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Developer swindles clients with plot offers in wetland

SULTANA RAHMAN

A fast-emerging developer is allegedly deceiving aspiring landowners with a controversial development project in the Gulshan low-lying area, dubbed as Dhaka Satellite City.

Gembind Union Logistic Services Limited (GULSL), the so-called latest addition to the mushrooming developers, is illegally filling wetlands on 200 bighas near Hatirjheel-Begunbari, right under the nose of Rajuk, city land developer.

Rajuk officials pegged the real estate builder as a fake company, swindling people with plots and flats on offer and a slogan -- "the new city within Dhaka city".

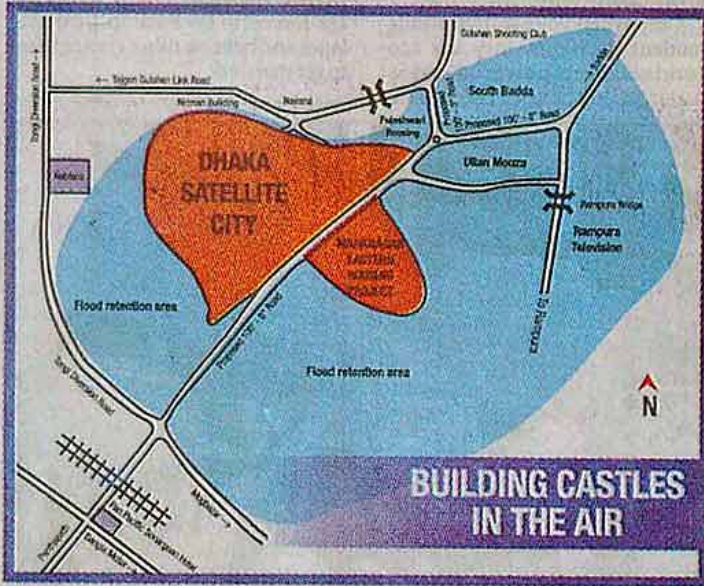
"The GULSL has no Rajuk approval to develop the area. This is a flagrant violation of the Town Improvement Act," said a senior Rajuk official, asking not to be named.

The GULSL, with 500 plots of land at Tk 10 lakh a katha on offer has a plan to build 110 buildings of 16 storeys with 6,500 flats.

Rajuk Chairman Iqbal Uddin Chowdhury told The Daily Star that potential buyers should be careful about fake developers, including GULSL.

"We will not approve any plan for plots bought from such companies and if anyone is cheated by these companies, Rajuk will not be responsible for that," he added.

The Rajuk chairman said AH Mortuza, town planner of Rajuk,



visited the site Saturday to find the area being filled up by hundreds of labourers who work mostly at night to avoid law enforcers.

"We suspect the GULSL is filling the land using a signboard of another organisation, as they have no legal ground to do so," Chowdhury said.

"We are going to print a notice in newspapers alerting people against plot fraud. At this moment, Rajuk has nothing to do except (publishing) this notice. We will go for legal action against GULSL in our next step," he went on.

Not only Rajuk, but also other agencies are responsible to protect

wetlands, Chowdhury observed.

The builder has offered an option for Bangladesh expatriates to purchase or live in a separate zone in a plan that includes a multi-storey shopping mall, a park, community centres and a host of other facilities.

"They are giving all these lucrative offers only to deceive people," another Rajuk official pointed out, adding no company can either advertise or fill up the land for commercial purpose without Rajuk approval.

Earlier, Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB) initiated a project to construct a 100-foot

5 detained at Ctg airport with firearms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Five persons were detained at Chittagong Shah Amanat International Airport for entering the restricted area wielding a shotgun yesterday noon.

Later, police and airport security men seized a pistol, a gun, 20 pistol bullets and 80 gun cartridges from a bag found inside their Pajero Jeep at the airport parking lot. Police also seized the shotgun.

