



Pedestrians caring little about the danger they are putting themselves into and the motorists on Dhaka streets. They have little regard for the facilities in place for them, as seen in the photo taken from the footbridge at Bangla Motor intersection. They scale over the barbires on the central reservation at Farmgate, top right, and run across the street in front of vehicles at speed in Karwan Bazar, bottom right. Having left a footbridges out of commission for a long time, inset, at Farmgate only gave them another excuse for jaywalking. Come Tuesday, the police would be fining jaywalkers on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ / ANISUR RAHMAN

6 months' jail or Tk 200 in fine

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 "It's a pilot project. If it proves successful, the DMP will gradually introduce the project elsewhere in the city," he added.
 Police, said Benazir, have already launched a three-day awareness campaign on the project. Traffic police will use hoardings, banners and festoons to create awareness among the pedestrians during the campaign.
 The aim of the move was not to fine pedestrians, but to create awareness among people, mentioned the DMP chief. "Jaywalking not only puts ped-

estrians' lives at risk, but also creates chaos on roads."
 Visiting the area yesterday, this correspondent found that some traffic sergeants and constables were not aware of the DMP move. "I didn't receive any wireless message from the control room regarding the campaign," said a traffic sergeant at Farmgate.
 Only a few signs reading "Jaywalking is a punishable offence" were put up at the Karwan Bazar and Farmgate intersections by the Traffic Division (west) of DMP. Some pedestrians said they saw the signs being put up in the

afternoon. Some small placards were placed on lampposts in the area.
 Siddiqur Rahman, who regularly crosses the Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, said police should have made the announcement at least 15 days earlier and run a major campaign on televisions, newspapers and the road before setting up the mobile courts here.
 "Usually, I avoid jaywalking but sometimes you cannot desist from doing it when you find it difficult to access the footbridge," he mentioned.
FOOTBRIDGES IN BAD SHAPE
 There are six footbridges and an under-

pass on the stretch of the road between the Farmgate Police Box and Hotel Ruposhi Bangla intersection.
 The footbridge next to Ananda Cinema was blocked by Dhaka North City Corporation on July 18 after a physical inspection of the structure by Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology.
 There is no possibility of reopening the footbridge anytime soon as no renovation work is in sight.
 To cross the road, pedestrians at Farmgate need to use any of the two footbridges apart.

The two footbridges are also in a poor state. Renovation work is underway at the footbridge in front of The Daily Star Centre. Sidewalks under the footbridge are partly occupied by construction materials, forcing pedestrians to walk on the road.
 The sidewalks near the footbridge at Farmgate intersection have been occupied illegally by hawkers for years. Due to this illegal occupation of footpaths, many opt for crossing the road on foot, said pedestrian Abul Kalam.
 Mohammad Palash, a private company employee, said the DMP initia-

tive would be fruitful only when civic sense grows in general. There are several illegal hawker establishments in the area while cars are frequently parked on footpaths, he pointed out.
 Although in good shape, people are reluctant to use the footbridges near the Farmgate Police Box and at Paribagh.
 Asked, a pedestrian near the police box said he could save time by crossing the road on foot as he would have to pass through hawkers' shops near the Al Raji Hospital to access the footbridge.

Zero progress in two years

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 This punishment came after the US Department of Justice in March fined Marubeni \$88 million for giving bribes to high-ranking officials in Indonesia to secure a lucrative power project, according to the website of Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica). The blacklist status will, however, expire in mid-December.
 If there was no hitch, this 450-megawatt gas-fired power project would be in full operation from mid-2015 and provide cheap power to the national grid. And the project would cost \$342 million.
 As the lone bidder, Marubeni won two other Japan-funded large power projects in recent years.
 Instead of cancelling the Bibiyana-3 contract and going for a re-tender, the PDB has been allowing Marubeni to kill time till mid-December, sources said.
 As part of this exercise, the PDB, in violation of the Public Procurement Regulation (PPR), is seeking government approval to allow the joint venture to change the consortium's partnership as per a proposal of Marubeni.
 The Japanese company said its partner Hyundai no longer wanted to be in this project and that Marubeni

