

Motijheel in downtown was built during the Mughal period. During the time there was a big Mahal for Mirja Mohammad which housed a large pond known as Sukaku Mahal's pond. The area was later named Motijheel. A mazar called Shahjahan's mazar where fairs were organised existed. Motijheel and Dilkhusha gardens were in the same place earlier. The road dividing the two places was constructed during the British rule.

Govt land occupied without registration

TAWFIQUE ALI

Jamiatul Mudarreseen, an association of Madrasah teachers, possesses 8.10 bighas of prime public land in the city's Mohakhali commercial area without registering the deed of lease for the past 25 years, according to Rajuk sources.

The organisation has not obtained an approved plan from Rajdhani Unnyan Kartipakkhya (Rajuk) for construction of any of the structures on the premises, said Rajuk sources.

Jamiatul Mudarreseen was allocated two plots -- 54/A and 54/B on January 12, 1983 and March 13, 1985 respectively from Rajuk to construct a mosque and conduct other religious activities, shows Rajuk records.

Though the land is said to be commercial, it was allotted to Jamiatul Mudarreseen and Masjid-e-Gausul-Azam free of cost considering public interest, Rajuk sources said, but Jamiatul Mudarreseen has been using the land for commercial purposes as well.

"Jamiatul Mudarreseen has not yet settled the registration of deed of lease of the land nor has got the plan approved by Rajuk for any construction on the land," informed Rajuk authorities in a public notice on June 13.

Jamiatul Mudarreseen manages the Gausul-Azam mosque.

Meanwhile, the Jamiatul has illegally rented out a portion of the land to a bank and built a library complex without Rajuk's approval, the notice read.

"The fact that the deed is not

registered implies that possession of the land is unlawful," said a top official of Rajuk.

"It deliberately avoided registering the deed, as terms and conditions would be specified and the organisation would be bound to abide by them," said the official.

Senior president of Jamiatul Mudarreseen AMM Bahauddin said that the deed has not been registered because Rajuk did not

out, Bahauddin said: "We rented out a portion of the premises to bear various expenses to run the mosque and Jamiatul Mudarreseen's establishment costs."

When asked whether he was allowed to do so, he said: "In practice things differ from what is on paper."

Rajuk compromises with the commercial value of a plot and make allocations aiming to serve

Senior president of Jamiatul Mudarreseen says

Q: Why have you not registered lease deed in 25 years?

A: It has been Rajuk's indecision in this regard that has delayed the registration. We have written to them a number of times for registration.

Q: What is your response to the allegation that Jamiatul has not paid even the nominal fees for the land?

A: Initially we got the land free of cost. But later BNP government levied a certain price. We argued our position with the government on fixing the new price.

Q: As per the rules, can you rent out a portion of the land meant for non-commercial purposes?

A: In practice things are always different from what is written on paper. Who will pay for our establishment costs?

Q: Why have you not included a representative from Rajuk in the management committee?

A: I am not aware of any such requirement.

require us to do so though we wrote to the government authorities a number of times. We finally wrote to Rajuk two years ago."

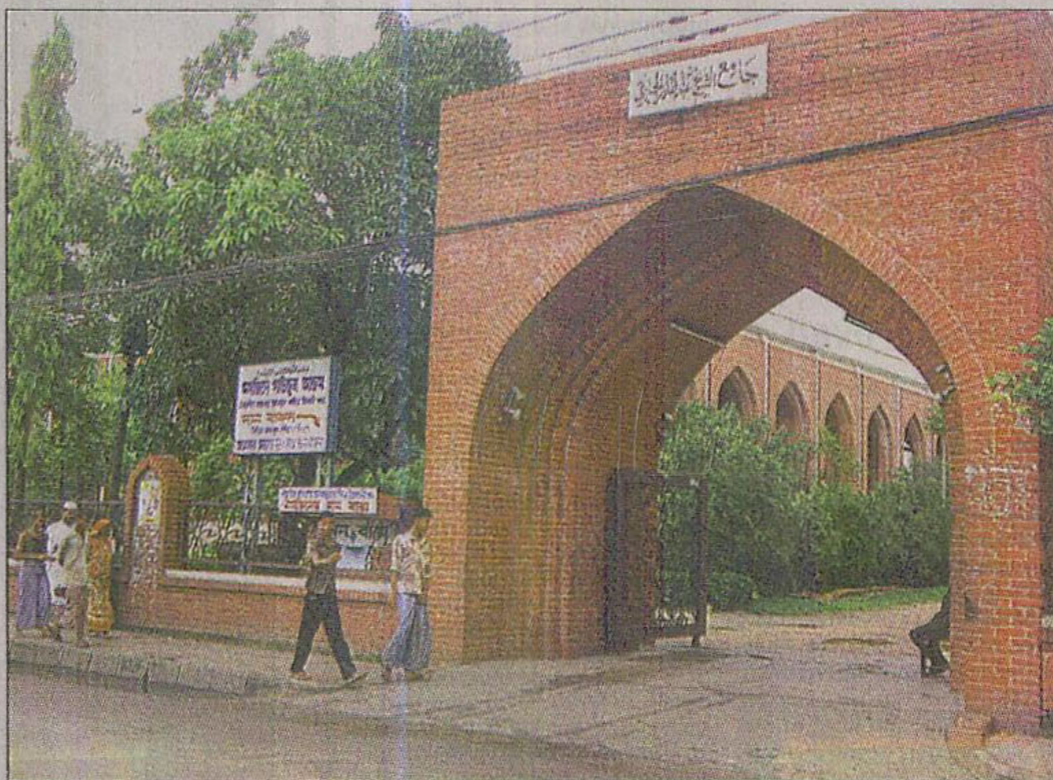
"They did not make any attempt to register the lease deed at all," said KAM Harun, the Rajuk chairman. "There is nothing to write to Rajuk, the lessees have to get the deed registered on their own," he said.

