

What to pack when commuting on a bicycle to class

Starting off, the one thing you should always keep, regardless of wherever you go with your bicycle, is a helmet. Considering how reckless some drivers are on the road, and the sheer chaos that ensues during rush hour, the helmet is an absolute must for all cyclists.

AZNEEF CHOWDHURY

Commuting with a bicycle to classes has become a viable alternative for many students. Travelling with a bicycle, however, is not as simple as getting on and pedalling. To ensure you get the best possible experience, and to make cycling a convenient means of travelling to your class, you should pack a few things before heading out with your bicycle.

Starting off, the one thing you should always keep, regardless of wherever you go with your bicycle, is a helmet. Considering how reckless some drivers are on the road, and the sheer chaos that ensues during rush hour, the helmet is an absolute must for all cyclists. You can buy one from your nearest bicycle store or order online. They usually go for around BDT 700 and around BDT 1,000 for higher quality ones.

The next thing that you should always keep with you is a water bottle. Most of the time, classes are scheduled

during the morning or the afternoon. Hence, the bulk of our travelling is likely to be around that time. Heatstroke is a very real problem that we risk facing when going outside, especially when doing something that requires physical effort like cycling. Consider fitting a water bottle holder on your bicycle's chassis as well, which makes carrying a heavy bottle less of a nuisance.

If your school or university is further away from urban centres, you should also carry a tube repair kit with you. Bangladeshi roads are often riddled with debris and sharp objects, and having your tube punctured away from the city may mean that there is no handy bicycle repair shop nearby to fix it, which can be problematic if you're short

on time or haven't travelled far enough to complete the journey on foot. With a tube repair kit, you can fix a leaked tube

on the spot and continue with your commute to the campus. The kit, which can be used multiple times, costs around BDT 150.

The final thing that you should get is a bicycle mirror, which sits on your handlebar and is an incredibly helpful tool to have when switching lanes or

crossing a road. Smaller-sized ones go for around BDT 140 a pair. If you're travelling at night, you should also get reflective stickers, or alternatively, a rear light to alert incoming drivers that there's a cyclist on the road.

There are some other optional extras which you may look into for the sake of convenience, such as a top tube bag, which provides you extra storage to keep things right on your chassis, as well as an LED headlight, which can be convenient to have if you're travelling at night on roads that have no streetlights.

If you're looking to commute to your classes with a bicycle, you should definitely carry the aforementioned things with you. That way, you'll save yourself a lot of time and frustration, and have a good and safe cycling experience.

Azneef keeps switching from one incomplete task to another. Remind him to finish his work at itsazneefchowdhury@gmail.com



Rural Road Safety Awareness Campaign

Practice changes among students in using roads

The campaign focuses on school students along with teachers, parents, members of school management committees, and local dignitaries.

MD. KAMRUL ISLAM

Rural Connectivity Improvement Project (RCIP) of Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) has undertaken a campaign to make students aware of using roads to reduce road fatalities.

Education on road safety is crucial for all as road accidents have become severe in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is one of the most accident prone countries in the world where 60 percent of road accidents victims are pedestrians. Lack of awareness from the pedestrians' side in using roads is one of the major causes of accidents.

The 5E's are vital for road safety – Engineering, Enforcement, Education, Encouragement and Evaluation. Moreover, safe roads for commuters, safe vehicles, and safe speed management are also addressed as major aspects for ensuring public safety. Under the purview of Local



Government Engineering Department's (LGED) mandate, 2 E's, i.e. engineering and education, are largely related to road safety.

The campaign focuses on school students along with teachers, parents, members of school management committees, and local dignitaries. By this time, the campaign has been implemented in 4 schools located at Kahaloo Upazila of Bogura, Bijoyanagar Upazila of Brahmanbaria, Chandanaish Upazila of Chattogram, and Sadar

Upazila of Madaripur district. More than 1,000 students, teachers, parents, and members of school management committees attended the road safety awareness campaign.

