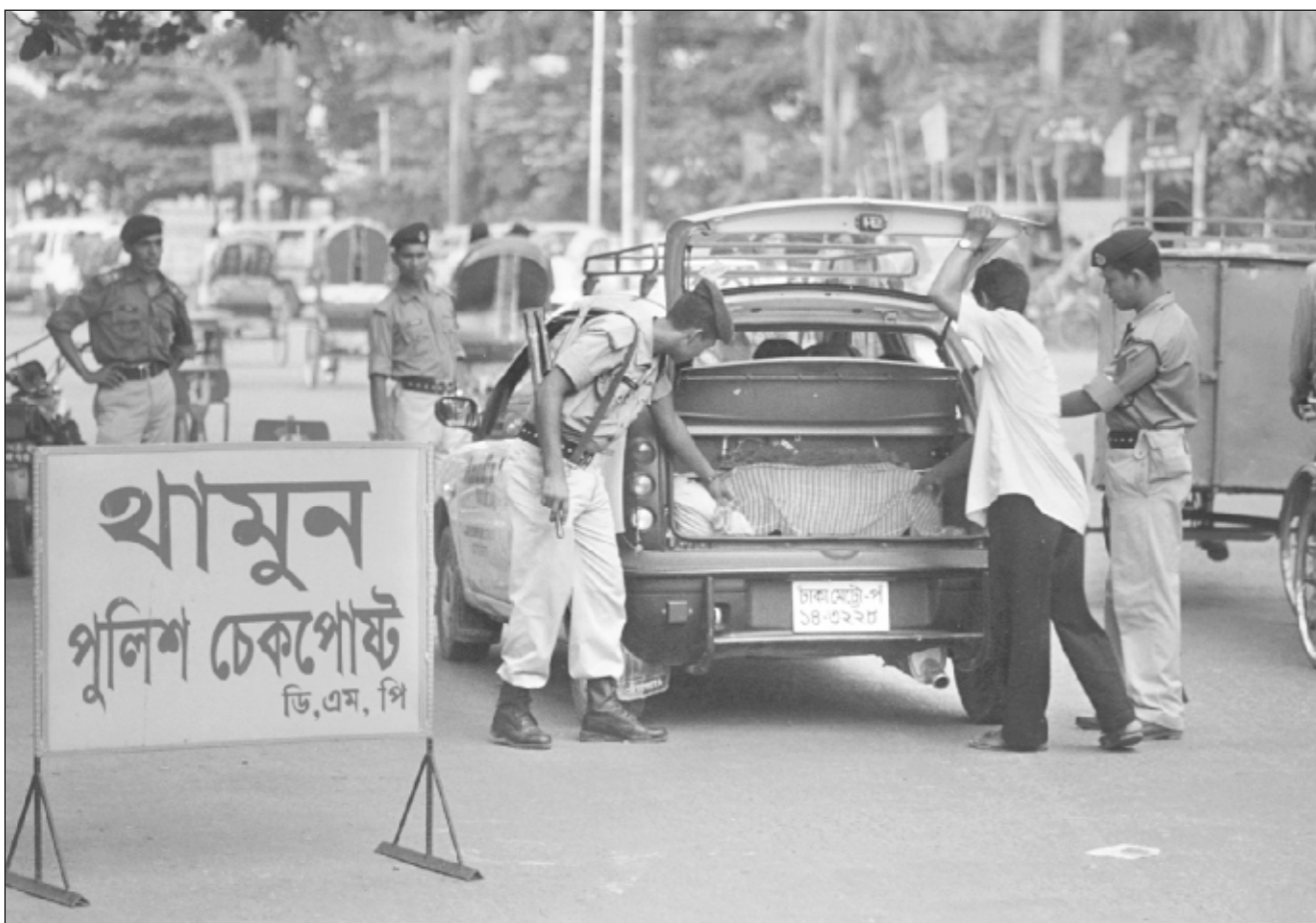


Uncivil security or civic safety?

Traffic flow down to a trickle



A police checkpoint in the city; are they helping people or harassing them?

SABRINA KARIM MURSHED

Life has lost its vibrancy for city dwellers since crime has become rampant in recent times. Many city dwellers are living in panic as every other day they are subjected to further reports of mugging, extortion, kidnaping or even murder.

The law enforcement agencies have taken different measures to curb the crime in the city. At least 90 checkpoints of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police have appeared in the major roads of Dhaka checking the public as well as private vehicles. These checkpoints remain active from 9 am. to 11 pm. Moreover, there are six permanent checkpoints at the entry and exit point of the city.

However, some of the city people commented that police check posts added to their problems since the common people are being harassed in the name of public safety. They said police interrogate and search innocent people at late hours of night and also at daytime while criminals escape easily.

"I was returning home at Mohammedpur from my cousin's house after long hours of study when the on duty police at Lalmatia checkpoint suddenly stopped the CNG I was commuting by," said Abu Saleh Siddiqui, a student of Dhaka College. "It took me an hour to convince him that I was not a criminal," he added.

