



Crowds cling onto moving BRTC buses on Mirpur-Azimpur route in a mad rush to get to their destinations with the banning of rickshaws.

BRTC buses reduced on Mirpur Road

ASHIQUIR RAHMAN

The Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) had promised 40 double-decker buses on the Mirpur Road following the ban on rickshaws from Azimpur to Russell Square. However, within three weeks of introducing the buses, the BRTC authorities have reduced the number to a half ignoring public demand.

Commuters on the route now believe that it was a ploy by the government to falsely convince people so that there was no adverse reaction to the rickshaw ban enforced from December 17. BRTC officials however, said buses were reduced fearing possible losses as there might not be enough passengers.

But hundred of people who mainly travel between Kalabagan and Azimpur can be seen waiting for buses everyday for hours. Students were the worst sufferers as there were no alternative cheap modes of travelling.

"Every day I have to struggle to get on a bus. It is like a war," said Simi, a Dhaka Medical College student who lives in Kalabagan.

Hiru Mian, a businessman of Lalbagh area complained that BRTC buses are rarely seen



during office hours and other buses do not have minimum space. "When buses run by private operators reach Kalabagan from Mirpur or Mohammadpur, they are already jam-packed. It is quite impossible to get on board."

"The government had introduced enough

BRTC buses when rickshaws went off the road from Azimpur to Kalabagan and for a certain period, it also facilitated the passengers by not demanding fare. But now very few BRTC buses are seen running on this road," said Shafique Ahmed, a resident of Azimpur.

Deputy general manager of BRTC's Kalyanpur depot Indraraj Chakma said the decision to limit the number of buses was taken purely from financial considerations.

"People might feel that we have deceived them but the buses were reduced due to the losses as passengers are not available on the Mirpur Road."

If 40 BRTC buses were to run on the Mirpur Road again, the government had to provide subsidy, he added.

"The government is now thinking of extending the route up to Gulistan via Dhaka University to make it more profitable for the BRTC," said Syed Anamul Haque, acting Chairman and finance director of BRTC.

He also said that a proposal in this regard has already been submitted to the Dhaka University authorities so that BRTC buses are allowed to use the roads inside the university.

Lanes suffering from heavy load

SYED TASHFIN CHOWDHURY

With the banning of rickshaws on main roads of the city, lanes and

by-lanes are remaining constantly choked with rickshaws and other non-motorised vehicles. On broken-down lanes like

Central Road, Kalabagan 2nd Lane, Bashiruddin Road and some other lanes in Rajabazar, Shukrabad, Azimpur, Sipahibagh,

Khilgaon and Shaheed Nagar the misery of people have increased in recent months with hundreds of new rickshaws starting to use

the roads following the ban.

"We are stuck in traffic for over half-an-hour regularly due to the jam in the by-lane of Dhanmondi Road 15," said Abbas Chowdhury, a resident of Rayerbazar.

Out of Dhaka's 2,290-kilometre road area, 20 kilometers have been made rickshaw free. The authorities plan more roads without rickshaws in the future. But while enforcing the ban, necessary contingency measures have been ignored.

It is believed that there are some two lakh illegal rickshaws in Dhaka and the numbers are increasing by the day with more people moving into the capital from villages in search of a better living. But the city does not have enough by-lanes to accommodate more commuters and vehicles.

The lanes previously used by rickshaws and cars are now experiencing additional load. Because of the heavy traffic, the existing potholes and cracks are deteriorating and new ones are developing. There is more noise pollution and the atmosphere is always crowded. Pedestrians using the lanes are fearful of getting hit by rickshaws near crossings as they try to race each other on the narrow lanes when signals turn green.

Trucks and heavy vehicles are also damaging the lanes by using them at night.

When asked about their plans on solving this problem, a senior official of Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP) said that they have not formulated anything yet.



At bay from main roads. Rickshaws choke Kalabagan 2nd lane entrance.



Ice cool parties

FAIZUL KHAN TANIM

The increasing number of parties and social gatherings has resulted in a high demand for ice cubes, manufactured commercially.

