

# Holiday market plan revived

## Move to free city footpaths from hawkers

KAUSAR ISLAM AYON

The home ministry has revived the plan to set up 'holiday markets' in the city to free the footpaths from hawkers without harming their business.

Under the plan the authorities will allow the hawkers to use a particular road on a particular holiday to do their business. Sources said eight roads in the city have been selected initially to introduce the holiday markets.

The ministry will help Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) implement the

programme which was earlier called 'Friday market'. It has been renamed 'holiday market' after the government recently introduced two-day weekly holiday.

The government will also allow the vendors to run their business on a selected road on other government

holidays, the sources added.

The home ministry has recently discussed the issue again with the concerned authorities to implement the plan. DCC officials said it would be more convenient for them to implement it if the home ministry joins hand with the DCC.

According to studies, about 40 percent of the 220 kilometres footpaths in the city are occupied by the vendors.

Leaders of Bangladesh Sammilita Footpath Hawkers' Parishad (BSFHP), an association of hawkers, said there are around 15 lakh hawkers in the city who have no other alternative place to do their business.

"It's a good news that the home ministry is thinking about it. We can successfully do the work together, said Abu Taleb, chief estate officer, DCC. He said the holiday markets will help keep the city footpaths roads clean and free.

"The hawkers will get more than 120 days out of 365 days a year to do their business in holiday market and if there is no footpath business on other days, the volume of their sale will not decrease on holidays," said Taleb.

"We will prefer wide roads for setting up the market. If we make such roads off-limits to vehicles, we hope it will not create traffic jam," he added.

The DCC may select some roads in Gulistan, Kamalapur and

Dhanmondi, apart from Manik Mia Avenue and Mirpur Road.

The project is aimed at establishing the rights of the pedestrians by making footpaths free without harming the business of hawkers.

"It is not possible and fair to evict the hawkers without leaving any option for them. If we can implement the holiday market plan, we will be able to keep the footpaths free," said Lutfozaman Babar, state minister for home affairs.

DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka took the plan three years ago but it did not progress. "Keeping the footpaths free from the hawkers is possible only if we can find an alternative way for their living. As we do not have ability to rehabilitate all of them Friday market would be the best solution," said the mayor.

As the holiday market concept is new in the country, the hawkers have not idea about it, But they said they will appreciate the plan if it is beneficial for them.

"We have long been demanding that the authorities should legalise our business and allot certain spots to run our business. In return we can pay them huge amount of money as rent that we pay to the extortionists," said Jalal, a hawker at Gulistan.

He also said if the hawkers are legalised in that process it would lessen the fear of eviction and harassment by the police.



Hawkers occupy about half of the city's footpath.



Many people cannot think of Eid without a new pair of shoes. Buyers from low and middle income groups throng this make-shift shoe market in New Market area for a choice at a reasonable price.

12x8