



Some of Khan's remote-control planes, left, and the proud owner at work, right, below.



Cruise thru' limitless airspace

Zabeer M Khan boasts 40 remote-control planes and has taken air-cruising by glider as a hobby since childhood

SYED TASHFIN CHOWDHURY

Explore limitless airspace with lightweight remote-control (RC) planes. Dive, roll, spin, glide, soar through the skies or drop down for a perfect landing. It's great fun.

"Anyone is likely to get hooked to this after flying his first RC plane," said Zabeer M Khan, as he flew his glider over Nikunjo area near the Airport Road.

Khan boasts 40 such RC planes and has taken air-cruising by glider as a hobby since childhood.

Skill, dedication and technical know-how are required to sustain such a hobby, says Khan, who completed his higher study in the UK and returned home to Bangladesh in 1997.

In the US, Canada and the UK, the hobby is popular among people of all ages and there are RC flying clubs, hobby shops and instructors thanks to the enthusi-

asm of RC flyers.

Khan wants to promote RC airplane flying in Bangladesh and has received good responses from enthusiasts.

When he flies planes in open areas, people watch him performing amazing stunts. "Some youths approached me and really wanted to fly such planes."

Having such a plane is only the first step to a major leap. Most people mistake the planes for toys, but flying such planes needs instructions.

"I got a plane at age 11, but I flew my first plane at 29," said Khan, managing director of Bengal Indigo, one of the leading denim manufacturers in Bangladesh.

Khan's planes did not fly on the first day and crashed numerous times, but his aircraft can now reach as high altitude as normal planes do because of his dedication and love for the hobby.

Beginners should stick to electric planes rather than fuelled aircraft, as plane crashes are

usually of learners, he suggested.

A remote-control electric plane has three major components -- radio system, kits and the power system.

Says Khan, who built two RC airplanes out of foam: "If your plane crashes, you have to buy a new airframe with which your previous radio and power system must be compatible. It works perfectly."

He looks forward to opening the first ever hobby shop in Bangladesh, which will help the

otherwise helpless flyers with information, airframes and radio system.

"I want the flyers to enjoy the thrill of flying an airplane first-hand, even if they do not buy it."

"I may hand homemade planes for free to visitors who come to the hobby shop," said Khan, who flies his planes every day, eliciting admiration from people.

Points for kickbacks

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Some traffic sergeants and constables at several points of the city are using their authority to prosecute innocent motorists on 'fictitious traffic offences'.

The 'kind hearted' policemen however are instantly offering the victims 'immunity' in exchange for handouts that ranges from TK 100 to 300.

In most cases each team of such traffic policemen consists of one sergeant and two constables. They wait within 100 to 150 yards from a traffic signal and stop their targets by waving them to pull over. Due to the existence of proper traffic signals on Mirpur Road, Panthapath and Begum Rokeya Sarani, unsuspecting drivers are easy preys.

In front of Asad Gate's Sonar Bangla petrol pump at around 2 pm on Monday last, this corre-

spondent witnessed a team of three traffic policemen pouncing on motorists coming from the Mirpur end.

Buses, yellow cabs, CNG autorickshaws, motorbikes and private cars, especially those having a run down look, were being stopped by the constables. The sergeant remained close to his red motorbike a few feet away.

A pickup van was parked and the constables asked the driver to go to the sergeant with his vehicle documents.

The sergeant then implicated the driver with a traffic offence for dodging signal lights.

From the spot where the traffic team was standing, it was practically impossible for them to determine whether someone has violated the lights and yet the driver was being harassed.

The wily sergeant had his nametag concealed by putting the inactive walkie-talkie inside his

shirt pocket all the while he was talking to the driver.

Then there was the inevitable bargaining. As the sergeant pretended to look away, the constables received the agreed amount from the driver who was then allowed to leave.

