

Road block postponed with 24-hour ultimatum

Students of 7 DU-affiliated colleges to continue agitation if demands not met

DU CORRESPONDENT

Students of seven colleges affiliated with Dhaka University yesterday lifted their road blockade at Nilkhet, after issuing a 24-hour ultimatum to the university authorities. The blockade was held earlier in the day to press home their five-point demand, including explanation of mass failures in examinations and re-evaluation of answer scripts.

The agitating students said they would go for continuous demonstration from today if the authorities do not make any announcement on fulfilling their demands.

"We would block the road from 10am to 2pm on a regular basis until the authorities assure us to meet all the demands," Abu Bokor, a student of Dhaka College, said at a press conference following the blockade.

They declared that today's blockade will start an hour later -- at 11am -- considering today's Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination.

Around 3,000 students took to the streets at 10am and formed a human chain at Nilkhet intersection initially.

They later blocked the intersection till 2:30pm, halting traffic movement and causing severe traffic congestion in the area.



Students of seven DU-affiliated colleges demonstrate blocking Nilkhet intersection yesterday. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Many were stuck in long tailbacks on adjacent roads. People were seen walking to their destinations.

Afsar Munna, a resident student of Dhaka University, said, "I left Sir F Rahman Hall for Asad Gate around 11am, but could not reach even after two hours as my bus was stuck."

The students obstructed every vehicle from crossing the intersection till noon. Some of them even sat in the middle of the road and chanted slogans.

Talking to The Daily Star, Shaheen Hossain, a student of Dhaka College, alleged that the activities of seven colleges have remained halted for around nine

months after they were affiliated with Dhaka University.

"Following human chains, hunger strike and other protests, the academic activities started slowly. But even after two and a half months, students are being deprived of basic institutional facilities," said Abu Bokor.

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Govt mulls underground substations in Dhaka

HELEMUL ALAM

The government is planning to set up country's first underground power substations in the capital's Karwan Bazar and Gulshan-1 to increase the capacity of power supply and cut the dependency on land.

These substations will reduce the possibility of load shedding and technical loss of power, said officials of Dhaka Power Distribution Company (DPDC) and Dhaka Electric Supply Company (Desco).

Each of the two substations will increase the capacity of power supply by 360 megawatt. The electricity demand of the city at present is around 2,700MW, they added.

Major portion of the project cost will come from Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica) and a loan contract was signed between the government and Jica on June 29, 2017 for this, they said.

Desco, which distributes electricity in the northern parts of the capital and Tongi of Gazipur, will construct the Gulshan-1 substation. A 34-storey commercial building will also be built on the ground above it.

DPDC, which supplies to parts of Dhaka and Narayanganj, will implement the Karwan Bazar project.

Mohammad Shariful Islam, project director of the Desco part, said the Gulshan substation will be built 60 feet underground.

There are many underground substations in Japan, and Tokyo Electric Power Service Company, has been appointed as the consultant for Gulshan sub-station.

"Therefore, it will not be risky," he told this newspaper recently.

Another local consultancy firm 37 Bridge -- is taking part in preparing the design.

The project is worth Tk 950.97 crore, of which Tk 247 crore will come from the government, Tk 629 crore from Jica and Tk 75 crore from Desco's own fund.

A tender to appoint a construction firm will be floated in November. The project, which started on July 1, 2018, is scheduled to be completed by December 2023, he said.

For the DPDC substation, around Tk 950.39 crore is required to implement the project. Around Tk 626.18 crore of the cost will come from the cooperation agency, around Tk 76.05 crore from its own fund and Tk 248.15 crore from the government.

This project started in July 2018 and is scheduled to be completed by December 2023, said DPDC Executive Director

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UNDERGROUND SUBSTATIONS

To be set up in Karwan Bazar, Gulshan-1
Each to increase capacity by 360MW
To be completed by December 2023

GULSHAN

Project cost Tk 950.97cr
To be implemented by Desco

KARWAN BAZAR

Project cost Tk 950.39cr
To be implemented by DPDC

Another Jaha Alam case?

HC questions imprisonment of Md Arman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday issued a rule asking the government to explain why it should not be directed to release Md Arman, a technician at a Benarasi Palli in Mirpur area, who has allegedly been languishing in jail for more than three years in a drug case in place of the real accused.

In the rule, the court asked authorities concerned of the government to show cause why is detention should not be declared illegal, and why they should not be ordered to give adequate compensation to Arman.

The HC in the rule also asked authorities to explain why they should not be directed to produce Arman before the court to convince it that he was not arrested illegally.

