

## Should we not be paying them a salary?

Ansar Ahmed

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A pathetic effort/COURTESY

### Our police officers are doing nothing to clean up our sidewalks

"If you are not outraged, you are not paying attention," so goes a popular line.

The other day, hot and humid, I walked out of a cafe on Gulshan Avenue and turned left to meet up with my driver and car, which had been parked on a side street.

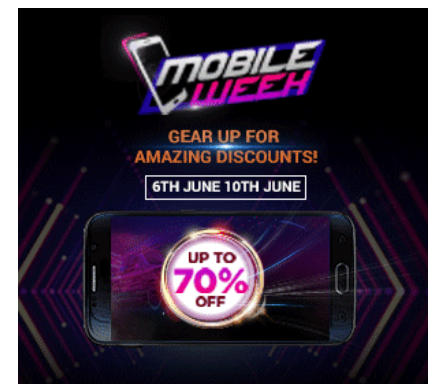
At the end of a sidewalk, I noticed that a couple of electrical wires were bound on two poles and were completely blocking the pedestrian traffic route. Right beside the wires, on a box, was a policeman sitting and facing the road.

I stopped and asked him why there were wires blocking the sidewalk, and how would pedestrians like me navigate the obstruction. He first looked at me, a bit dumbfounded, since I imagine no one asks him questions like these; and then he explained that cyclists tend to use the sidewalk sometimes and the wires prevent them.

### I am paying attention, and I am outraged. Are you?

Pedestrians, of course, would need to walk around the poles to continue. Pleased with his oh-so-logical-and-almost-official explanation, he reverted to his duty of staring at the traffic flowing on Gulshan Avenue.

Wait. If cyclists are illegally using the sidewalk, what prevents him from enforcing the law himself? Why are



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Why was a measure instituted to unnecessarily alter the behaviour of the many, creating an inconvenience for all of them, in favour of the exceptional few, who could easily be dealt with by the policeman stopping them, literally in their tracks, and rerouting them on to the road?

We all know that this measure, this solution, certainly cannot be a law or an official policy; it was merely the innovative mind of the policeman on duty at the site, created to allow them some respite from actually doing his job.

Most importantly, why are the wires doing his job for him as he sits on the box not doing anything necessary or useful? Should we not be paying the wires a salary because they are, indeed, doing the job, while the policeman at the site sits on the box doing nothing?

I am paying attention, and I am outraged. Are you?

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