

## Traffic chokes road to campus

Illegal bus, tempo stands at the gate of Jagannath University hamper academic atmosphere

SHAHNAZ PARVEEN

Unauthorised parking of vehicles in front of the main gate of Jagannath University is creating serious disorder around the campus, hampering academic atmosphere at the institution.

City service buses of route-7 and 10 use the opposite side of the gate as parking space, narrowing the street. Human hauliers and tempos are parked right beside the gate.

Students of the university complained that these buses and tempos are the main reason behind a chronic gridlock and congestion in the university area. Shouting of the bus helpers and honking create sound pollution, disrupting classes, they said.

The students said traffic policemen on duty play a silent role in this regard.

The students also complained that the boundary wall of the campus beside the tempo stand is used as urinal by pedestrians and transport workers, polluting the environment. They blamed the authorities for not taking necessary measures to stop them.

"A bus terminal in front of the university gate, urinating on its wall, shouting by helpers using slang and honking are not at all acceptable to us. The bus stand is seriously hampering the academic atmosphere," said Towhida Hossain, a third-year student of Social Work department.

"This is a university, the highest seat of learning. It deserves a little more respect," she said.

Another student of accounting department said, "Every day a horrible chaos awaits us in the street just outside the campus. The entire area remains blocked during noon. It does not look like the entrance of a university. It looks like a busy bus terminal."

A section of the students however prefer the bus stand in its current location as they can board a bus any time they want.

"It is more convenient. We don't have to walk a long way and stand in a long queue for a ride back home. We just get out of the university and the bus is waiting for us," said a student.

Raishaheb Bazar, Nababpur,



ABOVE: Illegal bus and tempo stands at the gate of Jagannath University. LEFT: Human hauliers parked at the site. Traffic chaos and honking are seriously hampering the academic atmosphere.

Banglabazar, Islampur, Laxmibazar, Shankaribazar and Tantibazar areas are also affected by the traffic congestion, which worsens at noon. Commuters to and from Sadarghat are regular victims of the traffic chaos.

The university is situated on 11.11 acres of land in the southern part of Dhaka city near the Sadarghat launch terminal. The institution has a glorious history of about 150 years, which started in 1858 as a Brahma School. The institution was made university in October 2005.

At present the university has around 27,000 students studying in 22 departments under four

faculties run by 294 teachers.

Prof Sirajul Islam Khan, vice chancellor of the university, said, "We have been trying to get rid of the bus stand for a long time. The parking is responsible for dreadful traffic jam around our main gate and the entire area."

"We sent a letter to the traffic department a few months back and then the bus operators moved away for a while. But they came back recently," he added.

"We have set up two speed-breakers on two sides of the entrance to avoid any accidents. We have also employed security staff to control the situation at the main gate," he said. "But we cannot control

what is going on outside the campus."

Md Jashimuddin, joint commissioner, Traffic, Dhaka Metropolitan Police, admitted the fact. "Bus services do not have authorisation to park the vehicles on the street. They are just supposed to go round the area and pick up passengers from the designated stoppage," he said.

"Instead, they are using the street as parking. The area is extremely congested with narrow roads and regular gridlock. This worsens the situation," he said. "A notice will be served to the responsible bus services very soon to ease the situation."

### city express

The latest crop of quotes from the city's press -- words worth repeating, we feel, for their humour, insight or sheer outrageousness. Star City does not necessarily support the opinions expressed in this column.

"The essence of trial doesn't stem from hatred for anyone. We want to try the [war] criminals because trial is a kind of burial. If you don't bury the dead it will start spreading infection. If we fail to hold trial for crimes, it will multiply. Crime will foster crime."

-- Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman  
Former chief adviser

Said while talking about holding trials for war crimes at the opening session of International Conference on Genocide, Truth and Justice organised by the Liberation War Museum at a city hotel, on Saturday. Source: The Daily Star

"A derailed train has been put on the line again. We will have to work together so that the train does not derail again and can reach its destination on time."

-- Dr Kamal Hossain  
President, Gono Forum

Said after a bilateral meeting with Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti (PCJSS) held at his Bailey Road residence in the city, on Sunday. Source: The Daily Star

"I, sometimes, want to live in the forest for getting the real peace."