Regarding renting the land

certain public interests like schools, hospitals and mosques, said another Rajuk official.

"In such cases, the organisation that enjoys this benefit is required to have Rajuk representation in the management and use of land," he said. "But the management of Jamiatul has no Rajuk representation," he added.

When asked why Rajuk has not yet taken any action to regularise the possession and



use of the land, Rajuk chairman said: "No action has been apparently taken because of religious sentiments involved with the establishment. We are sympathetic to issues related to mosques."

But Rajuk very recently filed a case against Jamiatul Mudarreseen on charge of grabbing additional 16.42 kathas of land illegally encroaching on the Gulshan-Banani Lake.

When asked why Rajuk had been silent for 25 years in addressing the anomalies in registration of lease deed, the chairman said that he was not aware of the details as it took place long ago. "I will now look into the matter," he said.

"The terms and conditions are mentioned in the lease deed and

as the deed is not registered, the lessee is not obliged to abide by rules as to how the land should be utilised," Harun said.

As a consequence of the anomaly in land allotment, there was a major audit objection against the then Rajuk chairman Humayun Khadem, said another source.

Khadem's retirement benefits have not yet been settled due to the objection. Financial benefits of all other members of the approval committee of the said plots too are stuck because of the same reason.

Those from whom the land was acquired are still fighting arbitration cases against Rajuk expressing their dissatisfaction with compensation, said sources at Rajuk.

According to Rajuk's present-

day land value, the market price of 8.10 bighas in the said area is Tk170 crore at the rate of Tk 1 crore per katha, said a Rajuk official.

"There is no use in talking about land value in today's context, as the situation was different 25 years ago," said Bahauddin.

He said that the land was originally allotted free of cost. The then president HM Ershad himself ordered the land allotment in favour of the mosque and Jamiatul Mudarreseen.

But the BNP government during its previous tenure determined a price on the land. Following it, "we submitted our argument to public works ministry explaining our stand," said Bahauddin.

city express

The latest crop of quotes from the city's press -- words worth repeating, we feel, for their humour, insight or sheer outrageousness. Star City does not necessarily support the opinions expressed in this column.

"Not me... It is Khaleda Zia who has relations with Golam Azam, and people know this"

-- Sheikh Hasina

Awami League President and Leader of the Main Opposition. Said at the parliament after a BNP legislator Moshir Rahman made some derogatory comments about her, on Monday. Source: The Daily Star

"Please don't hurt us. We're just carrying out our bosses' orders. Forgive us and let us go"

-- A policeman

Pleaded as about 500 policemen, who were deployed to clear the Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Kanchpur during the 14-party opposition combine's Dhaka siege programme, found themselves surrounded by over 20,000 demonstrators, on Sunday, June 11. Source: The Daily Star

"If I have done nothing then people should not vote me"

-- M Saifur Rahman

Finance Minister. Said in an interview with Prothom Alo, on Tuesday. Source: Prothom Alo

"I warn you not to take my photo. I will talk with Falu Bhai"

-- Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu

BNP MP. Said to a cameraman of ntv, a private channel owned by Mosaddeq Ali, when he was filming scenes of attacks on the students of Leather Technology College, on Sunday. Source: Prothom Alo

"We will terminate our activities if there is corruption. We hope that the government would institute policies for zero tolerance towards corruption"

-- Carsten Staur

State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark. Told The Daily Star in an exclusive interview that the official policy of Denmark is not to tolerate any corruption, on Thursday. Source: The Daily Star

"Prices of essentials will come down in two months, because tariff has been reduced to many items in this year's budget"

-- Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan

LRD Minister and Secretary General, BNP. Said at a roundtable on budget organised by Bangladesh Jatiyo Party (BJP), a ruling coalition ally, on Saturday. Source: Prothom Alo

"How many times do we have to beg the finance minister for the bridge?"

-- Farid Choudhury

Former president, Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industries (CCCI). Said while criticising the government for delaying the construction of the third Karnaphuli bridge, at a roundtable jointly organised by The Daily Star and CCCI in Chittagong, on Saturday. Source: The Daily Star

CRASH LANDING



SK ENAMUL HAQ

A billboard fell on top of a car while it was refuelling at a filling station during strong gales that swept the city last Friday night.