Besides, it ordered the Metropolitan Sessions Judge of Dhaka to send the record of the case, in which Arman was arrested, before

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DHAKA TODAY



YOUTH FESTIVAL

Tarunner Joyotsob
Organiser: Prothom Alo
Venue: KIB Complex, Farmgate
Time: 8am

Organiser: Fashion 21
Venue: Sayeedana Community Centre
Time: 10am

CULTURAL FESTIVAL

Jatra Utsob
Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy
Time: 6:30pm

HUMAN CHAIN
Six years of Rana Plaza tragedy: Demanding safe workplaces
Organiser: Industrial Bangladesh Council
Venue: Jatiya Press Club
Time: 11:30am

DISCUSSION

Women on the move: Too close for comfort
Organiser: Jatrik
Venue: The Junction, Niketan
Time: 6pm

IALOGUE
Delivering SDGs through Urban Local Government
Organiser: Centre for Policy Dialogue
Venue: Gardenia Grand Hall, Gulshan
Time: 9:30am

CONFERENCE

Blue Economy for Sustainable Development
Organiser: GreenTech Foundation
Venue: Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban, Dhaka University
Time: 9am

EXHIBITION
Introspection by Anisul Haque Borun
Venue: Faculty of Fine Arts, Dhaka University
Time: 5:30pm

FAIR

Eid Shopping Fest

Yet another drive to deter jaywalking

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 287 people were fined at different spots in Dhaka yesterday as Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) began a three-day special drive against jaywalkers.

Seven mobile courts of BRTA realised Tk 46,010 fine after conducting drives in New Market, Jatrabari, Bangla Motor, Mirpur, Banani, Rampura, Malibagh, Asad Gate and Shyamoli areas, according to a BRTA press release.

Including these seven, a total of 10 mobile courts conducted drives in Dhaka and Chattogram and fined Tk 3.37 lakh in 427 cases for violating traffic rules.

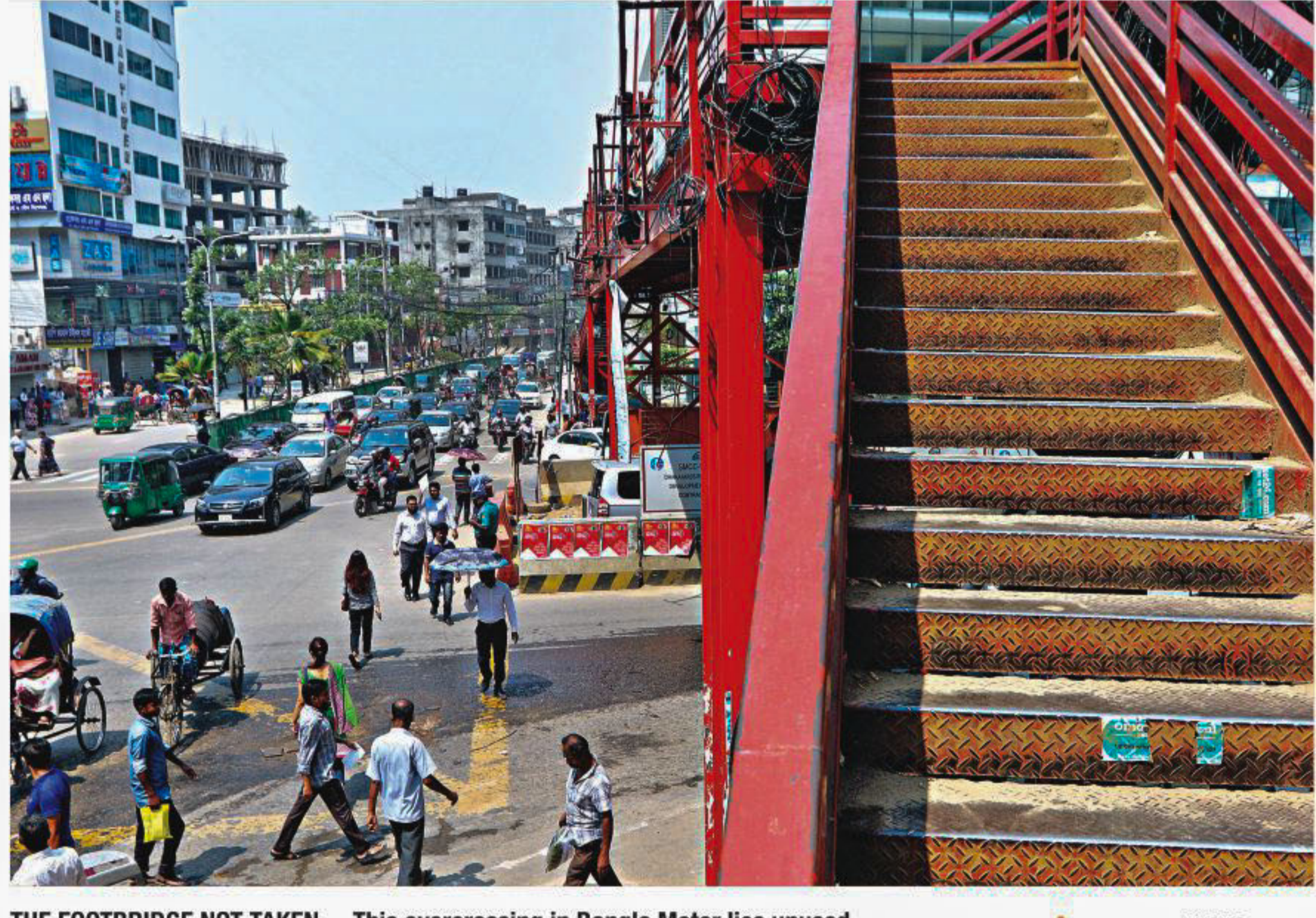
A BRTA official said they started the drive following the request of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) commissioner in an attempt to bring discipline among jaywalkers.