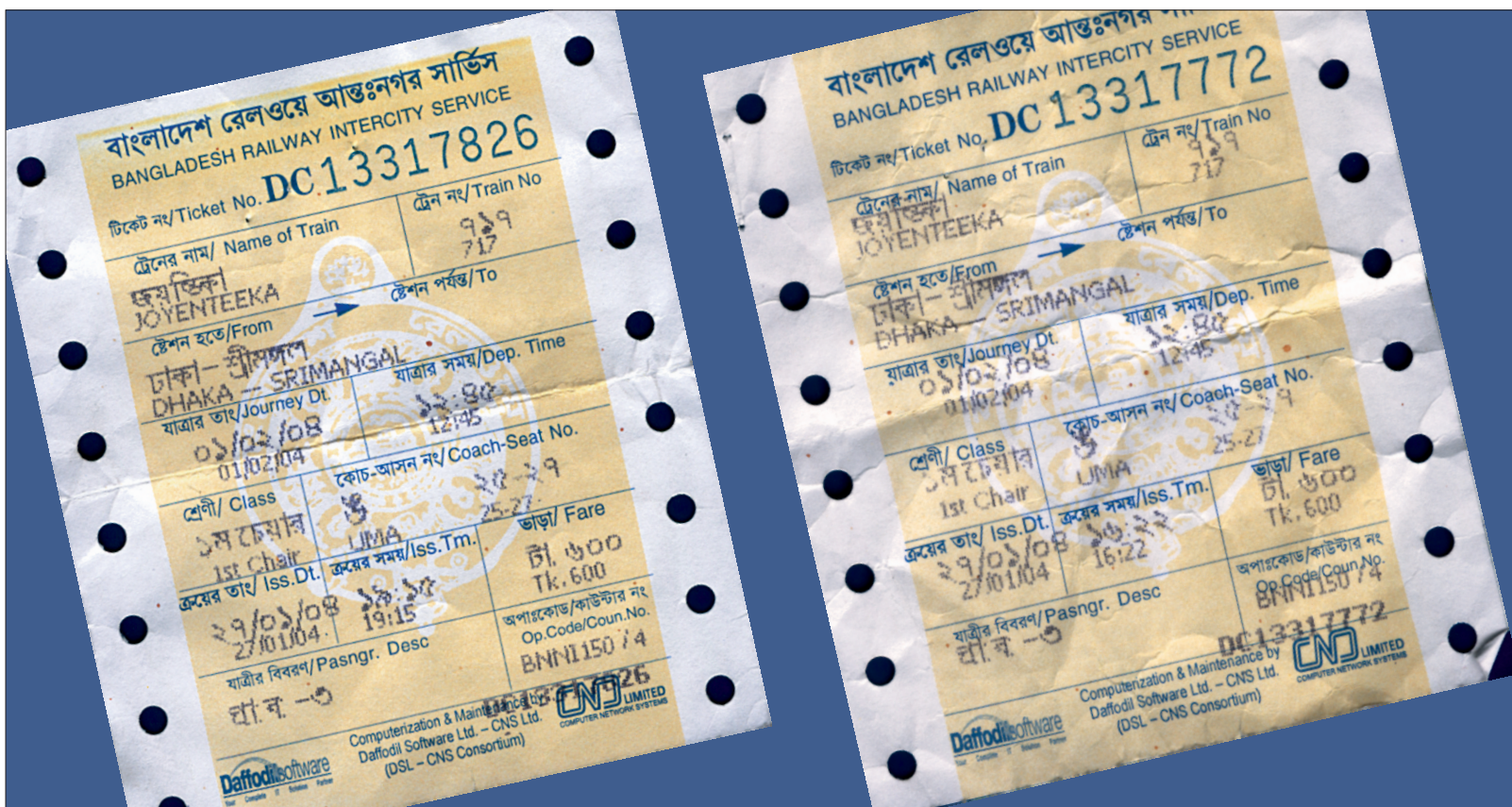
In just an hour, at least thirty vehicles were stopped at the spot and most motorists escaped with bribes.

