

## Mohakhali flyover multiplies traffic chaos at some points

SABRINA KARIM MURSHED

Mohakhali flyover, the first of its kind in the country, has failed to prove effective against traffic congestion rather multiplied the problem at some points around it.

Beginning from Banani Chairmanbari, the peak-hour tailback stretches on the entire deck of the 1.12-km flyover, up to Bijoy Sarani. The gridlock aggravates the traffic situation on the entire road towards Shahbagh including in front of the Prime Minister's office.

Traffic flow has increased manifold than it was six years ago when the flyover was designed. Moreover, increasing number of commuters are compelled to use the flyover, as all the roads inside Dhaka Cantonment were made off-limits to outsiders after the inauguration of the flyover on November 4.

When asked, Communications Minister Nazmul Huda told Star City that traffic congestion should not occur in the area, as the flyover is not carrying any extra load than before. "Number of vehicles is almost same as earlier whether they run on the flyover or on the road below it," he said adding, "Lack of proper management causes the gridlock."

"There should not be any problem if the four-lane system on the flyover and traffic signals are maintained properly," the minister observed.

Whatever reason lies behind the gridlock at Mohakhali, the situation has become unbearable for the commuters after the

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flyover was opened to traffic. The vehicles get almost standstill on the flyover, specially during peak hours.

"What a blunder I made by taking this trip! Now it takes three hours to reach West Dhanmondi. I would not be able to take enough trips today to manage the loss," grumbled Abul Mia, a CNG autorickshaw driver while coming from Banani.

"And what about me! Meter is still ticking while the CNG is stuck in jam. Do you people think



Planning Department of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology.

He said the flyover would have served well, if another wing of it diverted the west-bound traffic to the Rokeya Sarani to lessen the pressure on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue.

"I think the authority had never planned properly before they constructed Mohakhali flyover. May be they have seen such constructions abroad and just wanted to make one here," commented an urban planner. He said the flyover might have been made as a 'status symbol' rather than a solution to traffic chaos.

When asked one of the officials of Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB) admitted the fact that the flyover has added to the woes of commuters. He said a series of further steps are necessary, including the construction of flyovers at Kemal Ataturk crossing and at Bijoy Sarani intersection, for a permanent solution.

"We had foreseen the traffic jam long back but none of the follow-up projects started due to fund shortage and administrative tangles within DTCB," the official said. He said still there is no direction for immediate ending of the situation.

The communications minister however told Star City that the ministry is planning to construct an underpass underneath the Tejgaon Airport towards Rokeya Sarani and Mirpur Road to divert the traffic to the west.

we have a money-making machine?" commented his passenger.

This type of conversations is typical now in the morning when heavy traffic from the north, especially from Uttara, streams towards the south creating gridlock on the flyover.

"The lines of cars on the flyover are seen from afar without moving a single inch for long," said Jasmine Ahmed, a housewife residing in Mohakhali.

However, the south to north

road remains comparatively empty in the morning only to get reversed in the evening when those commuters return.

"I have never experienced such a gridlock in my entire life," said Nazmul Ahsan, a resident of Uttara. "It took more than two hours to reach my office in Motijheel," he said adding, it would be same when he returns in the evening.

Due to the gridlock up to Bijoy Sarani crossing, the traffic congestion spreads towards Farm

Gate, Sonargaon Crossing and Shahbag, even touching Dhaka University area, Matsya Bhaban and Kakrail crossing.

"The vehicles are now coming faster from other parts only to be stuck in front of Prime Minister's Office (PMO)," commented Alamgir Hossain, driver of a private car.

"In fact the flyover should have been stretched at least from Banani rail crossing to Progoti Sarani, said Professor Nazrul Islam, chairman, Urban

## Law slack on defaced bank notes

KAUSAR ISLAM AXON

There is no specific law against defacing or damaging bank notes by writing or drawing on them even though thousands of notes are being distorted in that way everyday.

Handwritings or drawings on notes irk people and bank officials but there is a lack of initiative in creating awareness among the people.

Officials of Bangladesh Bank (BB) said the number of defaced notes has not yet reached alarming proportions but they felt the tendency should be stopped.

"Unauthorised handwriting or drawing or any kind of defacing of bank notes are illegal according



Our correspondent was given this defaced bank note by a vegetable seller at Karwan Bazar kitchen market last week.

to the currency protection law. But we are taking a lenient stance on writing on notes considering the lack of knowledge of the people of our country," said Shafiqul Alam, general manager of the

currency management department of BB.

