Security checks bring harassment for Gulshan commuters

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Commuters and local residents have complained of unnecessary harassment at the five makeshift police checkpoints set up on entry routes to the diplomatic zone of Banani, Gulshan and Baridhara.

The checkpoint situated near the Gulshan Shooting Club stops mostly cabs and cng-run autorickshaws coming from the Tejgaon area. The ones at Kemal Ataturk Avenue, Baridhara, Badda and Mohakhali check all kinds of vehicles.

But commuters say that the stretch from the Tejgaon industrial area into Gulshan is notorious for hijacking and extortion especially in the evening but police petrol is hardly evident there.

Rashu Ahmad, a businessman from Gulshan was mugged during the Ramadan on that road.

"I was travelling in a rickshaw and the mugging took place right infront of the BMW showroom. There was not a single soul to help me and there was no patrol police nearby also. I then rushed to the police checkpoint infront of the shooting club and reported the incident but policemen there instead of helping me, told me to contact the Tejgaon police station."

Sub-inspector Ibrahim at one checkpoint said that they did not have the manpower to go beyond Gulshan. "It is the responsibility of the Tejgaon police to patrol or place mobile courts in that area," he said.

"We are not stopping every autorickshaw or cab anymore. Only vehicles with groups of youth and suspicious looking people are stopped. Those carrying ladies are not frequently checked," he added.

Taxi drivers allege that the check points are only a pretext for extorting money by policemen even if the necessary papers of the vehicles are in order.

"They search the car for illegal stuff and arms. If nothing is found, they then take the documents for checking and tries to blackmail the driver into paying them money," said a cab driver. "This tendency increased ahead of the Eid," he added.

Precious time is also lost at these checkpoints.

"Sometimes it takes 15 to 20 minutes to search a taxi and that's a lot of time wasted during rush hours," said Abdul Qayum, a Gulshan resident.

"However, all these checking often come to nothing as most miscreants either take the bus or find other ways to get past the law," Qayum added.

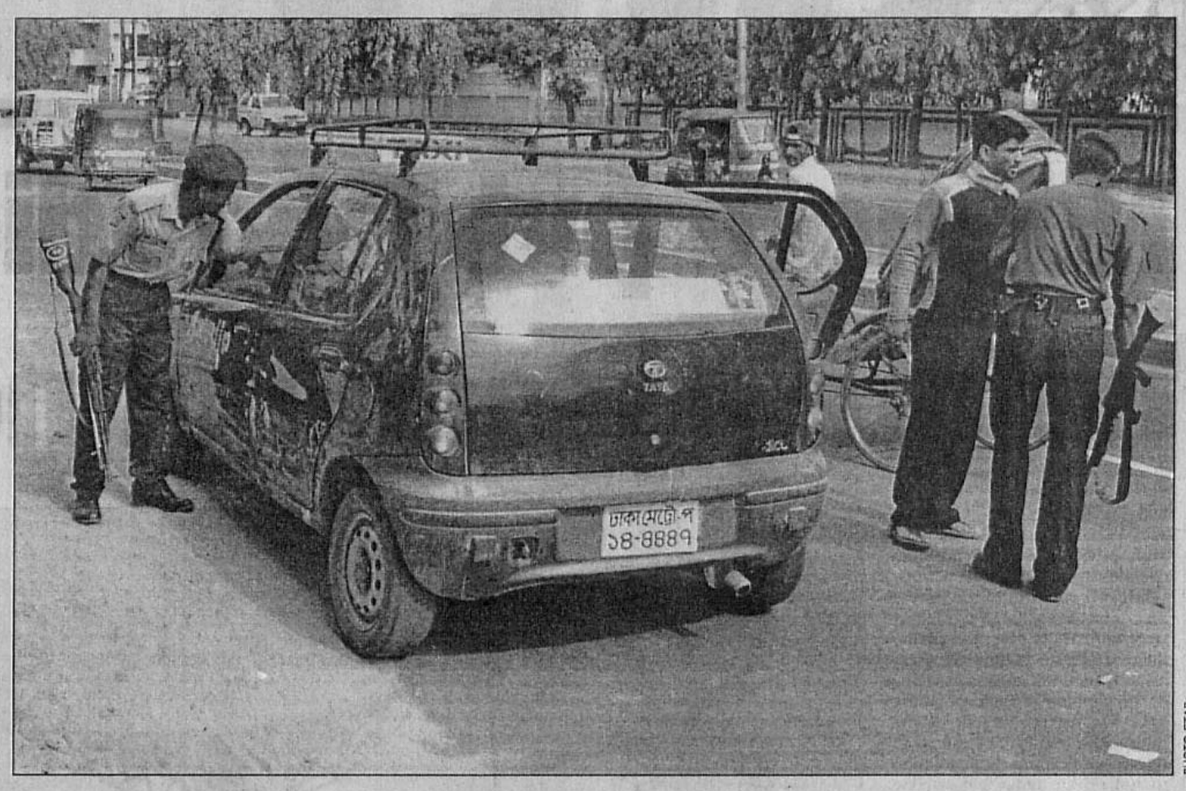

PHOTO STAR

Policemen at a checkpoint in Gulshan search a taxicab and its driver. Criminals are rarely nabbed through these checkpoints and illegal arms or contraband items are seldom found this way. Commuters and drivers, however, often complain of police harassment at the checkposts.