When contacted, Ansar Uddin Khan Pathan, Deputy Commissioner North of the traffic department said that it he wasn't aware of sergeants framing motorists with fictitious offences.

He claimed that the department was strictly manning all the traffic signals on Mirpur Road, Panthapath and elsewhere in the city and he has never received any complaint about the behaviour of sergeants.



A common scene at city points.



Mistake or something fishy?

NAIMUL HAQ

Believe it or not, Bangladesh Railway (BR) sold three seats to six travellers heading to the same destination on the same day!

The Banani ticket counter issued tickets for the same three seats to two different ticket purchasers and apparently all six passengers had no choice but to travel sharing three stuffy seats.

A computerised ticket -- DC13317772 -- for three first class (chair) seat Nos. 25, 26 and 27, on inter-city Joyentee's 717 UMA compartment was issued at 4:22pm on January 27.

Ironically the same counter at 7:15pm on the same day issued a ticket for the same three seats of the same compartment of the same train to another traveller. The only difference was the ticket numbers -- the second one bearing DC13317826.

The train, scheduled to leave Dhaka at 12:45pm was destined to arrive in Srirangal on February 1, the day before the Eid-ul-Azha.

Banani railway ticket counter issued tickets for the same 3 seats to two different purchasers and apparently all six passengers had to share 3 stuffy seats

On the day of travel, the six passengers unaware of what lay ahead, boarded the train from Airport Station in Uttara. Those who had purchased the ticket at 4:22pm occupied the seats before the latter located theirs.

One group finding another occupying the seats had a heated argument -- both claiming that they had purchased tickets after computer clarification on the availability of the seats.

The ticket checker intervened saying such a 'mistake' is common and he was helpless in solving the matter.

The passengers were later forced to take turns in sharing the seats on the eight-hour journey.

Contacted, the BR Dhaka station manager, Ashoke Kumar Dey, could not specify what caused the error.

This reporter was referred to the Daffodil Software Limited, the agent for computerisation and maintenance of the systems for the railway.

A Daffodil official said interruption in power supply may have caused the error but he was not sure about it.

It is alleged that the Daffodil staff in cooperation with BR ticketing staff often sells tickets with duplicate seat numbers to make a quick buck especially before events like the Eid.

city express

The latest crop of quotes from the city's press -- words worth repeating, we feel, for their humour, insight or sheer outrageousness. Star City does not necessarily support the opinions expressed in this column.



"Awami League is jatiya beiman (national traitors), none should trust them."

-- Khaleda Zia
Prime Minister and BNP Chairperson

Tells rally while pointing out that AL had pledged not to go for hartal, on February 13.
Source: Jugantor

"Even we told the Home Minister to ensure security so that we can safely go back home after this meeting."

-- Amir Hossain Khan
President, Bangladesh Shopowners Association

Tells press after a meeting on law and order at the home ministry, on February 11. Source: Prothom Alo

"When cops beat up an MP, it amounts to same action against the Speaker and the Leader of the House."

-- Kader Siddiqui
MP, President, Krishak-Sramik Janata League

Tells Jatiya Sangsad, on February 13
Source: Prothom Alo



"Forget about the ministers, bureaucrats, police or businessmen of the country, even the university teachers do not read books."

-- Humayun Azad
Poet, author and critic

Tells journalists during an exchange of opinions, on February 8.
Source: Prothom Alo

"Government officials are creating obstacles to development of the garment industry."

-- M K Anwar
Agriculture Minister

At a seminar on readymade garments, on February 13.
Source: Bhorer Kagoj

"Days of putting up resistance are over. Get ready for counter-attacks."

-- Motia Chowdhury
AL presidium member

Tells party workers in the wake of frequent police attacks during hartal hours, on February 14. Source: Bhorer Kagoj



"What's the use of computers? They won't supply us with food."

-- M. Saifur Rahman
Finance Minister

Tells the Annual General Conference of the Janata Bank, on February 10.
Source: Bhorer Kagoj