

Vibrant vegetable markets



Kazir Dewry kitchen market

MOHIT UL ALAM

Reazuddin Bazaar is still the oldest and biggest shopping centre of Chittagong, consisting of three parallel lanes entering from the Station Road on the south, and one lane entering from the Jubilee Road on the east. All four lanes meet at a right angle about 300 yards inside the market, thus creating a square where the vegetable market sits. The market is wondrously busy day and night with fish and meat galore, and seasonal vegetables all aplenty. However fresh and cheap every thing in this market is, it seems to have lost favour with the city people, as it is located in the busiest section of the city, making visits difficult. Reazuddin Bazaar has godowns and fish storage plants, and so it easily acts as the number one wholesale depot of the city. Chawk Bazaar vegetable market is as old as Reazuddin Bazaar, and it has a reputation for selling fresh fish, mainly the smaller species like the Bombay duck and other such assortments. Chawk Bazaar is small and rather unclear, though it is a favourite haunt of the low-income group people. On the other hand, the Karnaphuli Market is quite large and disciplined. And majority of the buyers in this market comes from the adjacent areas of Pathantuli and Agrabad. It is almost an evening market, because people returning home from offices in Agrabad take their chances at the later hours of the day. It sells big fish, Ruhi and Katla in abundance, and also beef, mutton and chickens. Many people maintain that the fish sold in this market is the finest quality. Another big

bazaar is Bahaddarhat Bazaar. In crowd accumulation it will come second only to Reazuddin Bazaar. Since Bahaddarhat is a kind of the last frontier of the city, its market is always renewed with fresh supply of vegetables and fish from the village. Besides, Bahaddarhat Bazaar seems to be rich in collection of indigenous but insignificant seasonal grove fruits like amlaki, jalpai, betgula, panifal, and golapjam, which are available here as much as sugarcane, tamarind, jamboora, pineapples, and watermelons. Those who avoid high-calorie food in their diets and prefer to depend on a herbal-dominated menu actually come to Bahaddarhat bazaar more often than not. The chickens of this market are also of a good breed, especially the Australian leghorn. But the cleanest and the most popular market is the Kazir Dewry Kancha Bazaar. Of all the City Corporation-managed markets this is easily the best one. The lanes inside this market are suitably wide for easy sauntering, and vegetables, fish, and meat are all vended in clear-cut isolated sections. There is an adjunct car park, which obviously has facilitated the women to come in large droves. Women from posh and less-posh areas are the regular visitors here. And you go there anytime of the day, you will hear the vendors crying out at the top of their voice a single word "afa" (apa, meaning elder sister) in their attempt to draw attention of the female customers. Poet Wahidul Alam who lived at Kazir Dewry and was a regular frequenter to the market used to call it the Afa Market.

Save Parabon

ABDULLAH-AL MAHMUD

The district administration on August 28 ordered eviction of the illegal occupants from the "Parabon" (man-made forest), a tourist zone of Sonadia and Ghatibhanga under the offshore upazila of Moheshkhali in Cox's Bazar. The illegal occupants had been developing shrimp enclosures that damages the huge "Parabon" in the two offshore islands, the district administration sources said. Sources said, foreign aid worth Tk 11 crore was also spent for development of the forest in different occasions. But a syndicate of 43 local influential people went on spree to occupy the lands illegally and destroy "Parabon" in the name of shrimp cultivation in the recent years, sources added. The Daily Star published a report last year on this massive disaster of "Parabon" and mangrove forests threatening environmental degradation. In a futile effort to put an end to this the concerned Forest Department also filed some 139 cases so far. Sources said the Deputy Commissioner of Cox's Bazar at the directive of higher authorities asked the illegal occupants to vacate the forest lands within next fifteen days. Otherwise, strict measures will be taken against them. The order was announced through loud speaker in the off-shore upazila, they added. According to sources, the islands of Sonadia (known as Golden Island) and Ghatibhanga-Taziakata, some 10 kms to the north-west off Cox's Bazar town, emerged as shoal in early eighteenth century. Though inhabited by only fifteen hundred people, all living on fishing or producing dry-fish, the 14-sq km islands with huge geological significance emerged as a tourist spot. With a view to saving the islands as well as Moheshkhali upazila from erosion, afforestation began in 1974 under Coastal Afforestation Programme. The forest was developed on some 5,000 acres of land. The islands under Kutubjome union were declared Ecological Critical Zone. Local environment conscious people including lawyers and journalists launched movement demanding measures to save the "Parabon" and proposed exclusive tourist spot. The Cox's Bazar Environmental Journalists Forum submitted a memorandum to Deputy Commissioner and Police Super recently. The district law and order committee at a meeting on August 20 formed a 6-member committee headed by additional deputy commissioner (education) to submit a report on the forest.

