

GULISTAN UNDERGROUND MARKET

Where the techie and sketchy coexist

|| SHOAB AHMED SAYAM ||



Are you willing to go to the depths of the earth to get your phone repaired? If not, in Gulistan you only need to descend one floor beneath the ground.

For those who regularly visit the area, Gulistan Underground Market is not something new. After all, it also serves as a four-way underpass to cross the busy intersection.

The market was established around two decades ago, repurposing the underpass to a place for all your phone needs. Why did the constructors build such an expansive structure beneath the ground? Did they predict Dhaka would be home to millions more down the line and plan accordingly?

I recently visited the market alongside our photographer, who was eagerly waiting to take pictures of vendors effortlessly taking apart and fixing devices.

As soon as we descended down the stairs, we were presented with lines of shops -- all selling the same products and providing the same services. We couldn't wait to talk to the shopkeepers to know how they run their businesses.

But something was off. Whomever we approached would not talk. A lot of eyes were locked on us, tracking our actions. We didn't get straight answers to our simplest questions. They were clearly weary of us, but why?

We slowly got hints while walking along.

Taking photos was a challenging task. Our photographer was bombarded with questions like "why are you taking pictures?" and "where are you from?" The latter sounding more like a threat.

Many covered their faces

when the camera was pointed at them, similar to how grooms do with their handkerchief at weddings. But this was no wedding and they were not wearing sherwani and turban.

At one point, our photographer was trying to take photos of a repairman fixing a phone. Whenever he pointed the camera, the repairman stopped what he was doing and glared at the photographer,

same response. One guy referred us to someone with 10 years of experience. After approaching said person, he said he was new there.

By then, we were on the verge of giving up, but finally, someone opened up.

Harun, worker at a shop, gave us a run down on how things work. He said the place is all about phone parts; you can get any component

device in shame.

Real talk, it's hard enough to get repairs done from reputed shops. Expecting top-notch parts and service from Gulistan, a place known for its "opportunistic activities", is perhaps expecting too much.

At one point of the conversation, Harun abruptly blurted out, "We don't buy or sell any phones here. We only repair and provide parts." But



For those who regularly visit the area, Gulistan Underground Market is not something new. After all, it also serves as a four-way underpass to cross the busy intersection. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

saying nothing. We tried a few more times, and every time he stopped and glared.

While we were trying to get the most harmless info out of them, shopkeepers kept referring us to other vendors, saying the other guy had way more experience in the business and they will be able to provide satisfactory answers.

We kept bouncing from one shop to another -- like a game of pinball -- hearing the exact

there. This seemed true as all shops were full of phone displays, chipsets, speakers and cameras. A person with the right technical knowledge may even be able to make their own makeshift phone with the available parts.

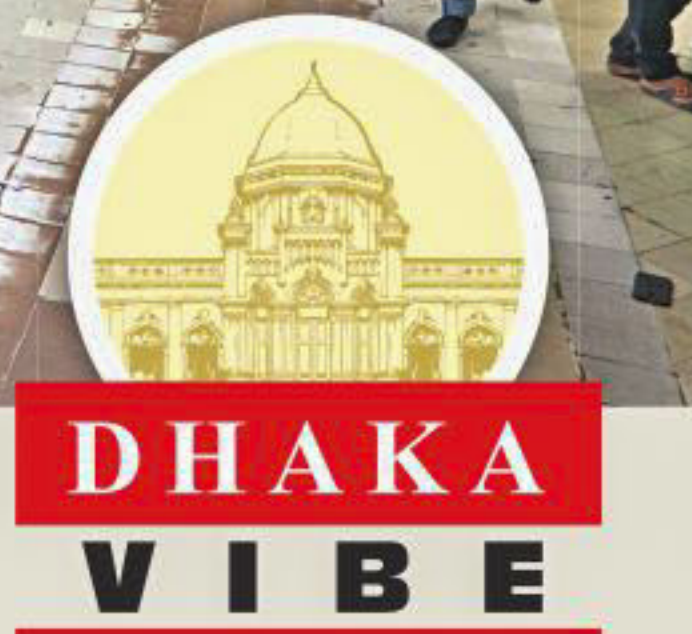
When asked if they have components for all phone sets, Harun proudly said, "We don't repair Chinese phones, we only have parts for the expensive ones." I quickly hid my Xiaomi

we didn't ask him anything regarding that.

In January this year, Rapid Action Battalion arrested two people in possession of 37 stolen phones and IMEI changing devices from the underground market.

But I'll take Harun's word for it.

