

ZIA UDDYAN

# Welcome relief in the midst of daily monotony

IMRUL HASAN

Zia Uddyan, previously named as Chandrima Uddyan, is attracting an increasing number of health conscious people and those looking for an open place to while away a nice evening.

Visitors of ages ranging from five to 65 years come here from different places of the city and from all over the country. Rukan Thakur, from Sarail, Brahmonbaria, came here with his wife to celebrate his daughter's birthday.

"There is no such open space in Dhaka to celebrate her birthday. We have come here in the morning and wish to spend the whole day here," said Thakur.

Shamed Ali, a 60-year-old man from Thakurgaon, was very excited to see the ambience of the Uddyan.

"I came to know about the Uddyan from my relatives and through the electronic media. Now I am delighted to visit the place myself," said Ali.

The principal attraction of the Zia Uddyan is the bridge, which connects the main road and the park, according to visitors. But another attraction is the Mazar of Shahid President Ziaur Rahman, around which the park has been designed. The glass roof of the Mazar is quite an addition to the park's attraction. Besides, the fountain in the lake and the acoustics with it has added to the beauty of the park.

"This place is an architectural beauty and its lighting system is very attractive," said Ferdousi Kaly, a student of Lalmatia Women's College.

She went there along with her friends to free herself from the monotony of city life and breathe in some fresh air.

"We can break away from the din of our daily lives to find some greenery, open space and a pollution-free atmosphere in the park," said Kaly.

Diabetic patients and those suffering from cardiac diseases come here in the early hours or in the evening to take a walk or do light exercise. Satya

Narayan Chakma, an official of Australian Embassy, takes his wife there every evening as she is predisposed to cardiac diseases.

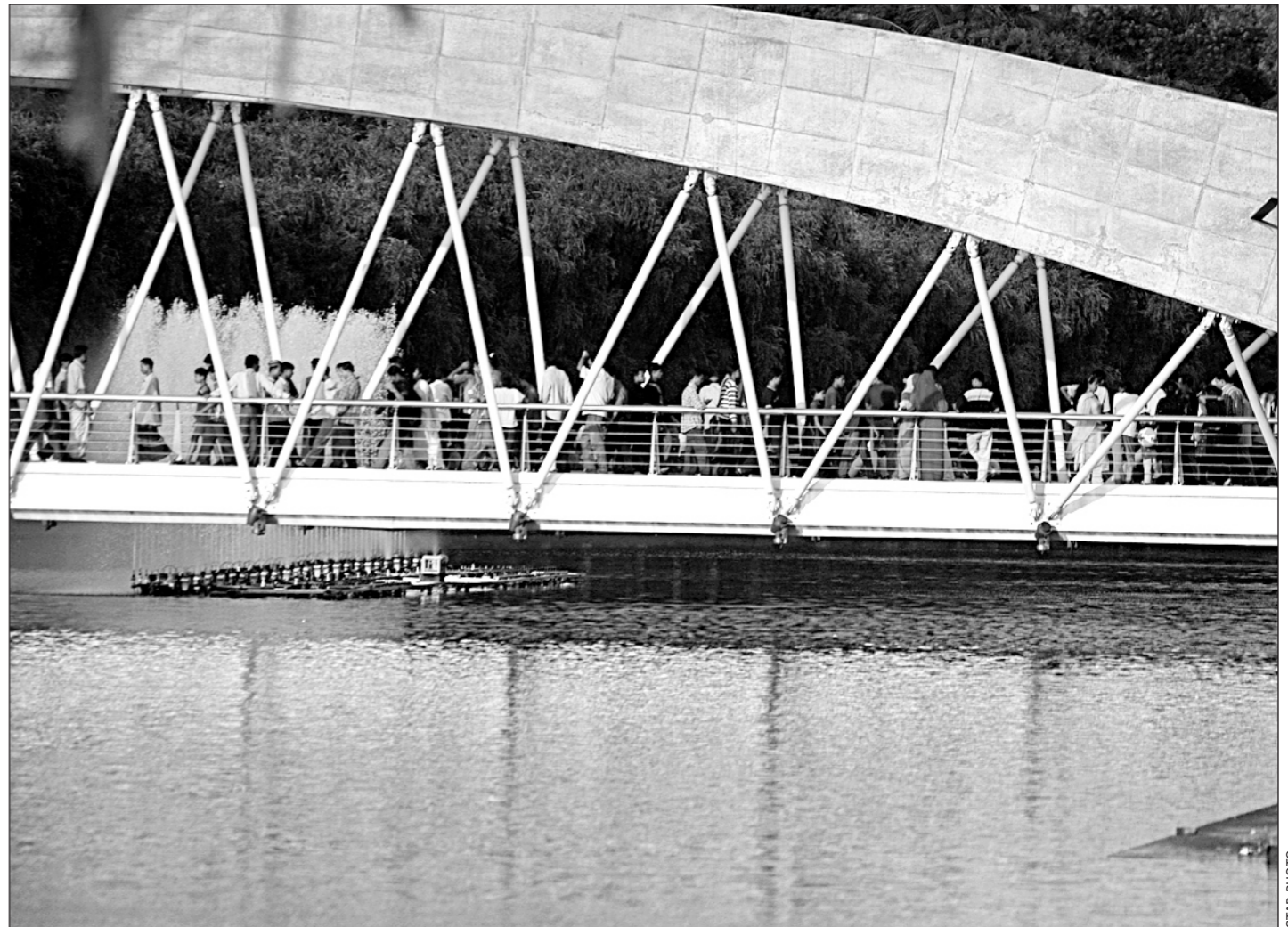
"The atmosphere of this place is better than those of the Ramna Park and the Dhanmondi Lake and that's why we chose it," said Chakma.