Since 1997, plants were developed for large-scale manufacture of ice, and although they did not make a beneficial commencement has now turned into great profit centres.

Sources from a clubs like Dhaka, Gulshan, Nordic and International said they no longer undergo the hassle of producing ice cubes, when they can now buy crushed ice or cubes from various production plants in the city.

Mozammel Huq Shahin, assistant officer of Himalay Ice described the production procedure: "Water from WASA goes through several phases of purification without boiling. Mineral compounds like carbon and ceramic help in the filtering process. Finally ultra violet rays are sent through the water to kill bacteria."

The moulds are then filled with purified water, and within 55 minutes, ice is produced and the next round begins. On an average around 300 bags

(each containing 850 grams of ice) are produced a day, according to sources from another plant. Clubs and hotels buy these ice bags at Tk. seven to 10 per 850 grams.

"When the business started in 1997 sales were only 10 packets a day. None wanted to buy packet ice. With major clubs and hotels in the city buying packet ice, the scene has now changed. The business is quite good. We are soon going to install a machine with higher capacity to produce the enormous volumes demanded by clubs and hotels," added Mozammel.

Dhaka and Gulshan club authorities said their daily requirement is a minimum of 60 bags of ice. This volume varies according to seasons and party times. The highest consumption by a single club goes to as high as 150 bags a day while smaller clubs use up a minimum of seven to 10 packets.

Residents now find these ice bags convenient at house parties, as they are freely available. Pharmaceutical officials said it was easy to transport costly vaccines to rural areas using ice bags as preservation.

useful telephone numbers

COURIER SERVICES

International
Air Borne Express- 9561371, 9561372, 9550724
Air Couriers Int'l (BD) Ltd.- 8815970
Aramex International Courier- 9558003, 9559582, 9565075
Airspeed Express- 9563494
Asian Courier Services Ltd.- 8313543
Baishakhi Courier Service- 9558606
Bangladesh 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- 9558515, 7110249
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

Dolphin Courier- 9558802
Dreamland Courier Service- 9550326, 9566975
Pioneer Courier Services- 9561727, 9569759
Probashi Courier Services- 9346359
Rainbow Express Parcel Services Ltd.- 8322773, 8315703
Reliance Express Services- 9558515, 7110249
Sundarban Courier Services- 9551984, 9556189, 9551656
Sunrise Courier Services- 9568751
World Runner Express Ltd. 9112068, Fax - 880-2-9112068

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- 8850141, 8850142
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 Jadugarh- 9559091
Open: 10:30 am 6:30 pm, Sunday Closed
Bangabandhu Smiti Jadugarh- 8110046
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Wednesday closed
Ahsan Manzil
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday: 3 pm - 7 pm, Thursday Closed
Shishu Jadugarh- 9666466
Open: 10 am- 6 pm, Sunday Closed

CITY BUS ROUTE

Bus No.	Route	Starts from
1	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 10, 11, 12	Golap Shah Mazar
2	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 1, 2	Phoolbaria bus station
3	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mahakhali-Airport-Azampur	Phoolbaria bus station
4	Shyampur-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Airport-Tongi	Shyampur
5	Sayedabad-Kamalapur-Motijheel-Airport-Joydebpur-Gazipur	Sayedabad
6A	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6B	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6C	Motijheel Shapla chattr- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2	Motijheel Shaplachattr
7	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2	Sadarghat
8	Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtol	Chittagong Road
9	Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12	Demra Ranimahat
10	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Mailbagh-Rampura-Biswa Road-Tongi Bridge	Sadarghat
11	Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Tongi Bridge	Sayedabad
11/A	Sayedabad-Khilgaon-Mailbagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge	Sayedabad
12	Shanir Akhra-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammadpur	Shanir Akhra
13	Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Jhigatola-Shangkar-Mohammedpur	Motijheel
14	Signboard -Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 12	Signboard (Chittagong Road)
15	Chittagong Road-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mirpur 12	Chittagong Road
24	Gulistan-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Airport-Uttara-Bipile	Gulistan