

City beautification measures need proper maintenance

FAIZUL KHAN TANIM

Lack of proper maintenance is hampering the beautification of the capital ahead of the Saarc Summit to be held in November this year as per revised schedule.

partnership seemed to work well but the summit, originally scheduled in January, was postponed twice. The authorities are now considering a follow-up of the beautification measures as new dates for the seven-nation summit was announced recently. In the meantime, the city witnessed a sluggish trend in the maintenance of the beautified roads and spots. Many fear

the beautification initiative would prove futile if the spots are not properly maintained before November. Most plants in Shahbagh area already died and decorations around Dhaka University and Ramna areas faded. Few decorative lights on fancy lampposts are seen ruptured on the road from Banani to Uttara. Many light holders are broken.

Officials of Dhaka City Corporation said the plants have died due to excessive heat. Ashfaq Ahmed, a resident of Uttara said, "Quite a few times I noticed that the lights remained switched on during daytime but off at night." A large number of plants including small grass seedlings were planted on road islands and the roadside medians spending a lot of money for beautification, but they are now damaged as pedestrians often walk along the beautified spots.



A step-up on the maintenance of Dhaka beautification is much required to save trees from dying. These fern trees along Rokeya Sarani are in a sorry state due to lack of maintenance.

The Panthakunjo Park near Karwan Bazar is not being maintained properly. Vagrants loiter inside the park. Pedestrians and vendors selling nuts and cigarettes are damaging the small grasses planted under the Mohakhali flyover.

The beautification measures on Elephant Road, Sonargaon Road, Mirpur Road, Satmasjid Road and in some parts of Kakrail were also spoiled due to the sluggish maintenance.

However, a few main roads remain well maintained. Panthapath and Bijoy Sharani are in good condition due to regular police patrolling. The Gulshan-1 medians are also well maintained, say the local residents.

A total of 71 public and private organisations were given the task of implementing the beautification project. The authorities have divided the city into 109 zones and asked the executing agencies to beautify these areas.

The private organisations are supposed to maintain the plants on medians and road dividers for the next four years. Officer in-charge of Dhaka City Corporation's beautification cell, Iftekhar Alam, said the top officials of the organisations involved in the project will be called in a meeting to discuss the progress of the beautification.

Another executive of DCC said most of the private organisations have given sub-contract to other organisations to execute the project components. The sub-contractors do not work sincerely if they are not paid as per contract.

"There will be a follow-up meeting within June 25 where a detailed monitoring session will be held on the progress of the beautification work," said Chief Conservancy Officer of DCC Sohail Farouque.



The expansion of the Premium Bus service is at a standstill, as they are yet to receive diversified route permits.

Premium Bus fighting for route permit renewal

SYED TASHFIN CHOWDHURY

Premium Bus Service, the first ever air-conditioned bus operators in the city, is unable to expand and improve its fleet due to complications regarding route permit.

The Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) is reportedly hesitant to renew the route permit, which expired in 2001.

"The route permit for each vehicle is only available for four years immediately from the year of purchase, after which the vehicle is deemed as 'unfit' to ply on the city streets," said a BRTA official, on condition of anonymity.

"We are trying our best to sustain the quality in our service but the route permit situation and the recent price hike of fuel are not helping matters," said an official of Bangladesh Metro Bus Company Limited (BMBCL), which owns Premium Bus Service.

Currently the service has around 30 vehicles at its disposal. Premium Bus started its operation in 1996 with 20 buses and had purchased 20 more over the next two years.

Sources in the BMBCL claimed that more than 10 buses have either been damaged beyond repair by picketers and political activists or have worn out during the last nine years.

"Those vehicles were never replaced due to financial constraints. However we thoroughly maintain our existing fleet. Still the BRTA is not renewing our route permit," said a BMBCL official.

A BRTA official pointed out that the vehicles bought by Premium Bus Service in 1996, 1997 and 1998, lost validity for route permit in 1999, 2000 and 2001 respectively. As a result BMBCL now needs to replace its buses if it wants to have the route permit renewed.

"Replacing all the 30 vehicles would cost around Tk six crore. On the other hand, the buses we have now have passed the fitness test approved by the BRTA with flying colours. But we plan to introduce some new

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buses anyway," said the BMBCL official who added that they had abided by all the rules laid down by the BRTA.

"Our service is on the Uttara - Motijheel route and despite the high demand, we have only kept 10 stoppages on this route."

Premium Bus Service maintains its schedule more or less, said regular passengers. It is also quite stringent about its sitting service rules.

"I had to argue with the driver who did not want me to board the bus as all the seats were already filled," said Shankar Das, who however managed to convince the driver about his emergency and traveled standing up to the Hotel Sheraton stoppage.

BMBCL authorities said that such incidents rarely occurred. "The 'sitting' rule is at times bent at the request of passengers or in cases of urgencies," said a BMBCL official.

He claimed that the BRTA has not shown a justifiable attitude towards Premium service.

"We had obtained the route permit following an agreement with the BRTA that only BMBCL vehicles would ply air-conditioned buses on the route. But

Nirapad, another sitting A/C bus service competed with Premium on the same route for seven years before going out of business last year."

Nirapad was operating without a route permit but BRTA never said anything against that service, claimed the official.

BMBCL filed a writ petition with the High Court against the BRTA for not non-renewal of route permit. The case is still being contested.

"We have received a stay order from the High Court to continue our operations till a verdict is reached," said a BMBCL official.

The BMBCL has not increased ticket rates of Premium Bus Service even after the recent rise in fuel prices, unlike some other sitting service operators.

