

# Special force to fine wrong parking

CITY CORRESPONDENT

As the government plans to build at least three multi-storied car parks in Motijheel, it has apparently forgotten to form a separate force to impose fines for wrong parking. At present, some sergeants occasionally hand out fines to vehicles parked wrongly on the city streets.

Traffic experts said, until the authorities, as in the case of developed countries, form a special force to impose on-the-spot fines, the

multi-storied car parks would not be economically viable. This special team of people could walk around the commercial districts of the city and hand down the penalties. The special team of people, both male and female workers could also help the government earn enough revenue to keep the force employed. In every developed country the traffic department has a separate section to fine parking related offenders on the streets. When the motorists are fined for wrong parking, they would definitely look for proper parking

space.

The entire city is now suffering from acute parking problems. For instance, in Motijheel during peak hours it might take an hour to find a proper parking place. The spaces along the main roads are taken over by rows of vehicles illegally parked without any intervention from the law enforcing authorities. In Karwan Bazar, the 100 feet wide road shrinks to 20 feet as buses, cars, taxis and CNGs occupy the roads illegally. These motorists would only look for proper parking when the authorities are tough on the

offenders.

An expert on traffic management said that the authorities, especially RAJUK would also have to ensure that the mushrooming market complexes in the city followed the construction rules and built adequate number of parking on their premises. No matter how many stories of parking facilities are coming up, if all these markets start functioning the city managers would have to take strong action against offenders.

# Parking relief in sight

SOHEL ISLAM

The city's commercial hearts Motijheel and Dilkusha hope to have at least five multi-storied commercial-cum-parking facilities in not too distant future for bringing about discipline in the traffic system of the areas.

The Rajdhani Unnayan Katirpakkha (RAJUK), Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and Shadharan Bima Corporation are going to construct these structures.

The DCC will build two multi-storied commercial-cum-parking spaces in Motijheel one on the land belonging to Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation (BJMC) and the other in front of the Uttara Bank head office.

"The one on BJMC land will be a 25-storey building. The first eight floors will be used for parking while

the rest for commercial purposes," said Dhaka Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka while talking to Star City.

"We have already signed a contract with a firm in August. This parking structure will be constructed on Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) basis," added Khoka.

Regarding the structure near the Uttara Bank, the Mayor said that the DCC would soon invite tenders for it, which will also be built on BOT system.

All the other planned high-rises too will use the first eight floors, including three basement floors, as parking lots.

However, the DCC's multi-storey parking on BJMC property has already ran into controversy as the Shadharan Bima Corporation is also planning to build a 25-storey parking-cum office block just next to it on two-

big land.

"At first it was decided that the DCC and the Sadharan Bima Corporation together would construct one multi-storey car park. But sometime later Sadharan Bima said that they were going to build their structure with their own money. That's why there are two separate buildings to be built now," explained Khoka.

Sadharan Bima officials also conceded that the two similar buildings next to each other would be a waste of precious space.

The Rajuk's two such structures will be in front of the BCIC Bhaban in Motijheel and behind the Hotel Purbani at Dilkusha.

"We will build our high-rises in a different away. We have invited a tender from interested bidders. These two facilities will be constructed on a partnership basis," said Rajuk's chief

engineer Sayedur Rahman.

The need for parking spaces at the city's commercial hub is at an all time high on office days at present.

Although commercialisation has spread very rapidly, the provision for parking has always been neglected by the concerned authorities.

Most of the high-rise buildings in the area do not have any parking facilities. Naturally, vehicles are parked on the streets, which invariably results in traffic congestion and jams.

There are allegations that a section of parking-lot attendants, who do not have any legal authority, charge Tk 10 a car claiming that they have got a lease from Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) for the roadside space.



The 19-storied Silver Tower in Gulshan has little parking facilities.

## Towering menace

SULTANA RAHMAN

Silver Tower in Gulshan-1 is perhaps the latest addition to hundreds of high-rises in the city, constructed without adequate parking space.

The 19-storey building has basement-parking facilities where only 24 vehicles can be accommodated, which is not enough for around 50 offices.

The building has been constructed in close proximity to the Gulshan-1 roundabout where traffic congestion remains at its peak all the time and the roadside and sidewalks are used as parking lots, as most high-rises there are hardly offering adequate parking facilities.

