

# Move to make Rapid Pass ‘One Card for All Transport’

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**Online Desk:** Dhaka commuters could soon be using a single card to pay fares across all public transport services, as the Dhaka Transport Coordination Authority (DTCA) is working on adding all payment features to the Rapid Pass — aligning with the government’s ‘Smart Bangladesh’ vision.

The Rapid Pass has so far only been used on the Dhaka Metro Rail service despite initiatives to include other transports since 2018.

Sources say the Cabinet Division has instructed the Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges to develop a multi-purpose card by integrating the Rapid Pass with other relevant payment methods and gateways.

A coordination meeting chaired by Cabinet Secretary for Coordination and Reform Mahmudul Hossain Khan was held on February 8 to discuss this initiative.

Sources say that the meeting directed the Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges to seek support from the Access to Information (A2I) programme when the DTCA implements the necessary measures.

The meeting particularly emphasised ensuring the card’s compatibility with other payment systems through proper integration and security measures.

This directive comes as the DTCA, the city’s transport regulatory and planning authority, has drafted a law to establish a special purpose company that would function as a clearing house for using the Rapid Pass across all transport modes.

The DTCA, under a JICA-funded project, has already been working as a clearing house to integrate information on the IC cards used by the Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited (DMTCL).

The state-owned company also uses its own IC card brand, the MRT Pass, whose operational and managerial activities are also handled by the DTCA.

Since its introduction, attempts have been made to integrate the Rapid Pass with BRTC buses and circular buses in the Hatirjheel and Gulshan areas, but these were discontinued for various reasons.

However, the state-owned bus operator recently reintroduced the Rapid Pass on its Dhaka-Narayanganj route as a fresh initiative towards a unified ticketing system across all its routes.

Officials say the Cabinet Division’s directive is intended to strengthen the draft ‘Clearing House Management Act’.

An official, who preferred anonymity, said the directives highlight gaps in the draft act’s definitions of some key players. They specifically mentioned a lack of clarity regarding integration and compatibility with payment system operators.

Compatibility with payment service providers approved by the central bank should also be addressed, said the official.

Under the A2I, atpay or @pay has been introduced as a payment gateway for various services, including toll payments on bridges and highways.

The official said the focus of IC card compatibility should be on seamless integration with various applications and apps, such as those used for recharging and depositing money.

The Rapid Pass was launched in the transport system in 2018 to become a 'One Card for All Transport' system, following its inauguration by the prime minister.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has been providing ongoing technical assistance to the DTCA to help it establish a special company for the clearing house.