

Anatomy of environment

Move is underway to prepare a draft report on the city's environment based on five issues selected by experts

AVIK SANWAR RAHMAN

The Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS) has taken the initiative to draw up a draft report on the state of environment of Dhaka city based on the five key issues selected by environmentalists.

"We are preparing the report based on the scientific and economic analysis on the key issues by March 2004," said Mozaharul Haq, the research fellow of BCAS.

Problems related to land use and management was considered one of the vital issues with land and river encroach-

ment being its most important aspect.

It was pointed out that under land management, the city should be divided into different zones such as industrial and residential, open space, lake, water bodies and also water retention buffer zones etc.

Protecting the city from floods and the problem of congestion of drains was considered the second most vital topic with air, water and noise pollution coming third.

Air pollution included the problems of vehicular emission like carbon and diesel particles and industrial emission and dust from construction work.

Overflowing of sewage pipes, blockage

of drains, the use of hydraulic horns in vehicles etc. were included in the water and noise pollution category.

Urban solid waste management was another key issue that is being addressed.

As health is an extremely important factor in the overall development of a country, this was the fifth most important issue. Occupational health and scarcity of safe drinking water within the environment were its relevant topics.

"Environmentalists and experts of government and non-government organisations and agencies have taken a stand to assess the national capacity of Bangladesh to make an accurate environmental decision on sustainable development focussing on the key issues," said Mozaharul Haq.

"The enhancement of the information bank on all aspects of environment and socio-economic development and establishing a strong information network with a uniformed format of data will be another aspect of this research," he added.

The organisations involved with BCAS in this project are representatives from the Rajuk, Dhaka WASA, Dhaka Transport Cooperation Board (DTCB), Dhaka Chamber of Commerce (DCC), Water Resources Planning Organisation, Titas Gas Transmission and Distribution, BRAC, Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association, LGED, Department of Environment (DoE) and the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).



Encroachment on water bodies, (top), and open-air waste disposal, (right), are two of five main problems that dog Dhaka's environment.



STAR FILE PHOTO

Uttara Model Town Project-3

Lawmakers visit site to probe 'irregularities'

CITY CORRESPONDENT

A Jatiya Sangsad sub-committee visited the site of Uttara Model Town Project-3 yesterday to investigate alleged anomalies in land acquisition and compensation to the residents who lost land to the project.

Lawmaker Abdul Gani, chairman of the sub-committee of the Public Estimate Committee, and Rustam Ali Farazi MP, a sub-committee member, visited the site, accompanied by Rajuk Chairman Iqbal Uddin Chowdhury and other Rajuk and district administrative officials.

Rajuk launched the model town project in 1999, with a June 2003 deadline for completion. Even after the deadline expired, the land acquisition is not complete, nor are the residents duly compensated.

The visit came after a meeting of the sub-committee at the Sangsad Bhavan on October 26, which decided to investigate the alleged irregularities in the project.

The two lawmakers talked to the local union parishad chairman, members and other residents.

"We talked to the people whose land has been acquired. We ended our preliminary investigation and will look into

the objections against Rajuk and the district administration," Gani said.

On the irregularities in the project, Gani said, "It is too early to comment on the matter."

"Our findings will be revealed after we submit our investigation report," the lawmaker said.

A senior official of Rajuk, seeking anonymity, said, "The classification of land was controversial. Because of shady transactions, a section of Rajuk officials showed lowlands and ditches as plain lands. And the real plain-land owners were deprived."

"The landowners who felt deprived filed lawsuits against Rajuk. These cases are now obstacles to implementation of the project," the official said.

Rajuk has so far distributed 2,762 plots, of which 567 were cancelled for a host of reasons, including incorrect affidavit, non-authorisation and fake documents of land.

Rajuk has paid about Tk 400 crore in compensation, which landowners called too inadequate.

Quoting the committee members, newspapers reported that the sub-committee detected irregularities and corruption in the project. The reports also said the progress of the project has slowed to a crawl because of some dishonest officials of Rajuk.

Mugging incidents on the increase

SULTANA RAHMAN

Incidents of mugging have increased in the city in the last two weeks.

According to a police report, at least 140 mugging incidents took place between October 15 and 25.

Police believe the actual figure would be much higher as majority of the victims did not file complaints. The number of mugging cases was 62 from the beginning to mid October.

"Three muggers came in a CNG auto-rickshaw and snatched my bag while I was passing by in a rickshaw through Baitul Mukarram on Thursday evening. The incident took place in a flash. I informed the police official on duty at Motijheel thana. But they did nothing," said Ms. Rahman. "All I could do was to lodge a FIR there."

