

Trucks, covered vans defy CMP rules

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Trucks and covered vans are plying the city roads during daytime, causing huge tailbacks at different points in the port city.

Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) Traffic Department imposed a ban last year prohibiting the trucks and covered vans from plying the city roads from 8.00am to 7.00pm to rid the city of traffic jam.

Immediately after imposing the ban, the traffic department relaxed it for those trucks and covered vans that will carry export and import items of food and garments products to and from the city.

For the garment-laden vehicles, a sticker from the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers' and Exporters' Association (BGMEA) was a must to ply the city roads during the



ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIDDER

Despite restrictions on the plying of trucks during daytime, trucks continue to flout the rules in the port city. The pictures were taken in Barik Building area and GEC intersection area on Tuesday.

daytime.

But, a vested quarter of the truck and covered van owners and drivers started faking the stickers of BGMEA for plying during daytime.

With this, lack of proper monitoring by the traffic department, it is a common sight that the trucks and covered vans, both goods-laden and empty without any sticker, ply the city roads in the daytime.

The commuters have been facing serious tailbacks following this at the entry points of the city at Oxygen Intersection, Kalurghat Bridge, Kotwali Intersection and some other busy points throughout the day.

On the other hand, Roads and Highway department constructed Chittagong Port Access Road at a cost of Tk 110 crore along the Dhaka-

Chittagong highway to help ease movement of vehicles like trucks, oil tanker, covered vans, container-movers and lorries to and from the Chittagong Port.

But, simply to avoid the toll of Tk 50 and for lack of proper monitoring these vehicles hardly use the 12.46-kilometre road stretching from Chittagong port to Bhatiari under Sitakunda upazila. The road was opened to vehicular movement on February 6 in 2007.

Mohammad Mainul Islam, deputy commissioner (DC) of traffic department, told The Daily Star that despite shortage of traffic sergeants they are trying to stop plying of trucks and covered vans with fake stickers. He said they also fine the vehicles and file cases against them for violating the rules.

To stop the malpractice, the stickers are now being given with signatures of both the BGMEA and the traffic department officials. The BGMEA has also been requested to change the colour and logo of the stickers frequently to avoid the possible fraudulence, Mainul said.

He said most of the drivers have a tendency to enter the city since they can do their other work apart from dodging the toll, he said, adding that their drive against the land owners, who keep the construction materials on the city roads blocking passage, is going on.

BGMEA Secretary Mohammad Moinuddin said they are issuing the stickers in cooperation with the traffic department from last month and faking stickers would reduce to a large extent.

Handloom products gain popularity in Rangamati

SHANTIMOY CHAKMA, Rangamati

The handloom products are gaining popularity among the tourists from home and abroad in the hill district of Rangamati.

Besides, the handloom industry in Rangamati has long been playing a pivotal role in creating jobs for the ultra-poor women and the indigenous people.

But the owners of the traditional factories are struggling with the rising prices of raw materials like yarn, dyeing as well as other weaving materials, owners said.

They sought government's cooperation to develop further the indus-

try as well as to get the country's economy going.

According to sources at least 2000 ultra-poor women have taken weaving as profession to earn their bread and butter along with the males in their families. They are engaged in wide range of work, including weaving, dyeing of cloths and processing yarn.

"I have been working here for the last three years. When I was an apprentice I used to get Tk 1,200.00. But today, I'm receiving Tk 2,000," said Lalita Chakma, a young female worker at Bain Textile.

Lalita's senior colleague Mariam Bagum

said her salary has been fixed at Tk 2,500 from Tk 700 when she started her career about 12 years ago. Mariam, a divorcee, said she is quite happy with her job and environment.

There are nine handloom textiles in Rangamati, including Bain Textile, Nakshi Textile, Banalata Textile, Banani Textile, Tantuz Textile, Craft and Fashion Textile, Bayan Textile, Majunder Textile and Rakhain Textile.

Of the handloom items produced in these factories, pinon-khadi (dress for indigenous women), three-pieces, punjabi, frock, orna, fatoa, shirt, bed cover, floor mat, din-

ing mat and cushion cover are very popular to the tourists.

Bain Textile is the pioneer in the industry established by Munjulika Chakma in 1965 at tribal officer colony at Tabalchhari. Following her footsteps, many others get encouraged and came up with a number of such factories.

"We often send large quantity of handloom items of good quality to different aristocratic fashion houses in the capital city Dhaka in accordance with their demands," said Manjulika Chakma.

Despite the popularity and demand, the owners feared to lose their edge in future due to price hike of

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weaving materials.

They said for the sake of expansion of the handloom industry, government must play a role by giving subsidy and interest-free short and long term loans.

Motaleb Hossain, one of the owners of Banani Textile, said they are to purchase weaving materials from Dhaka that increase the production cost of handloom items.

"There was a shop of BTMC (Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation) in Rangamati in the past from where we were able to buy weaving materials easily but we can't do now since the shop doesn't exist," he said.

Monjulika, who received The Daily Star Business Award in 2003, said the government should provide subsidy for the handloom sector for expansion and sustainability of the industry.



Two indigenous young women weave clothes at a handloom factory.

the week that was



Alam, Prof Khurshid Alam and Nur Mohammad also attended as the special guests.

The speakers lauded role of the foundation in social activities and called upon all to help in the social welfare work.

The foundation chairman Dr SMM Hasan presided over the ceremony while its Secretary General SMA Hossain, Deputy Secretary Shankar Saha and the Upazila Education Officer Sohag Hossain spoke at the programme.

