



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Welcome to Farmgate, where footpaths are not for pedestrians only. The footpaths from Ananda Cinema Hall to the Panthapath signal through Green Road have restaurants, book stalls, coaching-centre booths, stalls to open bank accounts, rickshaw and truck stands, tea stalls, a bazaar, dustbins, and a living space for the homeless. The one thing that is missing is ample space for pedestrians to walk on. Unfortunately, the same can be said for footpaths all around the capital. The photos were taken recently.

Footpaths not for pedestrians only

HELEMUL ALAM and MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

It's a 10-minute walk from Farmgate's Ananda Cinema Hall to the Panthapath intersection through Green Road. However, it takes 20 minutes to cross this 700-metre road, thanks to illegal occupants of the footpath.

The grabbers have even managed to occupy half the space on both sides of the road.

The six-foot wide footpath on the route has restaurants, book stalls, coaching-centre booths, stalls to open bank accounts, rickshaw and truck stands, tea stalls, a bazaar, dustbins, and a living space for the homeless.

These correspondents came across this situation when they went on a walk on the road on a Sunday afternoon.

The cinema hall near Farmgate intersection has three makeshift fruit shops in front of it. Moving up a little further, there are three bookstores. Each has an additional seating arrangement in front of them. This leaves only a narrow space, where two people can hardly walk simultaneously.

And then there are a couple of sanitary shops. These shopkeepers leave plastic pipes and some sanitary equipment on the footpath in front of their outlets. A passerby had to jump or go down to the main road to cross the area.

Then comes the tea stalls and food carts, followed closely by the rickshaw and truck stands, which occupy more than half of the walking space, leaving pedestrians no option but to get on the main road.

At the end of the road, many of the city's destitute population were seen in their small makeshift tents, making a home out of the road.

While returning to the cinema hall from Panthapath intersection, five tea stalls, two restaurants, a parking

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10 hurt as BCL men 'attack' Chhatra Odhikar Parishad activists in DU

DU CORRESPONDENT

At least 10 were injured after Chhatra League men allegedly attacked activists of Bangladesh Chhatra Odhikar Parishad on Dhaka University campus yesterday morning.

The injured were taken to two hospitals in the capital for treatment, said Sifat Uddin Sifat, former office secretary of DU unit Chhatra Odhikar Parishad.

Witnesses said the BCL men carried out the attack when leaders and activists of Chhatra Odhikar Parishad started a procession towards TSC around 10:45am, marking the student body's fifth founding anniversary.

This newspaper has collected a brief video footage of the incident, where we could identify at least one BCL leader - Asaduzzaman Farid, joint secretary of Jahurul Haque hall unit BCL - among the attackers.

Among the injured are Chhatra Odhikar Parishad president Bin Yeamin Molla and its general secretary Adib Arif, their DU committee's former president Akhtar Hossain, organising secretary Molla Ramatullah and Ahsanul Mahbub Jubair, Dhaka city unit's leader Yunus, Faisal Raky, Nirrob, Jahurul Islam and Sabbir Hossain.

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DSA CASE

2 IBBL officials held for defaming S Alam Group owners

STAR REPORT

Police have arrested two more officials of the Islami Bank Bangladesh Ltd, in a case filed for putting up posters and making social media posts to defame the owners of Chattogram-based S Alam Group.

The arrestees are Mohammad Kamrul Bari and Mahmud Hossain Khan.

A Dhaka court on Thursday sent the two to jail after investigation officer Mofiz Uddin, also a sub-inspector of the Detective Branch of police, produced them before the court. The DB on February 15 arrested Kamrul in the Motijheel area and Mahmud in Mohammadpur, said the police forwarding report submitted before the court.

The investigator mentioned in his report that the two arrestees disclosed "important" information on various transactions of Islami Bank.

With the two, the DB arrested 14 people, including five current and former Islami Bank officials and two minors, in the DSA case so far.

Besides, Golam Sarwar Mia, an FIR-named accused in the same case, got bail from a Dhaka court on February 9.

Abdul Kuddus, a deputy manager of S Alam group, filed the case with Gulshan Police Station on January

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Man dies as truck hits bike in Rampura

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man died after a truck hit his motorcycle in Dhaka's Rampura early yesterday. The deceased was identified as Nawsha Mia, 28, an employee of a private firm who also used to provide ride sharing services occasionally, police said.

A truck hit the bike around 12:15am near Farazy Hospital, leaving him dead on the spot, said sub-inspector Saifur Rahman of Rampura Police Station.

"The truck driver fled the scene immediately. We are trying to identify the vehicle," he said.

Hailing from Rangpur district, Nawsha used to live in Bashundhara Residential Area.

The body was sent to Dhaka Medical College morgue for autopsy.

Days of uncertainty

45th BCS candidates anxious over the unannounced date of preliminary exams

ASHIK ABDULLAH APU

Candidates of the 45th Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) preliminary test are passing days in anxiety as they are still in the dark about when the exam will take place.

The Public Service Commission (PSC), in a circular published on November 30 last year, said the preliminary exams might take place in the second week of March.

