

Draft Rajuk guidelines for real estate developers sidelined

JULHAS RIPON

A draft Rajuk guidelines for private real estate developers to check indiscriminate filling of low-lying areas in and around the city is gathering dust at the Ministry of Housing and Public Works.

The guidelines prepared upon a directive from the ministry has not been approved in eight months after submission as a strong lobby of the developers is working against it, sources said.

The Private Sector Housing Project Regulations, 2002 was submitted to the ministry in August last year.

An 11-member secretarial committee headed by Cabinet Secretary Saadat Husain is still 'scrutinising' the draft though it was decided earlier that it would be finalised 'within few weeks after submission'.

"But even after eight months, the government did not approve it for unknown reason," said a top Rajuk official.

The guideline makes compliance with the Dhaka Master Plan, Environment Protection Act, Bangladesh National Building Code, Building Construction Code and land

laws mandatory for developers.

It also proposes that if any developer seeks Rajuk's permission to take up a housing project, it will need a pre-feasibility report on the proposed project area and must submit a 'detailed concept plan'.

The initiative to prepare a guideline was taken as several real estate developers last year started indiscriminate filling-up of low lying areas earmarked as flood retention points and water recharging areas in the city and on the outskirts in

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Prime Minister Khaleda Zia offers *munajat* after opening the Doarika Bridge over the Sugandha in Barisal yesterday.

Khaleda opens 2 bridges in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday inaugurated two bridges at Doarika and Shikarpur in Barisal district.

The bridges have been built with financial assistance from the Kuwait government which gave Tk 112.76 crore for the project.

Addressing the people present on the occasion, the PM said that the two bridges were a milestone as far as communication between the capital and the southern districts was concerned. She also said that her government was trying to improve the communication infrastructure as part of its development agenda.

The prime minister arrived at the Barisal airport at 12.00 noon yesterday

and went straight to Doarika where she formally opened the first bridge, and then went to Shikarpur where she addressed a big gathering on the western side of the second bridge after inaugurating it.

Among others, the Ambassador of Kuwait to Bangladesh, Abdullah Masud Abdullah, Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, State Minister for Communication Salauddin Ahmed, Whip Mazibur Rahman Sarwar and local MP Moazzem Hossain Alal addressed the gathering.

A tragedy struck when Sujon, 9, a schoolboy, was crushed under the wheels of a truck at Dahergati in Babuganj upazila, minutes after the bridges were opened to traffic.

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Bush, Blair for 'vital' UN role in post-war Iraq

REUTERS, Belfast

Iraq war allies George W. Bush and Tony Blair on yesterday endorsed a "vital role" for the United Nations when fighting ends, but their plans may fall short of European desires.

The two leaders met for their third war summit in a month at an 18th century castle near Belfast as US forces staged an explosive show of strength in central Baghdad and tried to kill President Saddam Hussein with four huge bombs.

They hope their vision of a three-stage postwar scenario will placate anti-war nations like France, Germany and Russia, and appease widespread international suspicion of US motives.

"We are of course agreed ... that there will be a vital role for the United Nations in the reconstruction of Iraq," Blair said at a news conference with Bush at Hillsborough.

Bush used the same words, before spelling out their vision for the two

remaining stages after US and British forces take administrative control in the immediate aftermath of war.

"We will move as quickly as possible to place governmental responsibilities under the control of an interim authority composed of Iraqis from

both inside and outside the country," Bush said. "The interim authority will serve until a permanent government can be chosen by the Iraqi people."

He added: "Rebuilding of Iraq will require the support and exper

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The World Bank has warned the government that the bank and four other donors would suspend part of their joint funding to the health and population sector programme (HPSP) unless the government makes satisfactory proposals by April 30 to implement agreed reforms.

The World Bank is the lead donor in the health sector and representative of a pool of financiers.

In a press release from the health and population sector office (HPSO) yesterday, it was said the funds were intended to support agreed health reforms.

The donors would, however, continue to finance the purchase of essential commodities including drugs, vaccines and contraceptives.

It also said only limited progress has been made on the reforms agreed upon. Without an alternative strategy the country will not achieve significant and sustained improvement in family planning and population control nor will it ensure any significant improvement in women's health.

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STAFF CORRESPONDENT

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suspension of funding which could amount to approximately US\$65 million.

All efforts should now be focused on resolving the current impasse, so that the government and the development partners can continue their joint effort in improving access to health services in the country, the press release added.

Doctors fight over funds

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A confrontation between senior doctors of the Institute of Child and Mother Health (ICMH) and its director, regarding research money, has caused 'unrest' at the institute.

Earlier, funds for research would be deposited at a personal account. But because of allegations of misappropriating money, the present director ruled the fund to be deposited into the ICMH central account. This resulted in resentment among the doctors.