The world of five Taka

SULTANA RAHMAN

If you happen to pass by that route you can hear a tiny speaker from a makeshift stall on the pavement close to the Bangabandhu National Stadium continuously announcing *Ja loiben tai panch Taka* (the price of everything is Tk five).

The 'shop' is basically a wide wooden plank with a large plastic canopy protecting it from the sun and rain. Items ranging from pens to pencil batteries, cosmetics, plastic utensils and many other handy items are spread on the plank.

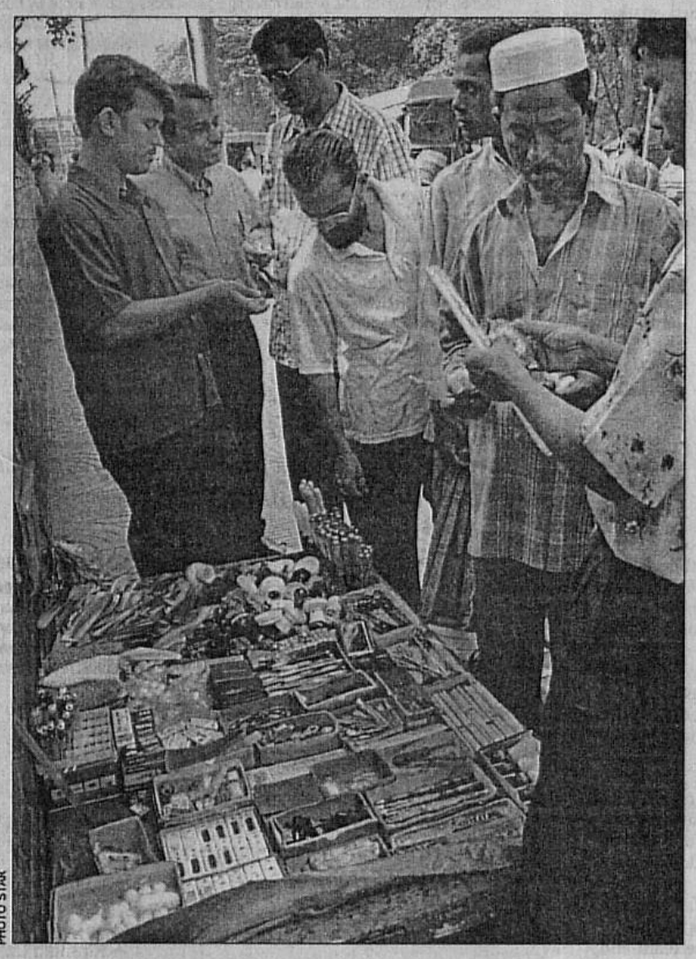

PHOTO STAR

"These all are necessary articles for household work. They may not seem important but there are times when you will feel helpless without them. Look at this tester for electric fittings. I can bet you that you will not find it for five Taka anywhere in the world. It is very effective and can rescue you when your electric appliances are not working," said Hanif Mian, owner of the '5-Taka' stall.

You could be pleasantly surprised at finding Ponds talcum power at Taka five at Hanif's shop but a closer look will reveal it is actually Pounds!

"Cosmetics are one of the most popular items here," said Hanif.

Nevertheless, there are some very useful items that just can not be priced at Taka five. So what is the catch? Nothing apparently.

"First of all, we do not have to pay any rent or other bills. We only make reasonable profit. If we sell a cosmetic product the profit margin is only Tk .03. That is why we do brisk business. The same items are being sold at Tk 15 to 20 at the departmental stores," explained Hanif who added that he can go home with Tk 50 to 70 at the end of the day after paying the lineman ofcourse. Now who is this lineman?

"Although we do not pay rents, we still have to give Tk 35 everyday to the lineman. He is the representative of the local police. Ultimately this money goes to the police," smiled Hanif.

Like Hanif, the other 'Five-Taka' vendors are all scared of one thing - eviction.

"Look at the eviction drive being carried out by the police inside the Suhrawardy Udyan. We have to make a living by selling things on government property. Where will we go if they keep throwing us out without rehabilitating," asked Mutaleb whose stall is near the Pir Jongi Majar in Gulistan.

Public Library auditorium reopening hits a snag

KAUSAR ISLAM AYON

Re-opening of the Central Public Library auditorium has become uncertain after the Public Works Department (PWD) stopped renovation work on it about a month ago.

