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Mahtuz Anam

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(Dilshad) Elita Karim

Staff Writers

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Apurba Jahangir

Nilima Jahan

Columnist

Osama Rahman

Staff Photographer

Kazi Tahsin Agaz Apurbo

Graphics & Illustrations

Manan Morshed

Make-up

Md Saiful Islam

Production

Shamim Chowdhury

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PHOTO: MIZAN RAHMAN

In the depth of winter I finally learned that there was in me an invincible summer. — *Albert Camus, Algerian and French philosopher, author, and journalist based in France.*

SNAPSHOT

ENDEAVOUR



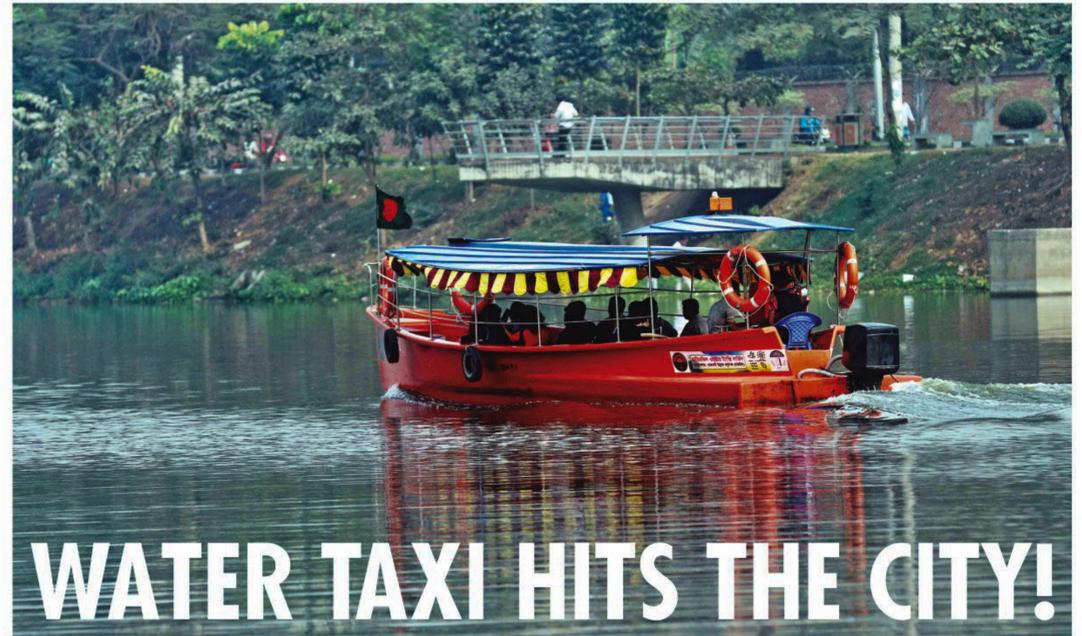
"It's undoubtedly a fantastic project and I along with my family members have enjoyed the trip greatly!" says 50-year-old banker Mohammad Firoz Alam Khan, after taking a water-taxi trip at the recent Hatirjheel water taxi service. The service was launched on December 16, 2016 – the 45th Victory Day of Bangladesh. As part of the Hatirjheel development project, the service was launched to ease commuting to adjacent areas, including Rampura and Badda, along with the beautification purposes. "Since I obtained GPA-5 in my Primary School Certificate (PSC) exam, my father offered me this boat trip!" says 12-year-old K M Ferdous Alam Khan, the son of Firoz Alam. "We have successfully explored the beautiful Hatirjheel!"

Within a very short period, the Hatirjheel water taxi service has successfully been able to attract an extensive number of visitors and regular commuters from different areas of the city. People crowding to buy tickets and the long queue for boarding these water taxis shows a booming response to this latest project.

"Every day, on an average, ten to fifteen hundred tickets are sold, tripling during holidays," says Mohammad Abul Kalam, a ticket checker of the 'Karim Group', the company responsible for managing this water taxi service.

Currently, a total of four water vessels are being operated within the two routes—one from FDC to Badda link road and the other from FDC to Rampura. While FDC to Badda link road costs around 30 takas, to Rampura would cost 25 takas. One can enjoy the service from 6 am in the morning, until 10 pm at night. Each taxi has an arrangement for accommodating 30 passengers at a time, including eight seats for women and disabled passengers.

"The water taxi service has eased the



WATER TAXI HITS THE CITY!

NILIMA JAHAN
PHOTOS: PRABIR DAS



commuting to Karwan Bazar, Moghbazar, Eskaton, Bangla Motor and Tejgaon areas from Badda, Gulshan, Rampura, and other nearby parts of the city," says 60-year old Nazir Ali, a local resident of Hatirjheel area. "Since, there is no rickshaw service available from Rampura to Kawran Bazar area and the number of buses is also insufficient, the water taxis have solved the problem greatly."

On the other hand, many believe that besides regular commuting, the service has generated a significant attention to the visitors, who come to explore the Hatirjheel area with friends and family. "We will be introducing six more

vessels – two at the end of January, two in February and two in March, so that the visitors can enjoy a hassle free service, instead of waiting," assures Major Kazi Shakil Hossain, project officer of the Hatirjheel-Begunbari Integrated Lake Development Project. To ensure maximum safety of passengers, the required number of life jackets is also available.

In spite of having some issues – namely a bad smell from the polluted waters, one would still appreciate the water taxi service. It seems that many more 'fun' features will be added soon. Good news for commuters and visitors alike! ■

MAILBOX

thestarmagazine@gmail.com



Looking back at 2016

I would like to thank the entire team of *Star Weekend* for presenting us so many insightful stories through out the year. In the year of 2016, Bangladesh has achieved so many things. Now as 2017 starts, definitely it will be a crucial year for Bangladesh. New year brings new hope for Bangladesh. It is a matter of sorrow that still there are so many problems in our country. But we hope that many problems will be solved in 2017 and our country will go ahead. We should co operate with each other for the development of our country. At the same time, we should be aware of our rights. I am hopeful to see some changes in the lives of the people who live under poverty line. I am hoping to see significant changes in the lives of women who are suffering from any form of violence and discrimination in their home or workplace. We, the readers are looking forward to getting more inspiring stories from the *Star Weekend*.
Redwan Alam
Mirpur, Dhaka



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

You must turn your practice into a Sadhana

I loved reading Pandit Yogesh Samsi's interview where he talked about a range of things- starting from the growing number audience coming to the classical festival to his valuable advice for the youngsters who want to pursue Hindustani Classical music. My brother plays tabla and seeing him I realised that you would not be able to play perfectly immediately. I totally agree with Pandit Yogesh Samsi, there's a single key ingredient in elevating your musicianship: the amount of time you spend playing well. Sounds utterly simplistic, but it's true. And to play really well—to find your best mastery over a piece—you need to turn your practice into a sadhana. I would like to thank the writer for this wonderful write up.

Amrita Chowdhury
Uttara, Dhaka

The opinions expressed in these letters do not necessarily represent the views of the *Star Weekend*.



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