

DCC's fight against post-Eid filth proves successful

SABRINA KARIM MURSHED

When Ashraf landed at Kamalapur Railway Station yesterday morning, he braved himself for the usual post-Eid filth and tummy churning foul odour of blood and waste of sacrificial animals.

Instead, he was surprised to find a clean Dhaka. No waste, no clotted blood, no smell. As if no Eid was observed in this city he knows for four decades.

And all the credit goes to Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) that embarked on a massive clean-up drive, engaging thousands of cleaners, hundreds of dump trucks and bulldozers. Roads were sprayed with anti-septic water and the job was supervised round the clock.

Officials of the conservancy department of the DCC said they began the clean-up drive even before the Eid-ul-Azha.

"Our cleaners cleaned some areas including the Baitul Mukarram, Gowsia, Dhanmondi, Gulshan and Airport Road on the night before the Eid as illegal cattle markets set up there dirtied the



The DCC at immediate work: A water lorry sprays water on a road at Posta in Lalbagh to clean blood and waste after the Eid.

places," said Sohel Farouque, chief conservancy officer of the DCC.

He said the DCC cleaners started cleaning from 12 at noon on the Eid day and continued for three days.

"We had 7,000 cleaners and 250 trucks of our own and hired another 2,000 cleaners and 300 trucks for the job," he said.

The DCC engaged 10 water lorries in its zonal areas to clean roads. For the first time it used antiseptic solution Savlon and bleaching powder to kill germs. "We installed sprayers in the water lorries and sprayed Savlon-mixed water on roads to prevent germs as well as the stink," said the chief conservancy officer.

Moreover, 20 dump trucks and six pay-loaders were engaged in the drive. Two 40-feet long trailers with a capacity of 40 tons each made the cleaning drive easier. "Three bulldozers were used to lift the thick layers of wastes that got stuck on the roads," he said.

All the staffs of conservancy department were on duty dur-

ing the Eid holidays to ensure a clean capital, Sohel said.

"People even slaughtered animals on the third day of the Eid (Monday) and we cleaned the areas immediately," he said. He added one of the staffs was suspended for not performing duty properly.

Dhaka city dwellers were saved the stink and filth of slaughtered sacrificial animals this year as Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) took adequate cleaning measures.

"It was a common sight to find people walking on streets with handkerchiefs pressed to their noses to prevent foul smell coming from blood and carcasses left by the roadside. But this time there was no such problems," commented Atiqul Alam, a resident of Eskaton.

As there is no designated place, people slaughter their sacrificial animals on the streets in front of their houses or inside garages. However, the waste and blood are left on the streets to decompose for days and then to pollute the entire atmosphere.

But old part ignored

ABDUL KADER

Residents of Old Dhaka expressed dissatisfaction with Dhaka City Corporation's (DCC) cleaning activities in the lanes and by-lanes.

People of Gandaria, Nazimuddin Road, Lalbagh and Chawkbazar said cleaners removed the leftovers haphazardly, without the use of water or sprinkling bleaching powder over the dumping points, leaving a pungent odour along the lanes and by-lanes.

"DCC cleaners do not wash and spray bleaching powder on the dumping points once the leftovers are taken away leading health hazards," said Tahmina Tasir, a resident of Gandaria.

Another resident of Chawkbazar Rezwana Afrin said she found leftovers at certain points along the Chawkbazar, Lalbagh and Nazimuddin roads on Monday on the way to her workplace.

However, the Chief Conservancy Officer of DCC Commander Sohel Farouque disagreed with the above views and said that like other areas of the city, all parts of the old town were cleaned. "Our priority was to clean the lanes and by-lanes of old town," he said.

The chief conservancy officer said that in the three-day special drive they utilised the present cadre of 7,000 cleaners, with additional 2,000 new appointees with vehicles and equipment to run the cleaning programme successfully. The drive included the old and new part of the city.

DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka went on an inspection tour to many parts including Old Dhaka.

RICKSHAW BAN AT BANGLAMOTOR

No bridge to broken link

KAUSAR ISLAM AYON

The authorities have made Bangla Motor crossing off-limits to rickshaw without making alternative arrangement of transport, throwing thousands of commuters into miseries.

