

Buses use colony space as illegal parking lot

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Bus companies ATCL and Sino-Dipon use the open spaces of Asad Gate New Colony and Tajmahal Road in Mohammadpur for illegal parking, but the National Housing Authority (NHA) that controls the colony appears to be unconcerned.

Up to 70 buses of ATCL and Sino-Dipon jam the space around the colony every day, making the residential neighbourhood similar to a bus stop.

Sources claimed an NHA measure fizzled out after officials received phone calls from a minister who allegedly asked them not to force the buses off the road as one of the bus company owners is the brother of the said minister.

A senior NHA official -- asking not to be named -- said: "When an influential minister asks us not to take action, what can we do? We have to save our job carrying out his order."

Communications minister Nazmul Huda, told Star City by phone: "My brother does his business on his own, but if he violates rules, authorities have

every right to take action against him."

The minister denied making phone calls to the NHA and said: "I have never stopped anyone from taking action against violators especially when it comes to illegal parking that brings sufferings to people."

Huda said law-enforcement agencies should act in line with the rules. "I have never tried to exercise influence before and promise I will never do so in future either."

Over the last two years, ATCL has turned the open spaces of the colony into a parking lot. SinoDipon followed suit early this month.

"Drivers and conductors chat well into midnight as many of them sleep inside the buses. Their presence is a disturbance to the environment," said Arif, one of the residents.

"During Ramadan last year, the buses left the road. We thought the authorities took steps. Unfortunately, they came back three months ago," said another colony resident, who would not give his name for security reasons.

"The place becomes a den of bus drivers, conductors and helpers after dusk. Their foul-

moutherd jibes are embarrassing for local residents," he said.

On October 22 last year, the office of NHA Dhaka Division told The Daily Star that it would file a general diary (GD) against ATCL. But nothing was done yet.

"We haven't received any complaint from the NHA. How will we act against this illegal parking?" the duty officer of Mohammadpur Police Station said.

One of ATCL owners, Bachchu Mia, denied parking buses all around the buildings of the colony.

"Your newspaper is always after me. Why are you doing this to me? I have every right to park my buses in my plots of the colony. An appeal is also pending with the High Court against the NHA over the ownership of the plots," Bachchu told Star City that reported on the same encroachment earlier.

In a strange, secret move, the NHA allotted 1.4 bighas of land to Bachchu and 11 others under a rehabilitation programme for stranded Pakistanis a few years ago. An investigation revealed none of the allottees was Pakistani and the NHA cancelled their allocations.

Bachchu filed a petition with the High Court against cancellation of the allotment of the plots in 2002.

"His appeal pending with the court does not mean he has the right to park the buses in the colony," said Executive Engineer of Dhaka Division of the NHA Kabir Ahmed Bhuiyan.

"We will file a GD soon as ATCL did not pay attention to our request. I heard they stopped parking there. As they have again started parking, we will definitely take action," Bhuiyan said.

"It is really frustrating that the authorities are not doing anything for us. We hope the NHA will wake up," said Kamal Uddin, president of the New Colony sports club.

"The number of buses is increasing by the day and they are being parked in every open space around the colony," Kamal said.

Owner of Sino-Dipon could not be contacted.

However, an official declined to explain the company's position on the allegations.



Some buses illegally parked on the playground inside the Asad Gate New Colony.

Use of crests, medals gaining popularity



KAUSAR ISLAM AYON

Metallic work industries are rapidly booming and about 250 such cottage and small industries have provided employment for around 2,000 people, says the owner of one such industry.

Crests, medals, souvenirs and the like are manufactured in such factories based in Nawabpur, Katabon and Nilkhet while some are scattered over Mohakhali and Banani leaving a few in other parts of the city. The numbers of such industries are increasing with growing demand for their producers.

Commenting on the demand for metallic items, some businessmen feel that the use of crests, medals, awards, souvenirs, commemorative issues, badges has seen a sudden increase. They say that competition in the industry has increased as well. But the present uncontrolled price hike of raw material is a drawback in the industry.

