

Where pedestrians are neglected

MATHEWS CHIRAN

Though footpaths are intended for use by pedestrians, the one next to the road between Bangladesh Film Development Corporation (BFDC) rail crossing and Hatirjheel is being used for everything else except for the sole reason it was constructed.

The approximately 1km stretch is occupied by motor workshops and vendors. What was supposed to ensure smooth movement of people has also become a parking spot and a waste dumping site.

As a result, pedestrians are forced to negotiate almost the entire breadth of this extremely busy route without a pavement and walk on the tarmac -- putting themselves in the way of moving vehicles.

"A few days ago, I was about to get hit by a car while walking on the road," said Sruti Jahan, who works near Karwan Bazar and uses the road frequently. "It was a lucky escape."

Just to give a clear picture of the situation: the road is in Tejgaon area, adjacent to Karwan Bazar. There is also a flyover that connects Moghbazar to Mouchak. Be it office or regular hours or even weekends -- the road remains busy throughout the day.

Expressing their dismay, dejected pedestrians, mostly office-goers, said walking on this portion has become a trial by fire.

Drivers are also facing difficulties. "We get stuck near Karwan Bazar due to gridlock. But on this one [BFDC to Hatirjheel], we have to slow down as people are walking," said Md Salam, a CNG driver.

Meanwhile, the roadside, which barely resembles a footpath, has become a thriving business hub for auto workshops. Not only have they built vehicle access ramps for repair works, but also left auto parts and machineries on the footpath.

Though some sections of the pavement are still unoccupied, those are either battered or remain almost inaccessible by vehicles parked beside it.

Shamim Khan, proprietor of Shamim Motors in the area, said, "We did not occupy the footpath. We try to keep our auto parts close to our shops so that people can walk by."

About the ramps, Shamim, who has been doing business for seven years, said, "We made those to let the cars in."

When asked if they took permission for the ramps, he evaded the question.

Sufferings of pedestrians do not just end there.

Beside the BFDC gate and adjacent walls, there is a heap of garbage blocking the footpath. Quite a few cranes, used for shooting, were left on the road.

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Accelerate progress in reducing inequality

MJF urges state parties to SDG

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Manusher Jonno Foundation yesterday urged state parties to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, to redouble their commitment and efforts by accelerating progress in reducing alarming level of inequality, discriminations and injustices worldwide.

In a statement, MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam said, "We are witnessing economic growth without equality all over the world, causing distress among millions of people who have been facing inequality, discrimination, human rights violations and injustice on a daily basis."

"This must stop at once by adopting prudent policies that will enable all people to fully enjoy their human rights," the statement reads.

A leading national grant-making organisation in Bangladesh, MJF's statement was recently sent to the Office of Intergovernmental Support and Coordination for Sustainable Development of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

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Bright future awaits those involved with democratic movements

Dr Kamal says on 83rd birthday

UNB, Dhaka

Jatiya Oikyafront Convener and Gonoforum President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday hoped that people will be successful in bringing a change through a movement before the golden jubilee of the country's independence.

On his 83rd birthday, Dr Kamal also anticipated that a functional democracy in the country can be ensured through constructive politics.

Earlier, Gonoforum leaders and activists warmly received Dr Kamal with wreaths when he reached the party office around 10am and wished him a happy birthday.

Later, the Gonoforum chief cut a celebratory cake, followed by a brief

cultural programme.

A meeting of Gonoforum central committee was held afterwards.

Speaking at the meeting, Dr Kamal said, "The country's people will be successful through a movement. A bright future is waiting for those involved with democratic movements, including quota (reform) and safe road ones. We'll succeed before the 50th anniversary of the independence."

He also said a process is going on to bring a qualitative change in the country as per people's desire. "We hope we'll be able to ensure the desired change through constructive politics and political programmes."

Dr Kamal said people want a functional democracy and their involve-

ment with the activities at all levels, for a qualitative change in the country.

"We must keep in mind that carrying out meaningful activities and bringing a change in the country are not possible without a strong organisation."

Dr Kamal, a close associate of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, was born in Kolkata, West Bengal on April 20, 1937.

A globally renowned jurist, Dr Kamal Hossain obtained his Bachelor of Jurisprudence degree with honours from the University of Oxford in 1957 and a Bachelor of Civil Law from the same institution in 1958. In 1964, he was awarded a Doctorate degree in International Law.

