

Battered and rundown taxicabs roam freely

BRTA Chairman says none operates on valid fitness certificate

SHAHNAZ PARVEEN

Around 10,000 battered taxicabs are roaming the streets of Dhaka without valid fitness certificates, some even putting passengers' and public life at risk, while the authorities and cab owners pay no heed to the issue of public safety.

"To begin with, it was a wrong decision to use Maruti and Tata (light vehicles) as taxicabs. 5,000 out of the 10,000 registered cabs are these (Maruti and Tata) and these are completely beat-up already. Almost all taxicabs are running in a terrible condition and do not have fitness certificates," said Abu Bakar M Shahjahan, chairman of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA).

Taxicabs were introduced to the capital in 1999. For each brand new vehicle to be used as a taxicab, BRTA issued a fitness certificate valid for five years from the year of manufacturing of the vehicle.

The taxicab owners are taking advantage of confusing regulations set by BRTA and the police and BRTA both seem to be busy pointing fingers at each other when it comes to implementing the regulations.

Humayun Rashid, director of BRTA engineering division tried to clarify the regulation to this correspondent, "They (cab owners) were supposed to obtain new certificates from us

The taxicab owners are taking advantage of confusing regulations set by BRTA and the police and BRTA both seem to be busy pointing fingers at each other when it comes to implementing the regulations

after five years, but they do not come to us anymore for fitness certificates."

Rashid further explained that when the initial fitness certificates expired after five years, BRTA decided to allow those vehicles for another three years requiring them to obtain a new fitness certificate every year. After eight years, if the vehicle is tested to be unfit, BRTA can bar that vehicle from running in the city.

Although the first batch of taxicabs have been around for eight years now, the police or BRTA did not take any effective measures yet to bring discipline in the sector and ensure passengers' rights and public safety.

"We have mobile teams on the streets. But, we are shorthanded and helpless as we only have a total of 300 employees for the whole country," said Rashid. "We have one mobile court for Dhaka city that works five days a week. If the mobile court finds an unfit vehicle, it fines them. We do not have the authority to

enforce the law beyond that. We are only the regulatory body."

"Since fitness certificates expired few years ago and most cabs do not have valid ones, now it is the responsibility of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) traffic division to impound unfit vehicles from the streets," he added.

"Just one mobile court is not enough for the entire city. Without the help of the police and owners, it is not possible for us to get rid of unfit vehicles from the city," Rashid observed.

DMP traffic department is not least bothered about the condition of the taxicabs. "According to the Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1983, if a vehicle does not have a fitness certificate, we file a case and fine Tk.700. That is the best we can do in our jurisdiction," said Mohammad Altaf Hossain, a Dhaka North traffic inspector of DMP.

"Most cabs pay the fines and continue to ply the streets. It is the responsibility of BRTA to check for fitness, not us," he said.

Shiraj explained that when the concept of taxicab was introduced in 1999 in the capital, there were not enough drivers to drive them. "Drivers

confirmed. "Reckless driving cannot be punished effectively under the current law as the penalty is only a fine of Tk 500. Most taxicab drivers are young novices who often do not follow traffic rules. Besides, we still cannot book them because they also have driving licences and that is all we need to know," Altaf continued.

The owners blamed the drivers' reckless driving for causing damage to the taxicabs and cited the example of Nepal where Maruti and Tata is widely used as taxicabs. But GM Shiraj, chairman of Cab Association of Bangladesh, hoped the situation to improve soon. "We don't go for new fitness tests because we are not using that particular batch anymore. We are replacing them with blue ones. Within a year, there will be no black cabs on the streets."

Shiraj explained that when the concept of taxicab was introduced in 1999 in the capital, there were not enough drivers to drive them. "Drivers

are not using that particular batch anymore. We are replacing them with blue ones. Within a year, there will be no black cabs on the streets."

"Just one mobile court is not enough for the entire city. Without the help of the police and owners, it is not possible for us to get rid of unfit vehicles from the city," Rashid observed.