The muggers frequently change techniques. In the Dhanmondi area, different groups deceive people posing themselves as their friends.

"Some guys I thought they know me ... But when I approached them, one of the them suddenly pointed a revolver at me and asked to give everything I had," said Kishore who was injured by the gunman near the bridge at road no 8 in Dhanmondi in spite of giving every thing that he had. Kishore filed a case with the Dhanmondi thana.

Residents of Dhanmondi informed that mugging have become very common in the area. "The muggers generally come out in the evenings and target the people who look

comparatively rich", said Iftekhar Alam who witnessed several incidents from his road side corridor. "I called the Dhanmondi police station twice but none turned up to investigate the incident or to help recover the lost items. This is really very disappointing," Iftekhar said.

A sub-inspector at the Motijheel thana admitted that very rarely did the police succeed in recovering things.

"If the victim can provide us with the number of CNG auto rickshaw then we can do our best recover lost items. But in most cases mugging occurs in a flash and that is why the person cannot note down the number," he said.

However, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) has taken the initiative ahead of Ramadan to check mugging, extortion and other criminal activities in the city. Summary courts led by magistrates will try accused muggers and extortionists on the spot.

Forty mobile courts and as many police checkpoints backed by about 5,000 additional personnel will be set up.

The mobile courts to be led by magistrates will work from 10 am to 4 pm while the checkpoints will work from 10 am to 10 pm.

Plain clothes policemen will be deployed at shopping centres, railway stations and bus and launch terminals.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Shahudul Haq told the Star City the police are active in the field to stop extortion. "We urge people to inform the police if they face or see the culprits."

Follow-up

DCC's feeble war against mosquito

CITY CORRESPONDENT

When the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) claims that it is at war against mosquitoes, the city dwellers say that they do not see any warriors around other than the ones they are at odds with.

An official of the Health Department of the DCC said, "The ongoing mosquito control programme has not covered the entire city as yet. But whenever we receive complaints of mosquitoes we send our people immediately and take precautionary action."

"It is not possible for us to cover all the areas of the city at the same time. As the days go by, the mosquito menace will lessen," said the official wishing not to be named.

The DCC started a vigorous mosquito control programme on October 20 to curb the current mosquito onslaught that begins in October each year. This runs through April the following year.

In ten zones of the city, 565 hand spray, 343 fogger, 45 wheel and 15 ULV machines are supposed to go into an overdrive in the mosquito control programme.

"The water hyacinth around the wetlands of Moghbazar has remained the same as before. I haven't seen any of

the DCC's men in my locality. After dusk, we have to endure mosquito bites as usual," said Babla, a resident of Moghbazar.

"Over the last few days, the increase in the number of mosquitoes has been quite visible in our locality. It is affecting our daily lives," said Shilu, a school-teacher at Gulshan.

"We study at night, and our studies are being affected mostly due to mosquitoes. Our annual exams will start next month but we cannot study in peace," said Sabbir, a class eight student of Ideal College and School.

The DCC estimated that apart from purchasing larvicide and adulticide, the fuel cost both for the transport and fogger machines would be around Tk 88 lakh.

It will need 15,020 litres of larvicide and 3,88,505 litres of adulticide for this season.

Meanwhile, the Health Department of DCC Sunday instructed its 10 zones to initiate a special mosquito control programme for the devotees who through the mosques during Ramadan.

"Half an hour before the Magrib prayers begin, the field workers will spray adulticide around the mosques so that the devotees can pray undisturbed," said Chief Health Officer of DCC Colonel Azizul Haque.

A DOLL'S HOUSE



Japanese kokeshi dolls are visiting Bangladesh to strengthen ties between the two countries. Nearly 70 dolls of various sizes are on show at the Shishu Academy Art Gallery until 3 November 2003 from 10AM to 5PM every day.

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UTILITY

Electricity
Electricity Complex- PDB- 9566061-5, 9560170-9
Electricity Complex (DESA)- 8616737-43, 8617626
DESCO- 8123138-40
Complaints (Rural Electrification Board, Dhaka)- 8916424-8

Gas
Titas Gas Exchange (Emergency)- 9563667-8
Kawrnbar-8112135-42
Mirpur- 8014132-3
Mohammadpur- 9117215, 9113903
Mohakhali- 9884741, 9885922, 8824993
Motijheel-9667612

WASA
WASA (PABX)- 8117829-31
Mirpur- 9000519
Mohammadpur- 8120192
Fakirapool-9115343
Asad Gate- 8917492
Uttara- 9559142,
Segunbagicha- 7316348
Pagla- 8113900-39

