

Congestion, confusion mark Ravi Road markets

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By Muhammad Asghar

LAHORE, April 22: Business at the Ravi Link Road Fruit and Vegetable Wholesale Markets is being conducted amid congestion, confusion and insanitary conditions.

The markets are the oldest and biggest among the three fruit and vegetable markets in the provincial metropolis — the other two are located along Fultan Road in Allama Iqbal Town and along Ferozepur Road adjacent to the Railway Overhead Bridge. The volume of business at the two markets consisting of around 200 plots can be gauged from the fact that the Lahore Market Committee collects an average Rs25,000 to Rs30,000 daily in the form of market fee at the rate of Re1 per quintal for fruit and vegetables and paise 50 per quintal for fodder brought for sale there.

Business has started spilling over and spreading in the vicinity of the two markets because no provision was made for the expansion of the same by the planners while shifting the fruit and vegetable business from Gowalmandi and Circular Road to the present site in the late 1960s. It has already spilled over across the Ravi Link Road where a sugarcane wholesale market has come up opposite the two markets on the railway land. The 50 feet wide service road running parallel to the Ravi Link Road

has also been closed due to the spill over of business.

Inter-city public transport services leaving the Badami Bagh General Bus Stand are disrupted due to virtual blockade of

the Ravi Link Road by hundreds of vans, rickshaws, rehras, tongas and donkey carts used by retailers for transporting fruits and vegetables from the two markets to their shops in different parts

of the city for several hours every morning. Every bus leaving the GBS between 5am and 10am remains stuck-up in the traffic outside the two markets for 15 to 30 minutes due to traffic bedlam.

The congestion and confusion prevailing inside the markets with thousands of retailers giving bids for fruit and vegetables at hundreds of spots or haggling with middlemen, thousands of

labourers carrying fruits and vegetables on their heads or hand-carts and thousands of motorized and animal-driven transportation vehicles laden with fruits and vegetables trying to leave the two markets to destinations in different parts of the city beggars description. The trucks and tractor-trolleys bringing fruits and vegetables to the two markets from different parts of the country cannot leave the markets easily after unloading the merchandise and remain stuck-up in the traffic around the central platforms for hours.

Vegetable Market President Chaudhry Latif and Secretary-General Chaudhry Shane Elahi and Fruit Market President Hafiz Ajmal and Secretary-General Chaudhry Mazhar told *Dawn* that the sanitation was the major problem being faced by the wholesalers running business at the two markets. The sewage water disposal system was defective and the two markets turned into cess pools during the rainy season. The markets were located in a depression and the roads there were more than six feet lower than the Ravi Link Road and even the main drain running along it. Water spilling over the drain and flowing back from the sewers after the rains flowed into the markets and had to



A SUGARCANE wholesale market in front of the vegetable market. — Dawn

Continued on Page 19