

Cargo businesses still operating from Walled

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By Zulqernain Tahir

LAHORE, June 5: About 250 goods forwarding agencies are operating illegally from inside the Walled City despite having been allotted land in Sabzazar Colony in 1993.

The 110 12-marla plots were allotted to the owners of the agencies to stop entry of trucks in the old city precinct. The agencies purchased the land for Rs40,000 per marla. Several businessmen were said to have obtained more than one plots by manipulating the easy conditions set by the government.

According to the Regional Transport Authority officials, a forwarding agency was required to have at least 15 trucks. At least two of the trucks must be registered in its own name. It should also have a godown to store "goods." However, the officials said, "none of the agencies operating from inside the city fulfilled the RTA requirements."

Pakistan Goods Transporters Association president Aslam Dar claimed that the "GFAs operating from the Walled City did not fulfil the RTA license requirements mainly due to shortage of storage space and lack of parking facility for the trucks."

"The shops are constructed on 2-3 marla plots and most of them



are located in the streets", he pointed out.

The storage of goods outside the godowns resulted in encroachment on roads and streets and a large number of trucks parked on Circular Road, from Delhi Gate to Crown Adda, blocked the traffic throughout the night.

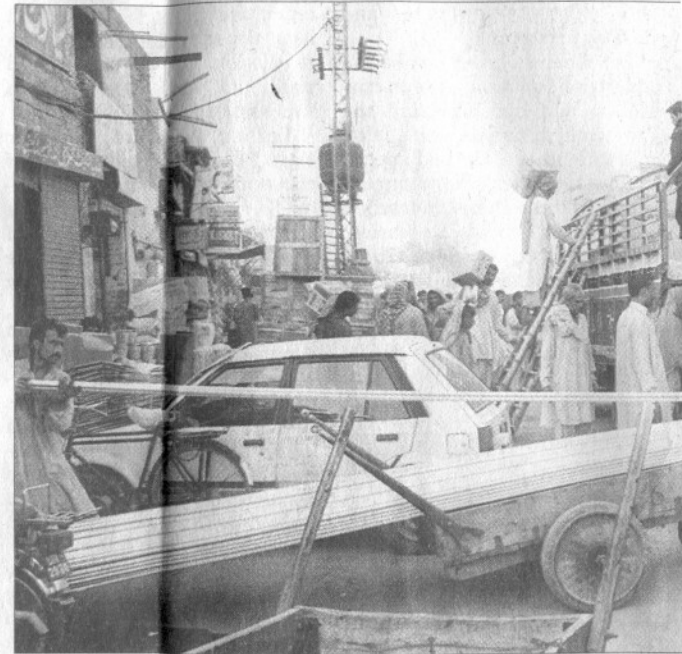
It takes about two hours to

load or unload a truck. According to Mr Dar over 1,000 trucks enter the Walled City every day. The government, he said, had banned their entry in municipal limits before 11pm.

"The truckers pay the police between Rs500 and Rs1,500 to park their trucks on the road," the agencies allege. "We have to

pay the charge because we're not legally allowed to do the business here," they admit.

The RTA secretary, Khalid Mahmood, told *Dawn* that the government could protect only the agencies having valid licenses. When asked why the RTA had not acted against the GFAs operating illegally, he claimed



that under the law it could impose a penalty of no more than Rs250. "It's beyond our power to force them out of business," he said.

Besides the agencies running illegally inside the Walled City, there are many operating from Bund Road, Data Nagar, Ravi Link Road and Sabzazar func-

tioning without a license.

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renewal," the officials said.

The plots allotted to the GFAs at Sabzazar for shifting their business there have been converted into auto workshops and truck and trailers stands.

City district Nazim Amer Mahmood said he was aware of the problem and would soon take appropriate action.