"There is no control on the price of raw material, but we cannot raise the manufacturing costs in this competitive market" said Sohail Ahmed Rana of Dhaka Sign.

Rezan Uddin, sales executive of Crown Electronic one of the very few importers of the raw materials said that they do not have a role with the price hike. "It depends on the international market, and the price of brass,

copper, nickel, zinc are increasing every day" he said.

A majority feels that an association of manufacturers could make a difference in advancement of the industry.

Demand Sign in Katabon has 20 years of experience but Executive Mahfuzur Rahman feels that an organisation could assist in controlling prices and continuing healthy competition. "But no one has taken such an initiative," he said.

Nazim, managing director of Emicon Metallic, one of the oldest industries, said that because of certain problems, manufacturers failed to come under one roof.

"With its expansion many labourers became owners and difference in mentality, standards and lack of commitment is a cause of not forming an association as yet," he said.

Some believe that there are chances of exporting their products. They said that concerned authorities did not make an effort to introduce metallic products to the international market. They however requested for a regular international fair to expose their products and bring in the chance of earning foreign currency.

"Some of our metallic and acrylic products are of international standards but we failed to enter the international arena because of lack of government support," said Nazim.

Delicious summer fruits still dear

Traders informed that prices of watermelon would come down with full-scale supply within the next two weeks. But the prices will not fall to the level of last year's

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Summer fruits have started arriving in the city markets but their supply is not sufficient and prices are beyond reach of the common people.

Watermelon, jackfruits, futi or bangi (another variety of melon), custard apples, sofeda (local brown melon), wood-apples are available at Karwan Bazar, New Market, Shantinagar, Hatirpool and other kitchen markets. But the other seasonal fruits like mango, black berry, leechie will require five to six more weeks to appear in the markets.

A medium-size watermelon now sells at Tk 80-120 a piece at Karwan Bazar and other places.

"This is first and last. How can we afford to buy these fruits at this price," said Anwar Uddin, a consumer of middle-income group. He said that the price has almost doubled as he brought similar-sized watermelons last year at Tk 60-70 a piece.

Traders informed that prices of water-

melon would come down with full-scale supply within the next two weeks. But the prices will not fall to the level of last year's, they said, adding that the harvest is relatively poor this year. This is because of petrol price hike that discouraged most farmers to produce watermelon using water pumps. Besides, fertiliser crisis, higher transport costs and extortion at different points also added to the situation, traders said.

Most of watermelons now being sold at the city markets are from Barisal, Kuakata, Bhola and Taraish of Sirajganj. The 'real delicious' variety from Natore will take some more time but supply from other districts i.e. Naogaon, Jhenidah will reach markets within the next two weeks, the wholesalers said.

Futi and bangi, the yellow varieties of local melons, are also in short supply and sell at higher prices. A piece of futi costs Tk 25-30, up from last year's Tk 15-20.

Wholesales at Badamtoli, Waiz Ghat demand Tk 7500-8000 for a hundred

medium-size watermelons and Tk 2000-2500 for futi and bangi.

Pre-season jackfruits, an attraction for many, are also pricey. A piece of jackfruit sells between Tk 100 and Tk 200 depending on its size.

One kilogram of custard apples costs Tk 25-45 while a dozen of sofeda (local variety of brown melon) Tk 30-36.

A pair of wood-apples is being sold between Tk 30-60, depending on their sizes.

Mangoes, now available in the markets, are all from India or Pakistan. As the supply of local varieties to take at least 5-6 weeks, the importers are selling low-quality mangoes at higher prices. One kilogram of imported mangoes sells at Tk 70-90 in the city markets.

