

Hoodlums collect tolls from illegal parking lots

DCC's name used in the practice

SULTANA RAHMAN

Hoodlums are collecting parking fee illegally in different areas of the city depriving the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) of a huge amount of revenue.

Using the name of DCC, the toll collectors allow parking of vehicles in several marketplaces creating traffic congestion in the areas.

DCC officials said they have leased out some specific places for parking while toll collection from other places is absolutely illegal.

"I have also heard some locals collect parking fees using DCC's name in different areas," said DCC Chief Executive Officer Dr MA Momen.

He said the DCC-appointed lessees can collect toll from the authorised parking places only. "They cannot expand the parking areas."

Replying to a question, the chief executive officer said, "We have imposed the parking fee to discourage parking on the main roads."

But organised gangs in some places allow parking on the busy roads to earn more. They are active especially in the marketplaces.

New Market, Gausia Market, Chawkbazar, Mohammadpur kitchen market, Karwan Bazar, Mouchak, Shantinagar and Mirpur are among these places.

"Only the southern part of New Market is an authorised parking place. But the other sides of the market are also being used for parking and we are not getting revenue from these places," a DCC official said asking not to be named.

Gausia, Chawkbazar and the kitchen market of New Market are out of DCC's parking range, but four groups are collecting parking fees at Tk 5 to Tk 10. The toll collectors claim that they are charging fees as per DCC rules.

"We are working for the city corporation and paying it the money we collect," said Majibor, a toll collector near Gausia Market. DCC officials however said Gausia and Chawkbazar are non-parking zones.

"It is the duty of traffic police to stop car parking and toll collection in these zones," said Mahboob Ahmed, executive officer of DCC's zone -5. "We tried to stop this and took action but they came again within a few days."

He said DCC is now getting on average Tk 50,000 a year as revenue from parking around New Market, which is much less than the expected amount.

DCC has leased out some roadside parking spaces in Motijheel and Dilkusha commercial areas to accommodate the huge number of cars. Sources said DCC earns around Tk 15 lakh a year from these parking spots.

"We leased out these spots in 1998 to stop haphazard car parking that creates traffic congestion in the busy. The plan is working very effectively," said Mohammad Sirajul Islam, chief town planner of DCC.

He said Tk 10 is charged as parking free for each vehicle.

DCC officials said the leased out parking areas can accommodate 2,500 to 3,000 vehicles but they are forced to accommodate more than 5,000 cars. Such a huge number of vehicles keeps the entire area blocked.

"The situation will improve after the construction of a multi-storeyed car parking in Motijheel," said Dr Momen, the DCC chief executive officer.

He also said the city corporation would take action against the unauthorised parking fee collectors in different areas of the city.

Contractors plan to fight government in court

AVIK SANWAR RAHMAN

Bangladesh Shommittoi Thikadar Shamannay Parishad (BSTSP), an organisation of contractors, has decided to launch a legal battle against the government to get prices of tenders revised in the face of an abnormal hike in the price of construction rods.

"We had requested the government to increase the tender price as the contractors have not been able to recover from the sudden rise of rod price after 2003. But instead, the Public Works Department

(PWD) is now rescheduling the tenders with a higher price and awarding the work stopped by us to other contractors," said Mir Zahir Hussain, convener of BSTSP.

"According to the PWD audit manual act 325, the chief engineer of PWD can reschedule tender price if cost of any commodity rises abnormally. We will file a writ petition with the court so that this act is upheld," said Hussain.

Hussain also claimed that Prime Minister Khaleda Zia had instructed the finance ministry to reschedule tender price in an Executive Committee for National Economic Council (Ecnec) meeting on May 19, 2004, but nothing happened after that.

Constructions worth 2000 crore Taka under various government projects have stopped as the BSTSP went on strike from January 15 demanding a ten-percent increase in tender price owing to the price hike of MS iron rod.

"It is not possible for us to incur a 25 percent loss. Rods consume 25 percent of the total construction cost and its price has gone up



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from Tk 20,000 per ton in 2003 to Tk 35,000 in 2004," added Rahman.

"We had started our work but now we can not continue because of the government's indecision. If we get a ten percent raise we could at least recover our expenditure," said another contractor.

The BACI president said that the government would be benefited if tender price is raised as contractors are not looking for profit.

"We had a meeting with the

commerce minister and the minister for public works and both have agreed with us in principle. But the finance minister is still not convinced," said Rahman.

"The finance minister should understand where we are coming from. If re-tender is called, that will cost the government more than what we are asking for because the tenders will be dropped on the basis of the current price of rod which has doubled after 2003," said Mir Zahir Hussain.

Promotional gifts have huge possibilities



A display of wall clocks in a shop at Karwan Bazar. These clocks are produced in bulk at very low cost and are attractive gifts to build rapport among organisations and clients.

FAIZUL KHAN TANIM

The trend of customising gift items like wall-clocks, diaries, calendars, pens and similar items for promotional purpose is becoming increasingly popular.

Not only the reputed corporate firms, small-scale businesses are also customising the company or organisation's name and logo on clocks, pens, pen holders, bags, card holders, caps and T-shirts as gifts.