Rizvi Ahmed, a student of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology confronted such a difficult situation when a policeman stopped him at the checkpoint of Elephant road. "He failed to realize the compass, anti-cutter and scissors that I was carrying was a must for my study but thought them to be weapons," he said.

Most of the cab or CNG drivers commented the police stop their vehicle only to make some money. "They try to ignore even if we have all the necessary papers with us," said Mohammed Rubel, a CNG driver. However, some other CNG and cab drivers said the opposite. "Police do not harass if we produce proper documents but it becomes irritating for the passenger when they interrogate them for nothing," said Chaan Miah, a taxicab driver.

However, most of the on duty policemen strongly denied the allegation of harassing the common mass. "How can we make sure someone is guilty or not without checking properly? We keep on checking the vehicles and passengers only to prevent crime," said Sub-Inspector Momorjon.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Ashraf Huda said the police force has been strongly instructed to behave properly and not to harass anyone. However, he added there are a few policemen who do not follow the rules and the whole force become stigmatized as a result.

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Commuting has become even more difficult in the city, as commuters have to negotiate ruptured lanes and by-lanes, dug up by utility service providers and left without repairs by Dhaka City Corporation (DCC). The DCC has the sole responsibility for repairs of dug-up roads but kept its jobs undone in many places because of bureaucratic tangles.

Residents of Gopibagh and Tikatuli, just a case in point, have problems commuting in and out, as the roads in the areas have long been left without repairs after digging.

The Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) dug Murad Sarak, the road linking RK Mission Road with Avoy Das Lane, to lay underground sewerage and storm water pipelines.

After Hathkolia Road was declared one-way, traffic flow increased on Murad Sarak, as it is the only convenient link from Tikatuli to Motijheel.

"The traffic flow has almost doubled on Murad Sarak, but digging has narrowed it and

created congestion," said a Tikatuli resident.

"I don't understand why the DCC is not repairing the road, only 50 yards from the mayor's own residence," said another regular commuter who uses the road to drop her child at Quamrunnesa Girls High School.

"We are unable to repair and carpet the road as WASA dug up more area than permitted. More digging requires more money for repair, which is not approved by the DCC," said the executive engineer of DCC zone 1.

The engineer also said the DCC wants to 'give WASA a lesson' for not providing proper information about digging.

Whether or not WASA will learn the lesson, it is certain that the commuters would continue to suffer for government officials' laid-back attitude.

DCC also allocate Tk. 50 lakh to each commissioner for general maintenance of the area.

Local Commissioner Mozammel Haq Mukta said funds for repair and carpeting comes from the DCC and the contractor could not start the work because of monsoon.

Unearthing public concern over local graveyard

Plans to convert sections of Uttara graveyard were met with local opposition

BISHAWJIT DAS

Uttara residents fought off a Rajuk plan to convert a graveyard into residential and commercial plots and forced authorities to cancel allocations of the land to different government organizations.

tions of the 30-bigha graveyard at Uttara sector 12, as the residents felt its necessity. I think the problem has been solved," Rajuk Chairman Iqbal Uddin Chowdhury told Star City.

From now on, Uttara will have three graveyards at sector 4, 12 and 14.

Rajuk earmarked 30 bighas of

land for the graveyard at Uttara sector-12 on May 20, 1991 in line with a model town layout. But it brought some changes to the layout on September 26, 2001 and came up with a plan to convert the land and build a new graveyard on 12 bighas of land at section 14.

According to the conversion

plan, Rajuk allocated land to DESA (Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority), BTB (Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board), Titas Gas Transmission, Dhaka Metropolitan Police and WASA (Water and Sewerage Authority), besides setting aside some land for commercial plots.

But a January 2, 2003 meeting reveals that Rajuk officials faced resistance while acquiring the land on the basis of an application by the chief estate officer of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC). The acquisition of the plots at sector 12 is not possible because of local resistance, the meeting was told.

In line with the decision of the meeting, Rajuk cancelled all allocations but that of DESA. And it is still uncertain what will happen to the graves on the land already sold to DESA.

Dr Asgar, secretary of Uttara Kabarthan Bastabayan Committee, said, "If the DCC takes care of the graveyard and does not allow anyone to make concrete structures on this graveyard, Dhaka will never have any graveyard crisis."

Not only residents of Uttara but those of Nikunja, Tongi and Baridhara as well use the graveyard that has now more than 250 graves.



Rajuk had designated sections of this graveyard in Uttara as residential and commercial plots.

A decade ago, traditional bookbinders were guaranteed a daily income of at least Tk 500. But in the past five years there have been days when Babul Ahmed couldn't earn a single paisa at his shop in Nilkhet.



An age-old profession finds itself in a bind

CITY CORRESPONDENT

With an ever increasing number of fresh faces joining the profession, the existing group of bookbinders of the city are finding it harder to earn a living.

Babul Ahmed, a 33 year old book binder, who owns the Hridhoy book binding shop at Nilkhet, has been in the business for eight years. He reminisced about the good times of a decade ago, when he was guaranteed a daily income of at least Tk 500. But there have been days during the last five years when he couldn't earn a single Taka.

