

Some routes such as this one have too many public buses plying while some suffer from a lack of transport.

DTCB plans to restructure city bus routes

SULTANA RAHMAN
Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB) is planning to restructure the city's existing bus routes to reduce the pressure on several busiest routes and distribute the load of mass transports equally among all the routes.
The traffic division of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has sent a proposal to the DTCB regarding the restructuring of

the bus routes. DTCB sources said they have already started conducting a study on the routes.
"Huge number of buses move on 7/8 main roads which are not capable enough to take the load. Eventually the roads become heavily congested," said Ansaruddin Khan Pathan, deputy commissioner of DMP traffic division (South).
"We should rearrange the routes in a scientific way," Pathan said.

The city has a total of 63 bus routes and except those 7/8 busy routes the others are neglected by the bus owners. Most buses ply on Uttara-Mohakhali-Farmgate-Shahbagh-Gulistan-Motijheel and Mirpur-Farmgate-Shah-xbagh-Gulistan-Motijheel routes.
The bus owners ask for route permits for these routes only. As a result, commuters of other routes have to change buses and rush to the busy points to get buses.
The officials of DTCB and the traffic division of DMP said about

5,800 buses ply on city roads. But according to Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA), 2,978 private buses and minibuses and 1,589 human hauliers are in operation.
DTCB officials believe if the routes were distributed scientifically, it will reduce passengers' hazards as well traffic conges-

tion. "The pressure on common routes will reduce if we could introduce circular transport system," a DTCB official said.
Newly appointed DTCB Executive Director MA Momen said they are trying hard to work out solutions to ease the city's ever-increasing traffic congestion.

No taxis for short distances

CITY CORRESPONDENT

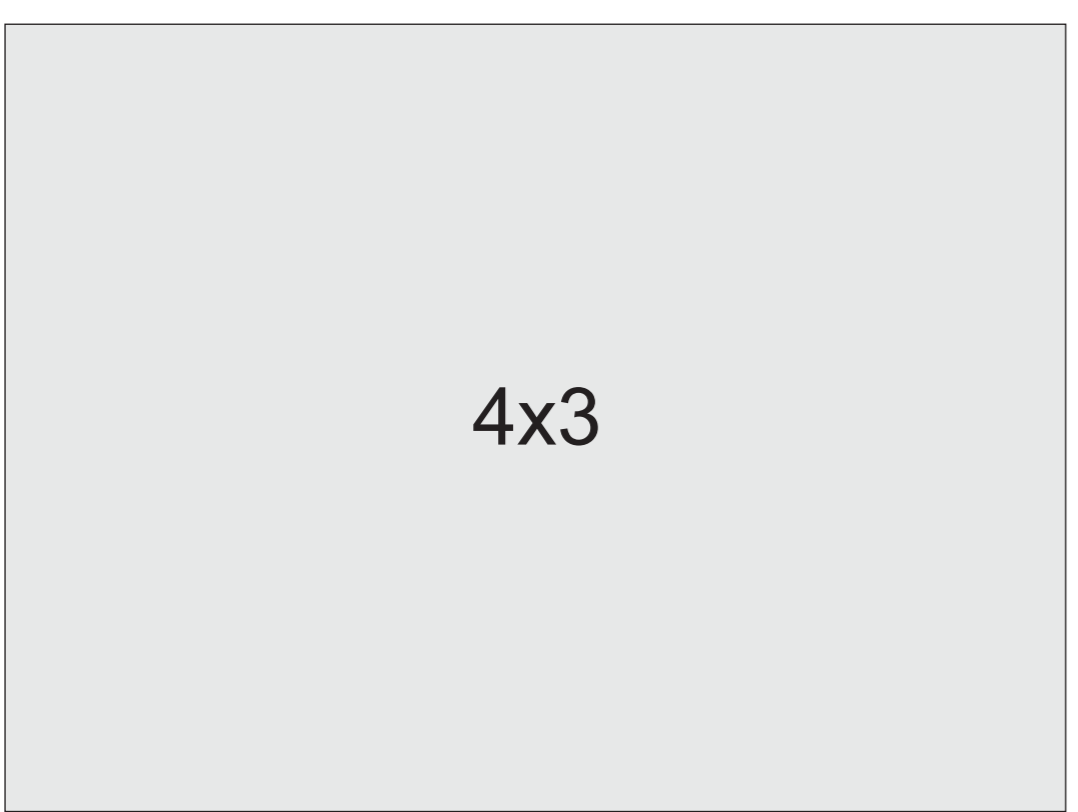
It was already 7:30 pm, when Mirza Mohiuddin began looking for a taxi or a CNG three-wheeler while his wife and son waited near the Agargaon bus stand. The family was returning home to Nakhla para from a relative's place.
As Mohiuddin approached the CNG three-wheeler drivers and cabbies, they flatly refused to take them to their desired destination. They all said they do not ply to short distances, which clock up small amounts of fare.
Mohiuddin and his family finally persuaded one of the three-wheeler drivers promising to pay Tk 10 on top of the metered fare.
Scores of city dwellers suffer the same problem everyday as Mohiuddin did.
"After a day's work, most commuters are too tired to hunt for cabs and the drivers take advantage of this situation," said Afsar Wahid, a city dweller.
Commuters also complain about rough behaviour from the drivers.
"They give excuses such as engine breakdown and brake failure when they do not want to take passengers," said Shejuti Chowdhury,

