



# Walking on streets of Dhaka

**This city of ours can easily be described as a sprawling metropolis with streets that could challenge even the most perceptive cartographers. Walking around a city is the best way to sample its ambience and beauty, as well as the pitfalls, and Dhaka is no different.**

SANIA AIMAN

During a stroll through the bustling streets of Dhaka, one would be enveloped in a whirlwind of sights, sounds, and sensations — there's a unique energy here, a vibrant pulse that beats to the rhythm of everyday life, singular to Dhaka.

The streets are almost always alive with activity during the day — people scurrying around, going about their daily routines. From the cacophony of honking horns to the calls of street vendors hawking their wares, every sound adds to the symphony of urban life.

Walking through these may become a bit tiresome and the incessant nagging of some sellers irritating, but it is often overtaken by the sheer joy of finding a great bargain or the bigger joy of finding something you were not even looking for!

Walking in Dhaka can also result in an onslaught on the olfactory senses. More often than not, a pedestrian in Dhaka anywhere, would find tantalising aromas of various types of food wafting through.

This could be the nearest window of a simple home where the daily dinner is being made, the exhaust outlet of a restaurant like Star Kabab on



Dhanmondi Road 2, or the shrimp heads being fried on the roadside stalls beside the footpath to New Market.

The attractive fragrance of spicy street food fills the air, drawing in passers-by with irresistible charm. From sizzling kebabs to steaming plates of biryani, the diverse culinary offerings reflect the city's culinary prowess and historically multicultural influences.

Walking to nearby destinations to avoid the notoriously chaotic traffic, one would be remiss to not notice the blending of modern and decadent architecture. On the same walkway around the Gulshan Lake, which can help one to walk from points in Gulshan 1 to Gulshan 2, there stand tall structures with glass walls, reflecting off the glare of the summer sun, and nestled in between, at the end of unassuming dead ends, are

gorgeous old multi-storied houses with large courtyards, full of character, and not very well taken care of.

I would sometimes marvel, who would own these beautiful places, once built with love and pride, and neglect them so? And I missed each one when these were replaced with billboards advertising the new block of flats set to replace them. No matter how modern and necessary, development comes at the cost of character!

The mohollas in Old Dhaka are even more intriguing in that way, the majestic architecture of historic mosques standing tall alongside modern skyscrapers, all mashed together around incredibly narrow streets, and a testament to Dhaka's rich cultural heritage and rapid development, no doubt sometimes

unplanned and risky!

Walking here is like playing a game of dare — avoid the pothole, oozing open drain, wildly swinging rickshaws, and look to be rewarded with a view to one of the heritage buildings of the Old Town, housing a wholesale market like Nawabbari or Islampur market, unassuming of its historic importance, or decaying yet graceful beauty.

Within the chaos, there are unexpectedly serene oases for pedestrians too. Walking around the few public parks, like Ramna or Chandrima Udayan or Balda Garden, or even the wide pedestrian pathways framing Manik Mia Avenue, can feel refreshing, particularly especially before and after peak traffic hours, offering a tranquil escape from the frenetic pace of urban living.

Walking on the streets of Dhaka is never a luxury or even preferred choice for most of its citizens, and often filled with dangers like accidents, mugging, and even sexual harassment — I have experienced all of that and more. Yet, walking in Dhaka also felt more than just reaching point A or point B — it always was an experience, always eventful, and sometimes a celebration of life in all its chaotic, colourful, and captivating glory.



PHOTO: STAR

## SSC candidate killed for protesting stalking schoolgirls

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

An SSC examinee was stabbed to death for protesting stalking in Munshiganj's Sreenagar upazila yesterday afternoon.

The victim, Nirab Ahmed, 17, was a student of Lahajong Pilot High School.

Quoting locals, police said a group of teenagers stalked some girls of Kazi Fazlul Haque High School of Sreenagar during an annual sports competition on Thursday afternoon. Nirab and his classmates protested it.

The stalkers attacked Nirab and his classmates in Kamargaon area. Nirab was stabbed, police added.

He was declared dead after being taken to Sreenagar Upazila Health Complex.