The latest rickshaw ban aiming to reduce traffic jam at Bangla Motor and on the VIP road has separated the eastern and western side of Mymensingh Road for non-motorised vehicles. For rickshaws, Bangla Motor was the only link between the two sides.

The authorities have compelled thousands of people to cross Bangla Motor on foot where there is no zebra crossing mark, let alone a foot-over

bridge.

"We are at high risk as the Traffic Department make us bound to cross the busy intersection on foot without taking safety measures for the pedestrians," said Shoeb Ahmed, a bank employee and regular commuter on this route.

The residents of Moghbazar, Bangla Motor, New Eskaton, Dilu Road and adjacent areas have now no alternative but to walk about one kilometre on way to Hatirpool, Paribagh, Shahbagh, Kanthalbagan, Green Road, Dhanmondi, Elephant Road and New Market.

Traffic police now allow rickshaws coming from Moghbazar to go up to Sohag Community Centre in New Eskaton. The passengers are

then compelled to cross Bangla Motor intersection on foot and walk up to Sonartori Tower to hire another rickshaw.

On the other side, rickshaws coming from Green Road and Dhanmondi areas are stopped near Kanthalbagan Dhal (slope) forcing the passengers to walk up to Sohag Community Centre to get a rickshaw to go to the direction of Moghbazar-Malibagh.

The officials of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) traffic department said they have made the road off-limits to rickshaw and other non-motorised vehicles to free the Bangla Motor intersection and the VIP road from congestion.

"Haphazard movement of

rickshaws through Bangla Motor creates traffic jam at the intersection. Flow of traffic on the VIP road (Mymensingh Road) also slows down because of rickshaws," said Ansar Uddin Khan Pathan, DC (Traffic South) of DMP.

"We have taken the step after discussing it with all the authorities concerned," he said expressing the hope that it will improve the overall traffic situation.

But the residents of Moghbazar are not happy with the decision. "We are now totally isolated from the western side of the VIP Road. In fact, we are surrounded by the so-called VIP roads," said one resident of Dilu Road.

"We don't understand why the authorities have done this.

Are they planning to divide the city into two parts? Then why don't they raise a wall at Bangla Motor to prevent the rickshaws and common people to go to the other side?" said another resident.

On Sunday, when traffic was very thin in the city just after the Eid-ul-Azha, the traffic department stopped plying rickshaws on the road without any notice.

"My daughters study in Vigarunisa Noon School and their only means to go to school was rickshaw," said Nazmul Hossain, a resident of Kanthalbagan. "How they will go to school as no other transport is available for this short distance?"

The traffic department officials said 60 BRTC buses and as many private buses will be available on this route that will transport passengers from Malibagh to the other side of Bangla Motor via Mouchak and Moghbazar.

But the service was not available till yesterday morning.

"If I want to go to Dhaka University (DU) or Birdem Hospital, I will have to walk a mile to get a rickshaw," said Samia Islam, a DU student residing in New Eskaton.

The rickshaw-pullers are also dissatisfied with this decision. "Where will we go? From this area there is no way left to go to Dhanmondi and New Market," said Kashem Gazi, a rickshaw puller of Moghbazar Pearabagh.

About the danger of crossing Bangla Motor on foot, Pathan said: "We have implemented electronic signal system. Now the pedestrians can cross the road safely at regular intervals. If they follow the rules there is no possibility of accidents."

Pathan also said they will request DCC to build a foot-over bridge at this point.



A policeman averts a rickshaw from plying along the Bangla Motor crossing.

Mohakhali flyover still at tremor risk

World Bank unhappy over delay in installing all shock transmission units

SABRINA KARIM MURSHED

The World Bank has expressed dissatisfaction over the delay in installation of 21 more shock transmission units (STUs) in Mohakhali flyover which was opened to traffic in November last year.

In a letter sent to the Roads and Highways Department (RHD), the implementing agency of Mohakhali flyover on January 15, the World Bank said the delay in supply and installation of STUs was quite unacceptable.

