

# Traffic month fails to tame chaotic traffic, stop tailback

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The traffic month 2005 ends in a couple of days without any significant improvement in the city's traffic system as the traffic department has failed to reduce the chaos in traffic due to a lack of manpower ahead of the Saarc Summit.

The traffic month that started on October 2 will continue till the last day of Ramadan.

"We wanted to rid the city of

traffic problems during the month of Ramadan but our efforts could not bring expected improvement," admitted a high official of the traffic department of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

"The main reason is the lack of manpower as the law enforcement agencies are now busy in the preparation for the Saarc Summit to be held on November 12-13," he added.

The preparation for this year's

traffic month in the capital was much intensive than that of previous year's. Around 1,800 regular traffic police, 500 community police, 400 armed police and nearly 400 traffic sergeants were engaged in enforcing traffic rules during the month but their combined efforts almost failed to achieve the target.

The traffic situation remained the same throughout the month.

Sources in the traffic department

said the armed police were unofficially withdrawn from traffic duty for Saarc Summit security after the first week of the traffic month.

Moreover, many traffic sergeants had to attend training sessions as part of Saarc Summit traffic management. "Newly recruited 500 community traffic police were deployed after only three days' training. They could not work properly," said the source.

After the first week of the traffic month, the activities of the law enforcement agencies slowed down. Except for irregular announcement in loudspeaker regarding traffic rules and guidelines, no other activities were seen in the city throughout the month.

Almost all the main roads of the city experienced huge traffic congestion during peak hours every day and the alleys were also suffocated mainly by rickshaws. The vehicles sometimes have to wait for more than a hour to cross one intersection.

"I was coming to Moghbazar from Mohakhali but I had to stop in front of Nabisco biscuit factory at Tejgaon, one and a half kilometres away from that intersection, due to a huge tailback," said Yameen, a private service holder.

As the shopping complexes are buzzing with Eid shoppers, the roads adjacent to different markets are experiencing huge congestion. Increased activities of the police during the traffic month could not ease the traffic jam.

"It is almost impossible to cross the road in front of a market without wasting 30 to 45 minutes from the beginning of Ramadan," said Humayun Ahmed, an elderly citizen.

The traffic department has completely failed to prevent the hawkers from occupying the footpaths in the city. As a result, the pedestrians have to use the main roads, creating obstacles to movement of vehicles.

"The number of vehicles in the city should be reduced or the roads should be widen. Blaming the traffic department is not a solution," said Jahurul Islam, a traffic inspector of DMP.



Caps wear beautiful designs ahead of Eid every year. Vendors, of course, also do brisk business during the month of Ramadan.



Ignoring the traffic month, buses look for passengers at Gulistan despite shifting of the terminal from there to Sayedabad.

## BSCIC sees steady fall in number of trainees

Untidy room, inconvenient location blamed

WAHIDA MITU

The Design Centre under BSCIC (Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation) has experienced a steady decline in the number of trainees over the last few years as prospective candidates reportedly lost interest due to the inconvenient location and unimpressive environment.

According to BSCIC officials, in the past around 1800 trainees used to enroll each year on an average. In 2004 the number came down to 1140 and in 2005 it has decreased to around 900.

"Untidy rooms for training, far of location and mush-rooming of private training centres are to blame for this situation," said one of the officials.

Nevertheless, the center is trying to attract new recruits. It arranges four fairs a year with a vision to make

the fresh craftsmen confident and to give them encouragement to become self-dependent in the competi-tive market.

At the latest fair, held for five days from October 23 to October 27, there were 91 stalls and all the participants received training under the BSCIC. It usually arranges this fair for those who had just finished their training.

This year's fair received encouraging response from ex-trainees and the consumers.

"The products are completely local and the price is also reasonable," commented Hasib-ur Rahman, while shopping at the fair.

The ex-trainees of BSCIC came to the fair with their own products like garments, handicrafts, leather crafts,

metal crafts, jewelry, ceramic, cane and bamboo-made goods.

Some customers pointed out that the designs are better than the materials used. But the sellers defended their position saying superior quality material would only encourage a price hike which is not the goal of the fair.

"We will loose a good amount of customers if we go for high stuff," said Hasina Shawkat, one of the participants at the fair.

"Our intention is to strike a connection between the sellers and the consumers," said Kamal Uddin Ahmed, chief designer of Design Centre, BSCIC and also the organiser of the fair.

10x4

10x2

6x2