People write their names, mailing addresses, phone numbers and even love letters on notes. Vulgar writings are not

uncommon also. Especially Tk. Two, Five, Ten and Twenty notes are mostly effected because of their easy availability.

"In most cases, half-literate people deface notes as they have no idea about the sanctity of it," Alam said.

The BB issued a circular on July 1998 instructing all banks to change defaced notes with fresh ones. The then Awami League government issued the circular in order to protect the ten Taka notes that were carrying the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

"People were distorting the Tk 10 note by drawing pictures and writing comments on the picture of Bangabandhu. The situation

became so bad that we had to withdraw the defaced notes from the market as we did not have any other alternative," said a BB official. That was an unprecedented step and the only time the Central Bank had issued a circular on the matter.

"We only reissue notes under a usual process but not for handwriting on them," informed Alam.

Bank officials also write on the notes but that is also not in line with the law. Bankers are allowed to write on the starting and the ending note of a bundle to maintain the accounts. "But they should use extra ply leaf to give initials on a bundle and any kind of writing should not be allowed on the currencies," opined a

senior banker.

People of the most countries are very aware of the value of a note.

"In India you can not transact with even a single scratch on a note. No businessman or a member of the public will take it. You will have to submit it to the bank," said a banker who recently came back from India after training.

"If we ask the people not to transact with defaced notes it may not prove a practical step as most of our population live in villages where there are very few banking facilities," said Alam.

"Growing awareness among the people could be the best solution to the problem," he added.

## Lord Krishna's temple needs help

SYED TASHFIN CHOWDHURY

Authorities of one of the most prominent Hindu temple complexes of the city, the Shri Shri Borodeshwari Kalimata temple, the temple of Shiva, temple of Shri Shri Shitala and the temple of Shri Shri BishwaKarma. Among other establishments there are sanctuaries like the Shri Shri Loknath Brahmachari Ashram, Mahadev Pithsthan and Buraburi Ashram. The complex also has the Shri Shri Borodeshwari MohaShamshan, the only electric cremation facility in the city.

The Durga Puja, the biggest Hindu festival in Bangladesh, has been celebrated here since 1995. The complex even has its own lake, the Gangashagor Dighi where the goddess Durga is sacrificed on the last day of the festivities.

of the locality and support from influential quarters, the complex expanded.

The notable temples are the Shri Shri Borodeshwari Kalimata temple, the temple of Shiva, temple of Shri Shri Shitala and the temple of Shri Shri BishwaKarma. Among other establishments there are sanctuaries like the Shri Shri Loknath Brahmachari Ashram, Mahadev Pithsthan and Buraburi Ashram. The complex also has the Shri Shri Borodeshwari MohaShamshan, the only electric cremation facility in the city.

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With the ever-growing popularity of the complex, the temple committee thought of constructing a temple for Lord Krishna and its foundation stone was laid about two years ago by the Minister for Housing and Public Works Mirza Abbas.

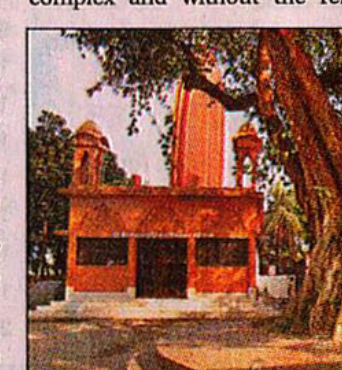
Although the temple is still under construction, no one is sure when it might be completed.

"We require 20 lakh Taka but with our limited resources, we fear we will not be able to complete the temple in near future on our own," said Brojen Das, secretary of the temple committee.

The committee was set up in 1935 and the responsibilities have been handed down from generation to generation. As a mode of earning, it has allowed shops to be erected bordering the complex. Rickshaw garages and tin-shed houses are also found inside the

compound. Devotees complain that the existence of such establishments inside and around the complex is destroying the aesthetic and spiritual beauty of the area.

