

FOCUS: BASHABO

Does anyone care for a children's park?

RIZANUZZAMAN LASKAR

A lone name stone hardly justifies the existence of a children's playground in Bashabo, and although it is known how crucially important the playground is to the area, authorities and residents have shown no enthusiasm in its possible development.

Inaugurated in May this year, the image of Bashabo Shishu Park does not project it as a playground and has now turned into a neglected wasteland.

"For months the ground remained unattended as scattered piles of debris and sprinkled mess of trash took over the bare ground", said a local resident. "Things worsened during the heavy rainfall of the monsoon season as the ground was strewn with slimy puddles of mud", he added.

After months of negligence, the ground was diffused with a thick layer of sand after the authorities finally decided to invest some resources for its betterment. But the inclination of the administration fell short as the work came to a halt a few days

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The space belongs to the Ministry of Housing and Public Works, who said to have regained the ownership after years of illegal possessions by slums, and are now administering the project.

Officials at the Public Works Department (PWD) were reluctant to disclose any information in this regard. "We have plans to renovate the ground and we are working on it," said a dignitary under condition of anonymity.

"Further development of the project would continue after a tender is floated for the work, which is under process right now,"

he said when asked about the cause of dilatory pace in the work.

Unofficial sources said that the allotted budget for the project is around Tk 11.5 million, although the authorities refused to comment on this information.

Called the "Choto Matth", the ground with its 75 x 60 feet of bumpy sand subsurface, still plays host to children everyday, who are left with no alternatives. Some concerned local residents expressed their disappointment over the authorities for depriving the children of a well-deserved playground with unjust deception.

"They (the children) have little say in the matter, they are just

happy to find an open space to run around. But the authorities should do something about the uneven ground," said another resident.

A local shop owner also said that the ground hosts more than just children's games and clogged rainwater. With virtually no security measures, the ground turns into a den of felonious activities at night. For these obvious reasons, local residents are apprehensive about their safety, he said.



Bashabo children's park is merely a publicity stunt with a foundation stone laid by Mirza Abbas.

DHAKA INTERNATIONAL MOBILE FAIR 2006

Into a world of new mobile phone technology

KAUSAR ISLAM AYON

The first Dhaka International Mobile Phone Fair 2006 that began

at the Bhasani Novo Theatre in the city yesterday has attracted a large number of visitors on the opening day.

Besides exhibiting latest

technologies, participants are offering special packages at discounted prices during the fair on mobile connections, handsets and accessories.

In addition, participants are also offering free handset servicing and giving the visitors chance to download ring-tones free of cost.

The Ministry of Science, Information and Communication Technology and the Bangladesh Mobile Phone Businessmen Association (BMBA) are joint organisers of the weeklong fair.

"Our main aim is to bring the all the manufacturers, dealers and marketers of hand phone sets, and

service providers under one umbrella, where people will find everything at a go," said BMBA President, Engineer Nezam Uddin.