The construction of the flyover began on December 6, 2001 and was scheduled to complete by June 2004, but the deadline was extended to September for installing STUs to protect the flyover from possible damage from earthquake.

The date was shifted again to November 2004 as the authorities concerned failed to install all the 42 STUs by that time. The flyover, first of its kind in the city, was opened with only 21 STUs installed, leaving it at risk of tremor.

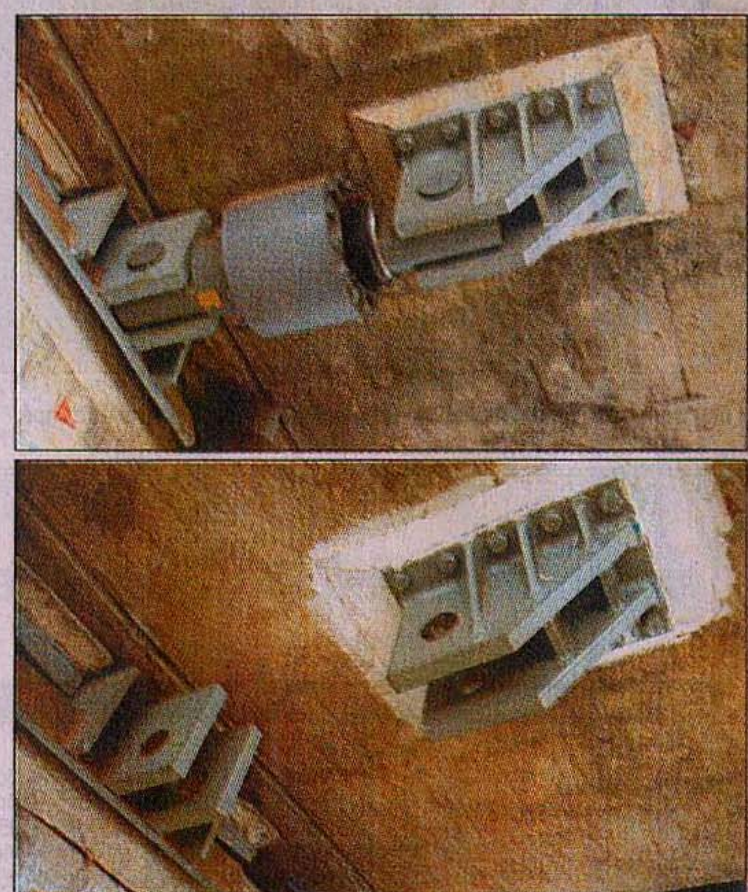
Sources in the Dhaka Transport Co-ordination Board (DTCB) in last November attributed the delay in installing STUs to a dispute between the authorities concerned and the contractor.

The contractor wanted to install Chinese-made cheaper STUs instead of US-made ones. But the authorities refused to permit them and suggested installing US-made STUs, which are of good quality but costlier than the Chinese ones.

According to the contract with the World Bank, STUs have to be tested in an independent laboratory before they are installed in the flyover.

The World Bank in its letter mentioned that the STU manufacturing was ended in July 2004 but the remaining 21 STUs were not tested as yet.

Moreover, World Bank found a latest proposal by the contractor



A part of Mohakhali flyover are secure from quakes with installation of STUs (top) while the other part still awaits completion.

to have the remaining 21 STUs shipped from USA to China for testing 'unacceptable'.

"...It will result in further wastage of time," the letter said adding that five months have already wasted. It stressed the necessity of completion of the flyover contract and being certified by March 31, 2005, the credit closing date.

"We cannot agree to this contract remaining incomplete beyond the credit closing date, as proper testing and installation of the STUs is critical to the structural stability of this multimillion dollar facility, as well as to its continuing ability to safely carry Dhaka traffic over its design life,"

the letter said.

When contacted, officials of RHD admitted World Bank's dissatisfaction, but they said it is nothing serious. "Testing of STUs is not necessary as all of their materials have been tested," said one of them. "But the contractor is bound to do it as it is mentioned in the contract," he said.

The official confirmed the contractor's proposal to have the remaining 21 STUs tested in China, as it would cost less. "But now they are doing as directed by the World Bank. We do not want to displease them (World Bank)" he said.