DMP traffic department is not least bothered about the condition of the taxicabs. "According to the Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1983, if a vehicle does not have a fitness certificate, we file a case and fine Tk.700. That is the best we can do in our jurisdiction," said Mohammad Altaf Hossain, a Dhaka North traffic inspector of DMP.

"Most cabs pay the fines and continue to ply the streets. It is the responsibility of BRTA to check for fitness, not us," he said.

Shiraj explained that when the concept of taxicab was introduced in 1999 in the capital, there were not enough drivers to drive them. "Drivers

are not using that particular batch anymore. We are replacing them with blue ones. Within a year, there will be no black cabs on the streets."

"Just one mobile court is not enough for the entire city. Without the help of the police and owners, it is not possible for us to get rid of unfit vehicles from the city," Rashid observed.

DMP traffic department is not least bothered about the condition of the taxicabs. "According to the Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1983, if a vehicle does not have a fitness certificate, we file a case and fine Tk.700. That is the best we can do in our jurisdiction," said Mohammad Altaf Hossain, a Dhaka North traffic inspector of DMP.

"Most cabs pay the fines and continue to ply the streets. It is the responsibility of BRTA to check for fitness, not us," he said.

Shiraj explained that when the concept of taxicab was introduced in 1999 in the capital, there were not enough drivers to drive them. "Drivers

are not using that particular batch anymore. We are replacing them with blue ones. Within a year, there will be no black cabs on the streets."

"Just one mobile court is not enough for the entire city. Without the help of the police and owners, it is not possible for us to get rid of unfit vehicles from the city," Rashid observed.

DMP traffic department is not least bothered about the condition of the taxicabs. "According to the Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1983, if a vehicle does not have a fitness certificate, we file a case and fine Tk.700. That is the best we can do in our jurisdiction," said Mohammad Altaf Hossain, a Dhaka North traffic inspector of DMP.

"Most cabs pay the fines and continue to ply the streets. It is the responsibility of BRTA to check for fitness, not us," he said.

Shiraj explained that when the concept of taxicab was introduced in 1999 in the capital, there were not enough drivers to drive them. "Drivers

are not using that particular batch anymore. We are replacing them with blue ones. Within a year, there will be no black cabs on the streets."

"Just one mobile court is not enough for the entire city. Without the help of the police and owners, it is not possible for us to get rid of unfit vehicles from the city," Rashid observed.

DMP traffic department is not least bothered about the condition of the taxicabs. "According to the Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1983, if a vehicle does not have a fitness certificate, we file a case and fine Tk.700. That is the best we can do in our jurisdiction," said Mohammad Altaf Hossain, a Dhaka North traffic inspector of DMP.

"Most cabs pay the fines and continue to ply the streets. It is the responsibility of BRTA to check for fitness, not us," he said.

Shiraj explained that when the concept of taxicab was introduced in 1999 in the capital, there were not enough drivers to drive them. "Drivers

are not using that particular batch anymore. We are replacing them with blue ones. Within a year, there will be no black cabs on the streets."

"Just one mobile court is not enough for the entire city. Without the help of the police and owners, it is not possible for us to get rid of unfit vehicles from the city," Rashid observed.

DMP traffic department is not least bothered about the condition of the taxicabs. "According to the Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1983, if a vehicle does not have a fitness certificate, we file a case and fine Tk.700. That is the best we can do in our jurisdiction," said Mohammad Altaf Hossain, a Dhaka North traffic inspector of DMP.

"Most cabs pay the fines and continue to ply the streets. It is the responsibility of BRTA to check for fitness, not us," he said.

Shiraj explained that when the concept of taxicab was introduced in 1999 in the capital, there were not enough drivers to drive them. "Drivers

are not using that particular batch anymore. We are replacing them with blue ones. Within a year, there will be no black cabs on the streets."