"To avoid the irregularities I have decided that administrative activities of research would be conducted centrally in the name of ICMH

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Humanitarian operation on in Iraq, says US envoy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

United States ambassador in Dhaka Mary Ann Peters yesterday said her country has begun a "massive humanitarian and reconstruction operation for the Iraqi people" with its partner and the international community.

"The international community is providing over one million metric tons of food to feed the Iraqi people," she said in a statement. The US is providing two-thirds of it or 670,000 metric tons, she added.

The items include lentils, vegetable oil and wheat flour, she said.

Mary said food held in the Turkish border is now being brought to northern Iraq. Humanitarian and other non-government organisations are bringing food and other relief items to the south of Iraq from Kuwait through Umm Qasr port.

The World Food Programme has positioned 132,000 metric tons of food in the region, which will feed 2.2 million people for four months, she said.

The US ambassador said large quantities of woollen blankets, plastic sheets for emergency shelter, personal hygiene kits, emergency health kits, water jugs, large water tanks and water treatment units are now in the Gulf region.

The US has provided \$246 mil

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Chicken pox spreading fast

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chicken pox has broken out in different areas of the city with doctors warning that the highly contagious viral infection might spread fast if precautionary measures are not taken.

Physicians at Dhaka Shishu Hospital, Dhaka Medical College Hospital, Institute of Child and Mother Health (ICMH), Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital (BSMMUH) and different private clinics have reported diagnosing a number of children having chicken pox in the last one week.

"Epidemics of the disease are common during a hot and humid season, specially attacking children between 5 and 9, who account for about 50 per cent of all cases," said Professor Saiful Islam, a child specialist.

Chicken pox is caused by varicella-zoster virus (VZV), which spreads through nasal discharge of patients and fluids from the blisters on their bodies. The disease is very contagious and about 90 per cent of people catch it when they are exposed to patients.

Prof Islam said, "Drugs do not have a big role to play. But proper home care is most important. As blisters itch and break, scabs form and those should not

be peeled off intentionally unless those fall off on their own. And the scabs should not be thrown anywhere but should be destroyed or burnt so that the virus cannot spread".

Usually chicken pox is not considered a serious illness but it can cause serious complications including pneumonia, encephalitis and serious bacterial infection of the blisters. A person normally has only one attack of chicken pox in his or her lifetime. But the VZV may remain dormant in the body and cause a different type of skin eruption, called shingles, later in life, doctors said.

Couple shot dead in Pirojpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A couple was shot dead by miscreants at village Nodmollah in Bhandaria upazila of Pirojpur district in the early hours of yesterday.

The victims were identified as Babul Sardar, 40, and his wife Jesmin, 24.

According to police and local people, a gang of miscreants entered

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Khoka to reconsider aerial spray in anti-mosquito war

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Aerial spray on a highly populated city like Dhaka may cause a great harm to public health and the environment, environmentalists stressed at seminar prompting the mayor to promise that he would give the idea a second thought.

They said all the developed countries in the world ceased aerial spray to stop mosquito breeding considering its harmful effect on human health.

They asked Mayor of Dhaka Sadeque Hossain Khoka, who was the chief guest at the seminar on 'Insecticide Aerial Spraying: Potential Harm on Environment and Public Health' to reconsider the decision.

It was organised by Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (BAPA) and UBINIG at the National Press Club.

Khoka assured the environmentalists that Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) would reconsider its decision to spray insecticide from helicopters to free the city from the bugs.

"We have already spent money for this. But if it is harmful to human health, we will consider it again," he said.

He said there were some low-lying areas in the city where manual spray of insecticide was not possible.

Farida Akhter from UBINIG read out the keynote paper at the seminar, chaired by Farhad Mazhar.

Farida Akhter said mosquitoes were a headache everywhere in the world. But the developed nations took some measures other than aerial spray to get rid of the menace.

They resort to aerial sprays only to curb crop insects, she said.

Referring to aerial spray experiences in Vietnam, India and Australia, she said even after a few decades after such sprays babies were born in Vietnam with deformed body parts due to the poisoning of their ancestors in the process.

Presenting another paper, Dr Abdul Matin said, as the cityscape was dotted with highrises, aerial spray was not a good way to kill the insects.

People would consume most of the insecticide, posing a serious threat to their health and to the environment, he said.

Expressing grave concern over

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S Africa, India arrive today

SPORTS REPORTER

South Africa and India will arrive in the city today to play in the TVS Cup triangular one-day tournament, starting at the Bangabandhu National Stadium on April 11.

South Africa, hosts of the World Cup 2003, will be the first team to reach the capital early in the morning. Graeme Smith, who took over from Shaun Pollock, will lead a new-look South African team after the Proteas failed to cross the first round hurdle on their home soil.

South Africa will also play two Tests against the home team after the one-day tournament.

Saurav Ganguly, after a successful World Cup campaign that saw his side finishing runners-up behind

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
April 9		6-18 pm
April 10	5-42 am	

Prayer Timings		
April 9		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-20
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-23	6-28
Esha	7-35	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation