



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

The absence of a foot overbridge compels pedestrians to risk their lives while crossing a road in Sholoshohor area of Chittagong city amidst a stream of vehicles. The scenario prevails in most of the busy intersections of the city. The photo was taken recently.

Qulkhwani

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Qulkhwani of Md Matiur Rahman (Sekendar), a language movement veteran and freedom fighter, will be held at Taqwa Masque, Road No 12/A, Dhanmondi R/A in the capital after Asr prayer today.

He died of cardiac arrest at Square Hospital on October 26. He was 77.

Death anniversary

METRO DESK

October 30 was the 21st death anniversary of Abu Mosab, ex-DGM of Sonali Bank. On the occasion, a doa and milad mahfil will be held today at his residence at Ananda Road in the capital after Maghrib prayers.

All his well-wishers, colleagues, and friends are requested to attend the programme.

Govt prepares to boost export of plants

UNB, Dhaka

The government has taken initiatives to ensure safe import and boost export of plants and plant products through modernising 16 plant quarantine centres in the country by adopting the required sanitary and phytosanitary measures.

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) recently approved a Tk 139 crore project in this regard. The cost of the project will be entirely born by the government exchequer.

The Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) under the agriculture ministry will implement the project styled "Strengthening Capacity of Phytosanitary in Bangladesh", which expected to be completed by June 2017.

Planning ministry officials said in Bangladesh there are some 26 plant quarantine centres, which operate the import and export of plants and plant related products.

Under the project, 16 such quarantine centres will be modernised while the remaining centres will

be upgraded gradually.

The 16 quarantine centres to be modernised are in the capital's Khamarbari and Shahjalal International Airport, Shah Amanat International Airport in Chittagong, Osmani International Airport in Sylhet, Chittagong Sea Port, Mongla Sea Port, and land ports in Teknaf, Akhaura, Tamabil, Burimari, Hili, Banglabandha, Sonamasjid, Bhomra, Benapole and Darshana.

Agriculture ministry said the project will ensure safe and risk-free import of plants and plant products through adopting effective measures which will protect the country from intrusion of pests and insects from other countries.

It will also enhance and bring dynamism in export of plants and plant products following the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and WTO-SPS (Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures) Agreement.

Under the guidelines of IPPC and WTO-SPS Agreement, it is mandatory to strengthen capacity of phytosanitary for import and export

of such products, said agriculture ministry officials.

The government has undertaken the project to modernise and strengthen the quarantine services of the country to stay alive in the competitive international market.

Sources said export of citrus fruits to Europe has been almost stagnant in the last four years and export of vegetables is on the verge of extinction. Export of country's agricultural products is also facing difficulty as the developed countries are imposing different kinds of phytosanitary conditions to tackle various risks.

Under the project, there will be Pests Risk Assessment of eight major crops in a bid to ensure risk-free import of products as well as to export them according to the importing countries' demands.

Besides, there will be six new laboratories and office-cum-training halls, construction of a central packing house in the capital to operate sorting, grading and packing activities of export-oriented fresh vegetables and fruits.

Ctg city in dire need of foot overbridges

SHAHENOOR AKTHER URMI, Ctg

With the rise in numbers of vehicles, markets, offices and residents, Chittagong city is in need of at least seven foot overbridges at six busy intersections and in front of a school.

The six intersections are Agrabad Badamtoli, Dewanhat, Tigerpass, GEC Mor, Colonelhat and Sholoshohor Number 2 Gate and the educational institution is Bangladesh Women Association (BAWA) School in Dampara.

Chittagong City Corporation (CCC), Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) and local residents stated that the seven would facilitate smooth movement of pedestrians and reduce the city's intolerable traffic jam.

A garment worker, Bappa Das, emphasised the need of a foot overbridge at the Agrabad intersection, stating a recent incident where he narrowly escaped hitting a car.

At present the city has seven foot overbridges. Three are in New Market, Reazuddin Bazar and Fakir Haat areas, set up by CCC and CDA.

Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority constructed two foot overbridges before Chittagong Export Processing Zone for the smooth passage of garment workers in the area.

The remaining two, at the South and East Port Colony Gate, were constructed by Chittagong Port Authority.

CDA Deputy Chief Town Planner Sarwar Uddin Ahmad said they did not have any foot overbridge in their master plan as they envisaged constructing flyovers over busy thoroughfares.

