

DCC faces 1,931 audit objections in 5 years

SULTANA RAHMAN

The audit department has filed 1,931 'broadsheet' audit objections over the last five years, alleging corruption in Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) projects.

Auditors pressed most of the objections involving over Tk 100 crore against the projects of engineering, health, estate and transport departments, with the engineering department top of the list, an official said, seeking anonymity.

The primary complaints raised by DCC's audit division have gradually moved to full-fledged government audit objections as accused officials failed to satisfy DCC auditors and the local government, rural development (LGRD) and cooperatives ministry.

"The objections came after auditors detected a serious lack of transparency and accountability among DCC's divisional authorities," a senior DCC official said. "Some dishonest officials are cashing in on lack of accountability," he alleged.

The

DCC auditors have found another 35 primary objections this year and over 70 objections of serious anomalies in different projects.

The issue was discussed at a meeting last month after DCC Chief Executive Officer Habibur Rahman asked senior divisional officials to submit clarifications to the DCC audit division, but no development was seen in its wake.

"Neither the DCC nor the LGRD ministry took action against the accused officials, who are now lobbying with higher authorities to

whom they have to clarify," another official alleged.

"The corrupt officials have always remained beyond the reach of law by bribing their seniors," he said.

Many officials charged with graft have retired or were transferred, complicating the process to hold them accountable.

The objections could be cleared at a tripartite meeting that involves auditors, LGRD ministry officials and DCC representatives, where the divisional officials would explain the allegations.

The DCC plans to take action against the project officials if they fail to give satisfactory answers, the DCC chief executive officer said.

Inflow of foreign furniture

It started with computer tables on revolving chairs but now people are opting for foreign made bedroom furniture too

SABRINA KARIM MURSHED

Arzoo of Bikrampur Foreign Furniture.

Foreign furniture has flooded the markets in the city threatening the potential of local furniture makers.

Starting from the posh stores in Gulshan to the more middle-class friendly Panthapath or Stadium markets, most of the furniture houses display imported goods.

According to Bangladesh Furniture Industry Owners Association, furniture worth Tk 200 crore were imported in the last three years.

"Initially it was office furniture like computer tables or revolving chairs but now customers are opting for foreign made bedroom furniture too," said Shariful Islam

"All types of furniture is dismantled into several pieces when it is being imported," said Ratan Kumar Dey of Modern Foreign Furniture at Panthapath. "The dismantled pieces are fixed again when they arrive in Dhaka," he explained.

Large sized beds, baby cots, sideboards or wardrobes are brought to the city this way.

The traders said customers prefer foreign furniture as they are better in design and have better finishing. "Moreover, foreign furniture are cheaper than those made of quality woods like Shegun, Shikoroi etc," said Dey.

Imported furniture is not made of wood unlike traditional furniture found in the city. They are made of processed wood like woodtex, laminated board, plywood, formica board, MDF board or other material. Mostly this kind of furniture is imported from Indonesia, Malaysia, China, Taiwan and Dubai.

However, raw materials of making such replacement wood are available in Bangladesh. Some of the furniture traders said bamboo, Jute sticks, paper pulp and some other chemicals are mixed with powdered wood for making wood replacements like plywood, formica or others. But only a few organisations like Star Particle and Navana Furniture in

Dhaka are making particleboard or veneer board that are being used in making furniture.

"Traders are bound to import alternative-wood furniture because local raw materials like particle boards are very expensive," said K.M. Akhteruzzaman, President of Bangladesh Furniture Industry Owners Association.

