

# Electronic traffic signalling: So far so good

FAIZUL KHAN TANIM

The recently installed electronic traffic signalling system in the city has apparently eased traffic congestion to a certain extent.

Some 58 signals have been installed under the Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP) at a cost of 6.5 crore Taka. The initiative has seen a marked improvement in the traffic situation at Gulshan circles 1 and 2 and the Sonargaon intersection.

"Earlier it took us at least 15 to 20 minutes to cross the Sonargaon intersection while going to Dhanmondi from Karwan Bazar. But now it does not take that much time," said Faiz Ahmed, a businessman.

Previously, the traffic police manually controlled traffic movement in that intersection and commuters

feel that was the main reason for the delay in crossing it.

"As the VIP road ran through this intersection, it always used to receive high priority under the manual system. At times, vehicles trying to get over to the other side to the Panthapath Road got stuck in front of the Hotel Sonargaon for half an hour at a stretch even. The traffic sergeants also stopped cars at will to facilitate the movement of VIP personnel," said a regular commuter of the area. "But now there is a fixed time frame at signals," he added.

"Dhaka City obviously needs more electronic signals. The total area of Singapore is around the same as Dhaka but that city has almost 6,000 electronic signals to control the traffic. The 58 signals are part of the first phase of installation. How-

ever we have not yet planned for the next phase," said a DTCB official.

Locals said that the overall congestion had come down at Gulshan circles 1 and 2 but some shopkeepers and businessmen in those areas cited certain technical faults of the new system.

"The duration of the signals are not symmetrical. Recently, I observed that the green signal flashed only for a short period and the red signal came back within 50 to 60 seconds at Gulshan 2. Hardly five cars could pass through during that time as drivers of many taxicabs and CNG three-wheelers had turned off their engines to save gas and fuel. By the time they could start their vehicles and cross the signal, cars following them had been stopped by the red signal," said Fahim Ahmed. Although commuters of

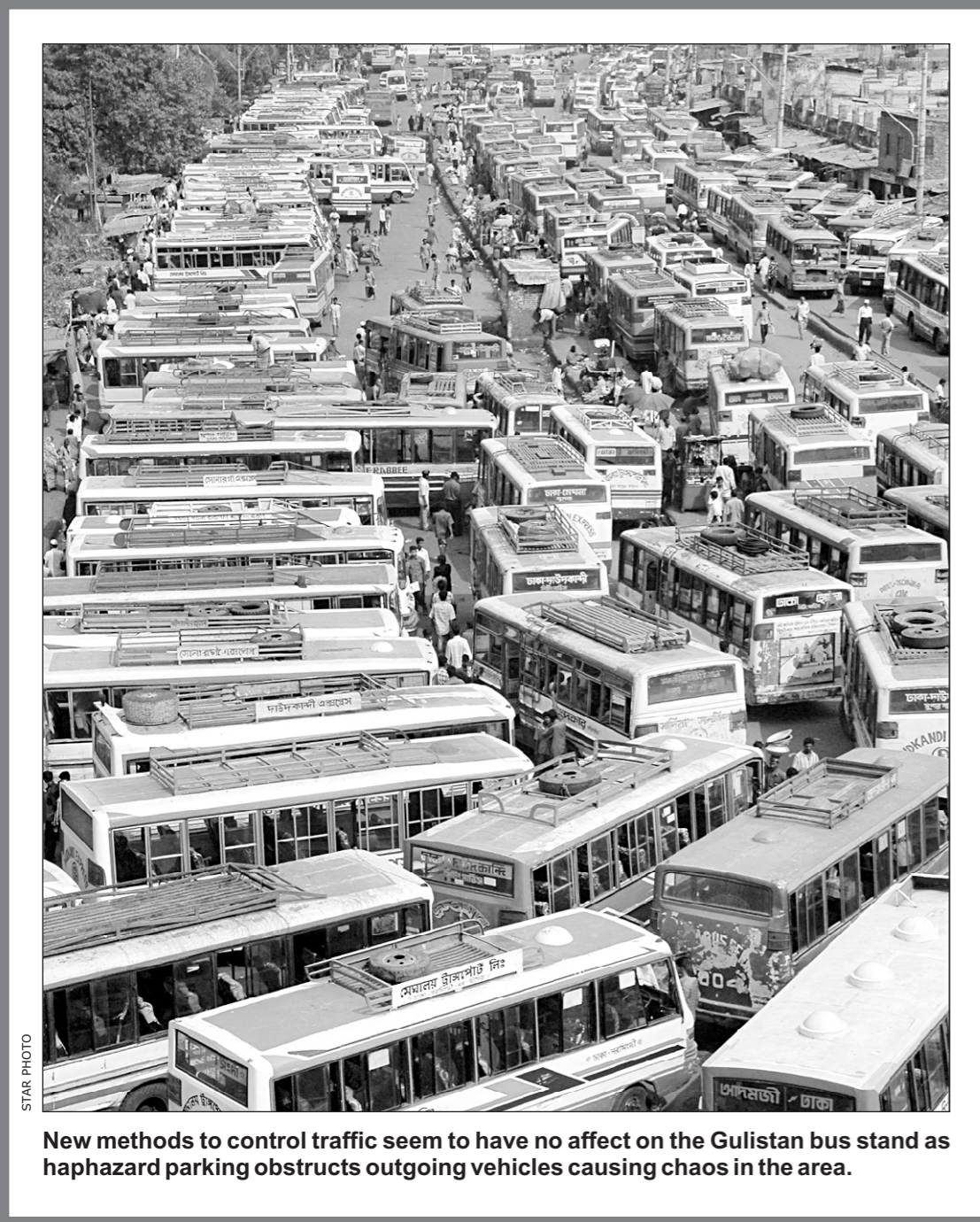
Karwan Bazar and Gulshan are experiencing relative relief from the infamous congestion of the past, the same can not be said about some other parts of the city.