The flyovers would have zebra crossings underneath, rendering foot overbridges useless. "But CCC could construct foot overbridges if they wanted to," he added.

In 2008, CCC launched an initiative to construct the seven and invited interested private firms for voluntarily assistance. "As we did not get any response, we shelved our plan," said CCC Chief City Planner Rezaul Karim.

However, CCC plans to construct the seven this year. "We have administrative and financial limitations and welcome financial support," he said.

Suvhash Chandra Barua, secretary of Forum for Planned Chittagong, a congregation of architects, said, "Flyovers are used for vehicles, not for pedestrian movement."

However, zebra crossings are also necessary for senior citizens and people with physical disabilities, who find it hard to climb stairs, he said.

CDA Chairman Abdus Salam said, "People do not use the existing foot overbridges, so why construct new ones?"

"We will think about constructing footpaths or alternatives for the smooth passage of pedestrians," he added.

DoE fines LGED engineer over pond filling

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The Department of Environment (DoE) on Wednesday fined the executive engineer of Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), Sunamganj Tk 2 lakh over filling a government pond in the upazila headquarters of Derai of Sunamganj.

The pond over 20 decimals of land belongs to the upazila land office and was being filled for the construction of a bridge over the Kalni river under an LGED project.

Mohammad Munir Chowdhury, director (enforcement) of the DoE head office in Dhaka, has summoned the Executive Engineer Iqbal Ahmed to his office and rebuked him for violating environment regulations and government's policy for preserving ponds.

The executive engineer sought apology and gave a written statement assuring the DoE of restoring the pond to its previous state by November 7.

Ranjan Roy, convener of Derai upazila

unit of Awami Jubo League, the contractor, was filling the pond without any approval.

He said almost of half of the pond would have to be filled for the sake of the bridge. The earth filling work remains suspended now for eid, he added.

Ranjan Roy also said he did not know about any decision to stop filling of the pond.

The upazila land office sources said a letter was sent to the land ministry weeks ago seeking approval for filling the pond for construction of the bridge, but no approval had come as yet.

Contacted, Upazila Nirbahi Officer Md Shamsul Haque told The Daily Star yesterday evening, "I am on leave, and I know nothing about the matter."

LGED Executive Engineer Iqbal Ahmed could not be contacted as his cell phone was switched off.

Abdul Bari, site manager of the construction firm engaged in filling the pond, said they were only working for LGED.

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6 killed, 42 hurt in road crashes

METRO DESK

Six people were killed and 42 others injured in road accidents in Sirajganj, Lalmonirhat, Rajshahi, Manikganj and Feni yesterday.

Our Sirajganj correspondent reports, three people were killed and 25 others injured in a road accident on Dhaka-Bogra highway in Buraburi area under Salanga Police Station early yesterday.

The deceased were Saidur Rahman, 35, and Porimal Kumar Roy, 22. But the identity of another deceased could not be known immediately.

Police said the accident took place as a bus of 'Keya Paribahan' hit a standing truck from behind killing two people on the spot and injuring others.

Our Lalmonirhat correspondent reports, motorcyclist Habibur Rahman, 42, was killed in a road accident at Chondimari village of Aditmari upazila yesterday.

Police said the accident took place as the motorcycle of Habibur hit a roadside tree when he was trying to give side to a tractor. Critically injured Habibur died on the way to hospital.

BSS reports from Rajshahi, a human hauler driver was killed and his brother was injured when a truck ran over them in Mollapara area under Rajpara Police Station in Rajshahi city yesterday.

The deceased was Bakker Ali, 40, and the injured was Jahangir Alam, 35.

Police said the accident occurred when a truck ran over the victims as their vehicle turned turtle and they fell on the road.

Our Feni correspondent reports, a motor cyclist was killed and another was injured in a road accident in Boktarmunshi Dak Bungalow area of Sonagaji upazila yesterday. The deceased was Anwar Hossain, 30.

UNB reports from Manikganj, at least 15 people were injured in a road accident on Dhaka-Aricha highway at Tepra yesterday.

Police said a bus of 'NNB Paribahan' fell into a roadside ditch as it was hit by another bus of 'Saudia Paribahan' around 11:15 am.



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