

Noise pollution crosses all tolerable levels in port city

No one at Bahodderhat to refrain noise giants from blowing hydraulic horns

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It is 5:30 in the morning. The place is Bahodderhat bus station. With the break of the day, about a dozen buses, destined for Cox's Bazar, Bandarban, Kaptai and other southern townships, park on the main road and all together start blaring powerful hydraulic horns. The purpose of such a noisy practice is crudely simple, it is as if the drivers are announcing, "Here we are oh Chittagonians wake up and board our bus before we leave..." As the day gets older, other noisy giants of the roads join the fiasco, constantly blowing their powerful hydraulic horns. The

noise slowly intensifies to cross all decibel levels tolerable to humans living in the vicinity of the Bahodderhat bus stand and the famous CDA Avenue that criss-crosses the port city. Patients in the clinics and hospitals, students in their schools and colleges, residents in the posh residential area of Chandgaon and thousands of others, regularly exposed to the noise, have nowhere to turn to for a respite. Some have lost the ability to hear the noise any more and some are frustrated because there is nobody to look into the matter. Throughout the port city, noise pollution has marked phenomenal rise over the last two years, according to Shabbir Hussain Chowdhury, a busi-

nessman from Chandgaon residential area. This is mainly due to the overwhelming presence of buses, trucks and other vehicles, indiscriminately using the forbidden hydraulic horns as well as other powerful honks on city roads. Near the Bahodderhat bus station, at least two police sergeants and half a dozen traffic constables man an intersection, totally oblivious to the deafening noise produced by buses and trucks nearby. When recently, one of these correspondents asked an on-duty sergeant about what the law says on use of hydraulic horns, he replied, "We are supposed to fine the driver around Tk 100 and immediately confiscate the illegal horn from the

vehicle." When pointed out about the defiance of the buses nearby, he replied, "What is the big deal? They are only trying to pick up passengers by blowing the horn. It does not bother me. It is a matter of getting used to it." The increasing noise pollution in the fast growing metropolis in fact does not bother anyone in the top policy making positions either. The Department of Environment (DoE), having set a standard for decibel level in the country, now awaits a ministerial nod to propose the enactment of a law. Technical Director of DoE, Mohammad Reazuddin Ahmed told The Daily Star from Dhaka that a year ago his office sent a

standard on decibel level at different zones to the Ministry of Environment and Forest. The ministry in turn sent the draft to the law ministry for proper vetting before enacting a law. Several months later, the law ministry sent the draft back to the DoE for some amendments. "We are now waiting for the response of the law ministry," he said. Another reason for increasing noise pollution in the city is the presence of about 3.5 lakh rickshaws, most of which are unauthorised. Bus, truck and private car drivers said they were forced to use horns frequently to avoid accidents with these non-mechanised vehicles on the roads. On the other hand, the con-

struction sector of the city is also a major contributor to noise pollution. In various residential and commercial areas, thousands of structures of all sizes are now being built. At most construction sites, workers use crudely assembled mechanised brick-breakers, which make huge noise during operation. Use of loud speakers is also rampant, adding to the deteriorating noise problem. "Students of the schools and colleges in the residential areas are most sufferers as the brick breakers are operated in the neighbourhood during school hours," said Roxana Habib, a school teacher from Chandgaon, where dozens of schools are operating. Dr Khurshid Jamil

Chowdhury, Civil Surgeon of Chittagong, told The Daily Star that noise pollution has been a serious health problem in Chittagong, and needs to be addressed jointly by the health, home and environment ministries immediately. "Residents near Zakir Hossain Road in Khulshi are regularly complaining of sleeplessness due to increasing noise pollution there and I am sure symptoms of various ailments are surely showing among them," the Civil Surgeon said. "We are today clamping down on food adulteration but we should also know that noise pollution is equally harmful to human beings, particularly to growing children, the difference

is we can see or smell bad food, we cannot see or smell noise, but both are deadly," Chowdhury explained. According to physicians, constant exposure to urban noise pollution could lead to various illnesses. Long exposure could undoubtedly cause loss of hearing. Blood pressure rises with noise and makes one vulnerable to heart attack. The human body undergoes various, known and unknown, turbulence when exposed to noise. Medical scientists also observe changes in human behavioural patterns due to noise pollution.

