

## Special bus service shatters hope of commuters

SHAHIDUL ISLAM

The city bus service launched about two months ago to provide special services has shattered hope of the commuters as it failed to keep its promises.

The commuters are being cheated in the name of Metro Special City Service inaugurated on November 21 last year.

Defiance of rules set for the vehicles under the service, harassment of commuters and realisation of excess fare have become a routine picture due to the indifference of the authorities concerned.

Chittagong Transport Owners Forum launched the seat-capacity special service in October in 2007 from Karnaphuli Shah Amanat Bridge to Chittagong Shah

Amanat International Airport route and set some rules in this regard on October 22 to make the service workable, useful and comfortable for the commuters in the port city with a population of around 40 lakh.

As per rules, 40 buses of Navana and Tata brand were given permission to operate in the city having maximum capacity of 40 seats. The rules also prohibit the drivers to pick up or drop passengers from anywhere at their whims. Besides, passengers were asked to collect their tickets from the designated counters before boarding the bus.

But these instructions are hardly obeyed by the reckless drivers. Apart from defying the set rules to run the vehicles

under the service, the drivers and their helpers also charge much higher fare, Tk 3 for first kilometre and Tk 1 for next each kilometre, from the passengers instead of 90 paisa per kilometre. This used to prompt regular altercation and scuffle between the two parties.

"We were excited when the special bus service was introduced in our city and we immediately seize the facility for a comfortable journey. It was good initially but now anarchy has overshadowed the service almost completely," said Md Ashraful Haque, a banker who travels to Agrabad office from his residence at Muradpur.

Shamsul Huda Mintu, a small trader at Reazuddin Bazar, said incident of quarrels takes place everyday over charging of addi-

tional fare but there seems no remedy to this from the authorities.

Forum General Secretary Golam Rasul said they have received many allegations regarding irregularities and defiance of rules by the drivers and their helpers.

He said they will take measures to stop such happenings for the sake of the passengers and the service.

Rasul said the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) should allow at least 10 more buses to cope with the increased demand.

Traffic Department of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) said they can't take action against the drivers, assistants or the owners without any formal complaint.



STAR PHOTO

Buses of city special service stop at the middle of the road to take or drop passengers violating the traffic rules and ignoring the safety. Photo was taken from the New Market area on Monday.



Artists of Sadarang Uchchanga Sangeet Parishad perform at the 11th Jatiya Uchchanga Sangeet Sammelon at the Muslim Institute hall on Thursday.

## Microbiology lab to relieve pain of BSTI certificate seekers

BSTI Chittagong is now able to test only 48 products out of 148

NUR UDDIN ALMAGIR

A microbiology laboratory is being set up in the Bangladesh Standard Testing Institution (BSTI) in Chittagong to cope with the pressure of testing 148 products.

The BSTI, the only institution to oversee the quality and quantity of products, is now able to test only 48 products out of 148, both imported and homemade, that need certificates from the institution before going to the consumers.

The BSTI is to send the remaining samples to Dhaka, which is a matter of time consuming apart from the hassle the certificate seekers face due to lack of a microbiology laboratory, sources at the BSTI said.

The institution is able to test only 18 out of 35 imported products while 17 others are to send in the capital for tests and certificates.

Besides, the certificate seekers are to take the sample to Dhaka on their own, they said.

Tapas Mallik, a senior chemist of the BSTI, said for lack of a microbiological lab they can't conduct a bacterial test for some of the products like water and milk.

Of the imported products, they can test biscuit, toilet soap, soya bean oil, coconut oil, honey, toothpaste, jam-jelly, sauce,

ceramic table ware, shampoo, lozenge, sunflower oil, chips, skin powder, skin cream, tin, instant noodles and after shave lotion, Tapas said.

He said the new lab will be equipped with equipments like auto clamp, incubator, hot air oven and analytical balance to conduct the tests.

Mohammad Rezaul Haque, assistant director (Metrology) of the BSTI, said they informed the matter to Dhaka as the Chittagong Customs Authority

asks them to provide test reports within 72 hours.

Later, the government sanctioned Tk 15 lakh to set up the lab which will help forward the test reports within a short time, he said.

The BSTI Acting Deputy Director Rezaul Karim Sarker told The Daily Star that after setting up of the lab, the institution will become almost a self-dependent organisation and help them meet the demand for testing the products within a

shortest possible time.

He said the work to set up the laboratory will be completed by March.

The BSTI that started its journey in Chittagong in 2000 is now running with a workforce of 36 officials, technicians and staffs in the Agrabad area in the port city.

Tests are being conducted on weight and measure, certification of marks, chemical and physical testing in two laboratories under four wings in the BSTI Chittagong.



Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI) Chittagong regional office at Agrabad.

## theweekthatwas

### Training on AIDS begins

A training programme on HIV-AIDS began at the Chittagong Government College on Wednesday.

