

Cabbies reluctant about ID cards

SYED TASHFIN CHOWDHURY

Most taxicab drivers in the city have given thumbs down to the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP)'s order to display identification cards on the dashboard of their vehicles.

In order to curb the increasing number of criminal incidents involving taxicabs like mugging, abduction and smuggling of drugs, arms and explosives, the DMP had issued the directive on February 8 and asked cab drivers and owners to implement it by March 10. But most cabdrivers preferred to ignore the instruction.

After the DMP's deadline expired, over 800 cases were filed against cab drivers within the first three days for their failure to abide by the order.

"We are taking legal action against these drivers by the law stated in the Motor Vehicles Ordinance, 1983's Section 140," said Ansuruddin Khan Pathan, DMP's deputy commissioner (Traffic), South.

Most cab drivers however, said that the time limit was too short to arrange identification cards for their vehicles.

"One month is not enough time to arrange the fees and apply for

Application fees for the identification card has been fixed at Tk 350 which is quite high considering the fact that a cabby's daily income is roughly 200 Taka on an average.

the identification cards," said a taxi driver.

They also complained that they had to pay the fees themselves although it should have been the responsibility of the owners.

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Most cab owners rent their cabs to a few fixed drivers whom they trust. The cabs belong to separate companies and the drivers get to drive each cab by rotation throughout a week.

"Under such circumstances, a driver might have to end up applying for more than two to three

vehicles depending on the number of cabs his owner has," said Kamal, a cab driver from Banani.

Drivers who have already applied for the cards are also facing a delay as the Cab Association of Bangladesh (CAB) is taking indefinite time in processing the applications.

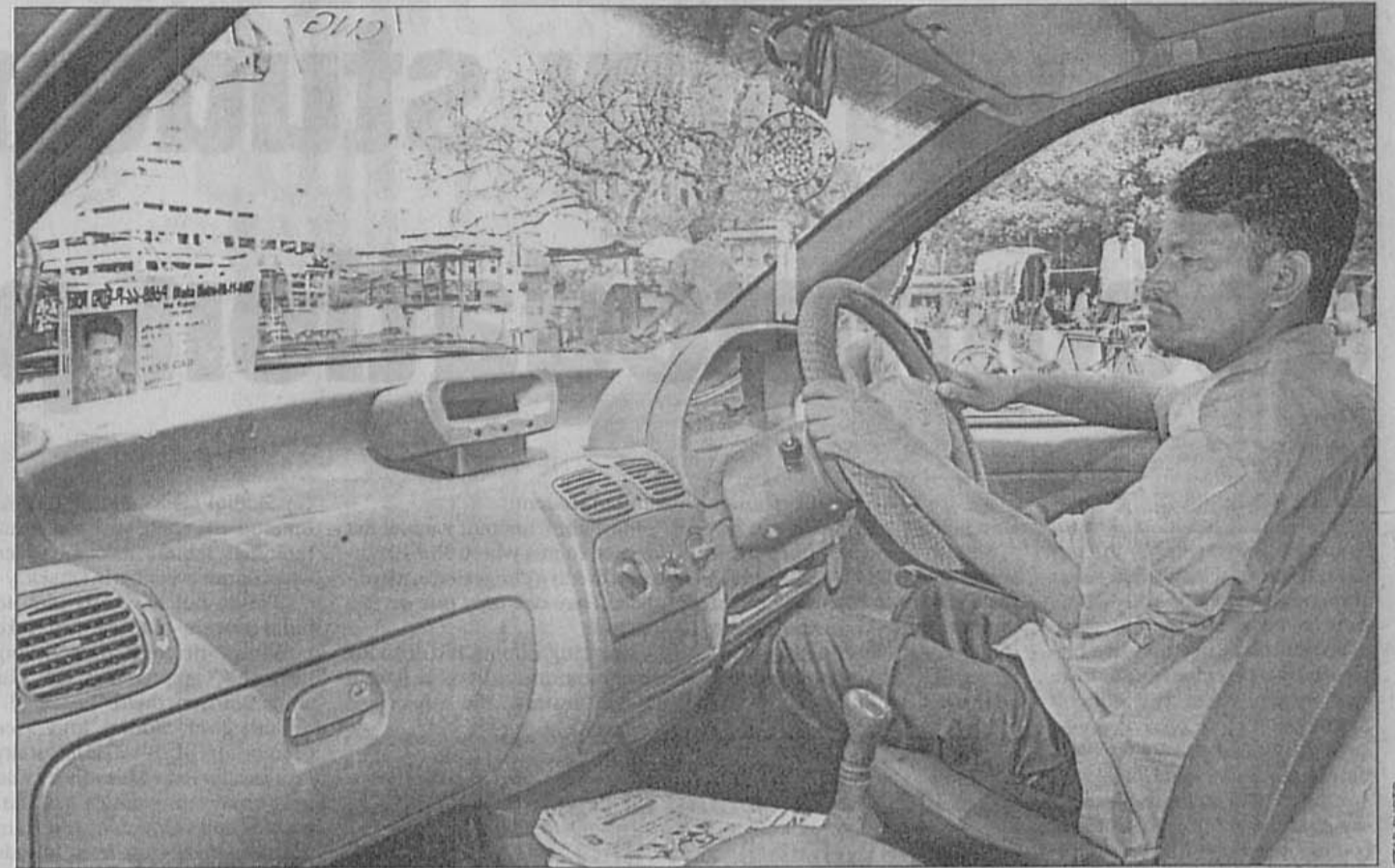
"I have been handed this receipt and asked to contact their office four or five days from now," said Sultan Mahmud, another driver who is afraid that some traffic sergeant might file a case against him if he gets caught.