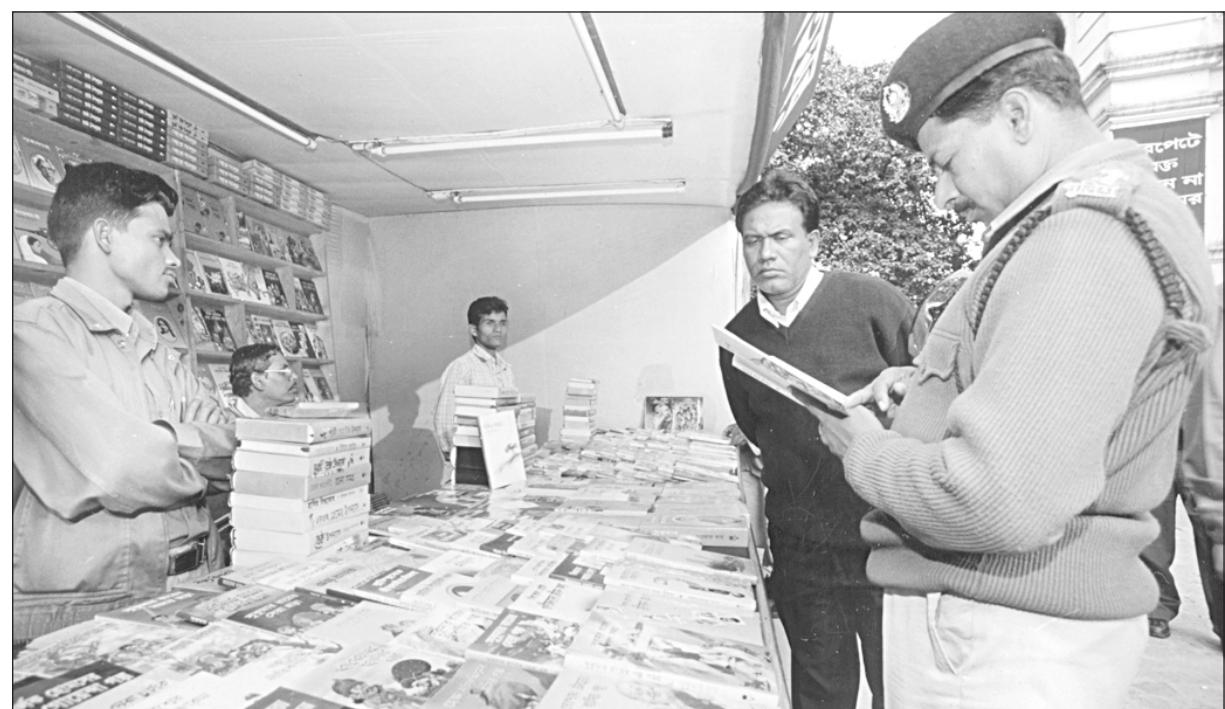
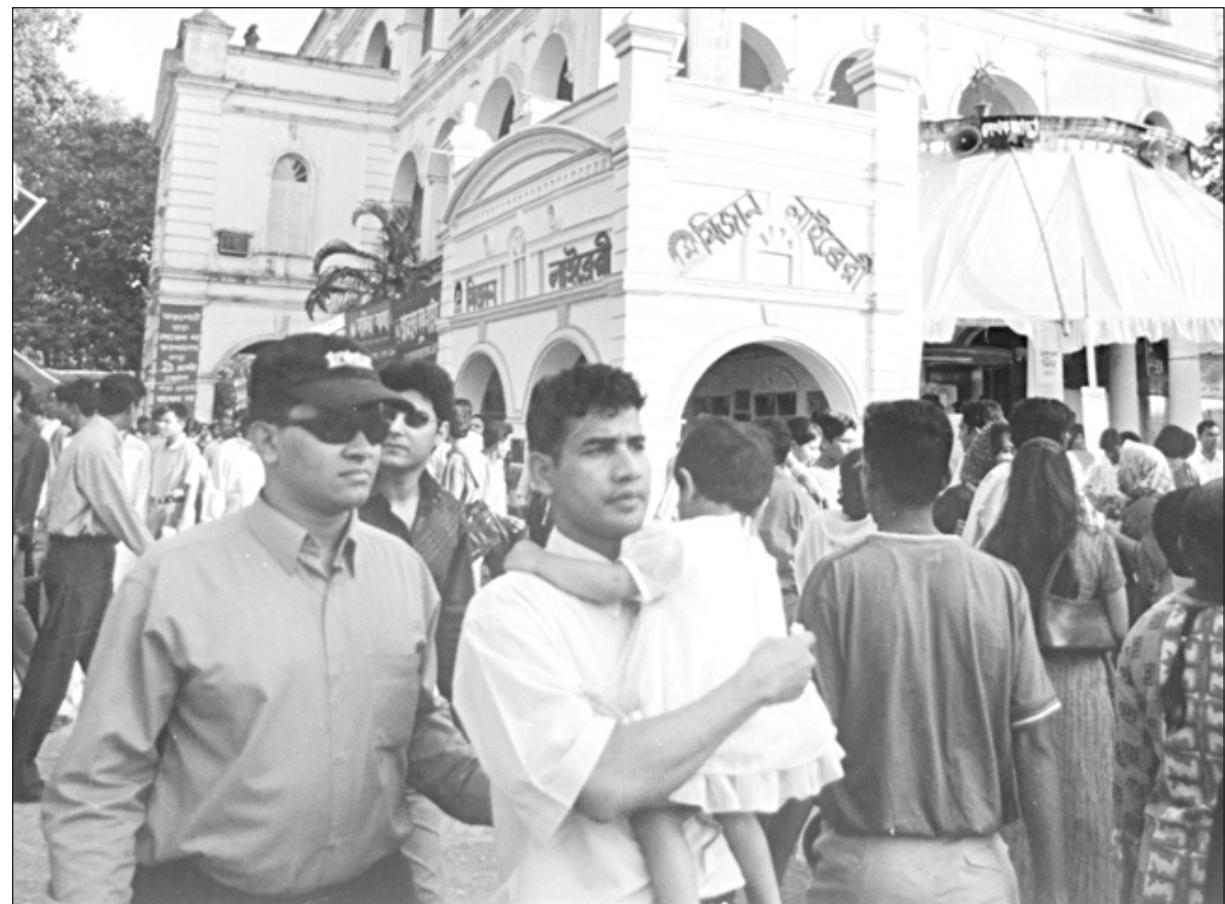
He said importing complete furniture remains cheaper even after paying tax.