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DHAKA TODAY

VR EXPERIENCE

The Last Goodbye

Organiser: Liberation War

Musuem

Venue: LWM Basement II,

Agargaon

Time: 10am

Centre, Dhanmondi

Time: 10am

SEMINAR

Business Process Outsourcing

Summit

Organiser: ICT Division and

Bangladesh Association of Call

Center and Outsourcing

Venue: Pan Pacific Sonargaon

Dhaka

Time: 2pm

HUMAN CHAIN

Demanding exemplary punish-

ment of culprits involved in

Nusrat murder

Organiser: Transparency

International Bangladesh

Venue: TSC, University of Dhaka

Time: 11am

PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

44th Basic Photography

Training Program

Organiser: Dhaka University

photographic Society

Venue: Sayeedana Community

Time: @pm

'Foreign policy saw spectacular success'

Says Gowher Rizvi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ahead of the BRI Summit in Beijing next week, Prime Minister's International Affairs Adviser Dr Gowher Rizvi yesterday said Bangladesh has welcomed China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), as it fits the country's national priorities.

"The establishment of BRI along with other initiatives is an important opportunity for development of the region and the country is proud to be a part of this initiative," he said.

He was addressing the launching ceremony of the first Chinese quarterly magazine in the country, "The Belt and Road" -- focusing on the vision of the BRI -- held at the auditorium of Institute of Modern Languages at Dhaka University (DU).

Bangladesh unit of the Centre for East Asia Foundation (CEAF), a non-profit and non-political independent study circle, organised the ceremony.

Rizvi claimed that the country has been

working in favour of the initiative even before its announcement.

"We had our own BCIM (Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar Economic Corridor) which is essentially a reduced version of the Belt and Road Initiative," he said.

He said the country is extremely fortunate to have found countries like China and India as its neighbours.

"Our relations with these two countries are really important for making a prosperous Bangladesh, and bilateral relationship with China is already trusted," he said.

Rizvi said the country is successful in managing its foreign relations, and has already become a model of development and innovation.

"If you look objectively, today Bangladesh's foreign policy has had spectacular success through its ability to maintain outstanding relations with different foreign countries," Rizvi added.

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WHO CARES ABOUT PEDESTRIANS? Scattered garbage occupies a large part of this around 1km footpath from BFDC rail crossing to Hatirjheel. Even though footpaths are made for ensuring pedestrians' safe passage, this one is being used for various purposes except for the initial function it was built to serve. *Inset, vehicles left to rust on a part of the pavement.*

Gonoforum to show-cause MP Mokabbir

UNB, Dhaka

Gonoforum will send a show-cause notice to party presidium member and lawmaker Mokabbir Khan, for "violating" its constitution and indulging in "anti-party" activities.

The decision was taken yesterday at a meeting of the party's central committee, said a press release.

The meeting has decided to serve a show-cause notice on Mokabbir Khan for his activities contrary to the party goal, ideal, principles, programmes and its constitution," it said.

The party, however, did not mention how Mokabbir indulged in anti-party activities.

On April 2, Gonoforum MP-elect Mokabbir Khan (from Sylhet-2) took oath as a member of the 11th parliament.

Some party central leaders, including its general secretary Mostafa Mohsin Montu, alleged that Mokabbir was sworn in going against the party decision.

Mokabbir, however, claimed he took oath as per party decision.

14kg gold seized at Dhaka airport

BSS, Dhaka

Customs officials yesterday seized 120 gold bars weighing 14 kilograms and worth around Tk 7 crore, from a toilet inside a US-Bangla aircraft at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka.

Acting on a tip-off, the team raided flight no. BS-214 at 4:30pm and recovered the gold bars from a toilet, said Customs Intelligence and Investigation Directorate Director General Md Shahidul Islam.

The estimated value of the gold bars is around Tk 7 crore, he added.

Legal steps have been taken under the customs act in this regard, Shahidul said, adding, nobody was arrested in this connection.

Kaberri Gayen, chairperson of the department, quoted Akhtar as saying that teaching is not a "part-time" profession, rather it is a noble duty.

The chairperson also said Akhbari taught many things including "critical schooling".

"These will be exemplary lessons in the days to come."

Speaking at the programme, Prof Akhbari said relations between teachers and students can be strengthened through assistance.

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DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University's mass communication and journalism department yesterday bade farewell to two of its teachers who will retire soon.

The department organised a programme on the campus in honour of the outgoing professors -- Akhtar Sultana and Ahaduzzaman Mohammad Ali.

Kaberri Gayen, chairperson of the department, quoted Akhtar as saying that teaching is not a "part-time" profession, rather it is a noble duty.

The chairperson also said Ahaduzzaman taught many things including "critical schooling".

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teachers and students can be

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Prof Akhtar Sultana and Prof Ahaduzzaman Mohammad Ali of Dhaka University's mass communication and journalism department were given a farewell reception yesterday.

Firecrackers, explosives banned during Shab-e-Barat

UNB, Dhaka

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has banned carrying of all types of explosives and explosion of firecrackers in the capital ahead of Shab-e-Barat, to be observed across the country tonight.

The ban was imposed under Section 28 of the DMP Ordinance III/1976, aiming to maintain sanctity of Shab-e-Barat.

The restriction will remain in force from 6pm today to 6am tomorrow, according to a media release signed by DMP Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia yesterday.