A physician of PG hospital who frequents Shahbagh said the traffic situation in that area has deteriorated after the installation of the signals. He put the blame on frequent malfunctions in the signalling system which forces the traffic police into taking charge manually.

Lack of awareness of pedestrians also attribute to the problems near Shahbagh. Most signals for pedestrians are out of order and many people still do not know how to use the ones that are working. Therefore, people tend to cross the busy roads whenever they feel like by holding off traffic.



Electronic signals at Hotel Sonargaon intersection has eased the rush of traffic.



New methods to control traffic seem to have no effect on the Gulistan bus stand as haphazard parking obstructs outgoing vehicles causing chaos in the area.

## Karwan Bazar underpass turns dirty again

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The Karwan Bazar underpass recently underwent a facelift but pedestrians are worried that its conditions could deteriorate fast if not maintained properly.

The underpass is cleaned only once in the morning and because of that, it remains dirty throughout the day. The tiles of its staircases have broken already in certain parts and dirt has formed on the walls.

The Karwan Bazar underpass was re-opened last December after the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) renovated it. The new-look underpass drew admiration for his interior décor, lighting and spaciousness from pedestrians who use it regularly in this busy commercial area of the city.

"Among the three underpasses in the city, the Karwan Bazar underpass is still the best. But it remains to be seen what will happen when the monsoon arrives," said Taslim Ahmed, who comes to Karwan Bazar kitchen market from Kathal Bagan at least twice a week.

Originally inaugurated in 1997, the underpass soon found itself in a run-down condition as no maintenance

was done. Waterlogging and filthy environment made it extremely unhygienic and insecure. During the rainy season, the underpass often became unusable as water dripped inside continuously due to technical faults in the structure, said DCC sources.

The City Corporation began the renovation work in September 2004 as part of the capital's beautification project. The underpass was renovated at a cost of 63 lakh Taka.

Under the beautification and renovation work, the terminal sheds on both sides of the underpass were replaced with catchy transparent sheets. Bright lights were installed and paintings were hung on the wall with spotlights on them to bring sophistication. The technical defects have been fixed also. There are now two entrances on the eastern side of the underpass. Previously, there was only one, which led to congestion.

It is still relatively clean considering the amount of load it takes everyday but many felt the situation could have been much better had there been permanent cleaners there.

"The overall security has improved as well. We can

now safely pass without the fear of getting mugged and teased," said Sultana Ahmed who works in the WASA Bhaban.

"The maintenance of the underpass is carried out under a project of the DCC called Dhaka Nagar Abokathamo (Dhaka City

Infrastructure). The security and other aspects are now being centrally looked after. But the responsibility will be handed over to the Zone 6 of the DCC within two years," said assistant engineer Abdul Mannan of Zone 6.

"At the moment, we look

after the electrification system of the underpass. When light bulbs go off, we replace them immediately. We also repair connections. On the otherhand, the DCC sweepers, who clean the adjacent roads in the morning every day, also clean the underpass," added Mannan.