CDA wakes up to fight unplanned urbanisation

Owners of high-rise buildings penalised for breaking rules

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) has fined influential owners Tk 1.10 lakh for four high-rise buildings constructed in violation of the approved plans, on the first day of its drive against illegal structures on August 9. The high-rise buildings are Akhteruzzaman Tower, Ayub Building, Century Tower and Moula Building at the Agrabad Commercial Area. It also fined Tk 10,000 several individuals for blocking the footpaths and roads with construction materials, they said. CDA is also planning to demolish 40 age-old buildings, including Kabiraj Building at Alkaran area, which many

experts feel should be preserved as heritage. Magistrate Tahera Ferdous led the CDA team on the first day. The CDA has started the drive with a view to helping proper urbanisation of the port city, sources said. It has also a plan to demolish 40 dilapidated buildings that pose a threat to the life and property. Construction of structures in violation of Building Construction (BC) rules was seriously hindering planned urbanisation, sources added. Earlier, the CDA formed a five-member vigilance team to put a check to the trend of illegal construction. The team would conduct the drive against such illegal buildings on every Tuesday that started on August

9. The CDA prepared a list of over 400 buildings, which were constructed violating the rules. It also asked the owners for bringing reforms in their structures according to the approved designs to avoid CDA action, they said. Sources said, high-rise multi-storied buildings with insufficient parking space hampered not only smooth movement of traffic, but also obstructed necessary expansion of the city roads and intersections. Besides, such buildings have their access ramps descending on the road disregarding the rights of pedestrians and the neighbours of the locality, they said. The CDA team comprises a town planner, an authorised

officer, an area planner and an investment planner. Most of these buildings are located at Firingee Bazar, Patharghata, Rumghata, Hemsan Lane and Kapashgola areas, sources said. There are 72 buildings on the demolition list. Of them, 32 at Anderkilla area were already demolished to facilitate implementation of the Anderkilla intersection and road expansion project, sources said. The CDA team, however, had to refrain from conducting the drive against construction irregularities on the second day yesterday as its magistrate was out of office due to sickness.



Kabiraj Building

the week that was



Local artistes perform at a cultural function organised by Rabindra Sangit Sammilon Parishad at the Theatre Institute Chittagong auditorium on Thursday.

Seminar on higher edn in Malaysia

The organisers at a seminar on 'Higher Education' here on Sunday said Bangladeshi students will get priority in the Malaysia Sunway University College. The seminar was held at the auditorium of Engineers Institution organised by H&I Council. They said the Sunway University has all world class opportunities, developed and cheaper accommodation, library, computer lab, and recognition in all famous universities in the world. The university offers facilities like credit transfer in the UK, Canada, Australia and the USA and the students can do part time job too, they said.

Senior Executive of the university Tan Su Lin and Sebastian Lu and Bangladesh representatives Rabiul Hossain and Sanjiv Islam addressed the seminar.

Bangabandhu's death anniversary observed

The 30th death anniversary of father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was observed in the port city on Monday. Different political and socio-cultural organisations chalked out various programmes to pay tributes to the great leader. City Awami League (AL) organised a milad mahfil at the party office in Darul Fazal Market in the port city in the afternoon marking the day. Later, a procession was

brought out from the party office premises that paraded city's major thoroughfares. A rally was also held in the afternoon demanding immediate execution of the verdict in the Bangabandhu Murder Case and protesting the revocation of state mourning on August 15.

Mishmak-PPP signed agreement

Mishmak Developer (Pvt) Limited, a real estate company, and PHP Float Glass Industry Limited signed an agreement on Saturday. Under the deal, Mishmak will use PHP glasses in all of their future real estate projects. Mishmak Ltd Chairman Mizanur Rahman Shahin and PHP Group Managing Director Mohammed Mohsin signed the agreement on behalf of their respective firms. Mohsin said their main objective is to make Bangladesh self-reliant in glass production and PHP always gives priority to the quality issue.

Ultrasound facility at CCC hospital

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) introduced ultrasonography facility at its Memon Maternity Hospital on Friday with a view to rendering better services to the patients. Acting CCC Mayor Jobaira Nargis Khan inaugurated the launching of new facility as chief guest. She termed the CCC step a milestone in healthcare sector and said the new technology will help provide modern and better services to the poorer section of the port city. Jobaira said CCC had long been playing a significant role in promoting healthcare sector and the distressed community is the main target group of this noble service.



Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al Noman addresses as the chief guest a seminar on 'Preservation and Development of Natural Fish Spawning Centre at the Halda' at the Institute of Engineers Bangladesh (IEB), Chittagong centre auditorium on Friday. The Fisheries Department organised the seminar on the occasion of the Fisheries Fortnight.



Proma Abritti Sangathan, a recitation organisation, took out a procession in the port city on the occasion of the first death anniversary of writer Prof Humayun Azad on Friday.



Poet and journalist Arun Dasgupta speaks at a programme titled 'Discussion and Recitation from the World Drama Literature' at the Chittagong Shilpakala Academy auditorium on Friday. Chittagong Group Theatre Forum organised the event.