In the past, his earning was good enough

to run the family of fourteen. Nowadays, other family members have to work as business has hit a slump.

"The shop is still running thanks to my regular customers and the local shops of Nilkhet who come to me for binding," said Babul.

The bookbinders do ten different types of bindings with normal binding being the most popular and the cheapest.

"Our profession is basically running on goodwill," said Khaza, another bookbinder of Nilkhet. "Since there is no unity among the people of this profession, there is no set rate or system in binding," he added.

Banglabazar and Nilkhet are the two

areas where bookbinders were mostly found. The total number of binding shops in Nilkhet is more than 150 and around a thousand are scattered all over the city.

Binders feel the necessity of an association which would voice their concerns, or help from the government so that a 'going rate' for bookbinding is established.

"Our value is no longer understood by the customers and we would probably go out of business if we continue to offer service at low rates," feared Khaza.

useful telephonenumber numbers

OURIER SERVICES

International
Air Borne Express- 9561371, 9561372, 9550724
Air Couriers Int'l (BD) Ltd.- 8815970
Aramex International Courier- 9558003, 9559582, 9565075
Airspeed Express- 9563494
Asian Courier Services Ltd.- 8313543
Baishakhi Courier Service- 9558606
Banmgladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
Bangladesh Courier Service- 9563989
Bengal Express- 9560642, 9552666
Bangladesh Int'l Courier- 953636
Continental Service Ltd.- 9552948, 9558425
DHL Worldwide Express- 9881703-7, 9886305-9, 9882057
Enem Express- 9330699
Fedex Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
Modhuban Courier Service-

9550884
Overseas Courier Service- 9352431, 8321169
Pacific Courier- 9568446
Reliance Express Service- 9558515, 7110249
Sky International service- 9660442
Skynet world Wide Express- 9558062, 9560258, 7114787, 7113184
TNT Express- 9566662, 9558239, 8618155
Union Courier Service- 9341722
United Parcel Service Air alliance Ltd.- 8826429, 8810223

National
Asian courier Service Ltd.- 8313543
BAE- 9884851
Central Courier Service- 9881118
Confidence Courier Service Ltd.- 9567036
Chisty Courier- 7110177-9, 7100842-4
Cosmopol Services- 9552793, 9557975

Dhaka Courier Services- 7236222
Dolphin Courier- 9558802
Dreamland Courier Service- 9550326, 9566975
Pioneer Courier Services- 9561727, 9569759
Probashi Courier Services- 9346359
Rainbow Express Parcel Services Ltd.- 8322773, 8315703
Reliance Express Services- 9558515, 7110249
Sundarban Courier Services- 9551984, 9556189, 9551656
Sunrise Courier Services- 9568751

TIPS
Do you know according to Dhaka City Corporation, you must deposit your waste at the collection site between 4pm and 10pm

LIBRARY & INFO-

Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers
Central Public Library- 8626001-4,
Shishu Academy- 9564128
Shilpakala Academy- 8614673
Bangla Academy- 8619550
Islamic Foundation- 9550280, 9556407
Nazrul Institute- 9114602
Ford Foundation- 8116133
Alliance Francaise- 8611557
British Council- 8618867-8, 8618905-7
Community Development Library- 8113769, 8113604
Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka- 9126525-6
Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library- 8615096
The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314
Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412

OUTING

Museum and Zoo
National Museum- 8619396-9
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday 3 pm- 8 pm, Thursday closed
Muktijuddha Jadughar- 9559091
Open: 10:30 am 6:30 pm, Sunday Closed
Bangabandhu Smiti Jadughar- 8110046
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Wednesday closed
Ahsan Manzil
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday: 3 pm - 7 pm, Thursday Closed
Shishu Jadughar- 9666466
Open: 10 am- 6 pm, Sunday Closed
Sonargoan Jadugha

CITY BUS ROUTE

Bus No.	Route	Starts from
1	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 10, 11, 12	Golap Shah Mazar
2	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 1, 2	Phoolbaria bus station
3	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mahakhali-Airport-Azampur	Phoolbaria bus station
4	Shyampur-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Airport-Tongi	Shyampur
5	Sayedabad-Kamalapur-Motijheel-Airport-Joydepur-Gazipur	Sayedabad
6A	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulistan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6B	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6C	Motijheel Shapla chattr- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2	Motijheel Shaplachattr
7	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2	Sadarghat
8	Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtolli	Chittagong Road
9	Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12	Demra Ranimahall
10	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Malibagh-Rampura-Biwa Road-Tongi Bridge	Sadarghat
11	Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Tongi Bridge	Sayedabad
11/A	Sayedabad-Khilgoan-Malibagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge	Syedabad
12	Shanir Akhra-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammadpur	Shanir Akhra
13	Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Jhigatola-Shangkar-Mohammedpur	Motijheel
14	Signboard -Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 12	Signboard (Chittagong Road)
15	Chittagong Road-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mirpur 12	Chittagong Road
24	Gulistan-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Airport-Uttara-Bipile	Gulistan