



DMP police stand alert at every shopping complex ready to nab any wrongdoer that comes their way.

Traders fall prey to pre-Eid extortion

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Extortionists are demanding toll from shop-owners and businessmen over telephone as the government has deployed more police force in shopping centres of the city for the security of businessmen and customers before Eid.

"Everyday businessmen are receiving calls from extortionists as they have changed their strategy; instead of coming to the markets they are now asking for money over phone," said Zafar Ahmed, president of Eastern Plus Market at Shantinagar.

Bangladesh Shop Owners' Association, at a meeting on law and order with State Minister for Home Lutfuzzaman Babar informed him of the extortion demand by telephone. "The minister has sought our co-operation to catch the extortionists," said Ahmed.

The businessmen however are not confident about the role of police security. "The police are not going to protect us from the extortionists, it is no use informing the police. We are bound to pay toll whatever they demand, as we can't risk our life," said a shop-owner.

Zafar Ahmed said the meeting was informed about the 'silent extortion' through phone calls. "But the decision to protect businessmen from the threat of extortionists and installing caller ID in the PABX lines of the markets were not implemented."

Deputy Commissioner (North) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Golam Rasul said the police being informed by people have already captured several extortionists. He admitted that some extortionists are giving threats to traders over telephone.

Check-posts have been set up to check CNG autorickshaws and taxicabs. All forces are kept on alert for possible bomb attack on markets.

According to the decisions of the home ministry meeting the markets have to arrange their own security systems, like close circuit televisions (CCTV), metal detectors and archway checkpoints, to prevent criminals from entering the shopping centres.

Detective Branch (DB) police are patrolling near the market areas while Rapid Action Battalion and paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) have been deployed at special points. Besides, there are some mobile teams to combat pre-Eid crimes.

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DC (South) of DMP Khan Sayeed Hassan said the DMP has selected main markets in the city and deployed three to four police guards for every market during Ramadan. Mobile teams comprising six members

have been deployed to patrol streets.

In the 58 markets selected by the DMP (South), a total of 259 policemen have been deployed. They are aided by 33 mobile police cars and 162 foot patrol police.

DMP (East) has deployed 144 policemen at 24 markets and 880 others for foot patrol. DMP (North) has deployed 250 policemen at 54 markets.

"We have taken special caution at some spots like Niketon, Wonderland, Pragati Sarani, and diplomatic area at Baridhara and Gulshan," said Gulam Rasul, DC (North).

DC (West) Mazharul Haq said they have deployed 175 policemen at 68 markets, ward-wise mobile police teams with 256 members, and 200 police in 10 check-points.

The shopping malls have also taken own security measures by recruiting more security guards from security agencies and setting up security systems.

The management of Bashundhara City shopping mall in Panthapath which has about 2,332 shops, three mini cinema halls, gymnasium and other facilities, has taken strict measures for ensuring security to the business and customers.

"We have recruited retired army personnel for security service. Besides, we have a hundred CCTV and metal detectors; and for Eid we have deployed vigilance teams in civil dress," said Colonel Ahsan responsible for the security of Bashundhara City.

About the extortion over phone, he said the market has PABX phones with caller ID system that enables them to identify the callers.

The management of Eastern Plaza market has introduced manual alarm system to guard against extortion and CCTV with recording facility.

Renovations a must for overhead footbridge

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The overhead footbridge at New Market demands urgent attention of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) as its damaged stairs need repair and renovations.

The bridge linking two of the city's busiest shopping areas such as New Supermarket and Gawsia frequented by females makes way for shopping in another female item centre, Chadni Chowk.

Every foothold has decayed. The bridge has not seen maintenance nor has it been repaired once after it was constructed before independence. But the DCC is not sure when the bridge was built.

The steel frames of the foothold remain, while the wooden loft has disappeared. The DCC recently evicted hawkers out of the bridge. But polythene, iron rods, electric wires and cords and ropes of about evicted 75 make-shift shops still lie on the bridge. The area has become a den of pickpockets.

"Movement of the bridge was easy after eviction. The pathway

should always be free for commuting," said Habib, a boutique owner of Gawsia.

But with Eid drawing near, the bridge, in its frail condition has still strength to accommodate make-shift shops, which have crept back to original.

