

Are sidewalks for construction material storage?

DWAIPAYAN BARUA

The vendors and a section of traders have again occupied most of the sidewalks and major portion of the busy roads in the port city, causing suffering to the pedestrians.

The matter remained uncared for long due to indifference of the Chittagong City Corporation (CCC), the prime authority to maintain the city streets and footpaths.

Eviction drives by different authorities during the immediate past caretaker government managed to keep the footpaths and streets clear at least for a few months.

But for lack of such drives in last one and a half years the same old problem appeared again, city dwellers alleged.

The busy roads like Port Connecting Road, Agrabad Excess Road, Dhaka Trunk Road, DT Lane and Jubilee Road were expanded, evicting illegal structures while footpaths were also

built on both the sides of these roads few years ago.

But these footpaths are now of no use of the pedestrians as a section of traders run their businesses keeping their materials like iron rods, scrap sheets, iron pipes, machineries and other equipments on the sidewalks.

Besides, construction materials like bricks, sands, bamboos and concretes are also seen on the footpaths and on a good portion of these roads hampering both public and vehicular movements.

Vendors and hawkers have again occupied the footpaths of the busy streets and areas like Station Road, New Market to Kotwali Moor, New Market to Amtal, Kadamtali, Subhapur Bus Stand, BRTC Fruit Market, Sheikh Mujib Road, Muradpur, EPZ Moor and streets in Agrabad Commercial Area.

Sumi, a student of Chittagong City College, has to suffer a lot to walk to the college from her

nearby residence at Nandankanon as the hawkers have returned to footpaths and occupied a good portion of the road from New Market to Amtal.

She said she can't remember when the footpath on this busy and narrow road was free for the pedestrians. She said to pass the little distance she is to hire a rickshaw only to avoid the unpleasant crowd but passing the area by a rickshaw is not easy since the road remains gridlocked for all the day due to hawkers.

Saiful Islam, a retired banker who uses the footpath to take his grand daughter to her school everyday, said it is really difficult to walk along the footpath as the construction materials are always kept on it.

The flower shops and nurseries of Momin Road have stockpiled flowers, garlands and plants on the footpath to run their business. Car parking in front of the flower shops added

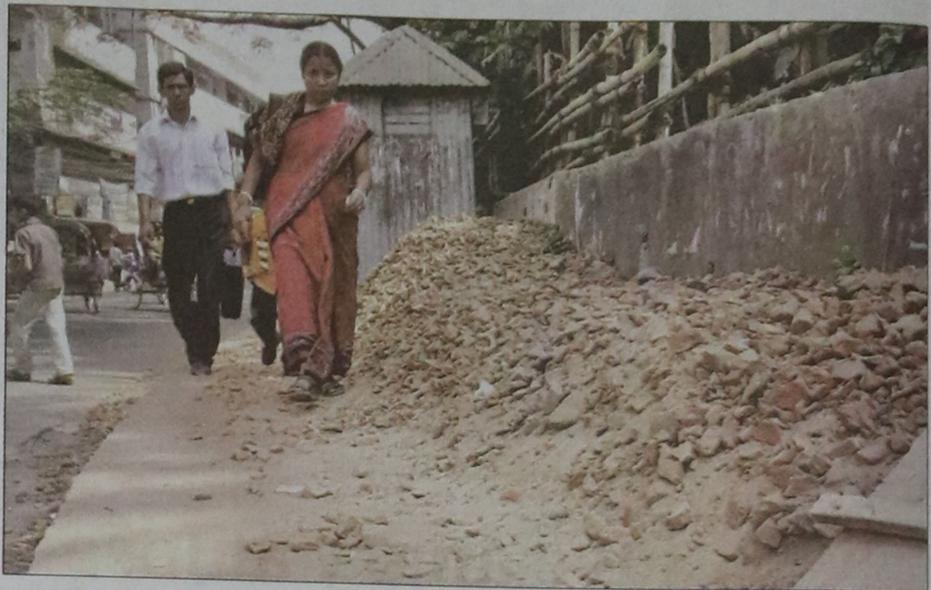
suffering to the pedestrians.

