

Traffic volume at the Jatrabari intersection will be under scrutiny with the installation of vehicle detectors.

Detectors to control traffic volume

AVIK SANWAR RAHMAN

Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP) is installing vehicle detectors to monitor city's volume of traffic. The project is scheduled to start functioning from next month.

"The cabling of these detectors is under process and we hope that they will be able to provide information on the traffic volume from first week of April," said Abdul Qaiyum Project Director (PD) of DUTP.

The detectors will help DUTP to control traffic according to the volume of vehicles at certain signal points.

"We would be able to measure volume of traffic at nine signal points and set the duration of

signal accordingly," Qaiyum said.

The detector is a sensor, which will send signals via a chip transferring information to the Central Monitoring Station (CMS) at the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC). The signal duration would then be set according to the information sent by the detector.

"The signals will start operating automatically once we set the duration and this could be changed if volume of traffic changes," said DUTP's Project Director of DUTP.

Grameen Phone (GP) has provided the information chip and DUTP has to pay GP Tk. 50 lakhs for maintenance of the nine vehicle detectors for three years.

The vehicle detector is a part

of DUTP's Tk. 14 crore electronic signal project funded by World Bank for 59 electronic signals throughout the city.

With the introduction of automatic electronic traffic signals the traffic situation of Dhaka has improved, but because the volume of traffic is not monitored congestion has increased at several signals along Shahbagh to Kataban, Technical Darus Salam and the signals at the Kakrail roundabout.

"We have to operate signals manually to cope with the traffic congestion as the duration of traffic signals are not set according to the vehicle volume," said a traffic police officer at the Kakrail roundabout.

The PD of DUTP thinks that vehicle detector will be able to

solve the problem erupted by lack of information of traffic volume.

"We can always change the duration of the signal and set it accordingly if it is reported by traffic police," said Qaiyum.

"We have installed the vehicle detectors to see the impact of the detectors on traffic movement. We are hopeful that traffic will be more easy to control once the detectors start functioning," the PD added.

The vehicle detectors are set at the Gulshan 1 and 2 intersections, Technical Darus Salam signal, Bijoynagar, Malibagh, Tongi Diversion, Malibagh Railcrossing (Atish Dipankar Road), Dhaka Sheraton and Bangla Motor intersections.

FDC's 'unwanted' visitors

KAUSAR ISLAM AYON

If you are asked to name recreational or historical spots in Dhaka, the National Zoo, Shishu Park, National Museum, Ahsan Manjil might come to mind instantly. But for many, the place to be is the 'FDC'.

FDC is the Bangladesh Film Development Corporation (BFDC)'s name in short to the masses addicted to local films. The heavily guarded complex near Karwan Bazar level crossing is forbidden to the public but just being near its gate alone is like a pilgrimage for many movie fanatics.

Most people gather there everyday with one common desire - to catch a glimpse of their heroes or heroines when they enter or leave the BFDC. Some brave rain or the scorching sun to wait for hours at the entrance. With local films being the main source of recreation for the lower class, usually workers of garment factories, transport work-

ers, rickshaw-pullers and other poor people dominate the daily visitors' list.

Humayun, a rickshaw-puller, was waiting to see his favourite heroine Shabnoor. "I do not start working before the evening. So I thought why not get some recreation and that is why I am here."

Most of the fans who come are young men but women arrive too. Amena came with her boyfriend hoping to get lucky.

"She wants to see her favourite hero Manna with her own eyes. She had been requesting me for a long time so I brought her here today," said Kamal, Amena's companion.

Unfortunately, Manna did not turn up at the BFDC that day and the couple went back after waiting for nearly three hours vowing to return again.

Raihan is a veteran at the BFDC's gate. He has seen almost all the heroes and heroines but never managed to get in to see the shooting of a film. Many people like Raihan arrive with the hope of

watching a movie being made but they hardly ever get that opportunity due to the restrictions on entry.

But there are ways if you are really desperate. Some opportunist middlemen in collaboration with the security guards reportedly let in a few people every now and then. But the bribe is too much to afford for most.

"The 'agent' has asked for one thousand Taka but I do not have that much money. So I can not enter," said a dejected visitor Rafikul Islam.

One middleman claimed that they were able to manage one or two passes each day for interested fans but the cost is high.

The security guards of the BFDC try to discourage unwanted visitors by brandishing sticks and even chase people away at times. But the die-hard followers still come back.