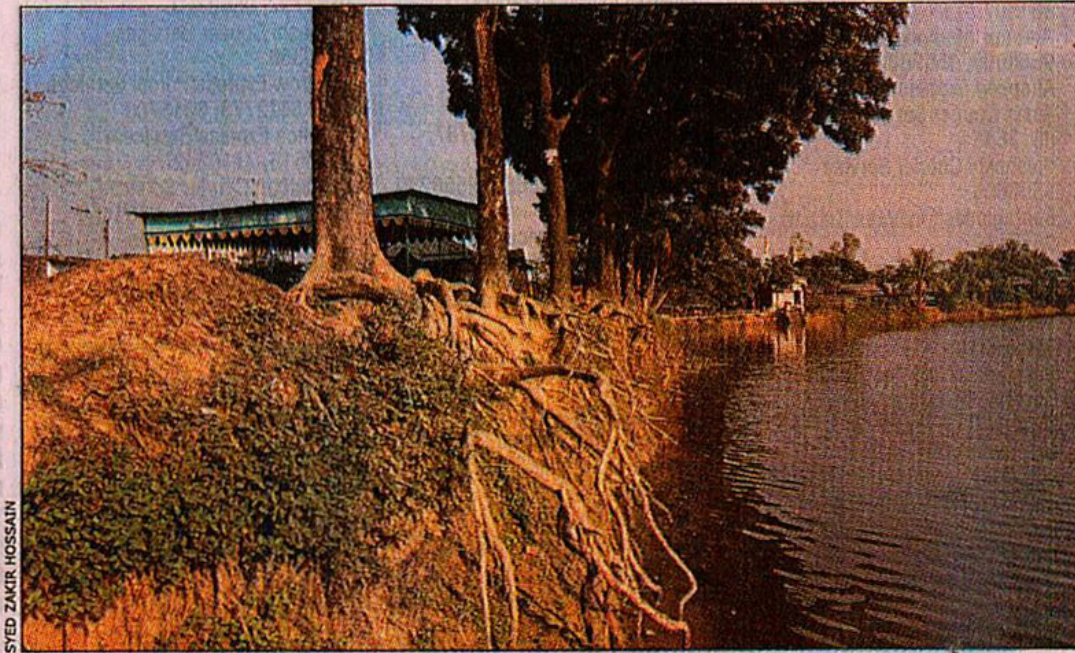
"We have no other option but to rent these spaces," said Brojen Das. "We have around 20 paid staff for maintenance of the entire complex and without the rent



from garages, tin-shed houses and shops, we can not meet the expenses."

"We would be extremely grateful to anyone wishing to aid us financially in constructing the Shri Krishna temple," said Suresh Chandra Das. "We are looking forward to any generous contribution from the city dwellers."

Work is going on at very slow pace because of insufficient funds which has made the completion of the building uncertain.



### city express

The latest crop of quotes from the city's press -- words worth repeating, we feel, for their humour, insight or sheer outrageousness. Star City does not necessarily support the opinions expressed in this column.

"Journalists' knowledge is so poor that it is beyond explanation"

-- Nazmul Huda

Communications Minister

Said on November 23 speaking as chief guest at an inauguration ceremony of the Chhatradal member-recruiting programme, the student wing of the ruling party in Dhaka University. Source: Prothom Alo

"Conducting politics over mobile phone and TV cameras have ruined us"

-- Abdul Jalil

General Secretary, Awami League  
Said on November 26 in a meeting with leaders of the front organisation at its Dhanmondi office. Source: Prothom Alo



"We will see how this Commission is used in hiding BNP's corruption instead of abating it"

-- Hasanul Haque Inu

President, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal

Told a reporter on November 22 commenting on Independent Anti-Corruption Commission. Source: Bhoror Kagoj

"It cannot be termed as 'complain' as it does not fall under the purview of complaints"

-- Captain Quamrul Hasan Joarder

Head of Training Department, Bangladesh Biman

Told a reporter on November 25 about the complaint regarding recruitment of pilots from abroad creating a false crisis. Source: Prothom Alo

"The Prime Minister, through RAB has left many a mother's bosom bare. She will face the same fate some day"

-- Razia Sultana

Sister of Narayanganj top terror David, killed in crossfire

Told journalists on November 25 reacting to David's death. Source: Bhoror Kagoj

"Interest shown by women in the Jatiya Party is now increasing"

-- H M Ershad

Former President and Chairman, Jatiya Party

Told a worker's meeting of Mahila Jatiya Party, the female wing of the party on November 25. Source: Daily Jugantor