Shakhawat Hossain, an executive magistrate of BRTA, told The Daily Star that he fined 25 pedestrians for jaywalking yards away from a footbridge with escalator in Banani area.

Fifty people who could not pay the fines were let off after they promised not to jaywalk on the roads again.

Meanwhile, seven bus drivers were fined Tk 11,500 for illegal parking, violating traffic rules and using mobile phones while driving, Shakhawat said.

Most of the people killed in



THE FOOTBRIDGE NOT TAKEN... This overcrossing in Bangla Motor lies unused while people cross the street as per whim.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

road accidents in Dhaka are pedestrians.

According to Accident Research Institute at Buet, 23 percent of the road accidents in Bangladesh occur in city areas. Of those, 74 percent happen in Dhaka alone.

As much as 74 percent of the

accidents involve pedestrians, eight percent rickshaws, three percent motorcycles, two percent bicycles and 13 percent others.

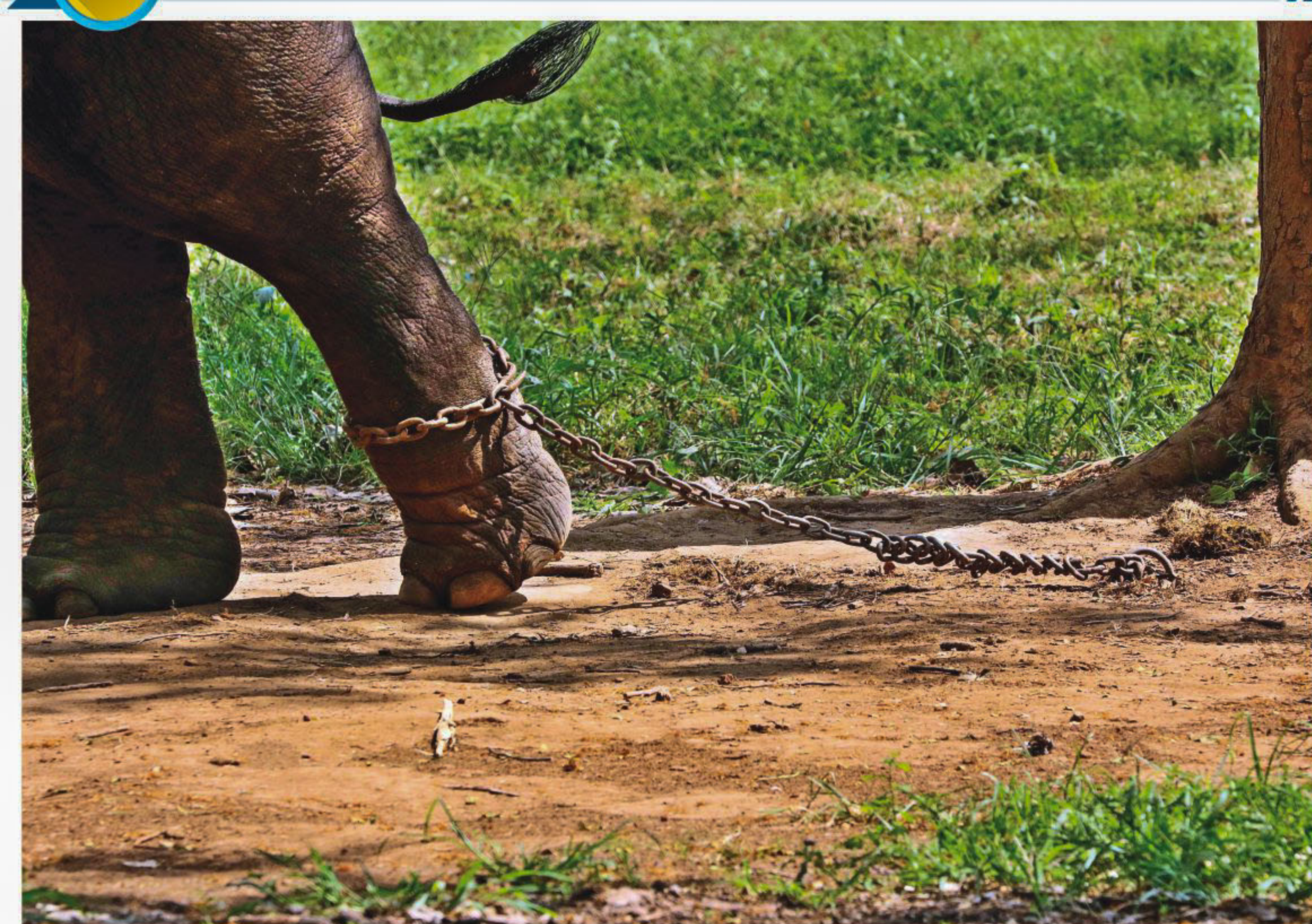
On several occasions, BRTA and DMP conducted similar drives to stop jaywalking but to little effect. Just minutes after the drive,

