

Over 300 acres of CPA land occupied

ABDULLAH - AL MAHMUD
Over 300 acres of land of Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) has been lying under illegal occupation. It has 2302.84 acres of land excluding 97 acres, now under the control of Bangladesh Railway and 117 acres of alluvial land at Mazherchar. With 594 acres of the total land being gravelly or sandy, CPA has 1708.63 acres of land for setting up different installations or other purposes.

But, of the usable lands, CPA has only 952.93 acres under its direct possession while some 307 acres under illegal occupation of different government, semi government, non-government organisations and individual encroachers, said sources at CPA. CPA magistracy recovered some 80 acres of valuable land, out of over 150 acres, from the encroachers during its eviction drives in the recent years. The magistracy in a drive

recovered 22.775 acres of land from the encroachers at Laldiar Char of Patenga last year. Later, the recovered land was leased out for installation of container freight station, supply base station, Inland Container Depot (ICD) or port shipping related industries to private sector on Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) basis. Besides, the magistracy also recovered 23 acres of land, out of 97 acres under the occupa-

tion of Bangladesh Railway, in September 2004. Of the land, some 14 acres was used for rehabilitating the families affected following acquisition of land for construction of New Mooring Container Terminal (NCT). Non-recovery of 23 acres of land from railway might have delayed the NCT project by several years, sources said. At present CPA has some 72 acres of its land in illegal possession of different firms and

local encroachers. Of them, 64 acres are at old airport adjoining Laldiar Char, sources said. It will launch a drive to recover rest of the land at Laldiar Char soon, sources said. Different trade union organisations and GBA of Chittagong port have also occupied around two acres of land setting up structures to house offices, libraries or clubs. To recover the land, CPA has planned to relocate these organisations to a multistoried building instead of evicting

them. An initiative was also taken to set up the multi-story building in 2002, in this regard. Site plan of the building is under process for approval, sources said. A total of 232 acres of land is under the capture of different government and semi-government organisations or agencies. Of them, Department of Forest has occupied the highest quantity of 75.70 acres of land under coastal afforestation

programme at Mazher Char. Chittagong district administration is the second in the race occupying 72.28 acres of land --- 72 acres for a Guchchha Gram project at Mazher Char and 0.28 acres (Rahmat Building) at Sadarghat Manoharkhali area. Besides, Bangladesh Navy using over 59 acres of land illegally at different areas of south Halishahar, south Patenga and north Patenga.

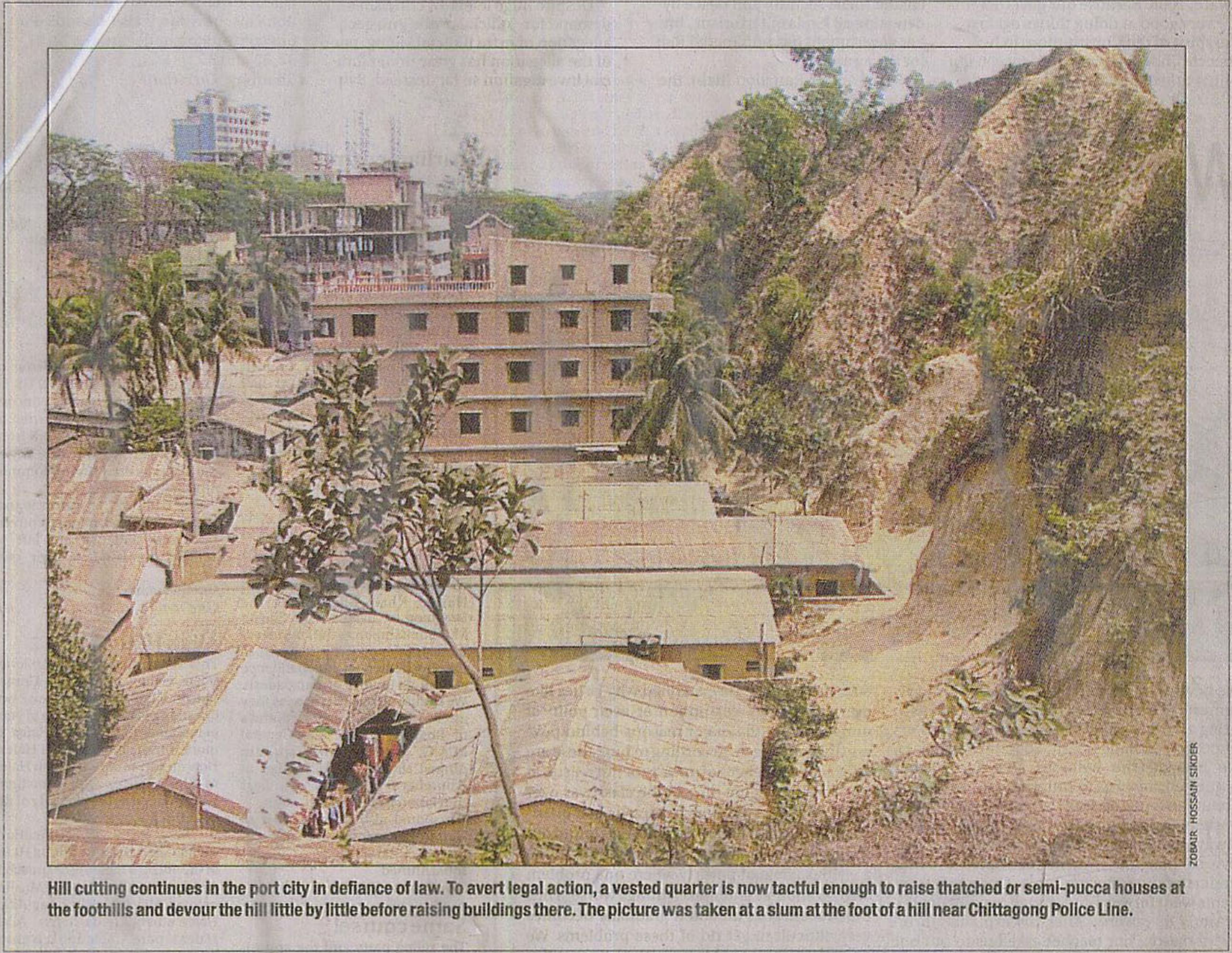
Bangladesh Railway is the fourth in the race keeping Agrabad Debha (lake) on 16.16 acres of land under its capture at Goshiledanga, CPA sources said. Bangladesh Water Development Board occupied 5.51 acres of land at different areas of south Patenga, port and Rangadia while Chittagong City Corporation 0.053 acres at Madhyam (middle) Halishahar, they said.