"A wall clock costs around Tk 50 to 60 and the printing cost with logo of a specific company is within Tk 30 to 40. So for Tk 100, you can get a nice wall-clock with the company's name and logo and such items can be produced in a bulk quantity," said Ahmed Sharif, an independent entrepreneur from Chawk Bazar who customises these items for clients.

Staff from corporate offices say that gifts have become an excellent way of building rapport among organisations and with clients. Exchanging gifts, calen-

dars, mugs, diaries and other items especially during the beginning of a year go a long way in developing goodwill and mutual confidence, they feel.

According to promotional gift producing companies in the city, each year only pens worth around one crore Taka are ordered by pharmaceutical companies, multi-national organisations, international banks and local corporate houses.

Nurur Rahman, business manager of Little Planet

explained the process: "We receive orders of gift items from corporate companies. After deciding on the logo and the gift item, we do sample printing. If the sample pleases our client then we go for mass production."

"This process takes around one and a half months at least as corporate clients seek top quality products and excellent printing. Such high quality finishing is not yet available in our country so we get them done in China or Taiwan," said Rahman.

Another manager of a promotional gift producing company in Banani added: "Since our local printing production is not up to the mark, we need to import a lot and get items printed from abroad. Even our neighboring countries are making different types of gel, ballpoint and sign pens of various colors and taste for different client groups. If our local companies were as developed, our country would have earned huge revenues from only gift items each year."

Marketing manager of another promotional gift firm said that the clients nowadays want variable gift items and not only pens, diaries and calendars and many things have to be imported.

"The tax on imported goods especially gift items, is huge. This is a big drawback of this business and for which we cannot flourish. Because of the government restrictions, even if the order of imported goods is of a small quantity, a letter of credit (L/C) has to be opened. This is not convenient for this type of small scale business."

healthouting, taxicab & train timing

HEALTH

Hospitals
Heart
National Institute of Cardio Vascular Diseases (NICVD), - 9130800, 912560-59
Burn
Dhaka Medical College Hospital Burn Unit-8626812-6
Cancer
National Cancer Institute-8014914, 8826561-65
Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University-8612550-4, 861455-9
Diabetes
Diabetic Research Hospital (BIRDEN)- 9661551-5, 8616641-50
Mother & Child Care
Shishu Hospital- 9119119, 8116061-62
Azimpur Mother & Child Health Training Institute- 8624827, 8624980



MARKET CLOSED

TAXI CAB



LIBRARY & INFO

Eye
Islamia Eye Hospital-9110794, 9119315
National Eye Hospital- 8117202, 8114807
Dental
Dental College -9002035
Blood Bank
Red Crescent Centre- 9116563
Sandhani (DMCH)- 8624040
Sandhani (SMCH)- 7310061, 7310061, 7319022
Dhaka Medical Collage Hospital- 8626812-9
Eye Bank
Sandhani International Eye Bank- 8614040
Ambulances For Dead Body
Anzuman Mafidul Islam (Kakrail) 9336611, Gandaria 7319808, 7318166, Al-Markajul Islam 9127867, Shishu Jadiughar-Sunday

Yellow Cab

Navana 9558065
Salida 9344477, 0171620881
Cosmo 9112959 and 8127191
Cab One 7113282-3
Nihon 8624741-2
Orion 9347277
Anudip 8125285 and 8127611
Capital 9352847

TRAIN TIMING

Subarna Express Leaves Dhaka at 4:30 pm
Mahanagar Prabhati Leaves Dhaka at 7:30 am
Mahanagar Godhuli Leaves Dhaka at 3:15 pm
Turna Leaves Dhaka at 11:00 pm
Parabat Express Leaves Dhaka at 6:40 am
Joyantika Express Leaves Dhaka at 12:45 pm
Upabon Express Leaves Dhaka at 9:45 pm
Tista Express Leaves Dhaka at 7:00 am
Katra Express Leaves Dhaka at 5:00 pm
Upakul Express Leaves Dhaka at 8:00 pm
Agnibeena Express Leaves Dhaka at 9:20 pm

Union 8130485
Kool 0171826731
Black Cab
Cab Ex 9358401
Cabline 8321162
JBS Cab 019364575
Orion 8125285 and 8127611
Capital 7113282-3

Leaves Chittagong at 10:35 pm
Leaves Chittagong at 1:55 pm
Leaves Chittagong at 10:55 pm
Leaves Chittagong at 6:40 am
Leaves Sylhet at 2:30 pm
Leaves Sylhet at 9:20 pm
Leaves Sylhet at 6:40 pm
Leaves Sylhet at 1:05 pm
Leaves Bahadurabad at 11:15 pm
Leaves Noakhali at 5:00 am
Leaves Jagannath at 2:30 pm

Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers
Central Public Library- 8626001-4, Shishu Academy- 9564128
Shilpakala Academy- 8614673
Bangla Academy- 8619550
Islamic Foundation- 95560280, Nazrul Institute- 9114602
Ford Foundation- 8116133
Alliance Francaise- 8611557
Information Resource Center, The American Center- 8813440-4, 9886395-9
British Council- 8618867-8, 8618905-7
Community Development Library- 8113769, 8113604
Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka- 9126525-6
Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library- 8850141-2
The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314
Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125, 812954, 8123412
Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) 9330081-4