who lives at Jhigatola.
She has to take taxis or CNG three-wheelers to reach her workplace at Karwanbazar.
Monty Khan, a resident of Tejgaon, said once he called up the police complaint centre from his cellphone after being refused a ride.
"The individual at the centre wanted to talk to the driver and once the receiver phone was given to the driver, the driver started screaming over the phone at the complaint centre staff," said Khan.
But while commuters suffer, most cabbies cite traffic congestion as the main reason for their reluctance to go to some particular areas during certain hours of the day.
"I do not make any trips to areas in or around Dhanmondi, Shahbagh and Motijheel between 7:30am and 9:00am," said Md. Selim, a black cab driver.
Also, most cabbies do not want to go to remote places at late hours where chances of getting passengers on way back are slim.
"I know I will not get too many passengers from areas like Uttara, Basabo, Madartek, and Sayedabad after 9pm and so I avoid making trips to these areas after that time," said a driver on condition of anonymity.
Most of these drivers are unaware that bound to take any

passenger to any area within the city limits.
"If a taxi refuses to go to a certain area, the commuter should contact the nearest traffic police and the policeman will take care of the situation," said Ansaruddin Khan Pathan, deputy commissioner (traffic), south of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).
He also pointed out that the driver could be penalised for refusing to take passengers.
The DMP has ordered taxi drivers to put on display identification cards on the dashboard by March 10. This is yet to be done even after the deadline.
The applicants are yet filling in forms for identification cards. The applications must accompany a written consent stating their willingness to abide relevant laws and regulations. The cards and the application processes are handled by the Cab Association of Bangladesh (CAB).
"Awareness programmes concerning laws and training sessions for proper treatment of passengers will be given to all taxi and three-wheeler drivers with identity cards by the end of the year," said Anwarul Islam Tareque, General Secretary, CAB.



Convincing a CNG three-wheeler to take short trips is a really tough job for commuters.



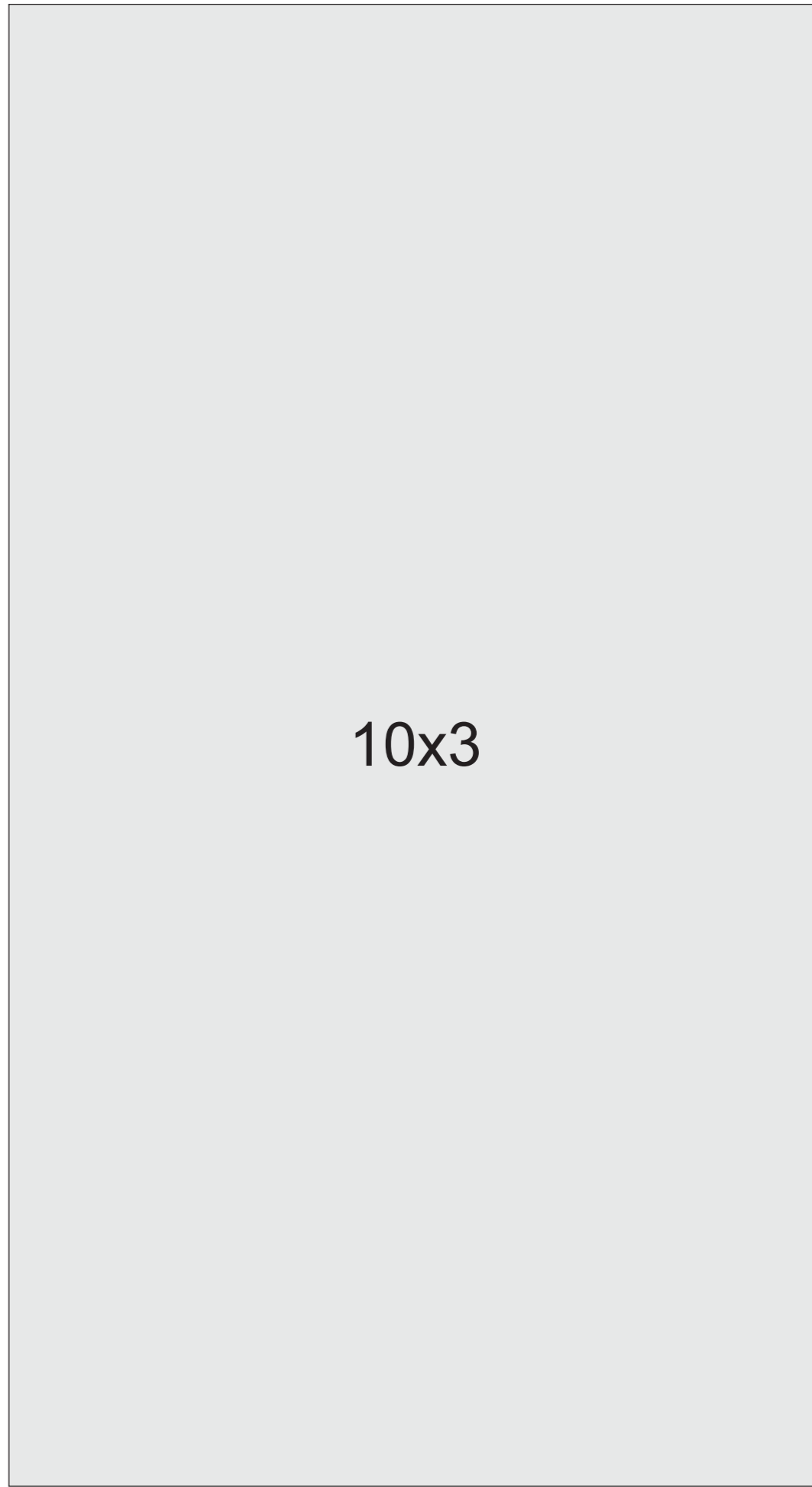
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