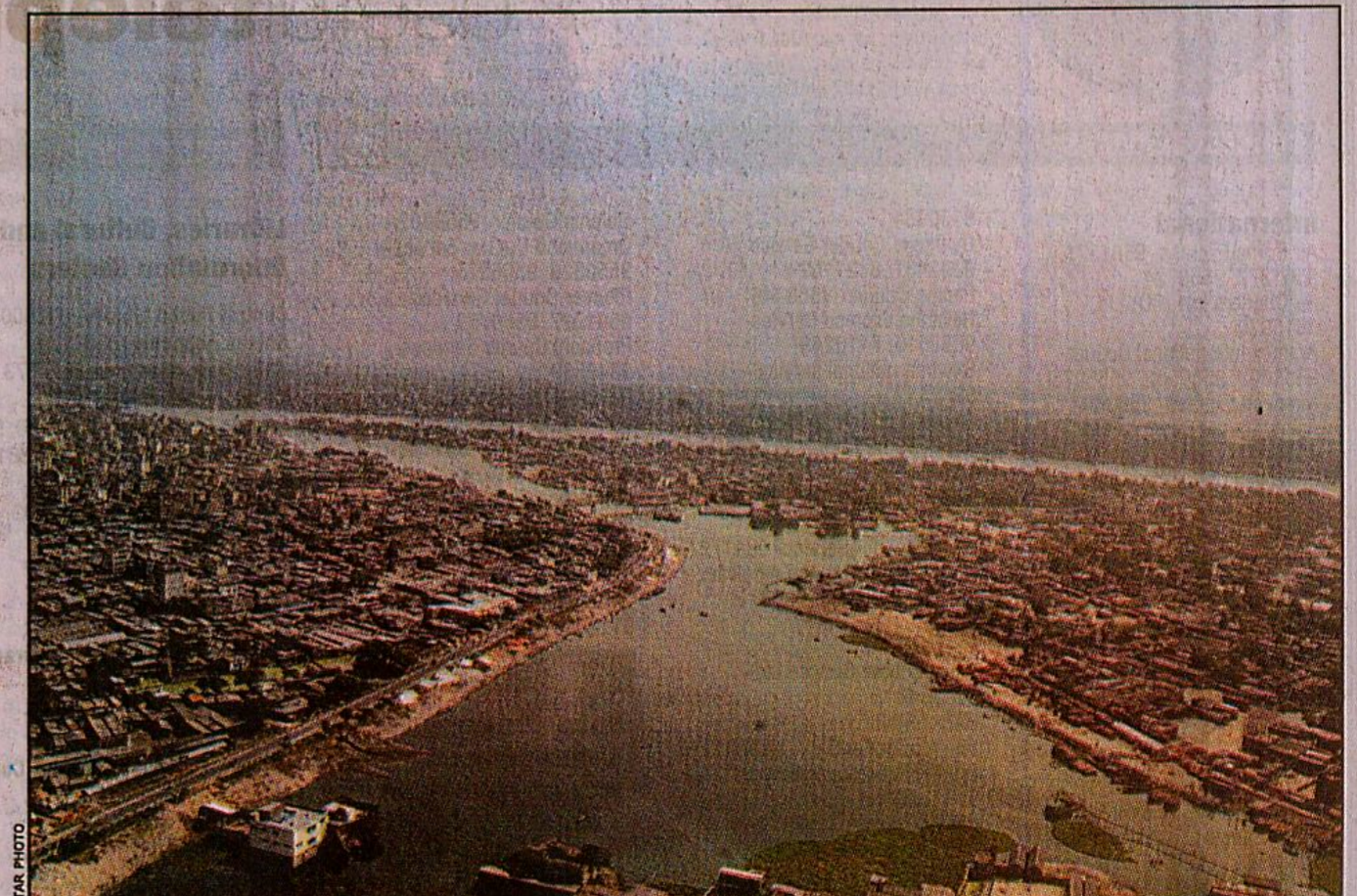
About 96.82 percent of the budget will be spent on the development of the river bank. A terminal building, a transit shade at Ali Bahar Char near Pagla, kiosks, a health centre, jetty, terminal, parking yard and open yard will be built there. Moreover, a recreation centre and sitting arrangement on the bank would be constructed.

The project also included construction of walkways on the 34km shore on both sides of the river.

The project is expected to generate income from the facilities.

"This project will also help reduce traffic at Sadarghat terminal and we will be able to regain the old glory of Buriganga," said the high official of the BIWTA.

The Sadarghat terminal, established in 1967, maintains communication with two sea ports. In 2002-3, about 2.18 crore commuters and 18.70 lakh metric tons of cargo passed through this port. Every year, movement of commuters is increasing by 4.29 percent and cargo by 4.72 percent, according to the BIWTA.



The plan to protect the Buriganga, the lifeline of the city, from encroachments is delayed for revision of the project concept paper.