Negligence clouds future of Khagrachhari Govt College

JASIM MAJUMDER, Khagrachhari
Sheer negligence of the authorities concerned forces Khagrachhari Government College to lie in a most miserable condition for decades. Shortage of teachers hampers proper education in the district level college while lack of facilities deprives students of all sorts of co-curriculum activities as well. Besides, absence of dormitory added a lot of suffering to the students as well as the teachers. With as many as 29 posts lying vacant since long, the college is left with only 19 teachers to provide education to some 1,000 students. There are two teachers out of four in English, one teacher out of four in Bangla, one teacher out of four in Economics, one teacher out of four in Sociology, two teachers out of four in political science, one teacher out of four in philosophy, two teachers out of four in History, two teachers

out of four in Management, one teacher out of four in Accounting, two teachers out of three in Physics, two teachers out of three in Chemistry, two teachers out of four in Biology and two teachers out of four posts in Mathematics department. "Shortage of teachers seriously hampers our study and very often we are to sit idle with no teacher to take our classes," said Rubel Dey, a student of intermediate first year. An initiative was taken six years ago to introduce honours courses in management, sociology, history and political science in the college, sources said. An academic building was constructed and money deposited to meet the requirements to introduce honours courses in 1998-2000, sources added. Besides, the college does not have any dormitory forcing the students as well as teachers to undergo a lot of trouble while traveling from different far-flung areas of the

forest clad hilly district with poor transport facilities. There is no hall room or auditorium at the college for the students to hold cultural programmes or in-door games. The college is situated on 12 acres of land without any playground. With three big ditches and pit-bogs on three sides, the college premises appear as a marshy land. A section of local people are using the ditches and pit-bogs as for fish farm when the authorities turned a blink eye to the illegal practice. The teachers and the students said Zila Parishad Chairman Nakkhatra Lal Dev Barmon assured of filling up the ditches in 2003. But, nothing has been done in this regard so far, they added. "When a college needs to offer all sorts of facilities, including IT, to help the students keep pace with the present day competitive world we are lagging far behind," said Principal Bodhyi Satta Dewan.



Hill cutting continues in the port city in defiance of law. To avert legal action, a vested quarter is now tactful enough to raise thatched or semi-pucca houses at the foothills and devour the hill little by little before raising buildings there. The picture was taken at a slum at the foot of a hill near Chittagong Police Line.

theweekthatwas

BLAST solves 97 disputes

The regional unit of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) in Chittagong has filed around 356 cases and solved 97 disputes through shalish (arbitration) last year.

BLAST coordinator Advocate Rezaul Karim Chowdhury told this at a meeting of its advisory committee on Wednesday at its office at Zila Parishad Bhavan with Advocate Subash Chandra Lala in the chair. Speakers at the meeting discussed different aspects of law and trial activities.

The meeting also discussed at length important issues on public affairs like low salary and harassment of tea labourers by the owners in the tea sector. Labour leader Tapan Datta, Chittagong University teacher Prof Dr Hamida Banu, veteran revolutionary Binod Bihary Chowdhury, writer Begum Mustari Shafi, Ranjit Kumar

Chowdhury and Aftabur Rahman Jafri spoke at the meeting.