When asked Babul, staff of Oporajita Flower Shop, said due to lack of enough space in the shops they stockpile the flowers on the footpaths in the morning when brought from different parts of the district.

Swapan, a resident of Madarbari, said indifferent attitude to the problem of the authorities concerned creates scope for the traders to occupy the footpaths.

Besides, buses and trucks occupy major portion of many busy roads like Dhaka Trunk Roads, Kadamtali and Port Connecting Road, leaving a very small portion for vehicular movement.

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Chief Engineer Nizam Uddin said they are concerned about the problem and would launch a drive soon to keep the footpaths and roads clear. He said they can't launch drive to clear the sidewalks as they have no magistrate at present.



(Clockwise) Construction materials obstruct path of pedestrians trying to walk on the sidewalk at Momin Road, rickshaws have been parked and concrete has been piled on sidewalks at Firingee Bazar Road in the port city.

the week that was

Artistes of School of Oriental Dance perform a dance at "Basanta Utsab" on the Government Fine Arts College premises on Friday. Charushilpi Sammillon Parishad organised the event.



Free diabetes diagnosis camp held

A day-long free diabetes diagnosis camp was held on the occasion of Diabetes Awareness Day at Bohoddarhat Intersection in the port city on Sunday.

Chittagong Diabetic Association and Bohoddarhat Multipurpose Traders' Welfare Association jointly organised the camp.

During the camp, speakers at a function said creating mass awareness about the diabetes is needed and regular diagnosis and advice from the doctors would help the diabetic patients leading a normal life.

The Diabetic Association General Secretary Prof Jahangir Chowdhury was the chief guest at the camp while the association Treasurer Mohammad Shahabuddin, Manager Abul Kashem and Chittagong City Corporation Councillor Mahbubul Alam also attended it.

A total of 300 people checked diabetes at the camp.

BGC trust prize giving ceremony held

Prize giving ceremony of annual cultural competition, reception to the meritorious students and reunion of guardians of Begum Gul Chemon Ara Academy School

and College and Maulana Muhammad Ishak Shishu Niketan were held on Friday.

The programmes organised by the BGC Trust were held on the Kanchanabad Biddanagar premises under Chandanish upazila in the district.

Secondary Education Department Chittagong Region Deputy Director Mohammad Abdus Sattar was the chief guest at the ceremony with the Academy Principal Ranjit Kumar Dhar in the chair.

Speakers at the ceremony called upon the students to study hard to build Bangladesh as a prosperous country.

The Trust founding Chairman Afsar Uddin Ahmed, Upazila Nirbahi Officer Emdadul Haque Chowdhury, the Trust Education Officer Tobarak Hossain, BGC Trust Medical College Vice Principal Prof Farid Ahmed, guardian Dr Mohammad Mohiuddin and student Ashraf Haque Chowdhury spoke at the ceremony.

Tribute paid to Afsar

A civic condolence meeting for freedom fighter Afsar Ahmed Chowdhury was held at Fatikchhari upazila College field on Saturday.

Prof Emeritus Dr Jamal Nazrul Islam was the chief guest at the meeting presided over by meeting organising committee convenor and Zonal Commander of liberation war Mirza Abu Mansur.

Dr Jamal in his speech said it will be the proper respect to Afsar if the politicians work together for welfare of the general people.

The speakers lauded role of Afsar in country's liberation war and said his demise will cause irreparable loss to the people of the Fatikchhari upazila.

Former lawmakers Nurul Islam Chowdhury, Rafiqul Anwar and Mazharul Haque Shah Chowdhury, Bangladesh Economic Association Chittagong chapter former president Prof Sekandar Khan and former Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) president Farid Ahmed Chowdhury, former Upazila Chairman ATM Peyarul Islam and newly elected Upazila Chairman Aftab Uddin Chowdhury spoke at the function.