itself would take all responsibilities for the project.
 "Marubeni's blacklisting has nothing to do with the failure to secure finance for the project," said Saiful Islam Khan, the project's director from the PDB. "This project is being delayed due to problems within the consortium. The JBIC has always said it was ready to provide the finance."
 While Marubeni never raised the partnership issue with the government until recently, the PDB proceeded slowly with the project and tabled a draft loan agreement with the JBIC late last year, many months after the signing of the power contract.
 The JBIC in last May told the PDB that it couldn't sign the loan agreement until the PDB resolved the partnership issue between Marubeni and Hyundai.
 In June, the PDB issued the consortium with a contract termination notice. Marubeni in late June replied that it wanted to change the partnership term as Hyundai wanted an exit.
 In late October, the PDB through the power ministry sent a proposal to the cabinet purchase committee for allowing Marubeni to become the sole contractor in the project.
 The project director noted that there was no legal problem in allowing the

consortium to change its partnership configuration after it signed a contract with the government. "It does not conflict with the PPR," he said.
 But Clause-9 of the PPR 2008 says: The composition or the constitution of a joint venture, consortium, or association once formed shall not be allowed to be altered prior to execution of the contract, but alteration at a date later than execution of the contract may be done subject to the prior approval of the head of the procuring entity.
 Besides, the consortium bagged the contract on the basis of their combined qualification, and the two companies had committed that "constitution or composition of the consortium shall not be modified, without the prior consent of the Employer, until the conclusion of the contract, which may be eventually awarded to it in consequence of its tender."
 According to the project director, the contract termination notice was just an official formality. "We lacked the experience to deal with bidder's finance. Through this project we found that it took between nine months and a year to finalise the finance. The JBIC is offering the loan with a low interest of 3.28 percent. If we cancel this tender, it would take another two years to seal a deal," he noted.

Govt alone can't fight corruption

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 elements of a society are in order like the human body which has good immune system then they will not get sick."
 But if some of these elements are not in order, very often the good elements do not help, said Eigen, also the founding chairman of Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative.
 For instance, he said, if a country had a good procurement law but did not have an independent media, where one could go to complain about its violation, the law would not help.
 Similarly, if the judicial system is corrupt in a country, good procurement system does not help, said the TI founder. He founded TI in 1993 with the mission to promote better governance and fight corruption worldwide.
 Eigen initiated Garment Industries Transparency Initiative (GITI) last year. GITI is a multi-stakeholder initiative aimed at promoting transparency as a means to improve labour condition in the global garment supply chain.
 During his stay until November 24 in the country, he will hold exploratory meetings on GITI with different stakeholders facilitated by Transparency International Bangladesh.

About the transparency in complying with ILO (International Labour Organisation) standards in the garment sector, especially after last year's Rana Plaza tragedy, he said civil society, private sector and the government should work together to address the problems facing the garment industry in Bangladesh.
 "They have to be independent of each other because they have different interests. But they should cooperate in order to do a joint diagnosis of the problem and to develop joint recipes," he added.
 After the tragedy that killed over 1,000 people, garment buyers from Germany are under tremendous criticism. Customers there do not buy their products anymore saying that those come from Bangladesh and so the German buyers are going somewhere where garment makers are complying with the ILO labour standards.
 Therefore, factory owners, workers, government, media should try to create a system that would ensure the availability of credible information about various aspects of the garment sector. And that's what GITI is trying to do in Bangladesh with the assistance of multi-stakeholder working groups, Eigen said.
 Asked about the government's

criticism over the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) prepared by TI, the chair of TI advisory council said it was like shooting the messenger rather than addressing the problem of corruption.
 "Our corruption perception index is a result of mathematics. Last time we have evaluated 14 different opinion surveys and asked tens of thousands of people how they judge Bangladesh on the scale of 1 to 10.
 "This is a global opinion survey," he said, adding that each year TI published the corruption perception index citing the sources.
 Sharing a story involving former prime minister of Malaysia Mahathir Mohamad, Eigen said that when Mahathir saw his country's position on the index he said western people did not understand Asian values and tried to look down upon Asia.
 Three Malaysian experts then went to TI's office in Berlin following his invitation. Returning to Malaysia, they said TI had maintained its highest professionalism with regard to statistics and econometrics. Hearing this, Mahathir apologised to TI in parliament.
 TI is likely to launch its next CPI in the first week of December, Eigen said.