It is not always good time in the Zia Uddyan. Visitors are often found falling victims to pick-pockets and vagabonds roaming the area. Beggars and vendors add to the nuisance.

"We cannot enjoy ourselves freely because of them. Police should control this," said Sharmin Jaman, a resident of Lalbagh.

"It is very hard for us to control the situation due to huge number of visitors during weekends and holidays. Visitors themselves should be vigilant," an on-duty police officer said when asked about the vendors and vagabonds.

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The bridge at Zia Uddyan is one of the major attractions for the visitors.

UCEP

## An opportunity for the unprivileged

SHARMIN MEHRIBAN

Attendance among underprivileged children, both in general and technical schools, has increased according to sources at Underprivileged Children's Educational Programs (UCEP).

Though the records do not specify the rates at the city's UCEP schools the overall attendance and completion rates at the secondary level at its 46 schools and training centres are said to be at 94 percent and 96 percent respectively. The attendance rate at the primary level is said to be at 96 percent with a repetition rate of 2 percent. No dropouts were included.

Originating in 1972 and founded by Lindsay Allan Cheyne, a social worker from New Zealand, UCEP targets urban poor working children who have no opportunities for formal education. The age group is 10 plus for girls and 11 plus for boys, all within the adolescent stage.

"We focus on the adolescent group because they form the majority in the underprivileged

sector of society," said Mokhesur Rahman, a programme officer at UCEP.

Currently there are 14 schools, two technical schools and four Para Trade Centres in Dhaka, located around the working or residential areas of the children such as slums and industrial zones. The schools operate in two semesters

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annually from basic education to Grade VIII so that the students can complete two grades in a single year.

The curricula and syllabi of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) are followed in an abridged and modified form. The fees are Tk 20 per semester at the general schools and Tk 50 per

semester at the technical schools. The students at the technical schools are also given a monthly stipend of Tk 250 to cover additional expenses like transport.

"We charge the fees to inspire accountability and commitment in the students," said Rahman. The teachers are provided training that combines

teaching methodology and social work, particularly behaviour towards underprivileged children.

Reaching Out to School Children (ROSC) is a government-backed program for mass primary education up to Class V that was implemented last year for underprivileged children but had more

dropouts, Rahman said.

Rahman compared the strategy of UCEP with that of the (ROSC) while citing reasons for increasing attendance and completion rate in UCEP schools.