The recently renovated Karwan Bazar underpass is now in need of consistent maintenance.

## useful telephonenumber numbers

OURIER SERVICES	LIBRARY & INFO	OUTING	CITY BUS ROUTE																																																														
<p><b>International</b></p> <p>Air Borne Express- 9561371, 9561372, 9550724</p> <p>Air Couriers Int'l (BD) Ltd.- 8815970</p> <p>Aramex International Courier- 9558003, 9559582, 9565075</p> <p>Airspeed Express- 9563494</p> <p>Asian Courier Services Ltd.- 8313543</p> <p>Baishakhi Courier Service- 9558606</p> <p>Banmgladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114</p> <p>Bangladesh Courier Service- 9563989</p> <p>Bengal Express- 9560642, 9552666</p> <p>Bangladesh Int'l Courier- 953636</p> <p>Continental Service Ltd.- 9552948, 9558425</p> <p>DHL Worldwide Express- 9881703-7, 9886305-9, 9882057</p> <p>Enem Express- 9330699</p> <p>Fedex Bangladesh Express Co. 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Cultural Library-</b> 8850141, 8850142</p> <p><b>The Russian Cultural Centre-</b> 9116314, 9118531, 9118314</p> <p><b>Drik Photo Gallery-</b> 9120125, 8112954, 8123412</p>	<p><b>Museum and Zoo</b></p> <p><b>National Museum-</b> 8619396-9</p> <p>Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday 3 pm- 8 pm, Thursday closed</p> <p><b>Muktijuddha Jadughar-</b> 9559091</p> <p>Open: 10:30 am 6:30 pm, Sunday Closed</p> <p><b>Bangabandhu Smiti Jadughar-</b> 8110046</p> <p>Open: 10 am 5 pm, Wednesday closed</p> <p><b>Ahsan Manzil</b></p> <p>Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday: 3 pm - 7 pm, Thursday Closed</p> <p><b>Shishu Jadughar-</b> 9666466</p> <p>Open: 10 am- 6 pm, Sunday Closed</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Bus No.</th> <th>Route</th> <th>Starts from</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 10, 11, 12</td> <td>Golap Shah Mazar</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 1, 2</td> <td>Phoolbaria bus station</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mahakhali-Airport-Azampur</td> <td>Phoolbaria bus station</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Shyampur-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Airport-Tongi</td> <td>Shyampur</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>Sayedabad-Kamalapur-Motijheel-Airport-Joydebpur-Gazipur</td> <td>Sayedabad</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6 A</td> <td>Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulshan 1, 2</td> <td>Kamalapur</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6 B</td> <td>Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2</td> <td>Kamalapur</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6 C</td> <td>Motijheel Shapla chattr- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2</td> <td>Motijheel Shaplachatter</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>Sadarghat-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2</td> <td>Sadarghat</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8</td> <td>Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtolli</td> <td>Chittagong Road</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9</td> <td>Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12</td> <td>Demra Ranimahala</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10</td> <td>Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Malibagh-Rampura-Biswa Road-Tongi Bridge</td> <td>Sadarghat</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11</td> <td>Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Tongi Bridge</td> <td>Sayedabad</td> </tr> <tr> <td>11/A</td> <td>Sayedabad-Khilgoan-Malibagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge</td> <td>Syedabad</td> </tr> <tr> <td>12</td> <td>Shanir Akhra-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammadpur</td> <td>Shanir Akhra</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13</td> <td>Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Jhigatola-Shangkar-Mohammedpur</td> <td>Motijheel</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14</td> <td>Signboard -Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 12</td> <td>Signboard (Chittagong Road)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15</td> <td>Chittagong Road-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mirpur 12</td> <td>Chittagong Road</td> </tr> <tr> <td>24</td> <td>Gulistan-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Airport-Uttara-Bipile</td> <td>Gulistan</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	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	6 A	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur	6 B	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur	6 C	Motijheel Shapla chattr- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2	Motijheel Shaplachatter	7	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2	Sadarghat	8	Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtolli	Chittagong Road	9	Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12	Demra Ranimahala	10	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Malibagh-Rampura-Biswa Road-Tongi Bridge	Sadarghat	11	Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Tongi Bridge	Sayedabad	11/A	Sayedabad-Khilgoan-Malibagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge	Syedabad	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
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