Power crisis cause traffic signal trouble

RAIHAN SABUKTAGIN

Frequent power failure and careless road digging have given rise to the malfunctioning of the traffic signal system, said officials of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and the traffic wing of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

"DCC installed traffic signals at 68 points under the Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP), funded by the World Bank towards the end of 2004; but there are hundreds of other points that warrant the installation of automated traffic signals," said one of DCC's traffic engineers.

Signals at 59 points, out of 68, have a power backup system for two hours through an instant power supply system, he added.

The backup devices need to be recharged for a minimum of

five hours to supply power during outage for two hours. But the power outages are so frequent that the devices cannot be recharged for five hours, gradually leading to a short life span of the battery.

Another high official of the department blamed the Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa), Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (Desa) and the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTB) for their careless attitude while digging roads, resulting in disconnection of signal system cables.

He said cables that connect signal posts to the control panel are regularly stolen, adding to disruption in the system.

A police constable at Agargaon said thieves usually take chances when there were no policemen around the posts.

Another traffic constable at the Press Club crossing told Star City that three constables at the crossing maintain traffic and one among them is engaged in keeping the rickshaws off the VIP roads.

He said it is difficult for two men to manage traffic at such a busy crossing but "we are helpless".

Expressing frustration the policeman said: "Signal lights help us maintain traffic but it works little for us as most of the time they are out of order".

A traffic-engineering department official from DCC said about 20 traffic signal posts had been damaged after their installation because of road accidents. He said the authorities concerned failed to collect compensation from the owners or drivers of the vehicles that caused the damage.

Little baby awaits her fate

WAHIDA MITU

The infant smiled in her sleep. Her tiny hands and legs moved as if she was trying to break free -- as if she was choking inside the incubator. It was not yet time for her to come out into the world, but she had no luck to be ensconced in her mother's womb. She missed the warmth, the protection, and the affection of her mother.

Born prematurely at six and a half months, she weighed only 700 grams. The length of her entire body is just 36-centimetres (cm) and the circumference of her cranium only 26 cm.

"The weight of a new born is normally above 2.5 kg (2500 grams) and length is 50 cm with a head circumference of 35 cm," said Dr Abdur Matin, Consultant Paediatrician, in charge of the baby's treatment.

She is now at Pancare Hospital,

Dhanmondi under the care of Dr Matin and Professor MAK Azad Chowdhury, Head of Neonatal Department, Dhaka Shishu Hospital.

The doctors named her Shuchi (meaning 'purity' in Bengali). She was brought to the hospital on May 27 around 11:30 pm immediately after she was born by a middle-aged couple who introduced them as the baby's maternal uncle and grandmother. The infant was wrapped in a piece of cloth.

Other than these two, a few others came along with the baby. Their attire and mobile phones showed that they were from a well-off family, said the hospital authority.

They were looking for an incubator and finding none in Dhaka Shishu Hospital they came to Pancare. The hospital authorities informed them about the high cost of using an incuba-

tor they replied that money was not a problem as the child's father lived in Australia.

As the hospital staff were busy arranging an incubator they ran away leaving the baby behind.

Later, Families for Children (FFC), a non-government organisation (NGO), took the responsibility of the baby and its treatment.

FFC began its operation in 1972 by arranging adoption of war children to foreign couples. They opened their own children home in Dhaka in 1975 with only 12 children. Their main objective was to help abandoned, destitute and malnourished children.

This organisation arranges adoptions to Bangladeshi couples also.

"We have arranged adoption of 3 children to 3 Bangladeshi couples to date. The adoption arrangement of another child is in progress," said Shikha Biswas,

assistant project manager of FFC.

"If any Bangladeshi couple is interested we will arrange adoption of Shuchi too," she added.

She said that they have a limited fund. Shuchi's responsibility will increase their expenditure, as she will need extra care including a single room, a room heater, and a constant nurse.

But as the organisation works for destitute children they have no other option but to take her.

"If we have financial support from others we will be able to save her," said Shikha.

Doctors are hopeful about the baby's physical improvement.

"The condition of the baby is better now. She has already gained 100 gram in three weeks," said Dr. Munira Rahman.

month," Dr Rahman said.

Although Shuchi's consultations are free of cost and the hospital authorities have commissioned a 20 percent reduction on her treatment, costs of her daily treatment is Tk 4,000.

"We did not shift her to Dhaka Shishu Hospital though the charges there are low," said Shikha Biswas from FFC. "She receives better treatment here and is under a very good care," he said.

As time goes by, FFC is finding the expenditure too high to meet. Anybody willing to help this baby can contact in the following addresses or make kind donations to: Pancare Hospital or Abdul Matin & Munira Rahman, account no- 01-2303132-01, Standard Chartered Bank, Dhaka or Families For Children, 0152405344, 8918197-8 or email to: shikaffc@citechco.net or Munira Rahman, 01199136059.



Shuchi sleeping in the incubator oblivious to the events since her birth.