"We learned traffic rules that will help to stay safe while walking on roads. We learned to look right then left and right again and if there is no vehicle near, we can cross the road quickly," said Habiba Khatun, a student of class nine at Aghore Maloncha High School, Kahaloo upazila, Bogura.

Monami Akther, a student of class five of Satirpara GPS, Bijoyanagar upazila, Brahmanbaria district said, "I was not aware of traffic rules; now, I'm quite knowledgeable."

"Following the campaign, I witnessed changes among students to follow traffic rules while walking on roads," said Habibur Rahman Bhuyan, Head Teacher of Satirpara Government Primary School.

The campaign started in October 2022 and will continue till June 2024. LGED has prioritised road safety issues to incorporate engineering measures in road design and simultaneously implementing rural road safety awareness

campaign to raise awareness among road users. It is supported by the Government of Bangladesh and Asian Development Bank.

After the campaign, 90 percent of students were able to recall messages successfully.

Around 18 key messages were disseminated during the campaign, including following traffic signs, rules of walking on the roads, walking in line, not playing on the roads, using helmets while riding bicycle, rules of crossing roads, different traffic signs, not racing on the roads, not running suddenly on roads, wearing bright dress while walking on roads in night and not using the phone while walking on roads.

The messages were developed in a simple manner with illustrations for better communication and circulating through festoons, flyers, and video shows. At the end of the campaign, participants took an oath to comply with road safety rules.

The writer is Project Director, Rural Connectivity Improvement Project (RCIP) of the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED).

Why daycares are important for working parents

NUZHAT HAYAT KHAN

For working parents, especially in nuclear families, every morning is a hustle. Juggling through the responsibilities of a job and their children can be extremely challenging.

According to a survey report by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), female participation in Bangladesh's labour force has increased to 42.68 percent in 2022, up from 36.3 percent five years ago. As more mothers are entering the workforce, the number of two-parent households where both parents work full-time is increasing as well. Under such circumstances, many parents have begun leveraging the convenience of daycare centres to maintain a work-life balance.

Daycare centres are facilities that provide a safe and secure environment for young children while their parents are at work. With the help of trained staff members, these facilities offer a range of activities that promote the development of cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills in children.

Daycare centres can also be an excellent opportunity for parents to work on early child development with extra help. For instance, these centres provide children with socialisation opportunities, which is essential for their overall development. Children learn how to interact with other children and adults, which helps them develop their communication and social skills.

Simultaneously, the centres provide early childhood education, which is crucial for their overall development. Children learn to read, write, and develop other cognitive skills while getting prepared for primary school. Moreover, daycare centres provide a nurturing and supportive environment for children. The staff at daycare centres are trained to provide care and education for children in a way that promotes their overall well-being. Besides, they provide emotional support for children, which is vital for their mental health and development.

Despite the growing need, the number of quality daycare centres is still relatively low in the country.



As per section 94 (12) of Bangladesh Labor Law 2006, every establishment having more than 40 female workers or more must provide and maintain a suitable room for the use of children under the age of six years. Although the law exists, daycare centres or children-friendly rooms at workplaces and educational institutions are very low. Now more than ever, the need for good quality daycare centres with the required facilities has become necessary.

In recent years, several new daycare centres have emerged in the country. These centres feature modern facilities such as air-conditioned rooms, age-appropriate learning tools, digital and smart audio-visual equipment, and an array of interactive indoor and outdoor activities, including access to libraries, computer labs, and Montessori labs. DPS STS School Dhaka is one example of such a school offering daycare facilities, that also offer counselling sessions for new parents, transport services, a comprehensive curriculum, and other meaningful activities, thereby redefining childcare in Bangladesh.

Needless to say, daycare centres play a crucial role in providing safe and reliable care for young children while their parents work. By providing childcare facilities in daycare centres, we can ensure that children receive proper care and education, which would contribute to their overall well-being and development. Most importantly, through good quality daycare centres, parents will definitely be able to manage their household, workplace, and life in general with more ease.

Nuzhat Hayat Khan is a Communications Professional.

