

Cabs losing appeal for poor condition

SYED TASHFIN CHOWDHURY

Due to the dilapidated conditions of cabs in the city caused by lack of proper maintenance, many commuters are preferring to revert to other forms of transportation.

Yellow and black cabs were introduced on the streets of Dhaka in 1999 but their looks and conditions have deteriorated rapidly in just six years.

"I would prefer taking a CNG three-wheeler anytime as the interior of cabs are often tacky and dirty," said Sultana Rabeya, a resident of Uttara.

The yellow and black cabs have been the objects of such complaints over the last few years. Commuters are less interested in using black cabs as engines of most make an irritating whirring sound. The doors do not lock properly and most vehicles have problems with the windows.

Some of these cabs are stinky inside and the drivers do not seem to care, complained commuters.

Yellow cabs on the other hand, are better maintained but pose problems of a different kind.

"Some cabs have broken gears, torn seat belts and wires hanging out of the dashboard. And the air-cooling system often do not work although the drivers

charge the same rate," said Afsar Wahid, another commuter.

"The sorry state of the cabs can be attributed to the reckless driving habit of most drivers," said Rahima Sharif, a resident of Mirpur. Some other passengers blamed drunk driving for the terrible condition of the cabs.

Cabdrivers defended themselves against such allegations.

"A cab usually runs at least 200 kilometres every day while private cars do not go that distance even in a week," said Yusuf, a yellow cab driver. Yusuf claimed that this was the main reason for the pathetic state of the vehicles.

"Each cab is handled by at least three drivers in a week and their driving habits are not the same either," said another cab driver.

Other drivers pointed out that driving at speed was a necessity in order to make at least 1,500 Taka a day.

"We have to pay a daily rent of 800 Taka on a cab and additional expense for fuel usually amounts to around 200 Taka," said Yusuf.

"Actually, the cab owners should be blamed for being apathetic about maintenance of these cabs and also for not properly training the drivers," said Anwarul Islam Tareque, general secretary of Cab Owners Association of Bangladesh (CAB).



Ramshackle taxis pose accident dangers.

MOHAKHALI FLYOVER

No heed to 'Stick no bills' signboard



Even the large notice has not prevented various types of posters on the walls of the flyover.

KAUSAR ISLAM AYON

The supervising authorities of Mohakhali flyover put a signboard to prohibit sticking of posters on the flyover but due to lack of monitoring nobody pays heed to the request.

The bid to keep the flyover neat and clean turned futile with all its pillars and ramps fully covered with posters of various business firms and political bodies.

In the signboard, the authorities warned that action would be taken if anyone puts up posters on the flyover, which was commissioned last month.

The practice of writing graffiti and sticking posters is increasing day by day, as it is the cheapest and easiest way of advertisement.

The prime minister herself

recently expressed her annoyance at the numerous graffiti and posters that upset the beautification efforts of the capital city.

Ironically, a number posters published by the ruling BNP carrying her photographs are also on display on many pillars of the flyover.

While visiting the flyover, this correspondent found the advertisements and posters of Castle cigarette, Crown Corn Flakes, Super Power Check, Acme Juice and many other products and services displayed on the flyover.

Even the posters published by the government have also been pasted on the pillars of the flyover. One of these was published by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs to celebrate the International Women's Day.

When contacted, an official of the ministry blamed the people who put up the posters on behalf of the ministry. "The ministry cannot monitor whether the posters are put on right places. It is the ignorance of the people who stick the posters."

The supervising authorities of the flyover said they have not taken any action yet against the companies who are using the flyover for advertising their products.

"Signboards and laws alone cannot change the situation until and unless civic sense of the people grows," said Humayun Aziz Chowdhury, executive director of Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB).

city express

The latest crop of quotes from the city's press -- words worth repeating, we feel, for their humour, insight or sheer outrageousness. Star City does not necessarily support the opinions expressed in this column.

"People are with us to raise the demand to put an end to political violence in Bangladesh"

-- Asma Kibria

Wife of slain SAMS Kibria

Told journalists at the display of a giant-size banner with over 1,00,000 signatures opposite the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban protesting the killing of former finance minister, on March 31. Source: Prothom Alo



"Saber is nothing but jealous. If Saber says that the flyover could be constructed within 22 months, why did not he do it while he was in power for five years?"

-- Mirza Abbas

Minister for Housing and Public Works

Said in a press conference explaining that Khilgaon residents would not be deprived of the use of the flyover as claimed by the former LGRD state minister Saber Hossain Chowdhury, on March 27. Source: The Daily Star

"If Abbas agrees we can sit together at any place of his choice in presence of the LGED representatives, contractor of the Khilgaon flyover, print and electronic media, and let the people know what the truth is"



-- Saber Hossain Chowdhury

Political Secretary to the Opposition Leader

Told journalists in a reply to the allegations made against him by Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas, on March 29. Source: The Daily Star

"Money is not a problem. The Parliament Secretariat or the telecommunication ministry will provide the money"

-- GM Fazlul Haque

President, Parliamentary committee on telecommunication

Said in a parliamentary committee meeting at Jatiya Sangsad commenting on the necessity of overseas tours for committee members to gain more knowledge on telecommunication. Source: The Daily Star

"The BNP-led alliance will not hand over power even one minute before the completion of its five-year tenure. None will be able to oust the government by creating anarchy through negative programmes like hartals"

-- Abdull Mannan Bhuiyan

Secretary General, BNP

Told a rally organised by the Dhaka City unit protesting frequent hartals called by the opposition, on March 30. Source: Prothom Alo

Digital traffic signal proves effective

SULTANA RAHMAN

The recently introduced digital traffic signal has proved effective in traffic management as city people are showing positive response to the system, observed the traffic division of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

Both drivers and pedestrians are now more conscious about following traffic signals and rules instead of competing against each other for moving ahead, said Ansar Uddin Khan

Pathan, deputy commissioner of DMP traffic (South).

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) introduced the digital traffic signal system in December last year at 69 intersections at a cost of Tk 14 crore to improve the city's traffic management under the donor-funded Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP).

Pathan said traffic situation has improved at most of these points including Gulshan-1 and 2, Matsya Bhaban, Shahbagh, Science Laboratory and Sonargaon Hotel intersection

after introduction of digital signals.

The digital signal is needed in all 276 intersections in the city to ease traffic congestion, he said, adding that people's growing awareness about the system and rules have encouraged them to install the system at other points.

The traffic policemen on duty at different intersections have also expressed their satisfaction over the digital system as they observed that people's tendency of violating rules has

declined. Some traffic cops however observed problems with the duration of each signal.

Ehsan, a traffic sergeant at Sonargaon intersection, said drivers can now easily follow rules as the signals can be seen from a long distance.

Drivers and pedestrians also said they have found the digital traffic system very helpful to get rid of traffic congestion. "It is better to follow signals rather than waiting for a long time in the long tailback with an uncertainty," a driver said.

Drivers and pedestrians now obey signal lights to ensure smooth movement of traffic..