"The bridge has turned risky because of its frail condition in addition to muggers lurking around. I avoid using the bridge," said Sharmin Luna, a teacher of an English medium school in Dhanmondi.

"Last week I used the bridge to get across to the kitchen market opposite Gawsia Market. When I reached the other end, I found my purse empty. I could not understand how such incidents occur," said Shahana Bari, a homemaker from Kalabagan.

The constant evictions and replacements have turned out to be a game, commented a pedestrian who frequently uses the bridge for safe crossing.

Shirajuddin Ahmed Chistey,



Evicted shops on New Market footbridge have come back ahead of Eid.

"We are taking initiatives to repair the bridge. Tenders and official procedures are complete and we are waiting for the work order," said Iqbal Kabir, DCC's zone 5 executive engineer.

New law to protect waterbodies

SULTANA RAHMAN

The ministry for water resources is going to introduce a law aimed at protecting and recovering rivers, canals, waterbodies and flood zones across the country and especially in Dhaka.

Draft of the proposed law has already been prepared and is expected to be sent to the cabinet next month. The proposed law has stressed on the recovery of the rivers and waterbodies as many have been encroached and thus blocking the free flow of floodwater.

"Due to lack of proper conserva-

tion of river channels and waterbodies, localities especially in Dhaka go under flood water. If we had preserved the natural waterbodies, rivers and canals, flood would not have hit major areas," said a senior official in the water resources ministry.

Environmentalists have observed that unplanned urbanisation of Dhaka has placed the flood-prone capital on the edge of an ecological disaster as most of the flood flow zones and waterbodies have been filled up over the years.

"The Wetland Protection Act 2000 ensures to preservation of the

rivers and waterbodies. But it is inadequate for recovering the already encroached rivers and canals. The new law will ensure that," an official of the water resources ministry said.

Under the proposed law, rivers, canals and wetland, which have been marked in survey records and exist in other government approved documents, will be recovered if they have been encroached.

Environment experts say that the already filled up natural rivers, hundred of canals and other waterbodies could consume huge volumes of flood water and protect many areas from flooding. Moreover, Dhaka's 44 natural canals, 26 water reservoirs, hundreds of small and large ponds, marshy land can naturally keep the overflowed water while the canals distribute it through different channels.

"If we could save the water bodies, canals and ponds, it could consume a certain volume of floodwater and many areas would not be flooded," said Md Salim Bhuiyan, executive engineer of Flood Forecasting Centre of Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB).

The proposed law has also mentioned that residential construction can not be allowed within 50 yards of a river and the District Commissioner (DC) will submit reports twice a year after inspecting the areas on the riverbanks. Already constructed structures on the bank will be demolished.

"District Commissioners are the responsible authority to recover the rivers and wetland from illegal encroachers and the law will empower them to take action against the encroachers," said a water resources ministry official.

Water resources minister Hafiz Uddin Ahmed meanwhile said that the Prime Minister has shown her personal interest in recovery of the rivers and canals from illegal encroachment.

"After formulating the law, it will be our first priority to recover the filled up water bodies as they were our gift from nature for saving the country from environmental disasters including flood," the minister said.



useful telephone numbers

COURIER SERVICES

International
Air Borne Express- 9561371, 9561372, 9550724
Air Couriers Int'l (BD) Ltd.- 8815970
Aramex International Courier- 9559582, 9565075
Airspeed Express- 9563494
Asian Courier Services Ltd.- 8313543
Balshakhi Courier Service- 9586606
Bangladesh 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
Erem 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, 9557975
Cosmopol Services- 9552793, Dhaka Courier Services- 7236222



LIBRARY & INFO-

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- 955815, 7110249
Sundarban Courier Services- 9551984, 956189, 9551656
Sunrise Courier Services- 9568751
World Runner Express Ltd. 9112068, Fax - 880-2-9112068

TIPS

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



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
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 Chhata- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2
7 Sadarghat-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 Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrai-Malibagh-Rampura-Biswa Road-Tongi Bridge
11 Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirpool-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 Shapla Chhata
Sadarghat
Chittagong Road
Demra Ranamahal
Sadarghat
Sayedabad
Shanir Akhra
Motijheel
Signboard (Chittagong Road)
Chittagong Road
Gulistan