

Pedestrians suffer without footpath in Patiya

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chittagong

The absence of a footpath along a one kilometre stretch of road from Thanar Mor to Primary Training Institute (PTI) of Chittagong's Patiya upazila is causing immense suffering to pedestrians.

Hundreds of public and private vehicles ply on the road from dawn to midnight as it is a part of the Chittagong-Cox's Bazar Highway.

Moreover, both sides of the road are narrowed down by iron rods and metals and cement illegally placed by adjoining shops and workshops.

These pose a risk to the daily movement of thousands of students of a government college, two private colleges, two high schools, a primary school and the PTI along the stretch.

"The road is very narrow. Bus, CNG-run auto-rickshaw and auto-tempo drivers park their vehicles at random to pick passengers, leaving no room for passers-by," said Bhuvan Chowdhury, a student of Patiya Government College.

Local people also blamed the traffic department for not imposing fines for such irresponsible acts.

Patiya Municipality Mayor Harun-ur-Rashid said the road did not have

enough space to accommodate footpaths.

Institutions along the road, including schools, colleges and the Assistant Commissioner's (Land) office did not leave six feet for the road, as per construction rules, while erecting their boundary walls, he said.

"We cannot even build drains for lack of space. Non-availability of adequate funds makes the task more difficult," he said.

A bypass from Indra Pool to Kamal Munshir Hat, being constructed under an Asian Development Bank project, will be used as an alternative to the road in connecting Chittagong-Cox's Bazar Highway, he said.

He hoped that the bypass would reduce vehicular movement along the road, making pedestrian movement easier.

Refuting the allegation about boundary walls, Patiya Government College Principal AN Yusuf Chowdhury said, "As far as I know, the walls were built following existing rules."

Chittagong District Police (Patiya) Assistant Superintendent Nazrul Islam said, "We will take immediate steps to remove materials kept illegally on the road."



Non-government school and college teachers try to force through iron barricades as they are obstructed by police while heading for Prime Minister's Office (PMO) from Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday. The protesters were demanding Monthly Pay Order (MPO) facility from the government.

PHOTO: STAR



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

A woman helps her kid cross a pool of dirty water on Hajji Hakim Uddin Road in the capital's Uttar Badda. The authorities have turned their back to the repeated requests of the residents for repairing the road. The road remains constantly water-logged either with rainwater or sewage. The photo was taken yesterday.

Muajjin held for Yaba trading

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives arrested a Muslim cleric (muajjin) and two others in the capital on Tuesday on charge of peddling Yaba tablets and recovered 1,680 tablets from their possession.

The detained are Mohammad Sultan, 26, muajjin of Baitul Aman Kuwaiti Mosque at the capital's Pallabi, Aftab Miah alias Arif, 54, and Shahin Miah, 21. Hailing from Teknaf, Cox's Bazar, Sultan has been employed at the mosque for the last one year.

Hasan Arafat, assistant commissioner of Detective Branch, said they first arrested Arif

and Shahin at Khilkhet with 220 Yaba tablets.

"On information from Arif and Shahin, we arrested Sultan who later admitted that he had been running the business of Yaba tablets for years. We also found 1,460 Yaba tablets inside his personal trunk kept in the mosque."

"Sultan's younger brother Mohammad Ayub alias Saiful used to smuggle Yaba tablets from Myanmar and send those to Sultan in Dhaka."

Sultan was a wholesaler of Yaba tablets and did not sell less than 200 tablets, said another official. "At least 20 people had been collecting Yaba tablets from Sultan for retailing."

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS WEEK Deprived children share life stories

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Many disadvantaged children gathered in the auditorium of the National Museum in the capital yesterday and shared their stories of struggles and successes in life.

Marking children's rights week 2012, Aparajeyo Bangladesh, an organisation working for disadvantaged children, arranged the gathering styled "Aparajeyo Shishu Utshab" with children who they have been giving support and shelter to since 1995.

Speaking at the programme, Faridul Islam, a beneficiary of the organisation, said he came to Dhaka after his mother's death and father's second marriage. He took shelter at his uncle's house but was driven out after some days.

With no alternatives, he began staying at a shrine in Mirpur and became involved in drugs and minor crimes, Faridul said.

"One day a child who received support from Aparajeyo Bangladesh took me to their shelter. They admitted me to a school and later I received vocational training," he said. Faridul now owns a mobile phone repairing and accessories shop.

Like him, other underprivileged children also shared their stories.

Wahida Banu, executive director of the organisation, among others, was present at the programme.

Later, a cultural programme was organised.

32 Islamists charged for Sept 22 vandalism

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday pressed charges against 32 leaders and activists of 12 like-minded Islamist parties including Islami Oikya Jote Secretary General Abdul Latif Nejami in a case filed for damaging and torching vehicles in the capital on September 22.

Masud Rana, sub-inspector at Shahbagh Police Station and also the case's investigation officer, submitted the charge sheet to the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court of Dhaka.

Names of four other leaders including Bangladesh Khelafat Andolan Ameer Maulana Shah Ahmadullah Ashraf were dropped from the charge sheet as police did not find their link with the charges.

On September 22, police filed the case with Shahbagh Police Station following clashes between the activists of the Islamist parties and law enforcers.

Twelve like-minded Islamic parties on that day fought pitched battles with police in the capital's Jatiya Press Club area to protest an anti-Islam film and a French weekly's cartoon demeaning Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

The protesters set fire to five vehicles including a police van and vandalised more than 15 others.

Obituary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Former BNP lawmaker Dr Mohammad Ali died of cardiac arrest yesterday. He was 70.

He left behind his wife, two sons and two daughters.

He was elected MP from Netrakona-5 constituency in 1996 and 2001.

NON-GOVT SCHOOLS, COLLEGES Teachers to lay siege to Secretariat today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Teachers and employees of non-government schools and colleges will lay siege to Bangladesh Secretariat today to press home their demand for including the institutions in the government's Monthly Pay Order (MPO) list.

On the third day of their agitation, a six-member representative team led by Ershat Ali yesterday announced their new demonstration after submitting a memorandum to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in the afternoon.

In the memorandum, they mentioned their five-point demand, including enlisting all government approved educational institutions in the MPO facility in this fiscal year and abolishing the practice of Demand Order letter (D/O), sanctioned by lawmakers, for MPO

enlistment.

Hundreds of agitators under the banner of Non-MPO Shikkha Pratishthan Shikkhak Karmachari Oikyajote staged their sit-in wearing shrouds in front of the Jatiya Press Club around 10:00am.

They also brought out a protest procession heading to Paltan with the slogan -- "MPO is our right, not anyone's compassion".

Around 12:00pm, they started marching towards PMO for submitting the memorandum. However, police intercepted them in front of Shishu Park at Shahbag.

After failing to break the police barricade, some of them scuffled with the police. Finally, they sat on the road at Shahbagh until 3:00pm, leading to a serious traffic jam on the route from Shahbag to the Jatiya Press club.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Disadvantaged children receive cheques of the money collected from the sale of their paintings at a cheque hand-over ceremony organised by Population Service and Training Centre at the capital's Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

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