Police and civil aviation sources said the detainees are Zahidul Haq Sikder, 35, son of the owner of Sikder Medical College in Dhaka, Sohel Alam, director (marketing), and Mohan, an executive of the hospital. Identity of two others could not be known immediately.

"The five are under detention and we are examining the documents of the arms they claimed to have been licensed," said a top

Mist blankets capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A cloak of mist blanketed Dhaka yesterday morning blocking sunrays and limiting vision in an echo of last year's weather pattern and weathermen said it would continue for two more days.

The mist was due to temperature inversions and falling temperatures together with moisture in the air, the meteorological office said.

"The cold will begin to bite

8 robbers lynched in Char Clerk as cops launch operation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

Outraged locals of Char Clerk cluster village rounded robbers and beat eight of them dead yesterday morning.

Another four robbers were severely wounded during the mob beating. The robbers opened fire on the villagers and injured 10.

A 300-strong police contingent

launched a combing operation in the village Saturday following rampant looting by robbers in recent times.

The police drive inspired the villagers to go hunting for the criminals. During yesterday's drive, the robbers took shelter in a paddy field and about 2,000 villagers cordoned them.

The villagers were enraged as the

robbers fired on them and they attacked the robbers with sticks, machetes and iron bars.

Shahjahan, second-in-command of the local robbers' racket, died on the spot in mob lynching.

Later, during another raid on a garden, robbers attacked a police team and fired at Noakhali Police

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

CHT braces for hartal amidst resistance from ruling alliance

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

The three hill districts of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) remained tense as Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) called for a dawn-to-dusk hartal today amid opposition from the UPDF (United Peoples' Democratic Front) and the ruling four-party alliance.

The PCJSS called the daylight strike to press for removal of the chairman of the CHT Development Board among its other demands.

Jyotindra Lal Tripura, convener of the district Awami League, has issued a statement supporting the hartal. "The AL will support any democratic programme aimed to implement the peace accord," he said in the statement.

The other PCJSS demands are

HC fines N'ganj magistrate for detention order

BSS, Dhaka

The High Court (HC) yesterday fined District Magistrate of Narayanganj SM Harunur Rashid Tk 10 for a detention order.

The division bench of Justice Hasan Ameen and Fazle Kabir passed the order.

Mohammad Billal was arrested in a case of Fatulla Police Station and detained for 30 days under the Special Powers Act 1974.

The detention order was challenged before the HC, which on November 15, 2003 directed the district magistrate to appear before the court along with supportive papers.



CHECK THE CHILL: Sale of warm clothes peaks in footpath shops in front of the General Post Office at Gullistan yesterday. Light early morning fog in Dhaka has hinted at the arrival of a cold spell, prompting the poor to mount their guard.

'Swadhinata Stambha', a monument of neglect

ABDUL KADER

One can hardly imagine how the symbols of the history of Bangladesh's liberation war have been left to rot unless one visits the city's Suhrawardy Udyan.

Take the Swadhinata Stambha (independence monument) for example; the half-done structures designed to immortalise the chronology of the events that led to the emergence of Bangladesh have been left to the mercy of the elements.

The coalition government stopped the construction of the

Swadhinata Stambha more than two years ago, leaving the incomplete massive concrete structures to decay. The monument was christened 'Bijoy Stambha' but later renamed 'Swadhinata Stambha'.

The past Awami League government undertook the construction of the Tk 81 crore project in 1998 and with the inclusion of a 150-foot high glass tower the project cost increased to Tk 171 crore in 2001.

But the government suspended the construction just after taking office and trimmed the fund for the glass tower, which was one of the

main features of the monument.

The project sprawling over an area of 67 acres will showcase the heroes of freedom struggle from 1948 to 1971. It will also include an underground theatre, an underground museum containing the historical evidence of the liberation war and a 157-seat audio-visual auditorium; all of them free for public view. The complex will also contain a display gallery, a boundary wall, fancy grills, an ornate gate and a decorative fountain.