The medication camp and annual programmes included eye, nose and tooth treatment, blood grouping and donation, and scholarships and books distribution to the talented students.

Children are engrossed in painting at a competition on the fourth day of the weeklong book fair titled 'Swadhinatar Boi Mela' organised by Chattagram Academy on the DC Hill premises on Monday.

Swadhinatar Boi Mela begins

A seven-day Swadhinatar Boi Mela (independence book fair) began amid enthusiasm and festivity in the port city on Friday.

Renowned litterateur Hasnat Abdul Hye inaugurated the book fair, marking the independence day at the DC Hill Park.

Chattagram Academy in association with Bangladesh Gyan and Srijanshil Prokashak Parishad organised the fair that drew huge visitors.

Litterateur Begum Mustari Shafi, wife of a liberation war martyr, Swadhinatar Boi Mela and Chattagram Utsab Parishad Convener Principal Anwara Alam, Chattagram Academy Director General Rashed Rouf, also general secretary of Chittagong Press Club, and Secretary General Nesar Ahmad also spoke at the inaugural function.

Chattagram Academy Chairman Dr Anupam Sen, also vice-chancellor of Premier University presided over the function.

Forty-six publishing houses including 36 from Dhaka participated in the book fair.

World Water Day observed

Speakers on Sunday underscored the need for increasing mutual respect, understanding and trust between Bangladesh and India to solve trans-boundary water sharing problems for water security.

They were addressing a seminar titled 'Trans-boundary River Basin of Bangladesh: Situation Analysis of Water and Sanitation' organised by NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation marking the World Water Day-2009 at

Chittagong Press Club (CPC).

Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Ehsan-e-Elahi was the chief guest at the seminar with Elma Executive Chief Jesmin Sultana Paru in the chair. Regional Manager of the Forum Rafiqul Islam Mazumder made the address of welcome.

Prof Dr Abul Kashem Bhuiyan of Zoology Department of Chittagong University (CU) presented the key-note paper.

Dr Kashem said most of the big 57 rivers that criss-crossed Bangladesh have already lost their navigability due to construction of dams, embankments, sluice gates and barrages by Bangladesh and India where the rivers originated.

Elahi emphasised creating public awareness on water usage and preserving the surface water side by side proper policy by the government to fight the crisis.

Executive Director of DPHE Md Bazul Hoque and representatives from different local NGOs like Monwara Begum of Protayshi, Sriman Barua of Sharan, Mostafa Kamal Jatraa of UTSA, Sourav Barua of Sangsaptak, Dayal Kanti Das of PSTC and Farid Uddin Akhter of Shasroy spoke at the seminar.

Workshop on new BC rules held

Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB), Chittagong chapter organised a workshop on the building plan and design approval process under the new Chittagong Metropolitan Building Construction (BC) rules 2008 here on Friday.

The participants at the workshop held thorough discussion making the professional architects aware of different aspects of the BC rules.

They alleged a vested

quarter is spreading wrong interpretation infusing a wrong idea among the people about the BC rules.

It was a bid to hinder application of the BC rules, alleged the speakers at the workshop.

The discussant observed that with the gazette notification of the new BC rules in October 2008 application of Chittagong Metropolitan BC rules 1996 became null and void.

As such there was no legal basis for approving construction design or plan following the BC rules 1996, they said.

Architect Zarina Hossain moderated the workshop where the Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) Deputy Chief Town Planner Shahinul Islam Khan presented the key-note paper and IAB Chittagong Secretary Nazmul Latif Sohel spoke at the workshop.

'Help distressed people'

Speakers on Saturday said poverty alleviation is possible if affluent section of the society stands beside the distressed people.

"The government is working for removing unemployment from the country, taking several initiatives like self-employment opportunities," they said.

They were addressing the concluding session of a two-day "Seventh free medication camp and annual programme," organised by Aslam Memorial Foundation of Noapara under Raozan upazila.

Local lawmaker from Awami League ABM Fazle Karim Chowdhury was the chief guest at the ceremony while Chittagong Press Club President Abu Sufian, former general secretary Kalim Sarwar, Vice President Asif Siraj, businessmen Shamsul

AL lawmaker visits Ctg jail

Awami League (AL) lawmaker Nurul Islam on Saturday said steps will be taken to give legal assistance to the prisoners without trial in Chittagong Jail.

The lawmaker said this while he was visiting the Chittagong Jail to see for himself the condition of the prisoners.

He listened to the prisoner with patience and ensured necessary steps in this regard.

He distributed clothes, including lungi and saree, among the prisoners. Nurul Islam said a television set will be given for them and a daycare centre and a school will be set up for the children of the women prisoners.

Prize giving ceremony held

Speakers underscored the need for spreading education among the common people at cheaper cost.

They said proper development of a country is not possible keeping major portion of the population illiterate.

They were addressing the concluding session of the seven-day annual prize giving ceremony of Oxford National School held on its Halishahar campus on Monday.

Industrialist Abul Bashar Abu was the chief guest at the ceremony with Principal Fazlul Hoque in the chair. Dr Md Toufik and freedom fighter Shafiullah were the special guests.

Speakers emphasised on arranging regular extra-curricular activities for quality education, creating congenial academic environment at the existing educational institutes of Chittagong.

Engineer Ibrahim, Shahin Siddique, Dost Mohammad, teachers Asma Sharif, Kirity Chandra Acharjya and Mahbubur Rahman spoke among others.