Give Rohingyas citizenship

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 Under a controversial government-backed plan, the Rohingya would be forced to identify themselves as Bengali - a term seen as disparaging -- in order to apply for citizenship. Those who refuse would be forced to live in camps.
 Many in Myanmar's government and local Buddhists view Rohingyas as illegal immigrants from neighboring Bangladesh, but the community maintains its has ancestral roots in the country.
 The resolution urges the government to protect the rights of all inhabitants of Rakhine state and allow "equal access to

full citizenship for the Rohingya minority," to "allow self-identification" and ensure equal access to services.
 Myanmar's representative voiced opposition to the use of term "Rohingya" in the resolution and warned this would stoke tensions in Rakhine state.
 "Use of the word by the United Nations will draw strong resentment from the people of Myanmar, making the government's effort more difficult in addressing this issue," said the delegate.
 The representative emphasized that the government was seeking to address

the issue.
 The measure drafted by the European Union now moves to the full Assembly, where it is likely to be adopted again by consensus. A vote is held if the country targeted by the resolution requests it.
 Despite criticism of the Rohingya's treatment, the resolution welcomes "continued positive developments in Myanmar" toward reform and notes that the government is making efforts to address the "complex situation in Rakhine state."
 It calls for an office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to open "without delay" in Myanmar.

Salute to creativity

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 The theme of this year's competition was "Living in Harmony", set with the objective to portray through photos, lyrics and films a Bangladesh where people co-exist with nature.
 Cultural Affairs Minister Asauddzaman Noor, who attended the ceremony as chief guest, said this initiative by the Standard Chartered and The Daily Star will further strengthen the cultural foundation of the country.
 He regretted that the children at present are not getting proper exposure to cultural activities. Rather, they are being "tortured" with textbooks and certificate-oriented studies.
 "There are no rivers, birds or flowers in their life. We don't hear the sound of harmonium coming from any child's home. They are only collecting some information, not acquiring knowledge," he said.
 A bleak future is awaiting the nation if the situation does not change, he warned.
 Speaking on the occasion, Chief Executive Officer of Standard Chartered Jim McCabe said, "We are not only making contributions to the financial sector but also have taken up the partnership to promote the positive image

of this country, particularly [in] art and culture."
 In the welcome speech, Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam greeted the large gathering of cultural luminaries, participants, award recipients and their family members.
 "This is true that we have limitations and failures in many areas but we are also making some definitive progresses at the same time," he said.
 "We are not aware of many successes we have gained, particularly in the fields of art and culture. We need to know our successes. It will help us overcome adversities," Mahfuz Anam said.
 Like the previous years, the Lifetime Achievement Awards went to three eminent personalities - Sayeeda Khanum for photography, Rani Sarker for film and Sheikh Sadi Khan for music.
 Hailing them, the minister said, "The cultural palace of Bangladesh could not have been built without their contributions."
 Three contestants from photography and lyrics categories each were awarded. The winners received crests, certificates and cash prizes.
 Unfortunately, no awards were given

in the film category as none of the 193 participants in the contest could meet the minimum standards of the competition.
 In the photography category, winner Pankaj Sikder received Tk 1 lakh, while the first runner-up Noor Ahmed Gela got Tk 75,000 and the second runner-up Shaikh Mohir Uddin Tk 50,000.
 KM Asad, Probal Rashid, Md Zakirul Mazed Konok, Mahfuz Hasan Bhuiyan, Kazi Golam Quddus Helal, Faisal and Abdur Rahman received awards in the honorary mention category.
 Sipra Goswami got Tk 50,000 as the winner in the lyrics competition. Tapan Bagchi received Tk 30,000 and Quazi Afzal Hossain Tk 20,000 as the first and the second runners-up respectively.
 Awards for lyrics in the honourable mention category went to Rafiq Muiyajin and Rayhana Parvin.
 The programme concluded with the performance of Rabindranath Tagore's dance drama Tasher Desh, presented by Shadhona.
 Since 2008, Celebrating Life has been honouring young talents working to uphold and promote the cultural heritage of the country.

Joy receives it for Hasina

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 ahead under the leadership of Sheikh Hasina administration by ensuring optimum utilisation of limited resources. This award is the recognition of that progress," Joy told the local media in his immediate reaction.
 The award was the recognition to Bangladesh's advancement under Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's leader-

ship in expanding information technology, ensuring healthcare to grassroots level, improving the lives of distressed people through safety net programmes and alleviating poverty.
 AK Abdul Momen, Bangladesh's permanent representative to the UN and president of the High Level Committee on South-South Cooperation, chaired the closing ceremony.

Diplomats and representatives of various countries, M Ziauddin, Bangladesh ambassador in Washington; M Asadul Islam, additional secretary of the Economic Relations Division; and Mohammad Abdul Muhith, deputy chief of the Bangladesh mission in Washington, were present.
 The weeklong event opened in Washington on Monday.