"We need factories here to make raw materials that will replace wood," Akhteruzzaman said. "Also we need foreign assistance or technical support to establish such industries. Government assistance is also a must for this sector to flourish."



A furniture shop at Panthapath

DIFFERENT STROKES



SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

Amar Ekushey is less than a week away. The fair at Bangla Academy has started drawing big crowd of book enthusiasts from different strata of the society. The fair will continue till February 29

No free drinking water at ZIA

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Ankur was thirsty before she flew abroad, but Zia International Airport had no free drinking water for passengers. On her first trip overseas, she bought a mineral water bottle from a duty-free shop at a price three times as high as on the local market.

"I didn't know there was no

drinking water at the airport. I had to settle for a high-priced water bottle. What alternative did I have?"

"It was embarrassing for me to ask immigration officers where drinking water outlets were," she said.

Discomfort turns even worse when flights are delayed, leaving hundreds of passengers stranded.

Airport authorities say over 40 flights carry around 6,000

passengers in and out of Dhaka a day. Up to 10 flights are late on average.

"Many passengers like me feel nervous before boarding a plane. They need water for their nerves to cool, but such a basic facility is not found at the airport," said Faisal Abdullah, a passenger waiting in the departure lounge.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (Caab) installed eight water filters for Hajj pil-

grims, but they have all now disappeared.

"No-one asked for such a facility before. Those who need water carry it with them or buy from duty-free shops," said a senior Caab official, seeking anonymity.

The official says Caab has no immediate plan to provide free drinking water for passengers but could consider the idea.

usefultelephonenumbers

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 Sercive-

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-

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,

Chisty Courier- 7110177-9,

Cosmopol Services- 9552793,

9557975

Dhaka Courier Services-

7236222

Dolphin Courier- 9558802

Dreamland Courier Service-

9550326, 9566975

Pioneer Courier Services-

9561727, 9569750

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

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

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-Mahakali-Airport-Azampur

Shyampur

4 Shyampur