Rangunia Samity AGM held

Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Rangunia Samity was held at Zila Parishad auditorium in the port city on Saturday.

A 27-member executive committee was formed with Samity Advisory Committee Chairman Ahmed Talukder as president and SM Mubinin Haque as general secretary at the AGM.

Ahmed Talukder presided over the meeting while the Samity members Himangshu Birmol Barua, Abdul Quddus, Mohammad Amiruzzaman, Kazi Nurul Alam, Tarani Sen Barua, M

Nazrul Islam, Yunus Chowdhury, Mir Touhidul Kanchan and Harun Al Rashid spoke at the AGM.

CU VC for maintaining congenial atmosphere

Newly appointed Chittagong University (CU) Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Abu Yusuf called upon all to maintain congenial academic atmosphere on the university campus.

He said the main task of a teacher is to take class regularly, hold examinations and publish results timely so that the students can complete their student life in time.

He said this while he was talking to the leaders of Chittagong University Teachers' Association (CUTA) at his office on Monday.

Prof Yusuf said they could not maintain congenial atmosphere in the universities even after 38 years of the country's independence. Everyone should work hard with responsibility in this regard, he added.

He assured the Cuta leaders of fulfilling their logical demands in phases.

Newly appointed Pro-vice Chancellor Prof Dr Mohammad Alauddin, Cuta President Prof Dr Mohammad Kamal Hossain and General Secretary Dr Mohammad Kamrul Huda were present at the meeting.

Use of firewood in brick kilns leads to deforestation

Environment under threat in Khagrachhari

JASIM MAJUMDER, Khagrachhari

The administration in the hill district of Khagrachhari is indifferent to extensive use of firewood by the brickfield owners that poses a threat to the environment here for long.

The brickfield owners continue to use of firewood unabated in the brickfield kilns, violating the rules.

Environmentalists fear the vast natural forest, including reserve one in the hill district, would disappear in near future if the illegal practice continues.

There are at least 30 brickfields operating at eight upazilas here and about one crore maunds of firewood are used in the brickfields a year, district administration sources said.

Worst more the reserved forests in the far-flung areas like Jugalchhari, Baillachhari and Alutilla are shrinking as the brickfield owners fall trees indiscriminately for firewood for their industries, they said.

The brickfields use, more or less, huge quantity of timber instead of coal taking full advantage of the authorities concerned, environmentalists alleged.

Of the brickfields, no one has license but never faces any problem to continue their operation as they appear smart enough to manage a section of officials, local media, forester officers and pressure groups, they said.

An official of the district administration seeking anonymity told The Daily Star that most of the brickfield owners would get license soon as their applications are now under process.

Abu Daud Muhammad, network member of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association (BELA), said a brickfield needs at least 30

ber of trees in collaboration with a section of dishonest officials and employees of the forest department. Some forest officials directly help the brickfield owners, he said.

"Apart from illegal use of firewood, most of the brickfields use only 20 to 30 feet high chimneys violating the existing rule instead of 120 feet high chimneys," said Pradip

the water level is also going down due to deforestation because of the brickfields.

Mohammad Rakib, owner of a brickfield at Alutilla, confessed to have using firewood in their brickfields, saying they usually first reach an agreement with the local journalists, foresters and some officials in this regard.

Divisional Forest Officer



Logs stockpiled at a brick kiln for burning defying laws at Natunpara under Matiranga upazila in Khagrachhari.

JASIM MAJUMDER

Chowdhury, an environmentalist.

Pradip, also the programme supervisor of Centre for Sustainable Development (CFS), said the over all environment in Khagrachhari has been under threat due to gradual disappearance of forest.

Pranab Barua, sub-assistant agriculture officer of Agriculture Extension Department (AED) Khagrachhari, said

Ali Kabir denying the allegation said he has heard about the large-scale use of timbers as fuel in the brickfields.

He said use of timber is not alarming as they have already taken measures to deter the illegal practice.

Deputy Commissioner AKM Khairul Alam said a committee has been formed to investigation into the use of firewood and chimney