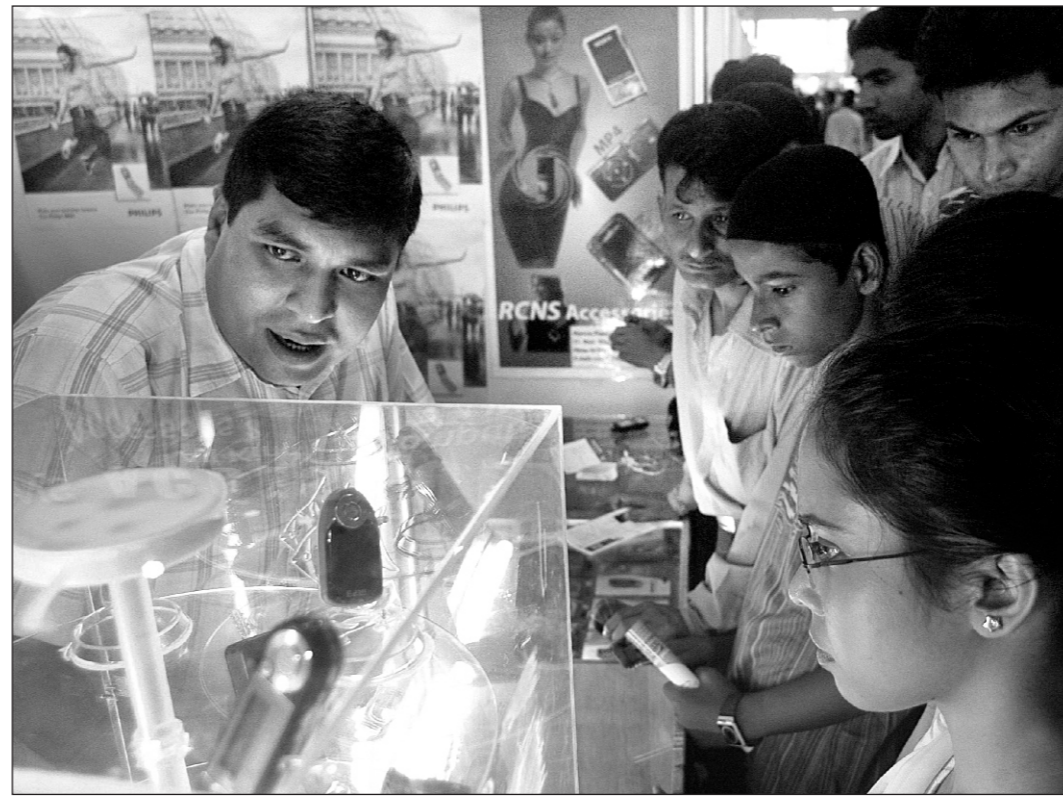
More than a hundred institutions including 28 multinational mobile phone, accessories manufacturers and cell phone service providers from home and abroad taking part in the fair.

The visitors to the fair said they have come to see for themselves the latest technologies on offer.

"The special offers during the fair will give us chance to buy things at a lower price than that existing in the market today. Another thing is that we can compare the market price and facilities," said Aminul, a visitor on the first day.

The fair will also have a seminar on contemporary issues on the mobile sector everyday.

The fair will conclude on October 17. Entry tickets are priced at Tk 20 per person.



Visitors flocked the mobile fair yesterday finding out the latest trends in mobile sets.

New labour law

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hurriedly keeping the labour fronts in the darkness. It limits the employees from taking part in trade union activities as it provides that there can be only one labour union in an entire industrial area, she added.

The government earlier agreed that it would take the opinions of the Skop into consideration in the process of making the law but it framed the law bypassing Skop, said Wazedul Islam Khan.

The Skop had identified as many as 252 inconsistencies and flaws in the draft labour law of 1994 and proposed amendments.

"But the government apparently took a position that it would not object to a correction demanded by labour representatives provided owners do not oppose it," said Zafrul Hasan, general secretary of Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal and joint secretary of Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS) and a government-nominated labour representative.

"As a result, it became impossible on the part of the labour

leaders to establish many of their demands when the government and owners turned one party in the bargain," he said.

One of the fundamental aims of framing the labour law afresh annulling 27 old ones was to have a modern law. But unfortunately, it has been another outdated law flawed with absence of adequate instruments to ensure welfare of the labourers, said legal experts.

Section 283 of the new law provides for three months' jail or a fine of Tk 5,000 or both for unjustly lay-off, discharging, dismissing or removing a workman from the job.

Reducing imprisonment in the new law to three months from six months in the previous law is a trick to keep the owners on the safe side in the event of doing injustice to workmen, said advocate Zafrul Hasan Sharif.

The provision for alternative punishment, a fine of Tk 5,000 in place of imprisonment of various terms in different sections of the law, makes the punishment provision trickily weak keeping scope for exemption of the offenders.

A workman will not be entitled to any compensation in the event

of on-the-job death if three years of service is not completed.

"There are lot of flaws and anomalies in the new labour law," said a top official of the labour ministry, who was involved in framing the law, on condition of anonymity.

Asked about inconsistencies in the law, Secretary in charge of the Ministry of Labour and Employment Syed Sujauddin Ahmed said, "I cannot respond. Submit the queries in writing and I will look into them and consult with my colleagues to make response."

Secretary of the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Md Alauddin Sardar said, "Inconsistencies in a law are supposed to be corrected in the process of vetting, but it is difficult to examine all the flaws in details because of excessive load of work."

Despite repeated attempts, State minister for Labour and Employment Amanullah Aman could not be contacted for his comments.