

Sorry state of Bou Bazar road slows down business

HELEMUL ALAM

Shah Alam, a keeper of betel leaf shop who started his business by selling a piece of land at Tk 2.40 lakh, is now thinking of leaving the shop as he incurred a huge loss due to the poor condition of Bou Bazar road at Lalbagh in the city.

"The road goes under knee-deep water even after a moderate rain which remains long time, which causes a huge financial loss," said the shopkeeper.

Alam said he ran the shop by selling a piece of land at Tk 2.40 lakh one year back, but his income continued to fall since the last seven months due to run-down state of the road and its poor drainage condition.

The petty trader said his investment now is almost finished and has not another option but to leave this profession.

Like Alam, all the businesses of the road have been facing huge sufferings due to the derelict condition of the drainage system of the road and its vulnerability.

"My sales have dropped by 30 percent to 35 percent for the last seven months due to poor condition of the road," said Shafiqul Islam, a wholesaler rice seller of Bou Bazar.

Md Didar, a salesman of Square products, said earlier, they used to come here to sell their goods every week but now they come once in a month due to the poor condition of the road.

Due to waterlogging, they have to incur a huge loss as water damaged goods of their confectionary shop, said Nur Hossain of Bismillah Confectionary.

Abdur Rahman, owner of Akhtar Store, said: "We could not come out of home during the last Eid-ul-Fitr. Even, we could not say our Eid prayers as the road went under knee-deep water."

A sweeper of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) seldom comes to clean the drain of the road for which the drain remains blocked most of the time, said Raju, a resident of Shahidnagar Road No. 5.

"We, some 10 youths, cleaned the drain in 28th Ramadan to recede the prolonged waterlogging," Nurul Islam, adding: "We again cleaned the drain after the Eid."

The road remained under ankle-to-knee-deep water during the Eid holidays, he added.

Like Bou Bazar, the road of Shahidnagar Road Nos. 5 and 6 is also in a very poor condition.

Nurul said, "We were in a huge problem during the Ramadan as the Road No. 5 remained under knee-deep water."

The road from Chunarghat to Babubazar also is in a bad shape for the last two years due to negligence of the authorities concerned, said Md Faisal.

Executive Engineer of DCC Zone-3 AFM Mainuddin said they have a plan to construct the vulnerable roads under the project of 'Nagar Obokathamo Unnayan Prakaipa' and another proposal of about Tk 28 crore is now waiting in Nagar Bhaban for approval.

The vulnerable roads will be repaired under the projects, he noted.



A woman with a kid tries to cross the pot-holed road of Shahidnagar Bazar at Lalbagh in the city gingerly as the road is splashed with sewage water from a broken manhole. The road remains in dilapidated condition for long, but the authorities appear to be heedless to the matter.

PHOTO: SHAFIQU ALAM

70pc plan to give up smoking

Survey reveals

UNB, Dhaka

As over 5 million people die globally each year due to tobacco-related diseases, nearly 70 percent of the current smokers in Bangladesh are planning to quit smoking, according to a survey.

"More significantly, almost half of the current smokers (47.3%) made attempts to give up smoking in the last 12 months," the survey says.

The survey titled 'Global Adult Tobacco Survey, Bangladesh Report 2009' is the first ever assessment made in the country in private sector using electronic means of data collection.

The National Institute of Preventive and Social Medicine (NIPSOM) in collaboration with Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and the National Institute of Population Research and Training (NIPORT) conducted the survey.

It was conducted this year as a household survey among the people of 15 years of age and above. The data were collected from 200 urban and 200 rural primary sampling units drawn by a multi-stage, clustered sample design to produce nationality representative data. The World Health Organisation (WHO) and US Centre for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention provided technical assistance for conducting the survey with financial assistance from Bloomberg Philanthropies under the Bloomberg Global Initiative to Reduce Tobacco Use.

Bangladesh is one of those countries where both production and consumption of tobacco are high and it is overburdened with tobacco-related diseases.

Though a good number of smokers plan to change their habit realising its dangerous effects on health, the number of smokers is not falling at all. A 2004 WHO study attributed 57,000 deaths and 382,000 disabilities in Bangladesh to tobacco use.

The current survey finds 21.9 million tobacco users in Bangladesh while 25.9 million of the adult population currently uses smokeless

tobacco. Though the prevalence is almost similar in males (26.4 %) and females (27.9), the current smokeless tobacco use is more prevalent in rural areas.

In Bangladesh, tobacco is consumed both in smoking form such as cigarette, bidi and hukkhah, and smokeless form as zarda, sada pata, gul etc.