Meanwhile, green mangoes, an attraction for preparing special pulses and seasonal pickles, have flooded wholesale and kitchen markets. However, the prices are yet to come down to reasonable level. A dozen of green mangoes sells at Tk 25-36 while a hundred at wholesale market at Tk 150-

useful telephone numbers

COURIER SERVICES

International
Air Borne Express- 9561371, 9561372, 9550724
Air Couriers Int'l (BD) Ltd.- 8815970
Aramex International Courier- 9558003, 9559582, 9565075
Airspeed Express- 9563494
Asian Courier Services Ltd.- 8313543
Baishakhi Courier Service- 9558606
Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
Bangladesh Courier Service- 9563989
Bengal Express- 9560642, 9552666
Bangladesh Int'l Courier- 953636
Continental Service Ltd.- 9552948, 9558425
DHL Worldwide Express- 9881703-7, 9886305-9, 9882057
Enem Express- 9330699
Fedex Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114
Modhuban Courier Service-

9550884
Overseas Courier Service- 9352431, 8321169
Pacific Courier- 9568446
Reliance Express Service- 9558515, 7110249
Sky International service- 9660442
Skynet world Wide Express- 9558062, 9560258, 7114787, 7113184
TNT Express- 9566662, 9558239, 8618155
Union Courier Service- 9341722
United Parcel Service Air alliance Ltd.- 8826429, 8810223

National

Asian courier Service Ltd.- 8313543
BAE- 9884851
Central Courier Service- 9881118
Confidence Courier Service Ltd.- 9567036
Chisty Courier- 7110177-9,
Cosmopol Services- 9552793, 9557975
Dhaka Courier Services- 7236222

Dolphin Courier- 9558802
Dreamland Courier Service- 9550326, 9566975
Pioneer Courier Services- 9561727, 9569759
Probashi Courier Services- 9346359
Rainbow Express Parcel Services Ltd.- 8322773, 8315703
Reliance Express Services- 9558515, 7110249
Sundarban Courier Services- 9551984, 9556189, 9551656
Sunrise Courier Services- 9568751
World Runner Express Ltd. 9112068, Fax - 880-2-9112068

TIPS

Do you know according to Dhaka City Corporation, you must deposit your waste at the collection site

LIBRARY & INFO-

Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers

Central Public Library- 8626001-4,
Shishu Academy- 9564128
Shilpakala Academy- 8614673
Bangla Academy- 8619550
Islamic Foundation- 9550280, 9556407
Nazrul Institute- 9114602
Ford Foundation- 8116133
Alliance Francaise- 8611557
British Council- 8618867-8, 8618905-7
Community Development Library- 8113769, 8113604
Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka- 9126525-6
Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library- 8615096
The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314
Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412

OUTING

Museum and Zoo

National Museum- 8619396-9

Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday 3 pm- 8 pm, Thursday closed

Muktijuddha Jadughar-

9559091

Open: 10:30 am 6:30 pm, Sunday Closed

Bangabandhu Smiti Jadughar- 8110046

Open: 10 am 5 pm, Wednesday closed

Ahsan Manzil

Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday: 3 pm - 7 pm, Thursday Closed

Shishu Jadughar- 9666466

Open: 10 am- 6 pm, Sunday Closed

CITY BUS ROUTE

Bus No. Route

1 Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 10, 11, 12
2 Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 1, 2
3 Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mahakhali-Airport-Azampur
4 Shyampur-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Airport-Tongi
5 Sayedabad-Kamalapur-Motijheel-Airport-Joydebpur-Gazipur
6 A Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulshan 1, 2
6 B Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2
6 C Motijheel Shapla chattrar- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2
7 Sadarghat-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2
8 Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtoli
9 Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12
10 Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Malibagh-Rampura-Biswa Road-Tongi Bridge
11 Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Tongi Bridge
11/A Sayedabad-Khilgoan-Malibagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge
12 Shanir Akhra-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammadpur
13 Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Jigatola-Shangkar-Mohammedpur
14 Signboard -Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 12
15 Chittagong Road-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mirpur 12
24 Gulistan-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Airport-Uttara-Bipile

Starts from

Golap Shah Mazar
Phoolbaria bus station
Phoolbaria bus station
Shyampur
Sayedabad
Kamalapur
Kamalapur
Motijheel Shaplachattrar
Sadarghat
Chittagong Road
Demra Ranimahal
Sadarghat
Sayedabad
Sayedabad
Shanir Akhra
Motijheel
Signboard (Chittagong Road)
Chittagong Road
Gulistan