



They help each other to beg.

Bribe, break law

Non-mechanised three-wheelers are banned from the Panthopath VIP road, but with a little cash, you can break the system

FAIZUL TANIM

Non-mechanised vehicles are banned on the Panthopath Road. But that is something written in the books. In practice, the entire stretch of the road is virtually open to rickshaws and rickshaw-vans,

only you have to bribe the traffic police there to get the right to break the law.

It is now a common scene that traffic at Sonargaon Crossing gets stuck because of rickshaw-vans plying illegally, taking goods to and from Karwan Bazar market.

The policemen have engaged street urchins to collect tolls from van pullers.

"The children are instructed by on-duty traffic police officers to collect money from rickshaw- and van-pullers. The rate ranges from Tk 4 to Tk 5 per trip," says Amjad

Alam, a street-side fruit seller. "Although non-mechanised three-wheelers are banned on the VIP road, the police do not object to their plying as long as the toll is given. The little street kids stop the vehicles, collect money and give it to the traffic police at the end of the day," he said.

Biplob, an urchin caught in the act of taking money from a van-puller by this correspondent, said: "The policemen just pick us (the street kids) randomly and force us to collect money. Today has been my first day at toll collection. We charge Tk 3 to Tk 5 depending on the value of goods."

Sadrul, an on-duty traffic police officer, totally denied the allegations. "Everyone here seems to be after the police and are looking out for our faults. We never take bribes".

When this correspondent pointed to Biplob, the child who was caught in the act of toll collection, Sadrul said, "Ask the street boy to name the police officer and bring him to us. We will then handle the case."

Zahurul Islam, Deputy Commissioner of Traffic, North, said, "We are completely unaware of the situation. The few hours that I stay at that spot, no vans or any non-mechanised three-wheelers ply it. We will definitely look into the matter immediately."



A rickshaw-van plying along the Panthopath Road in the midst of heavy traffic.

useful telephone numbers

COURIER SERVICES

International
 Air Borne Express- 9561371, 9561372, 9550724
 Air Couriers Int'l (BD) Ltd.- 8815970
 Aramex International Courier- 9558003, 9559582, 9560575
 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- 7236222

9550884
 Overseas Courier Service- 9352431, 8321169
 Pacific Courier- 9568446
 Reliance Express Service- 9558151, 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, Cosmopolitan Services- 9552793, 9557975
 Dhaka Courier Services- 7236222



LIBRARY & INFO-

Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers
 Central Public Library- 8626001-4, Shishu Academy- 9564128
 Shilpakala Academy- 8614673
 Bangla Academy- 8619550
 Islamic Foundation- 9550280, 955640
 The American Centre (IRC)- 8813440-4,9886395
 The 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

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

LIVING ON DOLES

Down and out in Dhaka streets

For the city's seven to eight lakh beggars, footpaths, bus, launch and railway terminals, mazars, aroths and slums are the only places they can slump down to sleep.

CITY CORRESPONDENT

They beg by day, shoving and pushing against each other to get the attention of the passengers sitting in the cool of air-conditioned cars. If the luck is good, they might get a two-taka note. But luck is something hard to come by.

"Car passengers are more generous," said Sagir Miah, a 60-years-old beggar, at Sonargaon crossing. "We pick the most dazzling cars in the queue."

In the sweltering summer heat or in the splattering rain, they have to go through the same routine, from morning to night.

As night grows and cars trickle down, they have another thing to worry about -- where to sleep. For the city's seven to eight lakh beg-

gars, footpaths, bus, launch and railway terminals, mazars, aroths or wholesale points and slums are the only places they can slump down to sleep.

But then, sleep is not often that easy for them.

"We are often forced to move out from footpaths in the middle of the night by policemen. The cops need the footpaths to flirt with floating sex workers," said Amina Begum, a middle-aged beggar, who sleeps on the footpaths of Farmgate.

Hafiz, a 65 years old beggar, who lives on the main road outside the High Court Mazar, alleged: "I was beaten up by policemen while in my prayers just because I took time to move out before the prime minister travelled through it."

The beggars who cannot find

shelter in the mazars go to the wholesale markets, for instance, Karwanbazar, to sleep. But that is not free too. Each beggar has to pay the local hoodlums Tk 1 for a night's sleep. That way, the police and the hoodlums can collect as much as Tk 10,000 a night. If someone refuses to pay, the policeman's baton will strike them hard.

Some floating sex workers in Gulistan said they started with begging and ended up as sex workers.

Sometimes, the authorities crack down on begging. The beggars are rounded up and taken to Bhabaghure Kendra (vagabond centre) only to be released a few days later.

Rana Begum, who had once been taken to a vagabond centre, has

again come back to begging near the Supreme Court. "That place is a hell," she said curly about her experience at the centre.

Constant begging, seeking mercy from the well-off, can often be too much to take for some.

"I don't want to beg, I want to die," said Abdul Karim, a paralysed beggar who has been living this life for the last 30 years. "It is unbearable to go from one person to another and ask for money."

But some still take a little humorously.

"I feel proud when the affluent says 'pardon me' when they don't want to part with a few takas," said Abdullah, a beggar, with a broad smile.

Dhanmondi in garbage glitch

KAUSAR ISLAM AYON

Kayan Parishad, a private organisation, has been providing such service to the residents of these areas since February. Locals are forced to take the service at a high price.

"We are paying Dhanmondi City Corporation (DCC) for garbage cleaning and again paying for the private garbage collection service," said a resident of Dhanmondi Road No. 1. "I can't pay for the same service."

Asked about his involvement in Dhanmondi Samaj Kalyan Parishad, who is taking the private service, says private garbage collection can be an option but not a mandatory system.

But the local ward commissioner has a different explanation. He told The Daily Star that the locals demol-

ished the garbage points as they are happy with the private collection service.

"The residents, who want to keep this area clean, are now depending on private conservancy service as they collect garbage and dispose of it at a distance point," said Abul khair Bablu, Commissioner of Ward No. 49.

"We have already requested the engineering section for reconstruction," he said.

"We are now collecting garbage twice a day from these areas and will continue doing so until we provide permanent garbage points," said Kuddus.



CITY BUS ROUTE

Bus No. Route

1	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 10, 11, 12
2	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 1, 2
3	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mahakali-Airport-Azampur
4	Shyampur-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Airport-Tongi
5	Sayedabad-Kamalapur-Motijheel-Airport-Joydebpur-Gazipur
6 A	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulshan 1, 2
6 B	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2
6 C	Motijheel Shapla chattar Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2
7	Sadarhat-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2
8	Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtoli
9	Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12
10	Sadarhat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Malibagh-Rampura-Biswa Road-Tongi Bridge
11	Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakali-Tongi Bridge
11/A	Sayedabad-Khilgoan-Malibagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge
12	Shanir Akhra-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammedpur
13	Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Jhigatola-Shangkar-Mohammedpur
14	Signboard -Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 12
15	Chittagong Road-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mirpur 12
24	Gulistan-Maghbazar-Mohakali-Airport-Uttara-Bipole

Starts from

Golap Shah Mazar	Phoolbaria bus station	Phoolbaria bus station
Shyampur	Sayedabad	Kamalapur
Motijheel Shaplachattar	Sadarhat	Chittagong Road
Demra Ramimahal	Sayedabad	Sayedabad
Sadarghat	Shanir Akhra	Motijheel
Chittagong Road	Signboard (Chittagong Road)	Chittagong Road
Gulistan	Gulistan	Gulistan