



NEW RULES, OLD HABITS

Clockwise from top left, On the first day of enactment of the new Road Transport Act, Nirapad Sarak Chai (Nischa) founder Ilias Kanchan stands on an intersection in Kakrail with a megaphone, letting commuters know of provisions of the new law; a policeman on a motorbike with a pillion scurries through a road median to cross over to the other side -- right between two volunteers of the awareness campaign by Nischa; Dhaka-4 lawmaker Sayed Abu Hossain reprimands his supporters for blocking traffic to allow his passage; a pedestrian runs to cross a street; and a volunteer urges a woman to use the footpath instead of jaywalking.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



Tourism sector to get a big boost

UNB, Dhaka

The government has taken a number of projects for the development of tourism sector. Once implemented, these are expected to attract more local and foreign tourists, which will eventually help the country achieve the much-desired double digit GDP growth.

According to an official document, the government is constructing a "Tourism Building" in the capital's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar area of Agargaon, spending Tk 62.81 crore.

It is also constructing 14 cottages, restaurants, walkways, lakes and children's corners at a cost of Tk 62.11 crore at Parki Beach in Chattogram.

Work is also underway to construct a hotel, restaurant, souvenir shop, walkway and parking lot at Dudh Sagar in Barishal. Besides, setting up a hotel and restaurant and other related facilities at Panchagarh at a cost of Tk 16.18 crore is also ongoing, the document shows.

Hotels and restaurants are being constructed at Nijhum Dwip and Hatia of Noakhali at a cost of Tk 49.61 crore, while a process is on to procure two water vessels.

The government has approved projects to construct tourism centres in Panchagarh and Mahananda Sheikh Hasina Bridge areas of Chapainawabganj at Tk 22.73 crore.

It is also conducting a feasibility study to build a world-class tourism establishment near Sundarbans, keeping its ecosystem intact for making the mangrove forest one of the attractive tourist destinations for domestic and international tourists.

Besides, the government is implementing a number of projects under public-private partnership to expand the sector.

They are: Development of resort and entertainment village at Parjatan Holiday Complex in Cox's Bazar (Tk 1,500 crore);

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DMCH OUTPATIENT DEPT

An ordeal of unending queues

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and HASAN MEER

On the night of October 14, Sanjida Begum fell off the stairs of her Azimpur New Colony residence, and hurt her leg.

As her pain showed no signs of easing till the next morning, the 38-year-old's family members decided to take her to the outpatient department of Dhaka Medical College Hospital around 11am.

Once there, a family member of hers stood in a line to get a token from the counter and be referred to the specific department.

All the queues for the counters moved at snail's pace as the room, filled to the brim with patients and attendants, became suffocating in the heat and humidity. Ceiling fans overhead could not keep up to the number of patients.

About 40 minutes later, the family got a ticket and was told to go to the orthopaedic section, where another long queue awaited them. An hour went by waiting, before Sanjida was referred to a doctor.

The family had to stand in a queue once again as Sanjida's pain escalated. After one more hour, a receptionist sent her to the doctor's room.

The doctor told her to get an X-ray done on her leg and prescribed some medicine.

Sanjida and her family went to the outdoor's pathology department for the X-ray.

There at the pathology department, unsurprisingly, was another long line of people waiting to be tended. By the time Sanjida limped to the counter, it was almost 2pm.

"We are closed," said the person behind the counter nonchalantly.

"He told me to come back the next day," Sanjida told this newspaper at the outdoor recently. "We requested him many times but to no avail."

The family went back home tired.

The next day (October 16), they came back around noon. "This time, we went straight for the X-ray," said Sanjida's daughter, who accompanied her.

But there was a long queue there that day too, with over a hundred patients and their attendees.

Meantime, a person walked up to them and said if they paid him Tk 200 they would not have to wait in line. Sanjida was in too much pain and paid him the money.

He quickly took her to the X-ray room, helped her get the X-ray done and gave her the report -- all in less than 30 minutes.

After looking at her report, the doctor said she had a fracture and needed to plaster her leg.

It was done in a separate room, which meant another long queue, more chaos and above all, more waiting. Sanjida sighed and waited for another hour.

"When my turn came, it was around 2pm, and the staffers said

they would not be able to plaster my leg," she said. "I left the place frustrated, and did not want to come back the next day [October 17]."

But the day after, the pain in her leg escalated and she went to DMCH once again, to get her leg plastered. And once again they had to go wait in line amid staffers screaming that many, including her, did not have all reports or necessary documents.

Amid the commotion, a man approached her and said he could manage everything for Tk 300. Sanjida paid him the money.