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TAXI CAB

Yellow Cab
Navana 9558065
Salida 9344477, 0171620881
Cosmo 9112959 and 8127191
Cab One 7113282-3
Nihon 8624741-2
Orion 9347277
Anudip 8125285 and 8127611
Capital 9352847

TRAIN TIMING

Subarna Express Leaves Dhaka at 4:00 pm
Mahanagar Prabhati Leaves Dhaka at 7:30 am
Mahanagar Godhuli Leaves Dhaka at 3:05 pm
Turna Leaves Dhaka at 11:00 pm
Parabat Express Leaves Dhaka at 6:30 am
Joyantika Express Leaves Dhaka at 12:30 pm
Upaban Express Leaves Dhaka at 9:30 pm
Tista Express Leaves Dhaka at 7:00 am
Ekata Express Leaves Dhaka at 5:00 pm
Upakul Express Leaves Dhaka at 6:00 am
Padma Express Leaves Dhaka at 9:20 pm

Union 8130485
Kool 0171826731
Black Cab
Cab Ex 9358401
Cabline 8321162
JBS Cab 019364575
Sajan 018126036
Anudip - 8125285 and 8127611
Cab One 7113282-3

Palki 0171052500
Cab I 7113282
Jatri 0171540074
Nipun 9572277
R-Cab 8914782
Star Cab 9571919
Shihab 018202477 & 018228675
KGN 8620011

MARKET PRICE

Rice (Tk. Per Kg)
Miniket- 20-22
Pajam- 18.50-19.50
Najirshail- 21-22
Kalijira- 33-34 (Polao)
Chiniqura- 35-36 (Polao)
Dal (Tk. Per Kg)
Masur Dal- 42-44
Masur Imported- 38-40
Mug Dal- 42-44
Mug Imported- 38-40
Motor Dal- 36-38
Motor Imported- 20-21
Oil (Tk. Per Litre)
Mustard- 65-70
Soyabean- 41-42
Palm- 35-36
Coconut (Imported)- 100-160
Veg. Ghee- 42-44
Ghee- 300-320
Spices (Tk. Per Kg.)
Onion (local)- 20-22
Onion (Imported)- 16-18
Garlic- 30-32
Garlic (Imported)- 24-28
Ginger- 26-28
Ginger (Imported)- 26-28
Turmeric- 65-68
Turmeric (Imported)- 60-62
Dried (Red) Chili- 70-80
Green Chili- 20-24
Coriander (Dhania)- 30-32
Kalijira- 8-10

Cumin (Jira)- 14-16
Cinnamon- 14-16
Almond- 60-70
Aniseed (Labanga)- 40-50
Black Pepper- 20-24
Vegetables (Tk Per Kg)
Potato- 13-14
Eggplant- 12-14
Green Papaya- 6-8
Pumpkin (Misti Kumra)- 7-8
Patal- 10-12
Karalla- 14-16
Borboti, (Beans)- 14-16
Dherosh, (Okra)- 12-14
Kakrol- 10-12
Kachumukhi- 10-12
Kachurlati- 10-12
Cucumber- 10-12
Chichinga- 10-12
Jhinga- 12-14
Lal shak- 10-12
Pui Shak- 8-10
Green Banana- 6-8 (Per Hali)
Jali Lau- 10-12/Piece
Panikachu- 6-10
Fish (Tk. Per Kg)
Rui (Local, Medium Size)- 230-240
Rui (Local, Small Size)- 130-140
Katal (Local, Medium Size)- 140-150
Katal (Local, Small Size)- 110-120
Katal (Imported, Medium)- 80-90
Hilsha (Big)- 160-170
Hilsha (Small)- 100-110

Pangash (Big)- 140-150
Pangash (Small)- 60-65
Shing- 300-320
Prawn (Big)- 180-200
Prawn (Small)- 110-120
Silvercarp- 50-60
Meat & Egg (Per Kg)
Beef- 85-90
Mutton- 140-150
Chicken- 75 (Poultry)
Egg- 15-16 (Duck, Farm), 15-16 (Local Chicken)
Fruits (Tk. Per Kg)
Green Coconut- 8-10 (Per Piece)
Pineapple- 12-15 (Per Piece)
Coconut- 10-14 (Per Piece)
Jack-fruit- 50-70 (Per Piece)
Guava- 12-16 (Per Hali)
Banana- 6-8 (Per Hali)
Lemon- 4-5 (Per Hali)
Mango- 40-55 (Differs species)
Apple- 80-90
Others (Tk. Per Kg)
Sugar- 32-34
Brown Sugar- 26-28
Salt- 10-11 (Packet)
Tea- 120-130
Gold- 8500 (11.66 grams)
Silver- 250 (11.66 grams)

Sources: Agricultural Marketing Department