Do you have a Dhaka Vibe story to share? Email us your ideas or reports to dhakavibeds@gmail.com

Each division to get 100-bed cancer centre
8 projects worth Tk 8,968cr okayed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to establish a 100-bed cancer centre in each government medical college hospital in divisional cities at a cost of Tk 2,388.40 crore.

The decision was approved at a meeting of Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecne) yesterday at NEC Conference Room in the capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar. It was chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, also Ecne chairperson.

Planning Minister MA Mannan briefed journalists after the meeting. He said the project will be implemented between October 2019 and September 2022.

A 17-storey building each with necessary medical and surgery machineries and equipment, vehicles and furniture will be added to eight medical college hospitals under the project.

They are -- Kurmitola General Hospital in Dhaka, Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, Rajshahi Medical College Hospital, Rangpur Medical College Hospital, Khulna Medical College Hospital, Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in Barishal, Chattogram Medical College Hospital and Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.

Ecne also approved another project worth Tk 225.49 crore for installing a 400KV double circuit electricity transmission line to import electricity from India's Jharkhand. It would be built from Rahonpur to Monakasha border in Chapainawabganj between July 2019 and December 2021, which will supply 1,496 megawatt electricity to the national grid.

In yesterday's meeting, a total of eight projects were approved with an estimated cost of Tk 8,968.08 crore. Of the total cost, Tk 8,952.89 crore will come from the government while the rest from funds of the institutions

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DMP to contact citizens about service at police stations: Shafiqul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A team from Dhaka Metropolitan Police Headquarters will contact service seekers of police stations over phone every day, to know whether they faced any harassment and misbehavior or had to give money to get service.

Md Shafiqul Islam, commissioner of DMP, yesterday revealed the plan while addressing a programme at Rajarbag Police Lines.

The DMP Headquarters will deliver two tabulated forms -- one for general diaries and another for cases -- to police stations across the city.

Law enforcers at police stations will have to fill those out with briefs of GDs and cases along with contact numbers of complainants, and send them to the DMP headquarters at noon every day.

"In the afternoon, a team from my office will contact complainants, and ask questions like how was the

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102 DNCC footpaths illegally occupied

Eviction to begin Sept 22

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) has identified at total of 102 footpaths that are illegally occupied in different areas under its jurisdiction.

Announcing a drive starting from September 22 to free footpaths from illegal possession, DNCC officials presented the list at a meeting organised at DNCC building in Gulshan.

The footpaths were identified by DNCC officials in a recent investigation from five different zones. It showed that there are 39 occupied footpaths in zone-1, 12 in zone-2, seven each in zone-3 and zone-4, and 37 in zone-5.

The eviction drive will start from zone-1 in Uttara. Monitoring cells -- consisting of six members including councillors and officer-in-charge of the respective police stations -- have been formed at different wards. The drive will continue till October 30, said sources.

Speaking at the meeting, DNCC Mayor Atiqul Islam said those who occupy the streets for business will be evicted.

"We construct footpaths for the convenience of pedestrians, but various

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11-year-old becomes latest dengue fatality

615 new patients hospitalised in a day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An 11-year-old girl died of dengue at the Intensive Care Unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday.

Tarin, a fifth grader of East Machuakhali Government Primary School in Shariatpur, breathed her last at 2:30pm. She had been suffering from fever since last week of August.

Initially, she received treatment after being diagnosed with dengue in Goshaghat Upazila Health Complex, Tarin's aunt Shahida Akhter told The Daily Star.

She was shifted to DMCH on September 12 after her condition deteriorated, Shahida said.

Tarin was the youngest among three siblings, said Shahida.

With her death, the unofficial death toll due to dengue has risen to 149. However, the official death toll stands at 68.

According to data from the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), a total of 615 patients were

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Railway knocks down 250 structures

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railways demolished 250 illegal structures in the capital's Shahjahanpur Railway Colony yesterday.

The drive was carried out from 10am to 3:15pm and it would continue until all illegal structures are evicted, Nazrul Islam, divisional estate officer of Dhaka, who led the drive, said.

Several other railways officials of Dhaka division were present on the site.

Most of the structures were tin-shed houses built in the last seven-eight years, he said.

"We will carry out a similar drive tomorrow [today] and if necessary, will continue in the next week," he told this newspaper last night.

Railway sources said a quarter with vested interest has been occupying a big part of railway land in the colony for years. They even built houses and shops there and rented those out to others.

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HC clears way for VNSC principal's appointment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday cleared the way for newly appointed principal of Viharunnisa Noon School and College (VNSC), Fouzia Rezwana, to join her post.

The court lifted its stay order and without imposing any restriction on her joining, issued a rule asking the government to explain in four weeks why the appointment of Prof Fouzia should not be declared illegal.