"Just one mobile court is not enough for the entire city. Without the help of the police and owners, it is not possible for us to get rid of unfit vehicles from the city," Rashid observed.

DMP traffic department is not least bothered about the condition of the taxicabs. "According to the Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1983, if a vehicle does not have a fitness certificate, we file a case and fine Tk.700. That is the best we can do in our jurisdiction," said Mohammad Altaf Hossain, a Dhaka North traffic inspector of DMP.

"Most cabs pay the fines and continue to ply the streets. It is the responsibility of BRTA to check for fitness, not us," he said.

Shiraj explained that when the concept of taxicab was introduced in 1999 in the capital, there were not enough drivers to drive them. "Drivers

are not using that particular batch anymore. We are replacing them with blue ones. Within a year, there will be no black cabs on the streets."

"Just one mobile court is not enough for the entire city. Without the help of the police and owners, it is not possible for us to get rid of unfit vehicles from the city," Rashid observed.

DMP traffic department is not least bothered about the condition of the taxicabs. "According to the Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1983, if a vehicle does not have a fitness certificate, we file a case and fine Tk.700. That is the best we can do in our jurisdiction," said Mohammad Altaf Hossain, a Dhaka North traffic inspector of DMP.

"Most cabs pay the fines and continue to ply the streets. It is the responsibility of BRTA to check for fitness, not us," he said.

Shiraj explained that when the concept of taxicab was introduced in 1999 in the capital, there were not enough drivers to drive them. "Drivers

are not using that particular batch anymore. We are replacing them with blue ones. Within a year, there will be no black cabs on the streets."

"Just one mobile court is not enough for the entire city. Without the help of the police and owners, it is not possible for us to get rid of unfit vehicles from the city," Rashid observed.

DMP traffic department is not least bothered about the condition of the taxicabs. "According to the Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1983, if a vehicle does not have a fitness certificate, we file a case and fine Tk.700. That is the best we can do in our jurisdiction," said Mohammad Altaf Hossain, a Dhaka North traffic inspector of DMP.

"Most cabs pay the fines and continue to ply the streets. It is the responsibility of BRTA to check for fitness, not us," he said.

Shiraj explained that when the concept of taxicab was introduced in 1999 in the capital, there were not enough drivers to drive them. "Drivers

are not using that particular batch anymore. We are replacing them with blue ones. Within a year, there will be no black cabs on the streets."

"Just one mobile court is not enough for the entire city. Without the help of the police and owners, it is not possible for us to get rid of unfit vehicles from the city," Rashid observed.

DMP traffic department is not least bothered about the condition of the taxicabs. "According to the Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1983, if a vehicle does not have a fitness certificate, we file a case and fine Tk.700. That is the best we can do in our jurisdiction," said Mohammad Altaf Hossain, a Dhaka North traffic inspector of DMP.

"Most cabs pay the fines and continue to ply the streets. It is the responsibility of BRTA to check for fitness, not us," he said.

Shiraj explained that when the concept of taxicab was introduced in 1999 in the capital, there were not enough drivers to drive them. "Drivers

are not using that particular batch anymore. We are replacing them with blue ones. Within a year, there will be no black cabs on the streets."

"Just one mobile court is not enough for the entire city. Without the help of the police and owners, it is not possible for us to get rid of unfit vehicles from the city," Rashid observed.

DMP traffic department is not least bothered about the condition of the taxicabs. "According to the Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1983, if a vehicle does not have a fitness certificate, we file a case and fine Tk.700. That is the best we can do in our jurisdiction," said Mohammad Altaf Hossain, a Dhaka North traffic inspector of DMP.

"Most cabs pay the fines and continue to ply the streets. It is the responsibility of BRTA to check for fitness, not us," he said.

Shiraj explained that when the concept of taxicab was introduced in 1999 in the capital, there were not enough drivers to drive them. "Drivers

are not using that particular batch anymore. We are replacing them with blue ones. Within a year, there will be no black cabs on the streets."

