



A line of seized cars near Gulshan Police Station have been occupying the entirety of this footpath for a while now, making it hard for pedestrians to pass by. Such vehicles continue to rust away, as they wait to be claimed or auctioned off.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

## Want to buy a car? It's only Tk 5,000!

HELEMUL ALAM and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Seized vehicles that are used for different crimes or have no valid documents mostly end up in auctions as scrap.

This can be for various reasons, like absence of the owner and reluctance of the investigation officer (IO) to dispose of the vehicles, which act as evidence, during trial.

Left unattended at police stations for ages, these vehicles just stay there and rust away.

By the time they are put up for auction following court order, after trial is completed, they are sold at a nominal price, like Tk 5,000 or 6,000.

Take the case of a car at the capital's Shah Ali Police Station, which has been there since law enforcers seized it in July 2008.

With all its tyres deflated and wheels burrowed into the ground, windscreens gone, dashboard broken and weed sprouting inside the cabin, the Toyota Corona EXiV is almost beyond recognition. The Daily Star found during a recent visit. A similar scenario prevailed in four other stations these correspondents visited.

Although there is no official data of seized vehicles, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) officials said each of the 50 stations in the city houses an average of 50 to 60 such vehicles, mostly cars and motorbikes.

According to a BRTA order, issued on November 13, 2008, if a vehicle is seized against criminal cases like theft, hijack, tampering with engine chassis number, or if its owner is not identifiable, then authorities must mention that the vehicle is "not fit for registration" and put it up for auction as scrap.

According to this rule, the auction winner cannot drive the car; they have to dismantle it. If the previous owner is found, however, the vehicle is returned to them, or if they refuse to take it back, anyone can buy the vehicle through auction and register it.

The government stopped re-registration of unclaimed vehicles



Seized vehicles rusting away at police stations

After trials finish, they are sold at nominal prices

Each DMP station houses 50 to 60 such vehicles

Some of them kept on roads, creating public nuisance

Auctions lost lustre after 2008 BRTA order

If vehicles are put on auction faster, authorities may get more revenue

to bring discipline to the transport sector and control road accidents.

A year ago, BRTA issued a blanket re-registration ban on all auctioned vehicles following recommendations of a committee approved by National Road Safety Council.

Re-registration of out-of-model vehicles and those sold through auctions by any government, semi-government or other organisations have been stopped, said a BRTA circular issued on March 10, 2021. So, the 2008 rule is no longer effective.

Aside from the issue of wasting good vehicles, more sinister matters also exist.

### THE CAR THAT BROKE ALL RULES

It was a 1994-model Toyota car.

When police seized it due to a criminal case on September 16 of 2011, the vehicle was in full operation. So, a police officer started using it for official purposes upon court approval.

After the case trial ended in 2018, the court ordered its auction on April 12 of that year.

Only four people had taken

part in the auction by paying a fee of Tk 1,000, according to auction documents. One Tajul Islam Liton was the highest bidder, who bought the car for a measly Tk 6,000 and paid a tax of Tk 540.

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) had also fixed the car's estimated price around Tk 6,000, said officials.

Ignoring past and present rules, the car, not fit for registration, was still found to be in use.

Analysing BRTA documents, this newspaper has found that the car's new owner is one Md Sharif Sheikh, who has taken fitness for the vehicle till January 3, 2023 and tax token till September 8, 2022.

Despite repeated attempts, this newspaper could not reach Liton or Sharif for comments.

Now the question is, since the car was sold as scrap, how did they get documentation to drive it?

When informed about the issue, Subir Kumar Saha, assistant director (engineering section) of BRTA, told The Daily Star, "We do not know about the car, but its owner was probably identified."

But then why was it auctioned off as scrap?

Saha said he does not have any idea about that, as the BRTA inspector, who inspected the car at the time, can explain.

### SEIZED VEHICLES A PUBLIC NUISANCE

Some of the seized vehicles are also parked on roads outside police stations, creating a public nuisance, said locals. Those also act as breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

Take the instance of Wari Police Station, where seized trucks and buses were found blocking the roads during a recent visit.

Abdur Rahim, a resident of the area, said in daytime, they can somehow manage to drive, but the situation deteriorates when traffic increases, usually in the evening.

Monibur Rahman, additional commissioner (traffic) at DMP, said they do not have parking space, so the seized vehicles are left at compounds of police stations, nearby places and on roads.

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**There was no bar to re-register after buying a vehicle through auction earlier. But that was stopped in 2008. Since then, we are only allowed to profit from a vehicle as scrap even if its condition is good. That's why we offer a low price. When re-registration was allowed, the auction had a vibrant look. Many people, including men of the ruling party and its affiliated organisations, used to take part.**

MD JAMIL HOSSAIN  
Auction Participant

Husband confesses to killing wife at Dhaka hotel

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Rezaul Karim Reza yesterday told a Dhaka court that he killed his wife at a city hotel following a family dispute.

Reza said he and his wife Jannatul Nayeem Siddique, a doctor, often quarrelled as he was jobless. So, he murdered her, he said.

None of the hotel staff assisted him in the killing. Reza added.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Md Rashidul Alam recorded the confessional statement after Investigation Officer Abu Zafor Md Mahfuzul Kabir, also an inspector of Kalabagan Police Station, produced Reza before his chamber, court sources said.

Later, the magistrate sent him to Dhaka Central Jail in Keraniganj.

On August 11, Jannatul, who was undergoing training at Dhaka Medical College Hospital after completing her MBBS

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Iconic items used by Bangabandhu given to Nat'l Museum



PHOTO: COLLECTED

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangabandhu Memorial Trust yesterday handed over the iconic Mujib coat, white punjabi, pajama and a tobacco pipe of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to the national museum.

On behalf of the trust, its member-secretary and curator of Bangabandhu Memorial Museum, Nazrul Islam Khan, officially handed over the items to National Museum director general Md Kamruzzaman.

The items were given to the country's main museum with the approval of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

State Minister for Cultural Affairs KM Khalid attended the event as chief guest. It was presided over by Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, chairman of the museum board.



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