

Extortionists menace Mirpur businessmen

SYED TASHFIN CHOWDHURY

Businesses, institutions and hawkers operating on the Mirpur Road are constantly tormented by extortionists.

There are some 4,500 businesses on either side of the Mirpur Road and a number of them reportedly are incurring hefty losses because of illegal toll collection. Some offices and shops have even shifted to comparatively safer locations due to the extortion menace.

"If we do not pay the toll, our lives will be under threat," said a manager of a store at Chandrima Market.

Garment factories, filling stations, coaching centres, restaurants, fast food and phone-fax shops etc. all operate under the shadow of extortion, local businesspeople alleged.

Over the past few years, entrepreneurs who have protested against this practice have turned into targets of

extortionists and the consequences have been deadly with murders, attacks, harassment and vandalism becoming common occurrences.

Locals said the rates of toll vary according to the size of the business. In the case of a garment factory the extortionists demand Tk. 30,000 to Tk. 50,000 a month. For fast food joints, restaurants and coaching centers the demand is around Tk. 10,000 to Tk. 15,000. For clothes shops, the rate is between Tk. 5,000 to Tk. 7,000.

Even the floating hawkers of the area are not left in peace. In the absence of a hawkers' association in the area, extortionists pounce on them at every opportunity. A number of street vendors also accused the police of collecting money from them regularly.

"We have to pay between Tk. 500 to Tk. 1000 at least," said a shirt-seller on Mirpur road.

According to sources, atleast three different armed gangs are responsible for extortion in the area.

Police have already arrested Din Islam, the leader of one of the strongest of these groups. But some other notorious criminals like Yaseen and Salim are still at large.

Since Din Islam's arrest, police patrolling has intensified and local entrepreneurs said that extortionists also are keeping a low profile for that reason.

"But they will be at it again as soon as the police ease off a little," feared an employee of a coaching centre.

Extortion is most rampant during festivals like the two Eids and Durga Puja.

The gangs allegedly collect monthly tolls from shops and institutions at Chandrima Super Market, the New Market Kitchen Market, Gausia,

Chandi Chowk market, Baku Shah Market and also from shops at Katabon.

Most business owners are too scared to speak up against the criminals as the gangs have hideouts and sympathisers inside the markets.

These days a popular form of demanding money is over telephone. Some of the most prominent businesspeople of the area have received phone calls where the caller identified himself as top terrorist Kala Jahangir or one of his associates. The lowest amount these callers demand is not less than Tk 1 lakh.

"We are trying our best to check such illegal practices. We hope to arrest some of the key extortionists in the next few weeks, which hopefully will lead to a stop in such activities," said the duty officer of Dhanmondi police station when approached.



Even hawkers and vendors on the Mirpur Road are not spared by the extortionists.

Traffic signals may not blip before December

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The operation of traffic signal lights at 59 locations in the city is likely to miss another deadline agreed earlier by

Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP) of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and the World Bank (WB).

"The work will not be complete before December and this will cause

delays in functioning," said a DUTP executive engineer.

Abdul Qaiyum, project director (PD) of DUTP, earlier said the installation of the signals depended on civil engineering work at intersections and work on 36 locations would be complete by July.

The two traffic signals at Gulshan intersections 1 and 2 are the only ones in operation at the moment. The Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB) completed these two points on priority basis to demonstrate the effectiveness of demolishing the roundabouts.

"The civil engineering work of 48 spots has been complete and cabling is going on in the other locations," the executive engineer said.

He added the electronic signals at Ellenbari, Bangla Motor, Dhan-sondi Road No. 6 and Nilkhet may start functioning this month depending on the outcome of the discussions with Dhaka Metropolitan Traffic Department.

"The traffic movement in the capital is expected to be monitored from a DCC central control room. But the mechanism has not been set up yet and will not be effective until all 59 locations are in operation," the engineer said.

The cost of the project is estimated at Tk 14 crore. ATS Hong Kong was awarded the contract for the WB funded project, as their bid was the lowest.

A number of expatriate engineers will maintain the system for at least three years and train their DC counterparts in the process.

DCTB officials said freeing main streets from rickshaws is a factor to start the operation of the automated traffic signals.



MAHANAGAR GENERAL HOSPITAL

Modernisation stalls as ministry rejects plan

KAUSAR ISLAM AYON

The modernisation project of Mahanagar General Hospital (MGH) has stalled as the local government and rural development (LGRD) ministry refused to accept the proposal for funding the project.

The 50-bed hospital run by Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has been in poor condition for long.

On examination of the proposal submitted in April, the ministry rejected it last month deciding not to forward it to the Planning Commission on grounds that the project did not fall under the ministry's jurisdiction, said Mohammad Muslemuddin, senior assistant chief, planning and development division of the ministry.

"This ministry deals with urban primary health care projects. The proposal forwarded is a tertiary health care project and the authority lies with the health ministry, so we can't allot funds," said Muslemuddin.

The hospital, set up in 1989 at Nayabazar, failed to provide proper services for patients because of lack of equipment and neglect by officials.

The modernisation project of the three-storey hospital included upgrading to 15 storeys with an increase in the number of beds to 500 from 50.

About 35 clinical departments except bypass surgery and kidney transplant were included in the proposal.

