



A chouki or security outpost during the Moghul period in Karwan Bazar was set up where people were checked before entering the city. There was a caravanserai near the chouki. The word Caravanserai was later distorted to Karwan Bazar.

# Mayuree gets permission under pressure

 SULTANA RAHMAN and  
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Although the government has decided not to encourage small vehicles in the capital city, a new three-wheeler "Mayuree" hits the city roads under the influence of a top-ranking leader of the ruling BNP, sources alleged.

"We were under pressure and forced to conceive the vehicle. We have approved 100 vehicles for the city against their demand for 5,000," said a top official in the communications ministry requesting anonymity.

The official claimed that the ministry was forced to permit the vehicle against the government's strategic transport plan.

Chairman of Mayuree Auto Md Ibrahim Babul however denied his family connection with the influential leader. About the permission for Mayuree, he said, "It is a matter of the government and the authorities concerned."

Before the ministry's approval, Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB) had suggested that this small vehicle should not be given permission as this type



Mayuree was given permission to ply only along by lanes, but this new vehicle is seen being repaired on the main road in Kakrail.

of vehicles reduce the road capacity and cause traffic congestion.

"We are now planning to withdraw minibuses due to its little capacity. How can we suggest for a two-seated vehicle in the city," wondered a senior

official of the DTCB.

On October 15 last year, Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) decided that no

registration and route permit would be granted to the public transports having less than 50 seats. Besides, it was decided that the authority would not renew the registration of the human-hauliers, but gradually withdraw the vehicles off the roads.

The two-seated Mayuree, which looks quite unsafe, has been permitted to ply only the by-lanes adjacent to NMT (non-motorised transport) free roads. But a large number of Mayuree is seen on the main roads, even on the VIP roads.

Communications Minister Nazmul Huda said, "We have given permission to only 100 vehicles on experimental basis and we have clearly ordered to run it on the by-lanes adjacent to the NMT-free roads."

"We will take action if any one violates this order," minister said.

The importer and distributor, Mayuree Auto, have started selling the vehicle across the country. In newspaper advertisements the company claimed that they have necessary permission including DTCB's approval.

"We have approval from the

DTCB," claimed the Mayuree Auto chairman.

The communications ministry on April 20 this year gave permission to Mayuree to run on the by-lanes. On May 28, Mayuree Auto applied to Road Transport Committee (RTC) for route permit. RTC later received a fax from the ministry for consideration of the application. In the meantime, the company started selling the vehicles.

On June 8, the communications minister at a meeting at his ministry again said Mayuree can only be run on the by-lanes, not the main roads.

Traffic experts said a hazardous situation will occur in the city if the three-wheeler are allowed to ply the city streets. Moreover, road accidents will increase and traffic control will be difficult, they said.

After the ban of two-stroke auto-rickshaws, about 40,000 motor vehicles have appeared in the city that worsened the traffic situation. Mayuree will further worsen the situation, the experts said.

## 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.

"Government activities have created scope for such comments. Was there any such observation by foreigners when we were in power?"



-- Sheikh Hasina  
Awami League President and Leader of the opposition  
Said at a press conference replying to a question on the statement of US ambassador Harry K Thomas on June 17. Thomas recently told reporters if major parties do not work together on national issues, people will seek alternatives, which will not be good.

Source: The Daily Star

"United States has not accused Bangladesh, rather praised Dhaka's effort to combat extremism. It is friendly advice for Bangladesh, and we shall remain focused on certain issues"

-- M Morshed Khan

Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Told journalists commenting on the US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Christina Rocca's statement to Senate Subcommittee on Foreign Relations, on June 17. Source: The Daily Star

"I am a victim of conspiracy. Journalists are responsible for my resignation. They have made wrong accusations against me"

-- AKM Mosharraf Hossain  
State Minister for Energy  
Told journalists after he resigned over the luxury car scam, on June 18. Source: Prothom Alo

"I did not know earlier that there are so many internal conflicts in BNP"

-- Kazi Sirajul Islam  
Former Awami League Law Maker  
Told journalists as he could not organise an opinion sharing meeting in the capital after he joined ruling BNP, on June 13. Source: Prothom Alo

"Sir, don't be sad. We will be always with you"

-- Kazi Zafar Ahmed  
Former Prime Minister and Jatiya Party leader  
Said at a presidium meeting as HM Ershad was crying for a while apologizing to his party members for the recent development in his personal life, on June 15. Source: Prothom Alo



# No monitoring: courier services transport illegal goods

FAIZUL KHAN TANIM

a member of the association. As Continental Courier Service did not maintain the rules and regulations formed by the association, they were discarded from the group. However, S A Paribahan has recently submitted an application for membership.

Courier service providers said that gift items are not scanned, and many illegal products are being transported via these services unknowingly. On the other hand courier service clients fear that misuse of personal address in transporting illegal products can get innocent people in trouble.