"The reason for the ROSC dropouts was that the children perceived no future after completing education. But at

UCEP, the general school graduates can enrol at the technical schools or para trade centres that involve training on trades based on market demand, on-the-job training and linkage with other technical schools, employers and communities for further job opportunities," said Rahman.

Small and medium enterprise

(SME) credit programmes are also available for self-employment, offering loans at an annual interest rate of 15 percent, he added.

Though UCEP is funded by external organisations like the Royal Danish embassy (DANIDA), Department for International Development (DFID), Royal Norwegian Embassy (RNE), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and Save the Children Sweden-Denmark (SCSD), no government assistance has yet been offered.

"We will implement a pilot project in collaboration with the government, beginning from January 2007, in Integrated General and Vocational Education (IGVE)," said Rahman.

Speaking to some of the students at the technical schools, this correspondent noticed more enthusiasm among the female trainees than the males.

"I will be honoured if people read books which I will print," said Tania, who enrolled at the printing unit after graduating from a UCEP school at Azimpur. She also cited

encouragement from her single mother and does not intend marrying early. Kulsum, a fellow trainee, also echoed similar views.

"We have no leisure as we have to do housework," said Kulsum.

Farouque, a male trainee, said that he is learning printing 'just to get a job'. However he said that he prefers to spend his leisure in reading storybooks rather than idle gossip.

Responding to a question, Humayun Kabir Khan, the divisional coordinator, said that no provisions are available for sex workers or children of sex workers.

"Such children require separate lodging, which we cannot provide, partly for their own security and partly because they could affect other children. Many guardians also object to the presence of such children besides their own," he said.

He also said the technical schools do not accept entrants beyond the age of 20 as they could cause adjustment problems.

## Facing the vicious

FROM PAGE 21

"Earlier I used to work in Kakrail as a floating sex worker and were faced with many harassments," said Razia.

"But later as I left the job and joined the organisation working for the betterment of the sex workers, the outlook of the same persons who earlier harassed me changed and now they honour my present job and me as well," she added.

Phulon, who pulls rickshaw in the guise of a man, said that the day she was forced into sex trade, she thought of escaping from its grip. "I left the profession eight years ago with the first opportunity I had but found no other way to survive until one day I started to pull a rickshaw. Other than this job I am working as cashier in Ulka Nari Sanghya," said Phulon.

However, not all women are as lucky as Razia and Phulon. Rokeya, 40, was also forced into prostitution at her childhood. She has a daughter whom she kept outside the brothel at her mother's residence to guide her into a normal life, which she herself was unable to get. But as Rokeya was a sex worker, the hood-

lums continued harassing her daughter. Rokeya lost the battle to keep her daughter away as she was forced to enlist her young daughter into the trade.

Faced with intimidation, physical torture and deprivation on a regular basis most of the street-level sex workers now have learned to defend their rights to some extent. But they are still far away from achieving many of their goals related to human rights. They are now demanding one of the most fundamental rights a human being may ask for ---- the right to burial or cremation of dead workers as per social and religious norms.

## No parking

FROM PAGE 21

The piece of land is being used illegally for nearly 50 years by encroachers. As the corporation has no ownership on the land, it could not develop the area.

During a visit it was found that power and water are used illegally at the terminal.

Because of the absence of proper sanitation facility the environment of the area is degrading fast.

