

Living with looming disaster

FROM PAGE 21
Pakistanis were never resolved.

Akhtar, also the sector in-charge of the Red Cross Relief Committee, added that in the original plan it had 6 small two-room flats in each floor.

The bricks and the iron structure were exposed to the harsh weather from the beginning, as it was not entirely finished. Cement coating were just done and needed a finishing touch. In the course of time the railings of the veranda and the stairs fell off.

The building is now the home for more than 500 people,

including toddlers, school going children and the aged, though it was built for 86 families.

Majority of the residents are Benarosi weaver. Mohammad Firoz, 25, a Benarosi weaver, said, "Every day I work in my shop for around 8 hours. I feel safe as long as I'm working there. At the same time I worry for my family members residing there."

The residents brave such dreadful incidents yet they refuse to move out as they fear once evacuated it will end up staying in the streets. "We have no other place to go. We have

no property and we don't have enough money to pay the rent outside," Firoz added.

"No one has come to our rescue all these years. We helped the injured when the roof came down and we managed a place for them to stay," said Akhtar.

After the January incident the government served notice to the residents to evacuate the building, pledging to accommodate them but nothing happened so far. Having no other place to go, Nusrat and her family members are now living in a school building nearby.

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Everyone knows how reckless these bus drivers are," said Zahir, a traffic sergeant who was seen filing a case against a bus driver for rear-ending a private car at Farngate intersection.

"All the bus drivers care for is to squeeze in as many passengers as possible and put almost all other aspects aside - including the safety of their passengers and other vehicles," he added.

This correspondent ran into (as opposed to being run over!) Yousuf Hossain, a typically imprudent mini bus

driver in his mid-twenties who was seemingly having the time of his life as he was driving recklessly on a post-Eid empty city street at Rampura.

"Accidents happen!" shrugged off Yousuf with a laidback attitude. "People call us maniacs! If we are maniacs, then what would you call the rickshaw pullers? ...you have to drive fast in these streets or else you would not get anywhere," he added.

According to Mir Hossain, a driver of Padma Bus Service, the main reason behind the bus drivers' dangerous driving practices and their rush to

finish a trip is that the drivers usually get paid for the number of trips completed and in the case of local bus services, they get paid for the number of passengers boarded the bus.

"In local bus services, the drivers and helpers put down the daily rental of a bus to its owner and split the rest of the earnings amongst themselves," said Mir Hossain.

Yakub Mia, a mini bus driver of route 6 local service, said he pays Tk 900 in daily rental to the bus owner and divides the rest of the income among helpers and mechanics.

"There are also other expenses like the occasional mechanical work and bribing traffic officials. We have to manage all this with the money left after paying the daily rental," added Yakub.

Bus drivers are paid from Tk 90 to Tk 200 for each trip, depending on the type of service and the distance of a route, said Ismail Ali, a ticket seller of Kalmila Bus Service.

Only to make a quick buck, the transport workers have been showing imprudence and sheer disregard for public safety by speeding through the streets to complete a trip or

cramming passengers into buses, well above the capacity, by blocking the traffic, said many commuters.

"The question is, whether the time of a bus driver is more valuable than the safety of a human being or, whether bus drivers would simply kill a person and get away with it," said a furious Jahangir Alam, a private firm employee at Mughabazar.

"Why cannot anyone do something about these bus drivers, especially when the safety of hundreds of thousands of people is concerned," wondered Alam.

Senseless contests by reckless buses

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health, busservices, airlines & train timing

HOSPITALS & CLINICS

Square Hospitals Ltd Emergency: 8144466, 8144477, 8144488, 0171337773, 01714477774, 0171337775. Fax: 880-2-9118921	Greenland Hospital 8912663	Rafat's Dental Clinic 9111090	Drooti 8014563
Gulshan Mother & Child Clinic 8822738, 8812992	Sallimullah Medical College Hospital 7319002-6	Eagle Paribahan 7101504	Aeroflot 9559930, 9559111, Fax: 9563787
Holy Family Hospital 8311721-25	Samorita Hospital Ltd 9131901	Green Line Paribahan 9336923, 9342580, 8353005	Air India 8617783, 8611929, Fax: 9670591
Islami Bank Hospital 9333739	Shahid Suhrawardy Hospital 9122560-78	Hanif Enterprise 9120116	Biman Bangladesh Airlines 8917400-19, 9560151, 9559610
Japan Bangladesh Friendship Hospital 8828855, 8827575	Shishu Hospital 8116061-2, 9119119	Keya Paribahan 7101894, 7101250, 9121280	British Airways 8815111, Fax: 8815346,
Labaid Cardiac Hospital 8610793-8	United Hospital 8836444, 0194001234	Modern Enterprise 9123743	Cathay Pacific 9557117, Fax: 9562667
Probin Hospital Phone: 9129814, 9141044	Blood Bank	Neptune A/C Coach Service 7101945, 7101951, 9123092	Druk Air 9862243, 9892862,
Medinova Medical Services Ltd 8620353,	Bangladesh Red Crescent Blood Bank 9116563	Shohag Paribahan (Pvt) Ltd 9334152, 8316766, 8126293	Emirates 9892801, 9885574-75
Central Hospital 9660015-19,	Modern Clinic & Blood Center 9883948	Subarna Express 9014397, 9001796	Malaysia Airlines 9888211-20
China Bangla Hospital (JV) Ltd 8913674	Sandhani, Dhaka Medical College 9668690	Mahanagar Prabhati 911250, 9113041	Airport Office: 8916953, Fax: 9890478
Dhaka Medical College Hospital 8626812-16	PG Hospital (BSMMU) 9614545-9, 9612550-4	Mahanagar Godhuli 911250, 9113041	PIA 9349293-5, Fax: 9345300
Gana Shaheedhi Kendra 8617208, 8617383, 8620178,	Rashmoni General Hospital 8317606, 9557354, 8317819	Turna Parabat Express Joyanika Express Upaban Express Tista Express Ekata Express Upakul Express Agnibeena Express	Singapore Airlines 8811504-7, 988259

BUS SERVICES

BLOOD BANK	
Bangladesh Red Crescent Blood Bank	9116563
Modern Clinic & Blood Center	9883948
Sandhani, Dhaka Medical College	9668690

AIRLINES

Shubra Express Mahanagar Prabhati Mahanagar Godhuli Turna Parabat Express Joyanika Express Upaban Express Tista Express Ekata Express Upakul Express Agnibeena Express	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	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 pm Reaches Noakhali at 5:00 am Reaches Jagannath at 2:30 pm
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LIBRARY & INFO-

Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers	
Central Public Library- 8626001-4,	
Shishu Academy- 9564128	
Shilpakala Academy- 8614673	
Bangla Academy- 8619550	
Islamic Foundation- 9550280,	
556407	
Nazrul Institute- 9114602	
Ford Foundation- 8116133	
Alliance Francaise- 8611557	
Information Resource Center, The American Center - 8813440-4,	
988395-9	
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- 81120125,	
8112954, 8123412	
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