"We have decided to wait for the Communication Ministry's decision regarding a new fare chart. On the basis of that, we will increase our fare," said a BMBCL official who hoped that the ministry would soon formulate a policy for sitting service operators.

"Such a policy would facilitate not only the operators but also the staff and the passengers."

healthouting, taxicab & train timing

<p>HEALTH</p> <p>Hospitals National Institute of Cardio Vascular Diseases (NICVD), - 9130800, 9122560-59</p> <p>Burn Dhaka Medical College Hospital Burn Unit-8626812-6</p> <p>Cancer National Cancer Institute-8014914, 8826561-65 Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University-8612550-4, 861455-9</p> <p>Diabetes Diabetic Research Hospital (BIRDEM)- 9661551-5, 8616641-50</p> <p>Mother & Child Care Shishu Hospital- 9119119, 8116061-62 Azimpur Mother & Child Health Training Institute- 8624827, 8624980</p> <p>Eye Istamia Eye Hospital-9110794, 9119315 National Eye Hospital- 8117202, 8114807</p> <p>Dental Dental College -9002035</p> <p>Orthopaedics National Orthopaedics (Pangu) Hospital- 9114075, 9112150</p> <p>General Dhaka Medical College Hospital- 8626812-6 Rushmono General Hospital- 8317819 Holy Family Hospital- 83111731-25 Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital- 8612550-4, 8614545-9 Bangladesh Medical College & Hospital- 8115443, 9118202, Shamaria Hospital- 9131901 Suhrawardy Hospital -- 9130800,</p> <p>9122560-69 Salimullah Medical Collage Hospital -- 7310061-4, 7319002-6 Cholera Research Hospital (ICDDR)- 8811751-60 Monowra Hospital 8319802, 8318135</p> <p>Blood Bank Red Crescent Centre- 9116563 Sandhani (DMCH)- 8624040 Sandhani (SMCH)- 7310061, 7310061, 7319022 Dhaka Medical Collage Hospital- 8626812-9</p> <p>Eye Bank Sandhani International Eye Bank- 8614040</p> <p>Ambulances For Dead Body Anzuman Mafidul Islam (Kakrail) 9336611, Gandaria 7319808, 7318166, Al-Markajul Islam 9127867,</p> <p>Gulshan 1, 2 markets-Friday Elephant Road-Friday Bishal Center-Friday Baitul Mukarram Market-Friday Polwell Market-Friday BCS Computer City-Friday Isha Khan Shopping Complex-Friday. Rajlaxmi Complex-Friday Stadium Market-Friday Bangabazar Market-Friday National Museum-Thursday Ahsan Manzil--Thursday. New Market-Tuesday Gausia Market-Tuesday Mouchak Market-Sunday Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesday Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesday Eastern Plaza-Sunday Farmview Super Market-Sunday Muktijuddha Jadughar-Sunday Dhaka Zoo-Sunday Shishu Jadughar-Sunday</p>	<p>MARKET CLOSED</p>	<p>TAXI CAB</p> <p>Yellow Cab Navana 9558065 Salida 9344477, 0171620881 Cosmo 9112959 and 8127191 Cab One 7113282-3 Nihon 9347277 Anudip -- 8125285 and 8127611 Capital 9352847</p> <p>Union 8130485 Kool 0171826731</p> <p>Black Cab Cab Ex 9358401 Cabline 8321162 JBS Cab 019364575 Sajan 018126036 Anudip -- 8125285 and 8127611 Cab One 7113282-3</p> <p>Palki 0171052500 Cab I 7113282 Jatri 0171540074 Nipun 9572277 R-Cab 8914782 Star Cab 9571919 Shihab 018202477 & 018228675 KGN 8620011</p> <p>Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers Central Public Library- 8626001-4, Shishu Academy- 9564128 Shilpakala Academy- 8614673 Bangla Academy- 8619550 Islamic Foundation- 9550280, 9556407 Nazrul Institute- 9114602 Ford Foundation- 8116133 Alliance Francaise- 8611557 Information Resource Center, The American Center - 8813440-4, 9886395-9 British Council- 8618867-8, 8618905-7 Community Development Library- 8113769, 8113604 Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka- 9126525-6 Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library- 8850141-2 The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314 Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412 Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) 9330081-4</p>	<p>LIBRARY & INFO</p>
<p>TRAIN TIMING</p>			
<p>Subarna Express Mahanagar Prabhati Mahanagar Godhuli Turna Parabat Express Joyantika Express Upaban Express Tista Express Ekata Express Upakul Express Agnibeena Express</p>	<p>Leaves Dhaka at 4:30 pm Leaves Dhaka at 7-30 am Leaves Dhaka at 3-15 pm Leaves Dhaka at 11-00 pm Leaves Dhaka at 6-40 am Leaves Dhaka at 12-45 pm Leaves Dhaka at 9-45 pm Leaves Dhaka at 7-00 am Leaves Dhaka at 5-00 pm Leaves Dhaka at 8-00 pm Leaves Dhaka at 9-20 pm</p>	<p>Reaches Chittagong at 10:35 pm Reaches Chittagong at 1-55 pm Reaches Chittagong at 10-55 pm Reaches Chittagong at 6-40 am Reaches Sylhet at 2-30 pm Reaches Sylhet at 9-20 pm Reaches Sylhet at 6-40 am Reaches Bahadurabad at 1-05 pm Reaches Bahadurabad at 11-15 Reaches Noakhali at 5-00 am Reaches Jagannath at 2-30 pm</p>	