"He took me to a room right away. Surprisingly, he did not have to buy or get anything the staffers were telling everyone to get," she said. "Finally, they put my leg in a plaster cast," she added. "I have to come back after two weeks for check-up. Who knows what's in store for me?"

A RECURRING SCENE

Sanjida is not the only one who had such bitter experience at the outpatient services. During visits to the department in the last two weeks, many patients shared their ordeals with this newspaper.

They spoke of mismanagement, long queues, crammed and humid rooms, and insufficient seating arrangements. Many also alleged of misbehaviour by staffers, and how patients are held captive in the hands of "brokers or middlemen".

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Unsure of when their turn will come, patients wait for conducting X-ray at the outpatient department of Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

‘Non-communal state not possible unless progressive forces unite’

Speakers say at memorial for Prof Muzaffar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of different political parties yesterday said the dream of establishing a non-communal state will not be fulfilled until the country's progressive forces are united.

Speaking at a memorial meeting for eminent leftist leader Prof Muzaffar Ahmed, they said collaborative contributions of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Prof Muzaffar Ahmed is a good example of such unity, that helped the country gain independence.

Moni Singh-Farhad Memorial Trust arranged the meeting at its auditorium at Purana Paltan, in memory of the president of National Awami Party (pro-Moscow), who passed away on August 23, at the age of 97.

Speaking there, Pankaj Bhattacharjee, president of Oikya NAP, said Prof Muzaffar was one of the key figures who had supported Bangabandhu during the country's Liberation War.

"If you [progressive party leaders] want to show due respect to Prof Muzaffar, you should not patronise BNP-Jamaat; rather you should be united to defeat communal forces in the country," he said.

Blaming lack of unity among different progressive parties behind "dirty" political culture in the country, he alleged that 82 percent of incumbent parliament members

are businessmen. "Politics is no more in the hands of politicians, so we all should come forward to change this culture," he urged all.

Afzal Hossain, information and research affairs secretary to the Awami League Central Working Committee, said the contributions of Prof Muzaffar to achieving the country's independence is unforgettable.

Terming Muzaffar a teacher of politics, he urged all to follow his ideology, considering the existing political context, and support Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to build a non-communal state.

In his speech, Liberation War Museum Trustee Dr. Sarwar Ali claimed that Prof Muzaffar helped Bangabandhu when many leftist leaders were allegedly playing a silent role to serve the interests of the United States of America and China.

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) General Secretary Shah Alam alleged that there is no democracy in the country. "We all should be united to uphold the spirit of the Liberation War, by establishing democratic values," he said.

Among others, NAP International Affairs Secretary Paritosh Debnath, Mohila Sramik League General Secretary Begum Shamsunnahar and Workers Party of Bangladesh politburo member Anisur Rahman Mallik spoke at the discussion.

JSC, JDC exams begin today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Junior School Certificate (JSC) and its equivalent Junior Dakhil Certificate (JDC) examinations are set to begin today across the country, with the participation of 26,61,682 examinees.

Among them, 14,39,987 are girls and 12,21,695 are boys, according to board officials.

A total of 22,60,716 students will take JSC exam under general education boards, and 4,00,966 will take JDC exam under the madrasa board.

On the first day of examinations, JSC candidates will take Bangla exam while madrasa students will take Quran Majid and Tajbid paper.

The JSC exam will end on November 11 while JDC will complete on

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DHAKA TODAY

TALK

With Bengali litterateur Shahaduzzaman
Organiser: Loghu-Guru
Venue: Level Crossing Limited, D Block, Gulshan-1
Time: 5:30pm

DISCUSSION

Liberation War in Bangla Literature
Organiser: Dhaka University Literature Society
Venue: Ducus Cafeteria, Dhaka University
Time: 4pm

SESSION

Achieving SDGs in Bangladesh: Priorities, Institutional Challenges and Financing Issues
Organiser: South Asian Network on Economic Modeling
Venue: Hotel Lake Breeze, Gulshan-2
Time: 9am

WORKSHOP

On Tax Return
Venue: Genesis Centre, Elephant Road
Time: 2pm

MEMORIAL LECTURE

Honoring Sector Commander Lt Colonel Quazi Nooruzzaman
Organiser: Quazi Nooruzzaman Trust
Speaker: Belal Ehsan Baaquie, Professor at INCIEF Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Venue: Professor Muzaffar Ahmed Chowdhury Auditorium Dhaka University
Time: 4pm

WORKSHOP

Terra Cotta and Clay Pottery
Venue: Studio 6/6, Joint Quarter Lane no.6 Mohammadpur
Time: 4pm