Tofayel Hossain Sarker, additional superintendent of Munshiganj police, said police were trying to arrest those involved in the attack.

## Two key accused confess to rape on JU campus

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Two accused yesterday confessed before a Dhaka magistrate to the rape of a woman on Jahangirnagar University campus on Saturday night.

Dhaka Senior Judicial Magistrate Sheikh Muzahidul Islam recorded the statements of Mamunur Rashid Mamun, 44, the key accused, and his aide Murad Hossain, 22, after investigating officer Mizanur Rahman, an inspector of Ashulia Police Station, produced them before the magistrate, said Additional Public Prosecutor Anwarul Kabir Babul.

After recording their statements, the magistrate sent the duo to jail.

On February 7, Rab arrested Mamun from the capital's Farmgate and Murad, also an assistant secretary of JU BCL, from Naogaon.

The victim's husband lodged the case under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, accusing six people of raping his wife and abetting the rape.

## Truck helper dies in road crash in Narail

BSS, Narail

The helper of a truck was killed as the vehicle overturned in Narail Sadar upazila yesterday morning.

The victim was Emon Ali, 25, of Jashore's Monirampur upazila.

Police said the accident occurred in Huaweikhalhi Bridge area as the driver lost his control over the steering. Emon died on the spot.

The body of Emon was sent to Narail Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

## Panic returns

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found a similar unexploded RPG on a paddy field near the border, said Mahfuz Imtiaz Bhuiyan, in-charge of Ghumdhum police outpost.

"I carried it and handed it over to the BGB members in Ghumdhum," he said. The 17-year-old carried the explosive on his shoulder and handed it over to BGB officials who placed it on the roadside and cordoned off the street, said a BGB official.

"We informed the Tumbur border outpost and they are taking necessary measures," said the official.

AKM Jahangir Aziz, chairman of Ghumdhum Union Parishad, said people of his union were frightened.

"There are risks of major casualties as people with no knowledge about explosives are handling those," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Meanwhile, the bullet-ridden body of an unidentified man found on Thursday night near the border in the Rahmater beel area of Ukhiya, Cox's Bazar, was not recovered until last night.

The sound of gunshots from Myanmar was heard in the Whykong area of Teknaf yesterday.

Mahfuzul Islam, a resident of the Unchiprang, said he heard 30-35 gunshots on Thursday night.

Meanwhile, BGB yesterday filed a case with Ukhiya Police Station against 23 Myanmar nationals who entered Bangladesh with firearms.

Mohammad Mafuzul Islam, superintendent of police in Cox's Bazar, said BGB handed over the accused to the police with 12-15 weapons.

The SP said the 23 people are displaced Rohingyas of Myanmar.

Meanwhile, people living around the Rahmater beel area could not go to their crop fields due to the unrest along the border.

Many fishermen, who run their livelihood by fishing in the Naf river are having a hard time since they could not go to the river because of the unrest.

Niamat Ali, a farmer of the area, said many like him depend on fishing from the Naf river.

"We are almost starving since we have no other option to run our family," he added.

## Pakistan heads for weak coalition

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Sharif's party is still likely to form the next government after a spell of horse trading with other parties and independents.

Sharif said his party would get in touch with others, including former President Asif Ali Zardari of PPP, to open negotiations as early as Friday night.

In its first reaction, a senior aide of Khan said leaders of his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party would hold talks among themselves and also meet Khan in jail today to discuss the results, Geo News reported.

Results of the vote have been unusually delayed, which the caretaker government ascribed to the suspension of mobile phone services — a security measure ahead of Thursday's election.

Independent members cannot form a government on their own under Pakistan's complex election system which also includes reserved seats that will be allotted to parties

based on their winnings.

But independent members have the option to join any party after the elections.

**CHALLENGES FOR COALITION**

"A timely announcement of the results, leading to a smooth formation of a new government, will reduce policy and political uncertainty," Moody's Investors Service said. "This is crucial for the country that is facing very challenging macroeconomic conditions."

The delay in the announcement of results was unusual for elections in Pakistan. Karachi's stock index and Pakistan's sovereign bonds fell because of the uncertainty.