According to data available from the survey, among all adults, 45 percent were exposed to secondhand smoke, which is known as passive smoking, in public places.

The study shows that overall, 97.4 percent of the adults believe that smoking causes serious illness. However, their beliefs differ regarding the causation of various diseases.

Data show that four in five people, including tobacco consumers, supported an increase in tobacco taxes.

Health and Family Welfare Minister Prof Dr AFM Ruhul Haque said the government has a plan to increase tax on tobacco products, especially bidi, so that the supply and consumption of these harmful stuffs can be cut down significantly. "It's essential to have effective tobacco-control programmes in the country to prevent premature deaths and disabilities as 57,000 people die due to smoking every year in Bangladesh," he said.

He emphasised education for all which can be the best option to make smokers aware about its bad impacts on health, as the rate of smokers is higher among the uneducated people.

Researchers think tobacco is more prevalent in rural areas (45.1%) than urban areas, as people there are mostly uneducated. So, the government wants to make it costly so that people cannot afford it.

It is believed that the supply and production of tobacco cannot be stopped unless its demand is reduced.

Researchers suggest formulation of a policy to make public places and offices 100 percent free from smoking and ensure its effective implementation.

Work to brighten country's image

Tajul urges armed forces

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for Liberation War Affairs AB Tajul Islam yesterday called on the armed forces and police members working in different peacekeeping missions to work sincerely to brighten the country's image abroad.

"The image of Bangladesh soldiers abroad is satisfactory. Furthermore, you will have to work hard for brightening the country's image more to the international community," he said.

The minister said this at a discussion organised by Rhythm Culture Society on the 6th death anniversary of 15 army officers who were killed in air crash in the West African country of Benin in 2003 at the National Press Club in the city.

"Today, we are recalling the memory of 15 army officers with due respect, because they made the supreme sacrifices. Similarly, the next generation

will remember us with the same respect if we can do something good for the nation. So, we should make our best efforts and work hard for the betterment of the country."

Apart from the members of the armed forces, a lot of brilliant figures of the country are working in different vital posts abroad. The policy makers should concentrate on creating opportunities for them to keep them inside the country for its development, he said.

Former inspector general (IG) of police Ashraful Huda stressed the need for ensuring congenial atmosphere for police members so that they can work sincerely.

A total of 1,618 Bangladesh police are currently working in seven UN peacekeeping missions in six countries, he said, adding that of them, 21 are policewomen.

Addressing the meeting, Maj (ret) Ameen Ahmed Afsary, founder director of

Rhythm Culture Society, said till May 2009, a total of 8,445 members of armed force are currently working in different peacekeeping missions in 13 countries.

"Since 1989, a total of 86 armed force members and five policemen made their supreme sacrifices in different peacekeeping missions," he added.

Maj (ret) SAJ Oadud Didar, executive editor of the Defence Journal, demanded naming different city streets after the names of the martyred army officers killed in different peacekeeping missions and BDR mutiny on February 25-26 at Pikhana.

Dr NI Khan, former representative of World Bank, presided over the meeting while Dr Kalimullah, acting director of Japan Study Centre of Dhaka University, Maj (ret) MK Ali, founder of UN Peacekeepers Band, and family members of the fallen army officers were present.

BLA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Help establish rule of law

Justice Haider calls on judges, lawyers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Justice Mirza Hossain Haider yesterday called on the judges and lawyers to put in their best efforts to establish the rule of law in order to institutionalise democracy in the country.

If the rule of law is not established, democracy would not be institutionalised, he said.

He also said it is not possible to establish the rule of law, if the executive, legislature and judiciary do not work in a coordinated way.

The High Court justice was speaking as the chief guest at the 24th annual conference of Bangladesh Law Association (BLA) on the Dhaka University campus.

Justice Haider called on the lawyers to provide proper documents and submissions to the

court for better judgements for the people seeking justice.

"A rich bar can assist the courts to deliver rich judgements. Give us good materials, and see whether we can deliver good verdicts in the cases," he said.

Presided over by BLA President Montajuddin Ahmed Mehedi, the meeting was addressed by Justice Mamnoon Rahman Justice MR Hasan, Supreme Court Bar Association President and Secretary AFM Mesbahuddin and SM Rezaul Karim, DU law faculty dean Prof Borhan Uddin and West Bengal Bar Council Chairman Bimal Chatterjee.

The speakers urged the BLA leaders and members to work together to establish the rule of law and ensure development of the country.



Children are engrossed in painting pictures at a drawing competition organised by Dhaka Nagarik on the Central Shaheed Minar premises in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

The Daily Star

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