"The paperwork for identification cards is quite lengthy but we are delivering the cards within three days of receiving the application," claimed Anwarul Islam

Tareque, general secretary of CAB. The frame, engraving the specific registration number of the vehicle and the police verification form were the main reasons for the delay, added Tareque.

The city currently has over 27 cab companies and 12,000 taxis and these numbers are gradually rising.

"We actually have only half of the actual number of cabs in operation at the moment. Most cabs remain idle throughout the year due to a variety of reasons like engine breakdown, license and registration problems and dispute regarding ownership," said Tareque. Besides, insecurity about jobs is also preventing cab drivers from applying for the ID cards, felt Tareque.



Although some taxi drivers, such as the one in the picture, have no objection to displaying ID cards, others are reluctant to do so.

Pantha Kunja remains closed for seven months

KAUSAR ISLAM AYON

Pantha Kunja, a park near Sonargaon Hotel in the city, remained closed for more than seven months for renovation and beautification work.

The only park in Kanthalbagan, Bangla Motor, Hatirpool and adjoining areas where many people used go for jogging is now a restricted place. Residents in the area complain that they are not even allowed to walk inside the park.

"I used to come here for morning walk but

I was compelled to go to Ramna Park after the authorities started the renovation work. After three months I stopped morning walk because Ramna is far from my house," said Ashraul Alam, a resident of Kanthalbagan.

Although renovation of the park has

improved its environment a lot, the users are disappointed to see the park closed.

"No doubt the park's environment has improved after the beautification and eviction of floating people and slums. But if we cannot use this, what is the benefit of renovation," said Humayun Kader, a resident of Bangla Motor.

The renovation work was undertaken in November last year under the Dhaka city beautification project which was implemented by various government and private organisations. Arkey group was assigned for the beautification of this park.

When asked, the officials of Arkey Group said they will open the park to public in mid April. "The beautification work of the park is already completed but we did not open it to save the growing grass on the meadow inside the park," said an official of Arkey Group.

Arkey group has beautified the park dividing it into two parts. Renovation of the part that they call Pantha Kunja Plaza (near Saarc fountain) was completed in February. The grass inside this part has already grown up, but it is yet to be opened for public.

An Arkey Group official said they could not open the plaza because the DCC has temporarily fenced it for the safety of the structure inside the plaza. However, the group will put up a permanent fence before opening it.

"There will be a single entry and exit point of the plaza that would discipline the visitors," the Arkey official added.

