

SATRASTA-TEJGAON ROAD

Will it finally be free of congestion?

DNCC setting up rickshaw lanes; experts sceptical as illegally parked trucks are the main problem

ARAFAT RAHAMAN and SAJJAD HOSSAIN

In its latest effort to free the capital's Satrasta-Tejgaon road from congestion, Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) is setting up separate lanes for rickshaws by installing dividers.

However, experts doubt whether this will change anything, as the main issue this road suffers from is scores of illegally parked trucks and pick-up vans. These vehicles occupy around half the road's width, restricting traffic movement every day.

In December 2015, then-mayor Annisul Huq cleared the road of these vehicles, overcoming strong opposition from transport workers. The road has thus become an embodiment of the late mayor's tireless efforts to bring down traffic congestion.

But the road, named Annisul Huq Road following his death in 2017, is now suffering from the same problem.

Although there is a truck stand in the area, it is too small to house the enormous number of vehicles. The authorities concerned have not taken any concrete action for a sustainable parking solution for the vehicles, which Annisul had pledged.

DNCC started setting up the rickshaw lanes this month. During a recent visit, this newspaper found workers installing dividers on both sides of the road, from the Satrasta intersection to Tejgaon railway crossing.

Khokon Uddin, who was supervising the construction work, said, "We are installing dividers on both sides to introduce separate lanes only for rickshaws. This will also help free up the footpaths for pedestrians."

Talking to this newspaper, rickshaw-puller Al Amin Hossain said, "Separate lanes will help us pull rickshaws but they may also slow down rickshaw movement,

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Although the haphazard parking of trucks is the main cause of traffic jams on the Satrasta-Tejgaon Road, DNCC is setting up separate lanes for rickshaws by installing dividers to mitigate the problem. Experts are sceptical of how such steps will reduce gridlocks. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

ASI who framed trader possessed yaba
Finds investigation

EMRUL HASAN BAPPI

A police probe has found that an assistant sub-inspector, who arrested a trader for possession of yaba in September, illegally possessed 100 yaba pills.

Mahbub Alam, an assistant sub-inspector of Pallabi Police Station, and informants Mohammad Rubel and Soheli Rana framed trader Mohammad Khalil with possession of yaba near the capital's Cantonment Railway Station on September 6.

The following day, Khalid Hasan Tonmoy, a sub-inspector of Pallabi Police Station, filed the case against Mahbub and two informants with Cantonment Police Station after footage of the trio framing Khalil went viral on social media.

They were arrested the same day, and are now out on bail.

On Monday, the case's Investigation Officer Anwar Hossain, also a sub-inspector of Cantonment Police Station, submitted the charge sheet to the Chief

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3 more die of dengue, 62 hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least three dengue patients died while 62 others were hospitalised in the last 24 hours till yesterday morning.

With the new deaths, the total number of deaths rose to 281 while the total number of dengue cases rose to 62,189, of which, 23,055 are from outside Dhaka, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

A total of 61,513 patients have already been released, of them 22,755 are from outside Dhaka.

**PRAYER
TIMING**
DECEMBER 28

Fajr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
AZAN 5:30	12:45	4:00	5:27	7:00
JAMAAT 6:05	1:15	4:15	5:30	7:30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Ruplal House: heritage held hostage

Historic 19th-century mansion now a wholesale spice market, staff quarter

SAJJAD HOSSAIN

If one goes to look for Farashganj Ruplal House in Dhaka, it would be a near impossible task to find it amid hundreds of shops. When they do get there eventually, they will find an old residential building covered with moss.

Thanks to the negligence of the authorities in properly maintaining and refurbishing the historic structure, this moss-covered residential building is what Ruplal House's fate turned out to be.

A wholesale spice market illegally occupies Ruplal House. Besides, around 24 families of members of security forces have been staying on the first floor of this building for over 40 years.

Both sides of the house were drastically altered and extended by the occupants, which caused serious damage to its archaeological value.

Over 50 different shops are scattered around the house. Around 20 of them were built by demolishing a part of the building. According to elderly locals, more than 90 percent of the outer wall of the house was damaged in the process.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Ruplal House (formerly known as Aratoon House) is a 19th-century mansion in Farashganj area in Dhaka. It was built on the northern bank of the Buriganga River, beside the Buckland Bund.

The house was built in 1825 by an Armenian businessman named Stephen Aratoon. It was later bought by two merchants, Ruplal Das and his brother Raghunath Das, in 1840.



PHOTO: STAR

Later, an architect firm of Calcutta, Martin Company, renovated the building with major extensions. It was renovated in the then popular neo-classical style.

According to Nazir Hossain, the writer of Kingbodontir Dhaka, Ruplal was the first from the Das family who went to school and scored highest numbers in the entrance exam, equivalent to present day SSC. He was also the most successful Bengali businessmen of his time. This period in history witnessed the gradual rise of the merchant class and the demise of the landed class.

