

## DCC's Illegal Billboard Drive Stalls After Just 2 Hours

Friday, 19 March 2010

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The demolition began as scheduled after switching off power connections in the area. The DCC moved in with bulldozers, cranes and steel-cutting equipment. They began to dismantle two large billboards in front of Shahbagh police control room.

However, Khalil said, the two teams from Shahbagh Police Station who had been providing security left the scene at around 11.20pm as the DCC authority was also intending to demolish a police box at the Shahbagh intersection that was situated near one of the illegal hoardings.

The notice for the city corporation drive said it intended "to remove all illegal advertising from roads, footpaths and lands under the DCC."

The police termed the move to demolish the police box 'illegal'. Krishnapad Roy, deputy commissioner of Ramna zone, said the removal of the police box was not resolved with the DCC and so the police left the place.

The DCC had announced the drive on Thursday morning, less than a week after two people were killed when a storm ripped down a massive rooftop billboard in the capital's Gulshan area. Last month, collapsing billboards at Bijoy Sarani and Dhanmondi caused injuries.

DCC chief planner Sirajul Islam had earlier told bdnews24.com that Thursday's drive beginning at 9.30 pm Thursday would remove all illegal hoardings of DCC's zone-5, or areas adjacent to Shahbagh police station. He said the drive was scheduled to continue until 5 am Friday.

"The drives in other zones will begin on Friday night," he had said, before the drive was cut short.

Magistrate Khalil Ahmed had also told bdnews24.com as the drive started that representatives of some advertising agencies had tried to stop it saying it was illegal. But they failed to show documents.

The last major drive by DCC to remove illegal hoardings was halted in 2007 by a High Court stay order. The High Court asked the city authorities not to pull any down till disposal of a petition by the Outdoor Advertisement Owners Association challenging the ban.

According to Sirajul Islam, there are only around 500 legally erected hoardings in the whole of Dhaka.

The rest, an estimated 2,500 billboards and mega signs, are illegal—though DCC admits even they don't know the exact number—many of which are in a hazardous situation, said Islam.

"Lethal accidents can occur anytime", he told bdnews24.com earlier in the week.

The owner of the billboard that fell and killed two people at the Gulshan Shopping Centre on Mar 15 failed to obtain permission from the DCC to build the structure, and ignored a number of DCC notices demanding that he remove the illegal billboard, Islam has said.

Islam blamed lack of manpower and equipment for not being able to operate regular drives. Necessary arrangements were made on Thursday with support from DCC's other units, he added.

### RAJUK MOVES AGAINST ILLEGAL ESTABLISHMENTS

Meanwhile, Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha in a special drive on Thursday removed over 50 illegal establishments in the

Gulshan area.

The drive held between 10am and 2pm was managed by RAJUK magistrate Rokon Ud-Doula.

Over 50 unauthorised structures, including makeshift homes, motor garages and shops between Gulshan Shooting Club and Badda Ring Road were removed, the magistrate told bdnews24.com.

The residents and owners of the establishments were given advance notice, he added.

Source: bdnews24.com