-- Prof Miah Md Moniruzzaman

Principal, Birsreshtha Munshi Abdur Rauf Rifles College  
Said at the inaugural ceremony of an exhibition by Wildlife Trust, Bangladesh on the college campus, on Thursday. Source: The Daily Star

"Perhaps, some people are hesitant to give out their address."

-- ATM Shamsul Huda  
Chief Election Commissioner

Said explaining why the Election Commission Secretariat could not even locate the whereabouts of the Muslim League (Jamir) office despite sincere efforts when a Jamaat leader demanded that the party should be invited, on Tuesday. Source: The Daily Star

"I was appalled as I had to struggle to figure out the spelling of my own name."

-- Arafat-ur Rahman

A passport holder  
Told a reporter when asked about hassles of handwritten passports, on Wednesday. Source: The Daily Star

"What will happen in the long run if the Human Rights Commission is weak in the beginning?"

-- Advocate Sultana Kamal

Executive Director, Ain O Salish Kendro  
Said at a joint press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity expressing concern over a number of provisions in the National Human Rights Commission Ordinance, 2007, on Tuesday. Source: The Daily Star

Compiled by Durdana Ghias

## GULSHAN CENTRAL PARK

### Playing games in guise of custodian

TAWFIQUE ALI

Gulshan Youth Club has been illegally occupying Gulshan Central Park since 1975 turning the public playground into a money-spinner in the name of maintenance.

Although the club does not have authorisation from the authorities concerned to maintain the park, also known as Wonderland park, it has erected illegal concrete structures there.

Moreover, the club is charging the park users a high amount of money.

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) plays silent role in this regard though it is the official custodian of the open spaces and playgrounds in the city.

"The club has no right to charge me money to use the field, nor any authority to exercise control over the public space," said a resident of Gulshan road-7.

He said: "We cannot use the park through we pay taxes for such civic amenities."

"One has to pay Tk 15,000 for a day to hold a cricket match at the field," said club's accountant Ahmed Kamal when this correspondent, in the guise of an organ-

iser of a local cricket team, sought the club's permission to hold a one-day cricket match.

Kamal asked this correspondent to apply to the club general secretary for permission.

He said the club charges Tk 1,000 if any sporting team

intends to use the field for a two-hour net practice and the ground is booked up to the first week of March.

"We charge the money as donation," Kamal said.

The Gulshan Youth Club has erected a one-storey building on the playground to set up the club office and two

hall rooms named Family Hall and a Presidency Hall.

There is another one-storey building in the southeast corner of the ground. Both the buildings have been constructed without approval from the Rajuk.

The tennis court, basketball court and badminton

court at the playground are meant for exclusive use by those who belong to the club.

Prof Serajul Islam Choudhury, noted educationist and head of a high-level advisory committee on the city's park development and beautification, said that the local people have to take moves to protect parks and playgrounds in community interest.

SM Shahjahan, former adviser to the youth and sports ministry and vice-president of Bangladesh Paribesh Bachao Andolon (Bapa), said public parks and playgrounds must be used properly in public interest. "Commercial use of them is unacceptable."

Commercial and exclusive use obviously implies abuse of public playgrounds, he said adding that "The government should take stern action against the authorities concerned for such improper use of public space."

President of Gulshan Youth Club Dr Wahiduzzaman Tamal said that the club has been carrying out its activities at the playground since 1975.

"We take money from the

users of the field as pitch preparation charge," he said.

Wahiduzzaman however admitted that the club has constructed the buildings at the ground without approval from the Rajdhani Uন্নayan Kartripakkha.

On whether the club is authorised to occupy the field and make money out of it, he said that the club is included in a DCC-instituted maintenance committee.

According to the DCC Estate Department officials, DCC has not authorised any clubs or organisations to use any public playgrounds exclusively in the name of maintenance.

DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka said that he has no idea that unauthorised clubs rent out public playgrounds and make money out of them.

The DCC leased out a big chunk of the park in 1990 to develop a commercial amusement park fashioned Wonderland, sparking resentment among the locals.

A DCC-formed committee in its report in 2005 said that the deal with Wonderland was made without lawful authority.



Unauthorised structures on the playground of Gulshan Central Park.