Ruplal House and Ahsan Manzil were the ornaments of the city, set along the

Buriganga river.

The famous mansion was also the host of many important events in the 19th century in the city, including the legendary reception for the Lord Dufferin, the viceroy to India, in 1888.

The elite of the city competed against each other to earn the privilege to honour the viceroy and the nawabs of Dhaka also wanted to show off their Ahsan Manzil.

But the Ruplal brothers won this competition. Legend has it that to show off their social status they spent Tk 45,000 at the time to decorate the whole building. One reason for selecting Ruplal House may have been the mansion's ballroom that overlooked

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The demolition of a MUGHAL-ERA BRIDGE

Concerned citizens slam the move, LGED says it's for public

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) is demolishing a nearly 300-year-old bridge at Lakshmipasha union in Sylhet's Golapganj upazila.

LGED says a new bridge will be constructed in its place.

The bridge, called "Dewaner Pool" (Dewan's bridge), is a Mughal-era structure constructed around 1740 AD when Muhammad Shah was the emperor.

The demolition of the heritage site is being widely criticised by concerned citizens while the LGED justifies the move as a necessary step for the betterment of locals.

According to the government website, Golab Roy, the dewan (revenue officer) of the then Mughal Subedar for Bengal, Suja Uddin Khan, constructed the three-century old bridge.

Sharing photos of the demolished bridge on Facebook, Abdul Karim Kim, the



In place of the rubble stood a 300-year-old bridge built by Golab Roy, the dewan (revenue officer) of the then Mughal Subedar for Bengal, Suja Uddin Khan. LGED is demolishing the structure and a new bridge will be constructed here. On the right: Dewaner Pool bridge before demolition. These pictures were taken from Sylhet's Golapganj upazila recently.

PHOTO: STAR



heritage structure." Anwar Shahjahan, the author of "History and Heritage of Golapganj", wrote, "I strongly condemn the demolition of Dewaner Pool. The sight of the demolished

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Gross violation of basic rights

44 noted citizens condemn assault on freedom fighter

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police's presence at the ancestral home of talk show host Zillur Rahman and the physical assault on freedom fighter M Inamul Haque by a Krishak League leader are grave violations of fundamental rights guaranteed by the constitution, 44 noted citizens said yesterday.

Anyone in the country criticising the government is experiencing police action and assault, they said in a joint statement.

Inamul was assaulted in front of the National Museum in the capital's Shahbagh while handing out leaflets on behalf of his political party on December 24, the statement reads.

Along with the assault on Inamul, the incident of police inspecting the paternal home of Zillur Rahman, eminent host of Tiritiyo Matra on channel-i, on December 22 are two examples of violation of fundamental rights of citizens, it adds.

"Sections 38 and 39 of the constitution guaranteed the freedom of expression, expression of thoughts and freedom to form any organisation for its citizens. The incidents are a gross violation of the freedoms. There is even no instance that action was taken against the violators," the statement says.

The eminent citizens urged the government to investigate the incident, take action to prevent the recurrence of such incidents and ensure conducive atmosphere for dissent voices.

The signatories to the statement include rights activists Sultana Kamal, Rasheda K Chowdhury, Syeda Rizwana Hasan from BELA, ZI Khan Panna from ASK, Iftekharuzzaman from TIB, Prof Ali Riaz, Prof Asif Nazrul, eminent jurist Shahdin Malik, Zafarullah Chowdhury from Gonoshasthaya Kendra, eminent photojournalist Shahidul Alam and Badiul Alam Mojumdar from Sujana.

Nat'l Expat Day to be observed on Dec 30 every year
Says foreign minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will observe "National Expatriate Day" on December 30 each year from now, said Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen yesterday.

"We have 1.20 crore expatriates in different countries. We will observe the day in their honour," AK Abdul Momen told the reporters following an event organised by Bangladesh Mahila Parishad at Cirdap auditorium in Dhaka.

He also said the government will also be sincere to reduce the harassment against expatriates while receiving government services.

"Expatriates have long been working for us... The country's economy keeps moving with the remittance sent by them. We want them to be more involved in the development of the country," the minister said.

Mentioning that December 18 is being observed as International Migrants Day, he said December 30 will be the day only for the expatriate migrant workers.

He also said those expatriates who send the highest amount of remittance will be honoured similar to the CIP award.

Earlier, the minister addressed the "National Sharing on Civil Society Led CEDAW Alternative Report 2022" event as chief guest.

The report prepared by Bangladesh Mahila Parishad highlighted that the existing laws to protect women's rights are not being implemented due to the lack of capacity and adequate funds.

Speakers at the event also stressed abolishing all acts that cause discrimination against women in the family as well as the society.