"Just one mobile court is not enough for the entire city. Without the help of the police and owners, it is not possible for us to get rid of unfit vehicles from the city," Rashid observed.

DMP traffic department is not least bothered about the condition of the taxicabs. "According to the Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1983, if a vehicle does not have a fitness certificate, we file a case and fine Tk.700. That is the best we can do in our jurisdiction," said Mohammad Altaf Hossain, a Dhaka North traffic inspector of DMP.

"Most cabs pay the fines and continue to ply the streets. It is the responsibility of BRTA to check for fitness, not us," he said.

Shiraj explained that when the concept of taxicab was introduced in 1999 in the capital, there were not enough drivers to drive them. "Drivers

are not using that particular batch anymore. We are replacing them with blue ones. Within a year, there will be no black cabs on the streets."

"Just one mobile court is not enough for the entire city. Without the help of the police and owners, it is not possible for us to get rid of unfit vehicles from the city," Rashid observed.

DMP traffic department is not least bothered about the condition of the taxicabs. "According to the Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1983, if a vehicle does not have a fitness certificate, we file a case and fine Tk.700. That is the best we can do in our jurisdiction," said Mohammad Altaf Hossain, a Dhaka North traffic inspector of DMP.

"Most cabs pay the fines and continue to ply the streets. It is the responsibility of BRTA to check for fitness, not us," he said.

Shiraj explained that when the concept of taxicab was introduced in 1999 in the capital, there were not enough drivers to drive them. "Drivers

are not using that particular batch anymore. We are replacing them with blue ones. Within a year, there will be no black cabs on the streets."

"Just one mobile court is not enough for the entire city. Without the help of the police and owners, it is not possible for us to get rid of unfit vehicles from the city," Rashid observed.

DMP traffic department is not least bothered about the condition of the taxicabs. "According to the Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1983, if a vehicle does not have a fitness certificate, we file a case and fine Tk.700. That is the best we can do in our jurisdiction," said Mohammad Altaf Hossain, a Dhaka North traffic inspector of DMP.

"Most cabs pay the fines and continue to ply the streets. It is the responsibility of BRTA to check for fitness, not us," he said.

Shiraj explained that when the concept of taxicab was introduced in 1999 in the capital, there were not enough drivers to drive them. "Drivers

are not using that particular batch anymore. We are replacing them with blue ones. Within a year, there will be no black cabs on the streets."

"Just one mobile court is not enough for the entire city. Without the help of the police and owners, it is not possible for us to get rid of unfit vehicles from the city," Rashid observed.

DMP traffic department is not least bothered about the condition of the taxicabs. "According to the Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1983, if a vehicle does not have a fitness certificate, we file a case and fine Tk.700. That is the best we can do in our jurisdiction," said Mohammad Altaf Hossain, a Dhaka North traffic inspector of DMP.

"Most cabs pay the fines and continue to ply the streets. It is the responsibility of BRTA to check for fitness, not us," he said.

Shiraj explained that when the concept of taxicab was introduced in 1999 in the capital, there were not enough drivers to drive them. "Drivers

are not using that particular batch anymore. We are replacing them with blue ones. Within a year, there will be no black cabs on the streets."

"Just one mobile court is not enough for the entire city. Without the help of the police and owners, it is not possible for us to get rid of unfit vehicles from the city," Rashid observed.

DMP traffic department is not least bothered about the condition of the taxicabs. "According to the Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1983, if a vehicle does not have a fitness certificate, we file a case and fine Tk.700. That is the best we can do in our jurisdiction," said Mohammad Altaf Hossain, a Dhaka North traffic inspector of DMP.

"Most cabs pay the fines and continue to ply the streets. It is the responsibility of BRTA to check for fitness, not us," he said.

Shiraj explained that when the concept of taxicab was introduced in 1999 in the capital, there were not enough drivers to drive them. "Drivers

are not using that particular batch anymore. We are replacing them with blue ones. Within a year, there will be no black cabs on the streets."