CHITTAGONG CHEMICAL COMPLEX

Awaiting final closure

SHAHIDUL ISLAM

Production at the Chittagong Chemical Complex (CCC) at Barabkunda in Sitakunda Upazila has been suspended since December 15 last year following the government decision on its privatisation. The complex will be closed down formally after clearing all dues and other benefits of its staffs, workers and officials soon, sources said. "About 80 to 90 per cent of the dues has been paid off since December 15, 2002," an official said. Over rising interests, continued loss, depreciation and lack of competitive edge are learnt to be the reasons that compelled the government to close the unit, sources said. Following the government decision, production at the CCC came to a halt

on December 15 and payment to its officials, staffs and workers started accordingly. "The pay-off can be deemed as a step before its ultimate closure," said an official on condition of anonymity. The unit had 429 permanent and 200 casual workforce. Among the permanent employees, 258 were workers, 95 staffs and 76 officials, sources said. At present, only 31 employees, including three key officials, are still working on 'emergency basis'. The three key men -- the managing director, general manager (administration) and general manager (accounts) -- are likely to be transferred to any other BCIC unit after the closure of the complex, sources said. The rest would be retrenched, they said. The unit had produced caustic

soda, liquid chlorine, hydraulic acid, bleaching powder, calcium hydrochloride and sodium hydrochloride. Sources said the annual production of the complex was 7,000-ton caustic soda, 4,600-ton liquid chlorine, 7,000-ton hydraulic acid, 600-ton bleaching powder and 2,400-ton calcium hydrochloride. The products were being used in the different industrial units of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC). Some units in power sector, steel mills and paper mills were the major consumers of these products. The complex went on production back in 1966. It was then called 'Chemical Private Industries Limited of Pakistan'. And it was renamed 'Chittagong Chemical Complex' in 1981. The unit was turned into a modern and state-of-the-art factory on March 1, 1997 following its Balancing, Modernisation, Rehabilitation and Expansion (BMRE) at a cost of a Tk111.14 crore. The Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) provided Tk 81.90 crore for the BMRE, sources said. Despite these initiatives, the complex had been reeling under financial loss, sources said. "Besides, the interest to the Japanese loan was also soaring everyday." "We were not able to withstand our competitors in the market in terms of price and demand, in spite of the fact that our products were no less than international standard and quality," said a chemist of the complex.



Front view of the Chittagong Chemical Complex

theweekthatwas

Attack on Darber Sharif Khadem

Khitaipchar Rahmania Jubo Kalyan (Youth Welfare) Committee leaders on Wednesday at a press conference at the press club demanded of the authorities concerned to take measures for protecting land of Khitaipchar Rahmania Darber Sharif and ensure security of its Khadem. They said a local criminal group called Aman Bahini in a bid to grab the land of Darber Sharif (Shrine) in Boalkhali upazila made attacked Khadem (caretaker) Syed Shah Nazrul Islam and his family on August 20. The injured Khadem is now under treatment at Chittagong Medical College Hospital. The criminals also assaulted his family members. A case was filed with Boalkhali thana the following day that only angered the criminals, they said. The culprits are now putting pressure on the Khadem and his

family members for withdrawal of the case or to face dire consequences, they added. The committee leaders demanded immediate arrest and punishment to the persons involved in the attack. Committee president Engr S M Taher read out the written statement at the press conference. Devotees Abdus Salam, Abdul Momen, Syed Abdul Gani, Abdus Sabur Master were present.

