

DSCC continues drive against illegal shops

Hundreds torn down at Gulistan's Sundarban market

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation yesterday started demolishing 669 shops in Gulistan's Sundarban Square Market, as part of its drive against illegal shops.

The shops were built violating the main design of the market, according to DSCC.

Traders and shop owners, however, protested the DSCC move, saying that they have documents from the city corporation to operate the shops.

Sources said crores of taka were spent in underhand dealings for constructing and running the illegal shops over the years.

Not just that, a syndicate, involved in the illegal activities, constructed additional shops on the fourth floor of the market, and sold those to traders, according to market leaders.

DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh told The Daily Star that they will continue their drive and will demolish illegal shops from all DSCC markets gradually.

The city corporation on December 8 demolished several hundred illegal shops at Fulbaria Supermarket-2 in Gulistan.



Authorities are chopping down old trees along Sylhet's Airport Road. Locals are concerned about the aesthetics of the VIP road and environmental effects, and criticised authorities, saying that before deciding to cut the 20 to 45-year-old trees, they at least could've planted an equal number of saplings in their place. This photo was taken on Wednesday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Govt silence is 'like law violation': NHRC Chair

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Human Rights Commission Chairperson Nasima Begum yesterday said the government's silence in giving feedback to the commission's recommendations is similar to violating law.

Relevant law has allowed the commission to send recommendation to the government, she said, while addressing enforced disappearance, extra-judicial killing, and provision-18 of the National Human Rights Commission Act-2009 during a virtual discussion.

"I cannot give order but my request will be like an order. They have to make it effective and send me feedback. It may not happen that they will entertain all of my requests. If necessary, they will explain why they didn't do it. But they cannot remain silent," she added.

Rights group Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) organised the virtual discussion on "A Decade of NHRC: Efficacy, Existing Challenges and Opportunities."

As per provision-18 of the National Human Rights Commission Act-2009, the commission on its own initiative or through a letter can seek reports from the government in case of allegation of rights violation against law enforcement agencies or its members.

Upon receiving the report, the commission, if necessary, can send recommendation to the government on what can be done regarding the relevant issue, the provision says.

On the other hand, upon receiving the recommendation, the government within six months will inform in written to the commission regarding the steps taken on the matter, it adds.

Addressing the discussion as chief guest, Nasima Begum said not abiding by such provision of the law will be similar to violating the law.

She said the commission will bring the issue to the knowledge of the

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USING MINISTRY CARS FOR FAMILY 'How is he still holding office?'

HC questions about land secy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday (Thursday) wanted to know under what authority land secretary Md Maksudur Rahman Patwary has been holding the office and what steps have been taken against him after he confessed that his family members are using three cars of the land ministry.

The court issued a rule asking the government, Anti-Corruption Corruption and Maksudur Rahman Patwary to explain in four weeks under what authority Maksudur has been holding the office of land secretary, even after he reportedly confessed irregularities of his using cars of the ministry.

In the rule, the HC asked the government and ACC to show causes why they should not be directed to take appropriate legal action against Maksudur.

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The day Rajshahi was freed

ANWAR ALI, *Rajshahi*

Rajshahi was freed on this day, two days after the country's victory in its Liberation War.

Geias Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury Bir Bikrom, then army captain and commander of sub-sector-4 under sector-7, declared Rajshahi's freedom from the Pakistani occupation forces, hoisting the flag of independent Bangladesh at Madrassa Maidan in the afternoon of December 18, 1971, said wartime journalist Ahmed Shafi Uddin in Rajshahi.

Ahmed Shafi Uddin was the Chief Reporter of Weekly Sonar Desh at that time. Pakistani army issued 'red warrants' against all journalists of Sonar Desh forcing them to take shelter at rural hideouts. He returned to his town hideout weeks before the Victory.

"I wrote notes of the days in a diary

at that time," he said.

"Rajshahi was a dead town with eerie silence prevailing after the atrocities committed by Pakistani forces during the nine-month-long bloody war. People were still fleeing homes to avoid possible attacks by the Pakistanis," he said.

"Some freedom fighters entered the town on the evening of December 17, 1971 and others at 8pm. At 12am, Major Geias reached the town. When the freedom fighters were arriving, the Pakistani forces began falling back to Natore for their surrender," he said, quoting the notes.