people start jaywalking -- risking their lives.

Shakhawat said apart from traffic police and mobile court drives, people including transport owners, workers and commuters should act responsibly to make the roads safe.

PHOTO OF THE DAY

ANISUR RAHMAN



SHACKLED... Even inside the concrete-and-metal enclosure of the Mirpur National Zoo, this young elephant is tied at the leg with a short metal chain pegged to the ground, unable to walk around. All four elephants in the enclosure are similarly restrained, which visitors say is cruel.

Two bills on media likely at 3rd JS session

Says info minister

BSS, Dhaka

The government is likely to place two bills on media -- Media Employees Act (Conditions of Service) 2018 and Broadcast Act -- at the third session of the Jatiya Sangsad, said Information Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud yesterday.

"We would not be able to place these two bills in parliament in the session beginning tomorrow [today]. But we hope to place the bills in the next [3rd] session," he said at a meeting with Broadcast Journalists' Association (BJA) leaders at the secretariat.

The information ministry has already finalised the draft of the two laws on protecting media employees and broadcast media, and sent those to the law ministry for vetting, Hasan said.

"We talked to the law ministry over quick vetting of the laws. We hope they will do so. We will place the bills in parliament after the cabinet's approval," the minister said, adding that once the bills

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All eyes on BNP's MPs-elect

House goes into 2nd session today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The eleventh Jatiya Sangsad goes into its second session this afternoon with wide speculation on whether BNP's MPs-elect will join after taking oath as lawmakers.

MPs-elect of BNP will have to risk losing their posts if they fail to take oath as lawmakers within April 29.

According to Article 67 (1) of the constitution, a member of parliament shall vacate his seat if he fails to take oath within 90 days from the date of the first meeting of parliament after being elected.

Speaker of the parliament, however, has the jurisdiction to extend the period for good cause.

The maiden session of the current parliament started on January 30 following the national election on December 30, 2018.

Awami League bagged a landslide victory securing 258 seats out of 300. BNP-led Jatiya Oikyafront got only eight seats. Gonoforum, a major component in the Oikyafront, got two seats.

Immediately after the election, Jatiya Oikyafront rejected the election result, citing widespread irregularities and vote rigging.

BNP and Gonoforum have been demanding fresh election, saying that their MPs-elect will not take oath and join the parliament.

Two MPs elect of Gonoforum -- Sultan Muhammad Monsur Ahmed from Moulvibazar-2 and Mukabbir Khan from Sylhet-2 -- however, took oath on March 7 and April 2 respectively, defying the party's decision.

Monsur was expelled from the party. Gonoforum also said they will take action against Mukabbir, a presidium member of the party, for taking oath as MP, violating the party decision.

Eyes will now be on BNP's MPs-elect to see whether they take oath or risk losing their seats.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir

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