Earlier, Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB) initiated a project to construct a 100-foot

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

End rivalry or face action

Hasina warns Sylhet AL leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina yesterday sounded tough against her two senior party leaders and instructed them to end their rivalry that is believed to disintegrate AL's slower tiers.

Hasina said the conflict between Abdus Samad Azad and Suranjit Sengupta stoked feuds among their loyalists in Sylhet in the last few months.

At a meeting of the 15-strong party presidium at AL's office in Dhanmondi with Hasina in the

chair, the leader of the opposition also took a series of punitive measures against 'troublemakers' in the party fold. Suspension of 16 party leaders in Netrokona and serving of show-cause notices on three others feature among AL's steps to set its own house in order.

The three-hour meeting, held in the presence of Samad Azad and Sengupta, decided to dispatch a team to Sunamganj by December 12 to investigate the display of black flags during Sengupta's visit to his constituency.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

Rejoinder

The Power Development Board (PDB) and Westmont in separate rejoinders on The Daily Star report on Saturday headlined "PDB's questionable deal with Westmont" said some parts of the report were not factually correct.

They also said the news failed to highlight the favourable terms for the power board.

"(The) BPDB is making deals as per terms given by the purchase committee," said PDB. "Westmont will make the invoice in local currency and (the) BPDB will pay the bill in local currency. Providing guarantee of 1.5 million US\$ and liquidated damage to pay for delay in commercial production are not the terms of the purchase committee. Rather it was the terms of the contract for (the) 1st phase.

But in the 1st phase (of the) contract, (the) BPDB has the obligation

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

European Parliament worried over law and order slide

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The European Parliament has expressed concern over the deteriorating law and order in Bangladesh and observed that police are unable to respond properly.

Replying to a query of Parliament Member Claude Moraes on the human rights in Bangladesh recently, EU Commissioner Chris Patten said the Operation Clean Heart failed to achieve its objectives and the human rights situation in Bangladesh deteriorated in course of 2003.

The question and answer is now

available at the official website of the European Parliament, www.europarl.eu.int.

"The commission is particularly concerned about the following developments: the law and order is deteriorating, as illustrated by endemic criminality and the inability of the police to respond in an appropriate manner. The nexus between the police, criminals and certain politicians is particularly worrying," Patten said.

He said in the absence of progress on the implementation of a 1997 peace agreement, tribal tensions

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

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OBITUARY

Alhaj Md. Fazlur Rahman, former Director (Agricultural Extension), Dept. of Agriculture, Govt. of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, died yesterday, the 7th December 2003 at Samorita Hospital because of old age complications (Inallillahi rajeun). He was 78. Late Mr. Rahman was the brother-in-law of the Chairman of Bashundhara Group and father of the Chief Executive Officer of Meghna Cement Mills Ltd. (An enterprise of Bashundhara Group).

He was buried yesterday in their family graveyard at Monipuri Para after Asr prayer. The deceased left behind his wife, two sons, brothers, sisters and innumerable friends and well-wishers.

The *Qulkhwani* of the deceased will be held on Thursday 11th December, 2003 after Asr Prayer at the Residence at Monipuri Para, Dhaka. All the relatives and well-wishers are requested to attend the *Qulkhwani*.

We express our deep condolence on his sad demise and pray to the Almighty Allah for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

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- Bachelor or Arts in English with Honors [4 Years] [Total Cost: Tk. 1,06,720 - 1,26,400/-]
- Bachelor of Laws (LLB) with Honors [4 Years] [Total Cost: Tk. 1,28,302 - 1,53,400/-]
- Bachelor of Laws (LLB) [2 Years] [Total Cost: Tk. 64,000/-]
- Master of English (Preliminary & Final) [Total Cost for Final - 44,000/-, Preliminary & Final - 66,400/-]
- Master of Bank Management (MBM) [Total Cost: Tk. 1,28,500/-]
- Master of Business Administration (MBA) - Regular [Total Cost: Tk. 1,16,000/-] - Executive [Total Cost: Tk. 88,500/-]

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