BGMEA crash programme begins

Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters

Association (BGMEA) has launched a three-month crash programme aiming at checking fire accidents and casualties in the garment factories in the port city on April 1.

BGMEA began the programme to create awareness among the workers and train them on how to escape safely during the fire incidents at different factories in Chittagong.

To mark the launching of the programme, a discussion was held at Agrabad BGMEA Bhaban.

Speakers at the meeting underscored the need for proper use of fire extinguishers and eradication of fire scare to avert stampede during the fire incidents.

BGMEA Director ANM Saif Uddin, also chairman of Chittagong Regional Standing Committee on Labour and Fire, will supervise the crash programme to be monitored jointly by BGMEA and Fire Service and Civil Defence, Chittagong region.

Fire Service Chittagong regional Deputy Director Rashedul Hasan Majumder will be the director of the crash programme, sources said.

Reforms in political parties demanded

Eminent economist and president of Sushashoner Jonyo Nagorik (SUJON) Prof Mozaffer Ahmad demanded reforms in political parties side by side the election commission and the caretaker government.

He said the caretaker government is not essential at all if the political parties ensure accountability, trans-

parency and responsibility. "The political parties must reform their nomination process, otherwise a neutral caretaker government or an independent election commission will not be able to hold a free, fair and credible election," Prof Mozaffer said while exchanging views with the local journalists at the Public Administration Training Centre (PATC), regional office, at city's Askerdighirpar on Friday evening.

SUJON Chittagong President Prof Sekander Hayat Khan presided over the meeting while its General Secretary Dr Badiul Alam Mazumder and Advocate Akhter Kamal were present.

Earlier, a workshop on different issues on national election with participation of SUJON activists was held. Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, Prof Fazlul Karim and columnist Abul Momen were present at the workshop.

Secretary: Shamsul Huda Mintu of the news agency Abash and Publicity and Publication Secretary: Ratan Kanti Debashis of the Daily Purbokone.

Kamal Uddin Khokan of the Daily Khabar and Dev Prashad Das Deb of the Bangladesh Observer were elected executive committee members. Out of 193, 182 voters cast their votes.

TIC launches course on art, culture

Theatre Institute of Chittagong (TIC) conducted a three-day training course on art, culture, fine arts, theatre and Tagore song with a view to enhancing efficiency of those who are interested in the creative branches of art and culture.

Chittagong City Corporation Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury inaugurated the courses at a ceremony on Thursday with eminent sociologist Dr Anupam Sen in the chair.

TIC director Ahmed Iqbal Haider and artist Shila Momen spoke on the occasion.

Mohiuddin in his speech said TIC can play a vital role in the society upholding the rich cultural heritage of our country. He assured the organisers of developing the infrastructure for the improvement of cultural sector.

The training course on stage tactics, including technical concept and application of set, light, costume design and make-up, began on March 31.

A special training course, both theoretical and practical, on fine arts, history of arts, aesthetic, drawing, sketch, watercolour and oil painting are also included in the programme.

Besides, a seven-day training course on 'Tagore song' conducted by Shila Momen began on March 30.

Shahid, Reaz CUJ president, secy

The biennial election-2006 of Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) was held at the Chittagong Press Club (CPC) Bhavan on Thursday.

Shahidul Alam of the Daily Khabar and Reaz Haider Chowdhury of the Daily Purbokone were elected president and general secretary respectively.

Nuruddin Ahmad got the highest 102 votes in the post of treasurer.

Other office-bearers are Vice-President: SM Ibrahim of the Daily Suprabhat Bangladesh, Joint Secretary: Nirupam Das Gupta of the Daily Sangbad, Organising

Secretary: Shamsul Huda Mintu of the news agency Abash and Publicity and Publication Secretary: Ratan Kanti Debashis of the Daily Purbokone.

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Fisheries minister distributes loan

Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al Noman said the government has launched various pro-people programmes, including interest free loan and distribution of goats, for the unemployed and distressed people to make them self-reliant.

He was addressing a function to distribute interest free loan among the poor at Fringibazar in the port city under the 'Fringibazar Social Welfare Programme-1' on Friday. Bistaran, a local club, organised the function. Noman gave Tk 5,000 each as loan among the 36 distressed people of the area under the programme.

He advised the loan recipients to use it in income-generating activities. He said they can get a bigger amount of loan if they repay it timely.

Bistaran President Shah Alam chaired the function. Social Welfare Office executives Omar Faruq, Rafiq Ahmad, MA Halim, Maksud Ahmed Sarder and Abdul Hai were present.



Children present Brinda Abritti (group recitation) from Rashed Rouf's rhymes and poems at a function organised by Bhodhon at the Chittagong Shilpakala Academy auditorium on Friday.