The cost of upgrading was estimated at Tk 154 crore and expected to be provided from government funding.

The proposal included the setting-up of an emergency unit of 150 to 200 beds, where dengue and diarrhoea patients would be treated.

A DCC official said the DCC would

decide whether or not they will apply to the health ministry for funding.

"Our next step will be decided once the LGRD has intimated its stand on the matter," he said. "We went ahead with the proposal on the green light given by Finance Minister Saifur Rahman when he visited Nagar Bhaban early this year,"

he added.

The modern diagnostic equipment would have included Spiral CT scan, Digital X-ray, lithotripsy machine, cardiac angiography, dialysis unit, machine for transurethral resection of the prostate, 3-dimension ultrasonography, video endoscopy and gama-camera.



Mahanagar General Hospital: Awaiting rescue.

healthouting,taxicab&train

HEALTH

Hospitals

Heart

National Institute of Cardio Vascular Diseases (NICVD), - 9130800, 9122560-59

Burn

Dhaka Medical College Hospital Burn Unit-8626812-6

Cancer

National Cancer Institute-8014914, 8826561-65

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University-8612550-4, 861455-9

Diabetes

Diabetic Research Hospital (BIRDEM)- 9661551-5, 8616641-50

Mother & Child Care

Shishu Hospital- 9119119, 8116061-62

Azimpur Mother & Child Health

Training Institute- 8624827, 8624980

Eye

Islamia Eye Hospital-9110794, 9119315

National Eye Hospital- 8117202, 8114807

Dental

Dental College -9002035

Orthopaedics

National Orthopaedics (Pangu) Hospital- 9114075, 9112150

General

Dhaka Medical College Hospital- 8626812-6

Rushmono General Hospital- 8317819

Holy Family Hospital- 83111731-25

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital- 8612550-4, 8614545-9

Bangladesh Medical College & Hospital- 8115443, 9118202,

Shamarita Hospital- 9131901

Suhrawardy Hospital -- 9130800, 9122560-69

Saifullah Medical Collage Hospital -- 7310061-4, 7319002-6

Cholera Research Hospital (ICDDR)- 8811751-60

Monowra Hospital 8319802, 8318135

Blood Bank

Red Crescent Centre- 9116563

Sandhani (DMCH)- 8624040

Sandhani (SMCH)- 7310061, 7310061, 7319022

Dhaka Medical Collage Hospital- 8626812-9

Eye Bank

Sandhani International Eye Bank- 8614040

Ambulances For

Dead Body

Anzuman Mafulul Islam (Kakrail 9336611, Gandaria 7319808, 7318166,

Al-Markajul Islam 9127867,

Gulshan 1, 2 markets-Friday

Elephant Road-Friday

Bishal Center-Friday

Baitul Mukarram Market-Friday

Polwell Market-Friday

BCS Computer City-Friday

Isha Khan Shopping Complex-Friday.

Rajlaxmi Complex-Friday

Stadium Market-Friday

Bangabazar Market-Friday

National Museum-Thursday

Ahsan Manzil--Thursday.

New Market-Tuesday

Gausia Market-Tuesday

Mouchak Market-Sunday

Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesdeay

Dhanmondi Hawkers Market-Tuesday

Eastern Plaza-Sunday

Farmview Super Market-Sunday

Muktijuddha Jadughar-Sunday

Dhaka Zoo-Sunday

Shishu Jadughar-Sunday

Yellow Cab

Navana 9558065

Salida 9344477, 0171620881

Cosmo 9112959 and 8127191

Cab One 7113282-3

Nihon 8624741-2

Orion 9347277

Anudip 8125285 and 8127611

Capital 9352847

Subarna Express

Mahanagar Prabhati

Mahanagar Godhuli

Turna

Parabat Express

Joyantika Express

Upaban Express

Tista Express

Ekata Express

Upakul Express

Agnibeena Express

Union 8130485

Kool 0171826731

Black Cab

Cab Ex 9358401

Cabline 8321162

JBS Cab 019364575

Sajan 018126036

Anudip -- 8125285 and 8127611

Cab One 7113282-3

Palki 0171052500

Cab I 7113282

Jatri 0171540074

Nipun 9572277

R-Cab 8914782

Star Cab 9571919

Shihab 018202477 & 018228675

KGN 8620011

Reaches Chittagong at 10:35 pm

Reaches Chittagong at 1-55 pm

Reaches Chittagong at 10-55 pm

Reaches Chittagong at 6-40 am

Reaches Sylhet at 2-30 pm

Reaches Sylhet at 9-20 pm

Reaches Sylhet at 6-40 am

Reaches Bahadurabad at 11-05 pm

Reaches Bahadurabad at 11-15

Reaches Noakhali at 5-00 am

Reaches Jagannath at 2-30 pm

Leaves Dhaka at 4:30 pm

Leaves Dhaka at 7-30 am

Leaves Dhaka at 3-15 pm

Leaves Dhaka at 11-00 pm

Leaves Dhaka at 12-45 pm

Leaves Dhaka at 9-45 pm

Leaves Dhaka at 7-00 am

Leaves Dhaka at 5-00 pm

Leaves Dhaka at 8-00 pm

Leaves Dhaka at 9-20 pm

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

Information Resource Center, The American Center - 8813440-4, 9886395-9

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

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