10MW power plant to be installed

The Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) and Green Power Limited (GPL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for installation of the 10MW power plant in the city on Sunday. The plant would be installed at a cost of Tk 36 crore.



Miss Rabi (centre) clinched the title "Miss Photogenic Chittagong" at Lux-Anandadhara Photogenic Competition held at the Engineers Institute hall on August 27. She is flanked by 1st runner-up Miss Nadi (right) and 2nd runner-up

The work for installation of the power plant at Nasirabad is expected to begin by November and completed by June next year. CCC Chief Executive Officer Abul Basher and GPL Managing Director Sheikh Ehsanul Habib signed the MoU on behalf of their respective sides. Mayor A B M Mohiuddin Chowdhury was present on the occasion.

OFA Coaching Academy

Old Faujian Association (OFA), Chittagong chapter has decided to set up an Old Faujian Coaching Academy in the city. OFA, Chittagong -- the forum of former cadets of Faujiderhat Cadet

College -- took the decision at a special general meeting at Lions Taheruddin Memorial Hall on Sunday. It also formed a committee in this regard. The meeting expressed deep shock and condolence over the early demise of Ofan Shakhawat Hossain of the 34th batch. Ofan Saiful Islam chaired the meeting.

DIIT training

concludes

The month-long special training on computer application of Daffodil Institute of IT (DIIT) ended here on Sunday. Fifty-three students took part in the training course that aimed at generating interest in IT (Information Technology) activities and proper application of computer for socio-economic development of the country. On the occasion, a Chairman's Award and Certificate Giving ceremony was held on the DIIT, Chittagong Campus of IFCO Complex at Nasirabad in the evening. Dr Mohammad Nurul Mostafa, Chairman of Computer Science Department of Chittagong University, gave away certificates among the participants. Chowdhury Mohammad Haider Ali, Deputy Director, DIIT, Chittagong Campus, presided.

150 statues stolen from Bud-dhist Temple

A total of 150 old statues were stolen from Bilchhari Buddha Bihar at Lama municipality area in Bandarban district on Thursday. The thieves stole the silver made statues worth around Tk 15 lakh breaking into the temple. The temple caretaker Principal Upaindya Oangxma filed a case in this connection. The local police officials visited the spot.

Cabinet meeting in Ctg soon

Food Minister Abdullah Al Noman said the government was determined to upgrade Chittagong as the commercial capital in true sense soon. In this regard a cabinet meeting will be held here soon where a number of programmes would be approved for development of Chittagong, he added. Noman said this while he was addressing the 14th installation ceremony of Rotary Club of Islamabad at a city community centre as the chief guest on Friday. The minister called upon the Rotarians for combining the will and the rich to come forward in the service of distressed people of the society. Advocate Kamaluddin Ahmed Khan and Begum Fahmida Amin were hon-

oured as "Senior Citizens". With Rtn Dr Md Jahangir in the chair, Rtn M A Awal, Rtn Magfuruddin, Rtn Farid Uddin Khan Siddiqui and Rtn Hemayet Uddin also spoke.

Pran-Prothom Alo pickle competition

The prize giving ceremony of the Pran-Prothom Alo pickle competition in Chittagong division was held at local Shilpakala Academy here on Monday. Renowned litterateur and social worker Begum Fahmida Amin gave away the prizes among the winners as the chief guest. It was followed by a solo cultural function of famous folk singer Shefali Gosh.



Action Aid and global Village jointly organised a human chain in Rangamati protesting rampant hill



Ekushey TV Viewers Forum in Chittagong formed a human chain at Cheragi Pahar area on August 30