

# Khilgaon flyover becomes a leisure walkway

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The Khilgaon flyover, constructed for the smooth flow of traffic and to avoid congestion in one of the busiest spots in the city, has turned out to be more a walkway for pedestrians than for the easy movement of vehicles.

This correspondent last week saw a police sergeant having a

chat in the afternoon with a female passer-by on the flyover as his motorcycle leaned against the bridge.

Many couples also used the flyover as a rendezvous unmindful of the walkway and risking their lives.

Mahmuda Ali, while walking on the flyover along with her children, was running across the

road. The driver of an approaching bus, who was in full control, stopped his vehicle in the nick of time.

This is a commonplace scenario on the flyover. Lack of proper monitoring and neglect of the authority concerned have allowed hundreds of pedestrians to use the Khilgaon flyover as a footover bridge violating all traffic rules.

"I use the flyover for my walks and sometimes take my children too along with me," said Mahmuda.

"I walk up the flyover with my friends for a chat, whenever I feel bored," said Kabita Rani, a student of Khilgaon Model College.

Most pedestrians are aware that it is illegal to walk on the flyover and when asked why they continue to do so, Mojibul Islam, a Khilgaon resident said that they found it a kind of entertainment walking on the flyover. "The authorities should permit us to take a walk at least on holidays."

However, Mainul Islam, a 60 year-old Sabujbagh resident said: "Although no accidents have taken place as yet, pedestrians should be aware that this is not a walkway. Authorities should set up police boxes at the exit and entry points," adding that both pedestrians and drivers are at risk if the rules are violated by pedestrians.

"We are afraid of using the flyover as pedestrians suddenly cross the road which can cause serious accidents any time," said Md Ali, a driver of Salsabil Paribahan Pvt Ltd.

"It is more risky to drive along the flyover on holidays as there is no patrol police to control the flow of pedestrians," he added.

A visit to the flyover however shows that the authorities have set up signboards prohibiting the entry to pedestrians, rickshaws, rickshaw-vans, bicycles and motorcycles some entry points of the flyover.

"Pedestrians must be made aware that the use of the flyover is illegal. The higher authorities must constantly monitor the movement of vehicles and pedestrians on the flyover," said Mahmuda Islam (Marjina), commissioner of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) wards 22, 23, 24.

Walking on the flyover began immediately after it was inaugurated by the prime minister, and the authorities seem to turn a blind eye towards such actions.

Residents said that some elements stay on the flyover till early hours of the morning resulting in many anti-social activities.

"Whenever I take a walk with my family, I face unwanted situations," said Anwarul Islam, a bank officer at Khilgaon.

But Md Mazharul Islam, deputy police commissioner of DC-South denied the allegations and said that the department has launched awareness campaigns. Announcements over megaphones are being made to make people more conscious of the illegalities and the consequences.

When the commissioner was asked about anti-social activities after 11:00 pm he said: "It is the responsibility of police to ensure law and order."

But owners of nearby shops said that they have not seen or heard of any awareness programmes by the police.



Common scene.... people passing leisure time on Khilgaon flyover.

9x3

10.5x8