The HC bench of justice M Enayetur Rahim and Md Khairul Alam passed the order and issued the rule after hearing a writ petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer Eunus Ali Akond challenging the legality of the appointment of Prof Fouzia.

The petitioner said in the petition that the governing body of VNSC is the authority to appoint its principal as per relevant regulations, while the government has authority to appoint teachers.

But the government illegally appointed Fouzia as principal of the institution on September 15, although it has no jurisdiction to do so, he said in the petition. The HC on Monday stayed till yesterday the joining of Prof Fouzia Rezwana.

Principal of Viharunnisa Nazneen Ferdous and two other teachers of the institution were removed last year over the death of Arifur Adhikari, a student of the school.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam appeared for the government and told the court that the writ petition is not acceptable as Eunus Ali Akond is not an aggrieved person with the appointment of Fouzia as principal of VNSC.

WILLES LITTLE FLOWER'S GOVERNING BODY ELECTION STAYED Meanwhile yesterday, another HC bench stayed the process for holding election to governing body of Willes Little Flower School and College for three months. The election was scheduled for September 28.

It also issued a rule asking the authorities concerned to explain why they should not be directed to include the names of guardians of English medium students of the institution [Willes Little Flower School and College] in the voters' list prepared for the election.

The HC bench of Justice Abu Taher Md Saifur Rahman and Justice Mohammad Ali came up with the order and rule following a writ petition filed by Shahidul Islam, guardian of an English medium student, challenging the voters' list of the election.

Advocate AJ Mohammad Ali appeared for the petitioner while Deputy Attorney General Amit Talukder represented the state.

JnU students evict encroachers from footpath on campus

JNU CORRESPONDENT

Students of Jagannath University (JnU) yesterday evicted at least 30 illegal establishments right outside the campus.

Witnesses said some 300 students took part in demolishing more than 30 makeshift shops from the footpath, and a human haulier stand, from 10:30am to 11:30am.

Later, they staged a demonstration and brought out a procession on the campus shouting slogans against the grabbers.

"Various shops and a human haulier stand had occupied the footpaths and south entrance of the campus illegally for a long time," said marketing department student Mohammad Raisul Islam Nayan.

"Despite our repeated warnings, the grabbers did not pay any heed to remove the establishments, forcing students to demolish those," he added.

"The university students removed our shops and Laguna stand," said Salam Dhali, president of Bahadur Shah Paribahan Malik Samity.

"The students do not want it here, so we will go away," he said.

"We have been doing our business for a long time here, but we did not take any permission from anyone for it," Salam added.

Salam did not reply when this correspondent asked how they ran their business for such a long time beside the JnU campus without permission of the concerned authorities.

"Our students evicted the illegal

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Media one of the strongest socialisation agents

Dr Md Ridhwanul Haq says at Abdur Razzaq Foundation lecture

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Certain television programmes are having a negative impact on socialisation of youths due to absence of any quality control system, said Dr Md Ridhwanul Haq, a professor of Institute of Business Administration of Dhaka University.

He also said media, especially electronic media, influences young consumers' behaviour to a great extent as it acts as a strong agent in creating ideas and values.

The professor made the observations as the speaker of the sixth "Unpublished PhD dissertation lecture" series organised by Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation, at the RC Majumdar auditorium of DU.

Dr Ridhwanul Haq completed the doctoral dissertation titled "Understanding teenagers' buying behaviour by the influence of electronic media" in 2010 from University of Western Sydney.

Dr SM Shameem Reza of Mass Communication and Journalism of DU presided over the programme while Dr Ahrar Ahmad, director general of Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Foundation, delivered the welcome speech.

Students of different faculties of DU attended the programme.

In his speech, Dr Ridhwanul Haq said reality shows have become



Dr Md Ridhwanul Haq speaking at the sixth installment of the "Unpublished PhD dissertation lecture", at RC Majumdar Auditorium of DU. PHOTO: STAR

popular at home and abroad.

"Teenage groups are engaging with reality shows and in Bangladesh, youths constitute quite a big community as around 60 percent of the population belong to it," he said.

He said media is shaping our consumption behaviour and among socialisation agents like family, school, community and religious institution, media is one of the strongest.

Dr Ridhwanul said socialisation agents make us responsible consumers. "When we talk about media -- we

have electronic, print and alternative media. Each has its different vehicles or programmes to draw people's attention," he said.

"I just wanted to see through my research how reality shows are shaping consumption-related behaviour of the youth community," he said, adding, "Gender, class difference and parental control are also shaping their involvement with media and how they are reacting, acting and responding to the marketplace -- based on cognition,

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