The auditorium was due to be reopened in the first week of November but now it is set for an indefinite delay. It has already remained closed for more than seven months for renovation and no one can say exactly when it would become operational again as more than fifty percent work has not been completed.

"There are so many reasons behind it which I cannot disclose to the press," said an official of the wood works department of PWD.

The public library auditorium, a popular spot for cultural events in the city had remained in a poor condition for a long time. The authorities finally started renovating it last May following repeated complaints from cultural activists and organisations.

The renovation work included replacement of chairs, repairing and modifying the stage, the lights and sound system, the screen and ceiling. Restrooms and a VIP room are also being upgraded.

"We have already finished all the necessary repairs except in the lights and sound system and in interior decoration. We will complete them later but at the moment, we want to open the auditorium as soon as possible," said Kazi Abdul Majid, assistant director of Public Library.

He informed that it would take more time to complete work on the lights and sound system as they have not floated tenders yet.

"It takes 28 days to complete the tender process according to the new rules so we do not want to wait for that. Once the process is completed, we will close the auditorium for seven to ten days to put the finishing touches on the renovation," added Majid.

He said that they have already changed 525 chairs. The platform of the stage has also been replaced. 27 lakh Taka has been spent on those.

Absence of alternative power supply was hampering the programme at the auditorium. The authorities have gone for a permanent solution to the problem.

"We have already arranged a 200 KB generator to tackle the power crisis permanently," informed Majid.

The auditorium had only five air conditioners, which was not sufficient. Besides, most of them remained out of order. As a result the audience was less interested to watch shows at the auditorium especially in the summer. Under the renovation programme, 13 new air conditioners will be added while the existing five will go through repairs.

"We have allotted Tk 26 lakh for the modernisation of the air conditioning system," said Majid.

The design of the auditorium will remain the same with only the washroom and toilets shifted to the southern corner to accommodate a VIP room in that place. Security around the auditorium will also be beefed up.

"We have a plan to set up a metal detecting arch door at the entrance of the auditorium and scanners will also be in use," Majid said.

According to the assistant director, the rent for the auditorium is expected to be increased as expenditure will rise because of the new air conditioning system and the alternative power supply.

Present rent of the auditorium is Tk 8,500 for 12 hours (8am to 8pm) and Tk 5,500 for six hours (8am to 2pm or 2pm to 8pm.).

Cultural activists have expressed their happiness with the renovation work but demanded reopening of the auditorium as soon as possible.

"If it remains closed during the winter, there will be a serious venue crisis for cultural events," said Akteruzzaman, general secretary of Somoy Nattyagosthy.

PHOTO STAR

OPEN SESAME!...No one knows for sure when the doors of the auditorium will finally re-open.

healthouting,taxicab&traintiming

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
Salimullah Medical Collage Hospital -- 7310061-4, 7319002-6
Cholera Research Hospital (ICDDRB)- 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 Mafidul Islam (Kakrail 9336611, Gandaria 7319808, 7318166,
Al-Markajul Islam 9127867,

MARKET CLOSED

Gulshan 1, 2 markets-Friday
Elephant Road-Friday
Bishal Center-Friday
Baitual 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

TAXI CAB

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
Union 8130485
Kool 0171826731

Black Cab
Cab Ex 9358401
Cabline 8321162
JBS Cab 019364575
Sajan 018126036
Anudip -- 8125285 and 8127611
Cab One 7113282-3
Paiki 0171052500
Cab I 7113282
Jatri 0171540074
Nipun 9572277
R-Cab 8914782
Star Cab 9571919
Shihab 018202477 & 018228675
KGN 8620011

TRAIN TIMING

Subarna Express	Leaves Dhaka at 4:30 pm	Reaches Chittagong at 10:35 pm
Mahanagar Prabhati	Leaves Dhaka at 7-30 am	Reaches Chittagong at 1-55 pm
Mahanagar Godhuli	Leaves Dhaka at 3-15 pm	Reaches Chittagong at 10-55 pm
Turna	Leaves Dhaka at 11-00 pm	Reaches Chittagong at 6-40 am
Parabat Express	Leaves Dhaka at 6-40 am	Reaches Sylhet at 2-30 pm
Joyantika Express	Leaves Dhaka at 12-45 pm	Reaches Sylhet at 9-20 pm
Upaban Express	Leaves Dhaka at 9-45 pm	Reaches Sylhet at 6-40 am
Tista Express	Leaves Dhaka at 7-00 am	Reaches Bahadurabad at 1-05 pm
Ekata Express	Leaves Dhaka at 5-00 pm	Reaches Bahadurabad at 11-15
Upakul Express	Leaves Dhaka at 8-00 pm	Reaches Noakhali at 5-00 am
Agnibeena Express	Leaves Dhaka at 9-20 pm	Reaches Jagannath at 2-30 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
Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) 9330081-4