An "internet issue" was the reason behind the delay, Zafar Iqbal, special secretary at the election commission, said without elaborating.

The main electoral battle was expected to be between candidates backed by Khan, whose PTI won the last national election, and the PML-N. Khan believes the powerful military is behind a crackdown to

hound his party out of existence, while analysts and opponents say Sharif is being backed by the generals.

The military has dominated the nuclear-armed country either directly or indirectly in its 76 years of independence from Britain but for several years it has maintained it does not interfere in politics.

Analysts say a coalition government will struggle to tackle multiple challenges — foremost being seeking a new bailout programme from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) after the current arrangement expires in three weeks.

The election was expected to help resolve the crises Pakistan has been dealing with but a fractured verdict "could very well be the basis for even deeper exposure to forces which would create instability", said Marvin Weinbaum, Director of Afghanistan and Pakistan Studies at the Middle East Institute in Washington.

Trump, have voted against Ukraine aid.

Putin said Russian and American special services were discussing the Gershkovich case and had made some progress.

Putin suggested that in return, Moscow wanted Germany to free Vadim Krasikov, who was convicted of the 2019 murder of a Chechen dissident in Berlin, although he did not mention Krasikov by name.

"There have been many successful examples of these talks crowned with success," Putin said. "Probably this is going to be crowned with success as well but we have to come to an agreement."

Russia and the United States have agreed high-profile prisoner swaps in the past — most recently in December 2022 when Moscow traded Brittney Griner, a US basketball star convicted of a drugs offence in Russia — for Russian arms trafficker Viktor Bout.

## Eminent historian

FROM PAGE 1

the events recorded by the inscription as a document.

A sports enthusiast, Momin also served as the Vice-Chancellor of National University and Primeasia University and president of Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, a prominent research organisation of the country.

He was buried at the Banani graveyard following two namaz-e-ajanazas at Lalmatia C Block Mosque after Juma prayers and the central mosque of the DU.

He is survived by two daughters and a son. Momin lost his wife in 2021.

Momin wrote several books and scores of research articles but his book "Dynastic History of Bengal (750-1200 A.D.)".

In the book, he produced an account of the political history of Bengal from the eighth century to the Muslim invasion properly than anything hitherto written on the topic.

Born in 1940, Momin completed his post-graduation from the Department of History of Dhaka University, and joined the same department as a teacher in 1960.

He served the department in different capacities before retiring in

2013.

In his long career besides teaching, he served in various important positions including librarian, dean of arts faculty, syndicate and senate member of the Dhaka University.

He received his Ph.D. from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London in 1965. He completed post-doctoral research on Commonwealth Fellowship in 1975-76.

Momin was also a Senior Fulbright Fellow and a Visiting Scholar in the Department of History at Vanderbilt University, USA.

He served as the Vice-Chancellor of Bangladesh National University from 2001-2003 and Primeasia University from 2003-2005.

He served as General Secretary and President of Bangladesh History Association.

Momin was also a member of the Bangladesh Cricket Control Board for 1985-1989, chairman of DU Cricket Committee from 1976-1989 and served as the Manager of the Bangladesh Cricket Team on its tour of Pakistan in 1986.

Vice-chancellors of Dhaka University and National University have expressed deep sorrow and prayed for the eternal peace of his departed soul.

## Essential prices keep spiralling

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So, despite the recent global commodity price decline, Bangladesh's economy couldn't benefit due to the significant domestic currency depreciation, which subsequently raised import prices, contributing to inflationary pressures.

The taka has lost its value by about 30 percent in the past two years, making imports costlier for the country.

Additionally, second-round effects from adjustments in energy prices and imperfections in the commodity

market further compounded high inflation, according to the Bangladesh Bank.

Inflation declined for the fifth consecutive month in January. But the rate is much higher than the country used to witness before the external and internal sectors brought on the current unprecedented level of inflation since the middle of 2022.

The pass-through of a sharp depreciation of the local currency accounted for half of the inflation surge in the last financial year, according to the International Monetary Fund.