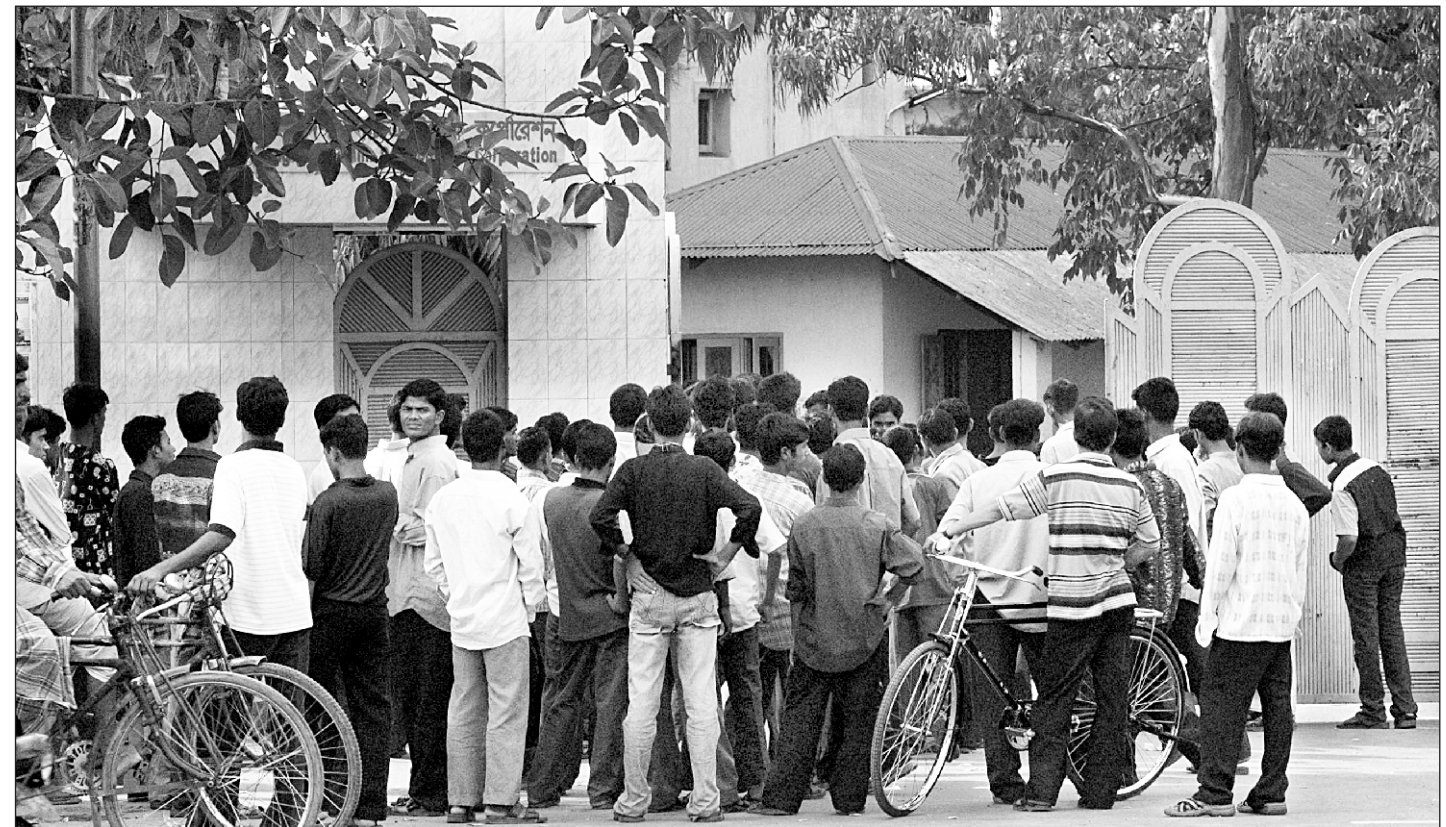
"Ten people work here per shift and at least five of us are always busy in pushing people away as they often block the entrance," said Amir Hossain, a security guard of

BFDC. He informed that the situation goes out of control every Friday. "There are ten times more than the usual number of fans on holidays."

Some young men and women come with the secret desire of somehow getting a break on the silver screen. Middlemen can be found active in negotiating deals with these unsuspecting young people and many eventually leave heartbroken and with empty pockets.

"I am confident that I can act. I just need a break," said Rubel with a twinkle in his eyes. "I am sure I would be able to draw the attention of a producer one day."

The BFDC only allows enlisted people, artists, technicians and workers to get inside its premises. For thousands of others who flock its entrance religiously every day, dreamland remains a dream for ever.



A section of crowds that flock the FDC gate on Friday afternoons.

10x3

10x2

10x3