MAH Selim, lawmaker and managing director of Silver Line Group, the parent organisation of

Silver Tower, said, "We will provide each office with space for two vehicles. If more space is required, we will build another place into a parking lot where more vehicles can be accommodated."

"The plan of the building was approved in 1998 when the idea of parking facilities was not much talked about by legal bodies," he said agreeing that the parking space of Silver Tower is inadequate.

Selim also said it was not possible for all tenants to avail themselves of the parking facilities.

The Silver Tower is marked to accommodate around 50 offices. The calculated ratio of the occupants of the tower to parking allocations is approximately 3:1. To make things worse, customers and clients of the shops and offices of the building too need parking space.

But the Building Construction Act, formulated in 1952 and amended in 1996, says a commercial structure on 200 square metre requires at least 23 square metres parking space. As per the law, the 19-storey Silver Tower, placed on 5,000 square metres, will have to leave space for 48-50 vehicles.

Urban planners blamed the high-rise owners and architects who design beautiful skyscrapers with eye-catching interior décor but ignore parking facilities.

"We face trouble moving around the area as the footpaths are encroached upon by parked vehicles," said a resident of Gulshan.

"The problem will increase by the day as high-rises are mushrooming in the area without proper plans."

### What the law says

Status of buildings	Floor area and the number of users	Minimum area for parking
Residential	For 300 sq. metre	23 sq. metre
Commercials	For 200 sq metre	23 sq metre
Shopping Complexes	For 100 sq. metre	23 sq metre
Hospitals/Clinics	For 300 sq. metre	23 sq metre
Educational Institutions	For 200 sq. metre	23 sq. metre
Hotels	For 200 sq. metre	23 sq. metre
Restaurants	For 100 sq. metre	23 sq. metre
Cinema Halls	For every 20 users	23 sq. metre
Factories	For 200 sq. metre	23 sq. metre

SOURCE: BUILDING CONSTRUCTION ACT 1996.

# Sweating at a shopping mall

SABRINA KARIM MURSHED

He became dumbstruck for a moment. This was the situation least expected by him. Being stuck in a maze of different vehicles, Parvez couldn't fathom where or how to move his car.

Before coming back to his homeland, after living for ten long years in the USA, Parvez never believed what he was told regarding the parking hazards of Dhaka City. "There must be designated car parking at necessary areas if not everywhere," he always argued.

But he realised he was wrong when his car was at Satmasjid Road among some other vehicles vying for a place to park. It was a multistoried shopping mall at Satmasjid road that he opted to drop by. The small parking lot was already full leaving a large number of cars scattered at different angles on the road. Half the road in front of the mall was occupied by them.

He was desperate to buy a birthday gift for his little daughter. He wondered if he could leave his car in the middle of road and sprint to nearest shop. But his car may be towed away by the traffic authority for not parking in a designated car park. Then again he remembered the wise words of his fellows---- "Never leave your car unattended or else you will be left with only the four wheels when you return."

Parvez's plight is the most familiar one for the city dwellers. For a motorist, driving on road number two of Dhanmondi to Rifle Square, and then especially on Satmasjid road has turned into a nightmare. Either a shopping complex or a clinic has propped up a few meters apart.

Each of these commercial organisations claims they have proper parking places enough for number of customers visiting. However, in reality those parking places can house only four or five cars. Moreover, some of the shopping malls have turned the parking place into

playgrounds for kids where customers leave their children while shopping.

Inconvenience of a motorist does not end with parking plight. In most of the places on these roads, commercials buildings have been erected in front of U-turn points. The traffic authority was left with no other choice but to closing the points since scattered cars in front of commercials building and vehicles trying to take a U-turn clogged the entire length of the road. The result is, a motorist needs to drive a good stretch of road to take a U-turn leading to more loss of time and, of course, fuel.

People have accepted the trouble on roads as inevitable for them. They became accustomed to the common combat for parking space. Parvez followed their strategy and finally after an hour of agonised waiting and continuous honking, he managed to park the car on the slope in front of the shopping complex and rush inside.



Motijheel commercial area is riddled with parking problems.

COURTESY: SHAHADAT PARVEZ