ANM Iftekharul Hoque, officer-in-charge of Dhaka City Beautification Cell, said they will request the DCC to re-open the park for the public as soon as possible.

"Arkey has completed the beautification work in time. As grass takes time to come to a stable position, we did not put pressure on them to open the park hurriedly," he said.

BTTB yet to initiate further caller ID project

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Despite the nagging demand from subscribers, Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) failed to bring all fixed phone users in the capital under the caller identification (ID) system.

"We completed the initial task of connecting one fourth of the existing city numbers, but further initiatives have not yet been taken to expand the system," a BTTB official said.

The government owned only telephone board had earlier assured ID facilities to all 4,50,000 land phones in the city out of a total of 8,41,000 numbers across the country under the modern facility by October last year.

BTTB is now providing fixed phone connections without caller ID facility amidst an increasing demand for this facility from clients, inside sources said.

According to BTTB officials, the project was completed providing only 1,00,000 connections with caller ID facility.

The BTTB also has more than 1,00,000 applicants for fixed phones pending along with caller ID.

BTTB chairman Engr Nurul Islam said the board has been working to take up another project to meet a further demand of 1,10,000 caller ID connections in the

city. "The timeframe of the next project is yet to be determined," the chairman said giving no details.

The BTTB also could not mention the actual break down of caller-ID technology with new connections and the old connections that were transferred to caller ID.

A few caller IDs are also being connected with the land phones in Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions with an additional of Tk 5,000, the sources said.

BTTB sources alleged that lack of coordination between cable and network switch prevents caller ID features.

Under the first project, the new network switches with caller ID features have been imported from Shanghai Bell, Htuawei, ZTE of China, and Nortel of Canada.

The demand for caller ID option in fixed phones has been increasing as subscribers have been receiving threats for ransom, some just in fun over the phone in the name of several terrorists, sources said.

Besides caller ID would help subscribers to trace the unwanted callers and to report such calls to the BTTB or even to law enforcers, if necessary.



The Pantha Kunja park in the heart of the city beautified for the Saarc summit, still awaits opening to the public.

useful telephone numbers

COURIER SERVICES

International
Air Borne Express- 9561371, 9561372, 9550724
Air Couriers Int'l (BD) Ltd.- 8815970
Aramax International Courier- 9558003, 9559582, 9565075
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
Enam Express- 9330699
Fedex Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
Medhuban 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,
Cosmopol Services- 9552793, 9557975
Dhaka Courier Services- 7236222

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- 9558515, 7110249
Sundarban Courier Services- 9551984, 9556189, 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

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- 8850141, 8850142
The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314
Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412

QUITTING

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-Shahabagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 10, 11, 12	Golap Shah Mazar
2	Gulistan-Shahabagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 1, 2	Phoolbaria bus station
3	Gulistan-Shahabagh-Farmgate-Mahakhali-Airport-Azampur	Phoolbaria bus station
4	Shyampur-Motijheel-Shahabagh-Farmgate-Airport-Tongi	Shyampur
5	Sayedabad-Kamalapur-Motijheel-Airport-Joydebpur-Gazipur	Sayedabad
6 A	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahabagh-Farmgate-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6 B	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6 C	Motijheel Shapla chattr- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2	Motijheel Shaplachatter
7	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2	Chittagong Road
8	Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahabagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtoil	Chittagong Road
9	Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12	Demra Ranimahar
10	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Malibagh-Rampura-Biswa Road-Tongi Bridge	Sadarghat
11	Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Tongi Bridge	Sayedabad
11/A	Sayedabad-Khligoan-Malibagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge	Syedabad
12	Shanir Akhra-Shahabagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammadpur	Shanir Akhra
13	Motijheel-Shahabagh-New Market-Jhigatola-Shangkar-Mohammedpur	Motijheel
14	Signboard -Motijheel-Shahabagh-New Market-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 12	Signboard (Chittagong Road)
15	Chittagong Road-Motijheel-Shahabagh-Farmgate-Mirpur 12	Chittagong Road
24	Gulistan-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Airport-Uttara-Bipile	Gulistan