Principal of the college Prof Syed Md Shahidullah inaugurated the

programme titled 'Join In Circuit United Preventing AIDS' as the chief guest jointly organised by Chittagong College and HIV-AIDS and STD Alliance Bangladesh (HASAB) with the financial and technical support of German Technical Cooperation.

Speakers at the ceremony urged all to work together for making the country free of HIV diseases.

Organisers hoped that the training programme, which is educational, entertaining and participating as well, will be helpful for the students in playing a role to prevent spread of HIV.

Prof Fazlul Karim, Abdul Hamid Khan, coordinator of HASAB training committee SM Akbar Imam, trainer Makbul Hossain and ATM Rezaul Karim and student representative Ziaur

Rahman Khan spoke at the inaugural function with Vice Principal Dharani Kanta Biswas in the chair.

Dr Tahmina Banu, Head of Paediatrics Surgery Department of Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) moderated the programme.

### 'Marks All Rounder' talent hunt begins

A month-long contest titled 'Marks All Rounder' for the school students began at Dr Khastagir Girls High School on Friday.

Headmistress of the school Hasmat Jahan inaugurated the contest of zone 1 on the school campus.

Resident Editor of daily Prothom Alo poet Abul Momen was the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony with Drishty President Masud Bakul in the chair.

Consultant (Brand and Research) of Abul Khair Goods Division Tasneem A Karim was the special guest at the ceremony.

Around 1100 students from 40 schools of the zone in three categories, including primary level (Class I to Class V), lower secondary (Class VI to Class VIII) and secondary (Class IX to Class X), will participate in different events.

Marks, a popular full cream milk powder brand of Abul Khair Group, and Drishty, a cultural organisation, are jointly organising the contest to hunt talents from school students of greater Chittagong.

Radio Foorti is the radio partner of the competition. Additional Deputy Commissioner

(Revenue) Jafar Alam as the chief guest distributed prizes among the winners at a ceremony in the afternoon.

Kalpama Lala, Shikha Rani Das, Prama Abanti, Ananya Barua, Zahid Ali Chowdhury, Azizul Kabir, Pridip Dewanjee, Kuntal Barua, Dr Masud Rana, Jolly Chowdhury and Mili Chowdhury were the judges.

### Team to address sufferings of city dwellers

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) formed a survey and action team for addressing the sufferings of city dwellers due to the unplanned digging of city roads repeatedly by different organisations.

The team was formed at a meeting with the officials of the organisations concerned with Acting CCC Mayor M Manjur Alam in the chair at his office on Wednesday.

The team headed by the CCC chief engineer was formed with two officials from the CCC, two from Wasa, two from T&T, two from Bakhrabad Gas, two from Power Development Board (PDB) while one from each mobile phone operator and Nokia network.

Mayor at the meeting said unplanned digging of city roads brings suffering to the city dwellers to a large extent and cause financial losses.

He said everybody has to finish the underground work at a time and none will be allowed to dig the roads later.

Bakhrabad Gas System Limited General Manager Mohammad Hasan, Chittagong Wasa Superintendent Engineer Mohammed Abul Kashem,

T&T Chittagong Divisional Engineer Kazi Golam Kuddus, PDB Executive Engineer Ml Arif, City Cell General Manager M Shahabuddin, Banglalink Engineer Keshari Chandra Barman, Nokia Network Engineer Samiul Alam, Grameen Phone Official Mohammad Kamal Hossain, CCC Chief Executive Officer AKM Khairul Alam and Chief Engineer Mohammad Nizam Uddin Chowdhury were present at the meeting.

at a ceremony on Sunday. The college Principal Safia Ghazi Rahman inaugurated the ceremony.

The principal welcomed the freshers and hoped that the students of the college will be able to contribute to the development of the country.

The college Vice Principal Shirin Hoque and teachers addressed the ceremony followed by a cultural programme.

Speakers urged the people to use the technologies innovated by the scientist of Bangladesh Forest Research Institute (BFRI) since they are easier,

cheap, profitable and environment-friendly.

They were addressing a workshop on technology identification jointly organised by BFRI and Rural Environment Forum Lohagara, Chittagong at Chunati under Lohagara upazila.

Organisers presented different aspects of techniques like bamboo cultivation in 'Kanchi Kalam', production of high quality seed and plant and collection of seed from mother-tree.

Upazila Agriculture Officer Aminul Hoque, BFRI Divisional Officer Mohammad Mohiuddin, senior research officer Rafiqul Haider, research officer Mohammad Shahidullah, president of Rural Environment Forum Prof Mohammad Aman Ullah spoke at the workshop.

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Chittagong Divisional Commissioner Hossain Jamil and former adviser of caretaker government and Bangladesh Federation of Women Entrepreneurs President Rokia A Rahman admire the products of newly trained women entrepreneurs during a training programme organised by Chittagong Women Chamber of Industry at its auditorium on Saturday.



Winners of the zone-1 of the cultural contest titled 'Marks All-rounder' pose for photograph with the guests at the certificate giving ceremony organised by Drishty at Dr Khastagir Girls School on Friday.