## health, bus services, airlines & train timing

### HOSPITALS & CLINICS

**Ahsania Mission Cancer & General Hospital**  
90808919, 8051618

**Holy Family Hospital**  
8311721-25

**Apollo Hospitals Network**  
9891680-4, 01713046884/85  
Emergency no. 9896623, 0171409000

**Islamic Bank Hospital**  
9333739

**Bangladesh Medical College & Hospital**  
9118202, 8115843

**Japan Bangladesh Friendship Hospital**  
8828855, 8827575

**Labaid Cardiac Hospital**  
8610793-8

**Central Hospital**  
9660015-19,

**Marie Stopes Clinic**  
8821874

**China Bangla Hospital (JV) Ltd**  
8913674

**Medinova Medical Services Ltd**  
8620353,

**Dhaka Medical College Hospital**  
8626812-16

**Monowara Hospital**  
8318135, 8319802

**Gana Shasthyo Kendra**  
8617208, 8617383, 8620178,

**Pangu Hospital**  
9112150, 9113041

**Greenland Hospital**  
8912663

**PG Hospital (BSMMU)**  
9614545-9, 9612550-4

**Gulshan Mother & Child Clinic**  
8822738, 8812992

### BLOOD BANK

**Bangladesh Red Crescent Blood Bank**  
9116563

**Modern Clinic & Blood Center**  
9883948

**Sandhani, Dhaka Medical College**  
9668690

### BUS SERVICES

**Drooti**  
8014563

**Eagle Paribahan**  
7101504

**Green Line Paribahan**  
9339623, 9342580, 8353005

**Hanif Enterprise**  
9120116

**Keya Paribahan**  
7101894, 7101250, 9121280

**Modern Enterprise**  
9123743

**Neptune A/C Coach Service**  
7101945, 7101951, 9123092

**Shohag Paribahan (Pvt) Ltd**  
9334152, 8316766, 8126293

**Shoukhin Paribahan**  
8014397, 9001796

**Silk Line**  
7102461

**Shyamoli Paribahan**  
9333803

### AIRLINES

**Biman Bangladesh Airlines**  
8917400-19 9560151, 9559610  
Airport Office: 8917400, Fax:8913005

**British Airways**  
8815111, Fax: 8815346,

**Cathay Pacific**  
9557117, Fax: 9562667

**Druk Air**  
9862243, 9892862,

**Emirates**  
9892801, 9885574-75

**GMG Airlines**  
8825845-9, Airport Office:  
8960404,8915699, Fax: 8826115

**Gulf Air**  
9130123-5, Airport Office: 8914573

**Indian Airlines Ltd**  
9555915, 9557813,

**Kuwait Airways**  
9115182, 9118829

### TRAIN TIMING

**Subarna Express**  
Leaves Dhaka at 4:30 pm  
Reaches Chittagong at 1-55 pm

**Mahanagar Prabhathi**  
Leaves Dhaka at 7-30 am  
Reaches Chittagong at 10-55 pm

**Mahanagar Godhuli**  
Leaves Dhaka at 3-15 pm  
Reaches Chittagong at 6-40 am

**Turna**  
Leaves Dhaka at 6-40 am  
Reaches Sylhet at 2-30 pm

**Parabat Express**  
Leaves Dhaka at 12-45 pm  
Reaches Sylhet at 9-20 pm

**Joyantika Express**  
Leaves Dhaka at 9-45 pm  
Reaches Sylhet at 6-40 am

**Upaban Express**  
Leaves Dhaka at 7-00 am  
Reaches Bahadurabad at 1-05 pm

**Tista Express**  
Leaves Dhaka at 5-00 pm  
Reaches Bahadurabad at 11-15

**Ekata Express**  
Leaves Dhaka at 8-00 pm  
Reaches Bahadurabad at 5-00 am

**Agukela Express**  
Leaves Dhaka at 9-20 pm

**Malaysia Airlines**  
9888211-20  
Airport Office: 8916953, Fax: 9890478

**PIA**  
9349293-5, Fax: 9345300

**Singapore Airlines**  
8811504-7, 9883259  
Airport Office: 8911928, Fax: 8811503

**Thai Airways**  
8314711-18, 8914343

**Virgin Atlantic Airways**  
8816324-5, Fax: 9896481

### LIBRARY & INFO-

**Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers**

**Central Public Library- 8626001-4,**  
**Shishu Academy- 9564128**  
**Shilpakala Academy- 8614673**  
**Bangla Academy- 8619550**  
**Islamic Foundation- 9550280,**  
**9556407**  
**Nazrul Institute- 9114602**  
**Ford Foundation- 8116133**  
**Alliance Francaise- 8611557**  
**Information Resource Center, The American Center - 8813440-4,**  
**9886395-9**  
**British Council- 8618867-8,**  
**8618905-7**  
**Community Development Library- 8113769, 8113604**  
**Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka- 9126525-6**  
**Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library- 8850141-2**  
**The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314**  
**Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125,**  
**8112954, 8123412**  
**Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) 9330081-4**