In the last three BCS exams, the PSC officially announced the dates of the preliminary exams at least two months ahead of the tests. However, they were yet to officially announce the date of this year's preliminary exam as of now.

PSC announced the dates of the 41st and 43rd preliminary tests two months before the examinations, while the date of the 44th test was announced four months before the test.

They announced the date for the 42nd BCS preliminary test special for doctors 44 days ahead of the exam.

PSC officials said they are working to hold the examination according to their previously announced roadmap. However, it might be difficult to do so, as the authorities entrusted with the responsibilities to print and supply question papers are yet to assure the PSC when they will be able to supply the preliminary questions.

"Holding the 45th BCS preliminary test on March 10 will be very difficult. We will still monitor the situation till the first week of March. Candidates will have to wait

for more to know the exam date," a PSC member told the Daily Star, requesting anonymity.

Another PSC member said they held a meeting with the press authorities on Sunday, but the latter could not confirm when they will be able to provide the papers for the exams.

"The commission would announce the date only after getting confirmation from the printing authorities," said the member.

"We are passing our days in constant anxiety. PSC should announce the date immediately so that we can adequately prepare and plan for the exam. Many aspirants come from rural areas. They need to travel to cities to attend the exam."

SHARMIN AKTER
BCS candidate

"Apart from that there are some other issues, including the availability of test centres, that BPS is currently trying to resolve."

Several aspirants apprehended that PSC might not be able to conduct the exam in the second week of March as the Health Ministry has already announced that the medical college exams will be held on March 10, which is a Friday.

Usually, the BCS preliminary

tests are held on Fridays.

"We are passing our days in constant anxiety. PSC should announce the date immediately so that we can adequately prepare and plan for the exam," Sharmin Akter, a graduate from Government Rajendra College, told The Daily Star.

"Many aspirants come from rural areas. They need to travel to cities to attend the exam," she added.

Hamid Hasan, a graduate from Dhaka university and a BCS candidate, said as the PSC is not announcing anything clearly about the exam date, misinformation and rumours are being spread regarding the exam dates.

"Further delays would take a heavy toll on general students," he added.

The PSC published the 45th BCS circular - seeking applications for 2,309 posts - on November 30. About 318,000 candidates have applied to sit for the exam.

The BCS examination is a nationwide competitive examination for recruitment to the civil service. The examination is conducted in three phases - the preliminary examination, the written examination and the viva voce.

Contacted, Ananda Kumar Biswas, exam controller of PSC, said, "We are at the final stage of moderating the question papers and have already uploaded the admit cards on the website. We will hold a meeting once we get confirmation from the printing authorities and announce the exam date after that."

Two brothers sentenced to death for war crimes held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion arrested two death-row fugitive war criminals, who committed crimes against humanity during the Liberation War, from Dhaka's Mohammadpur and Mugda areas on Thursday night.

The arrestees - Abdul Wahed Mondal and his brother Jachhizar Rahman alias Khoka - have been absconding since 2016 after coming out of jail on bail, Lt Col Arif Mohiuddin Ahmed, commanding officer of Rab-3, told a press briefing at the Rab media centre yesterday.

A team of Rab-3 arrested Wahed from Mugda.

In a separate drive, a Rab-2 team arrested Jachhizar from Mohammadpur area in the capital. He had been hiding for the last 14 years, said a press release.



They had been moving around frequently to avoid arrest, according to Rab.

Rab said Wahed used to move around different parts of the country with Tablighi Jamaat. He went by a pseudonym and communicated with his family members using SIMs registered to other names.

A team of Rab-3 arrested him when he went to his son's rented house in Mugda.

On October 15, 2019, the International Crimes Tribunal handed death penalties to five persons in Gaibandha, including the two brothers and their father Abdul Jabbar for committing crimes against humanity during the Liberation War in 1971.

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AMAR EKUSHEY BOI MELA

Friday brings smiles on publishers' faces

DIPAN NANDY

It was quite a sight. The premises of the Boi Mela in Bangla Academy and Suhrawardy Udyan were packed with bookworms. They were moving from one stall to another, turning through the pages of the books available and buying them.

As it was a Friday, the fair opened for visitors at 11:00am yesterday, hours earlier than the usual slot. The first two hours of the fair were dedicated to children.

Hundreds of them surrounded Sisimpur Mancha at Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela yesterday. They were accompanied by mascots of the popular characters from Sesame Street's Bangladeshi adaptation.

Marking the "Shishu Prahaz", Sisimpur's Halum, Ikri and Tuktuki recommended the children read more books and consequently performed skits, much to their excitement. Besides, children were seen walking around holding the hands of their guardians, and some were also being carried by the adults accompanying them.

According to Shyamal Kumar Das, publisher of Ghasfaring Prakashani, the crowd on the third Friday was more than double that of the previous two Fridays and sales were up.

Mohiuddin Ahmed and Ratri Ahmed came to the fair from Banashree in the



A father showing her daughter what a book on alphabets has to offer in front of a stall at the book fair. Many children, accompanied by their parents, thronged the fair premises yesterday as weekend mornings are dedicated for the little ones. This photo was taken from Suhrawardy Udyan.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS