

# BIG STORY

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# Parking for a living

Sayes can help you find a parking space, saving your precious time every day



Some building watchmen work as al sayes.

● The role of al sayes is not limited to finding a parking space. They clean cars, wipe car glasses and even guard the vehicles on the basis of orders received from “their bosses”.

● Sources say someone seeking the services of al sayes can save a minimum of 20 minutes in places like Bab Al Bahrain or Muharraq Souq where a parking space is nothing less than a treasure.

TDT|Manama  
Thamer Tayfour

It is generally believed that every crisis brings out legions of opportunities and ‘al sayes’ is the direct byproduct of the car parking crisis in the Kingdom.

A name borrowed from Egypt, ‘al sayes’ are those who help car drivers find a parking space.

Of late, many expats, are opting the profession and they could be seen in many areas including Bab al Bahrain, Muharraq Souq, Hooraa and Gudaibiya.

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An al sayes in action ... a newly sought after job

**700,000**  
is the approximate number of vehicles hitting Bahrain roads every day.

Hiring an al sayes’ service is not a very expensive process. The total charge including finding a parking place, cleaning and guarding the vehicle generally won’t exceed BD2 and, of course, they are subject to bargaining powers.

Sources say someone seeking the services of al sayes can save a minimum of 20 minutes in places like Bab Al Bahrain or Muharraq Souq where a parking space is nothing less than a treasure.

“Even in Manama the parking crisis is severe. Though the Ministry of Works, Municipal Affairs and Urban Planning opened a parking lot having a capacity for 400 cars, the crisis still persists,” they said.

Speaking to Tribune, Bangladesh national Khurshid, an al sayes, said, “This is a part-time job for me. I work in a laundry. I don’t demand money from people, only receive what they give.”

“We believe we are providing a great service by helping many save their precious time.”  
YOUSIF

“I don’t demand money from people, only receive what they give and be happy with that.”  
KHURSHID



Sayes charge additional money for cleaning vehicles.



The number of vehicles on Bahrain roads per day will cross the million mark in 2020.

Yousif, another al sayes, said he charges BD1 from “his customers”, which is inclusive of finding a parking space, cleaning and guarding the vehicle. “We believe we are providing a great service by helping many save their precious time. We don’t own parking spaces; we are just facilitators.”

Some of these parking assistants also promote illegal parking without their customers getting fined. “I know traffic patrol timings in each and every area across Manama. So my customers can park at places I show to them without any fear of getting fined,” an al sayes, who doesn’t want to be identified, said.

There are many al sayes who are illegal residents. “We don’t have work permits. We enjoy this job because we have some freedom in it although financial rewards are little,” said Mohammed Bakr.

It is learnt that there are also some expat gangs, which control these al sayes. Through these al sayes the gangs sell illegal parking spaces charging even BD30 a month.

Like all other professionals, al sayes also have some business development tricks. “If someone parks a car without our permission, we throw eggs on them. So the next time he will seek our help to guard the vehicle when he comes here.”

Some building watchmen also wear the shoes of al sayes at times. In places like the Diplomatic Area it is very common to find these watchmen illegally selling building parking spaces to outsiders.

“In Egypt, a licence issued by the municipality is required for al sayes, but here anybody can become an al sayes and earn money,” Amr Mustafa, an Egyptian citizen said.

“It means al sayes is the profession for those who have no profession.”

According to traffic directorate, around 700,000 vehicles hit Bahrain roads every day and all these definitely require a parking space. With the number of vehicles on roads per day reaching a million in 2020, al sayes are going to realise their true potentials.

“In Egypt they need a licence. Here al sayes is the profession for those who have no profession.”  
AMR

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AN AL SAYES