An official of Continental Courier service requesting anonymity told Star City that police seized about 738 bottles of phenylid when they intercepted a vehicle in the Arambagh area belonging to Continental Courier Service arriving from Bagerhat to Dhaka. Police also arrested three employees of Continental Courier Service on suspicion of their involvement in drug smuggling.

When, after repeated attempts, finally Continental Courier Services Managing Director Ruhul Amin Chisty was contacted, and asked what security measures were taken after these incidents, he replied: "I am not bound to answer any of your questions".

A courier service agent explained that there are two types of services -- courier and parcel. The former delivers letters or gifts at the door, while transporting bulk quantities of goods by parcel service is cheaper. The courier service providers get a declaration from the sender that they (the service) will not be held liable in case of trafficking.

Mostofa Jamal, an agent from Anondo courier service from Mohakhali said in that both cases unscanned packages are collected from the branch offices. Goods are to be delivered out of Dhaka are accumulated in the head office and consequently despatched.

"The head office can easily afford scanning devices to check illegal items before transportation. The negligence of one agency and the illegal activities that take place in certain other agencies have tarnished the image of all courier service agencies," said another agency representative from Mohakhali.

Courier services in Bangladesh started in October 1983 with Continental Courier Services Limited being the pioneer. At present there are about 50 courier and parcel services..

General secretary of Courier Services Association of

Goods lying in the open near a courier service provider in Motijheel



Bangladesh, Abu Nasser said that courier services in Dhaka do not fall under any Government supervision.

About 3,00,000 workers are involved in this field where almost 2,00,000 letters handled by all the courier organisations across the country daily, 50 percent being in Dhaka.

These organisations are only armed with a trade license and these service providers take the opportunity of trafficking illegal items, on trains, buses or their own carriers, said association

representatives.

General Secretary Abu Nasser said the courier services association is running under a license from the ministry of commerce. "We applied for Compulsory Membership under the Commerce Ministry, which will be excellent for our business as we have been dealing with this ministry from the beginning".

On the other hand, when DHL Worldwide Express Bangladesh was contacted, marketing man-

ager Kazi Sayeed Faruqui said when despatching any shipments, all of them are opened, checked and scanned even if the item is gift wrapped. Once checked and scanning results are okay, the shipment is passed on for transportation. "There is a specific International Air Transport Association (IATA) guideline controlling the transportation of goods, which we follow in order not to transport illegal items".

# Emergency electric pumps to be set up near DND dam

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) plans to install at least 15 electric water pumps at four important points around the Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra (DND) dam as an emergency measure ahead of the upcoming flood season.

Wasa is hoping that the initiative would alleviate the waterlogging problems that nearly two million residents faced every year during the rainy season.

"Residents suffer for months during every monsoon because of waterlogging. Through this project, hopefully we can reduce loss of properties and lives," said one Wasa official.

Wasa's drainage department sources have already pencilled out two of the most vulnerable



Each year a repetition of water logging in the DND areas causes much suffering to the locals, but Wasa's current initiative to install pumps will likely reduce the discomfort.

spots in the area the Wassa lagoon and the Rani Cinema Hall for setting up pumps.

"As waterlogging is most acute in these areas, that is why we have primarily planned to install at least five emergency pumps at each of these two spots," said an executive engineer of the drainage section.

The two other tentative spots could be on the Narayanganj Shyampur road and the Shamshan - Dholakhal pump road.

According to sources, at least three to four pumps would be required on these roads.

The operation and maintenance of the five electric pumps over a period of 40 days will cost Wasa over Tk four lakh. At that rate, the overall expenditure of the entire emergency project could be between Tk 20 to 22 lakh depending on the duration of

the flood.

Pumps were first set up on an experimental basis during last year's flood.

"The success of last year's experimental has inspired us to go for the emergency measure," said Khwaja Ahsanullah of Narayanganj.

But residents of the area feel that the emergency step should have been taken much earlier and that could have saved properties worth millions.

"Stagnant water has been a regular trend in this area during every monsoon. It is a fact which Wasa authorities have been very indifferent about until the last few years," said Nirjon who has lived in the area since childhood.

Some other Narayanganj residents feel that certain areas, which are frequently waterlogged during the monsoon needed permanent water

pumps.

Residents of Jamtola Graveyard, Delpara, Wuig and some adjoining localities will be greatly benefited if some pumps were installed in those areas," said Khwaja Ahsanullah of Narayanganj.

He also pointed out that Jamtola used to have a water pump which was later dismantled.

Some of the pumps in Siddhirganj and Pagla needed to be repaired while others had to be replaced.

"Most of the pumps in the two areas have been operating since the 1950's and they are hardly in efficient working condition at the moment," said Ahsanullah. Currently, there are four water pumps in Pagla and eight in Siddhirganj.