On December 18 morning, Indian army, who were assisting the freedom fighters, reached the town and set up tents in Rajshahi College field, he said, reading from the diary.

"I can remember the freedom fighters were tired, unfed. I saw some

of them standing on rickshaws and shouting for food. The town's people responded to them and provided them food. Our family provided them bread and chicken curry, others offered puffed rice, thrashed rice and sweets," recalled Ahmed Shafi.

"The town's people had an outburst of emotions and celebrated that morning (December 18). The women in our house sewed the national flag cutting their wears and reshaping those like the new born country's map. People took to the streets chanting Joy Bangla," he said.

In the afternoon, a public meeting was held at Madrassa Maidan.

Politicians Ataur Rahman of Rajshahi, Mesbahul Haque Bachchu of Chapainawabganj, Shankar Govinda Chowdhury of Natore, Mainuddin Mandal of Naogaon, Azharul Islam

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MJF outraged at rape, death of Bogura child

CITY DESK

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) yesterday expressed outrage at the death of eight-year girl in Bogura district, whose body was found in the early hours of Tuesday, after brutal rape by unknown assailant(s).

Condemning the incident, MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam said: "This horrific news of rape-induced death of a minor on the Victory Day clearly demonstrates that we have miserably failed to protect women and children even after 49 years of independence."

She urged the authorities to diligently conduct investigation into the murder of the minor and bring the perpetrator(s) to justice, says a press release from the organisation.

A total of 18 rape incidents have been reported in one Bangla and two English national dailies between November 1 and 15 December. Among the victims, 13 were children, four housewives and one teenager.

Of the child victims, one was mentally-challenged and seven were madrasa students.

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Currency counterfeiting ring busted in capital

9 held; fake notes of Tk 32 lakh, Rs 20 lakh seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Detective Branch (DB) of police yesterday busted a currency counterfeiting gang in the capital's Jurain, arresting nine people and recovering fake notes of Tk 32 lakh and Rs 20 lakh.

On secret information that such gangs become active ahead of New Year, a DB team led by Assistant Commissioner Mohiuddin (Gulshan division) raided the "fake note factory" at a rented flat on Shaheed Shahadat Hossain Road in the area.

Law enforcers seized Tk 4.05 lakh during the drive, he said.

Detectives also seized a huge amount of special papers, safety yarn, paints, chemicals, laptops, printers, lamination machines, cutters and other materials, which were enough to make crores of counterfeit taka and rupees, said a DB official.

The arrestees are Liakot Hossain alias Zakir, Badal Khan, Jahangir Alam, Malek Faraji alias Sagar, Shihab, Jasim, Jamal Hossain, Obaidul and Zakir's wife Momtaz.

There are dozens of cases against almost all the arrestees in different districts of the

country, said police.

Moshiur Rahman, deputy commissioner of Gulshan division of DB, said Zakir is the key person behind this illegal business.

Obaidul and Jasim used to make the special papers and security yarn for the gang. Badal is a dealer in Dhaka, Savar and Manikganj and Shihab in the capital while Sagar in Narayanganj and Gazipur.

Jamal is the main supplier of counterfeit notes in the southern region including Barishal.

"They have a strong network through which they sell such fake currencies in markets and shopping centres," Mashiur added.

Police said various members of the gang used to make counterfeit money by hiding in Bagerhat, Chapainawabganj, Rajshahi, Chattogram, Dhaka, Narayanganj and Gazipur.

Mashiur said filing of a case is under process and police will seek remand for the arrestees to question them. They are trying to arrest rest of the gang members, he added.

112 doctors for 86,998 prisoners

IG prisons tells HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The office of Inspector General of Prisons yesterday submitted a report to the High Court, saying that there are a total of 112 physicians for providing treatment to around 87,000 prisoners at 68 prisons across the country.

The report also said 29 posts of doctors are now vacant. The prisons can accommodate 40,664 prisoners, whereas the number was 86,998 till August 27 last year.

The government has appointed 102 doctors on deputation for the prisons after November 5 last year when there were only 10 physicians for the treatment of all the prisoners, the report said.

The office IG prisons submitted the report through its lawyer Shafiqul Islam to the HC in line with its earlier directive during a writ petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer Md JR Khan Robin on February 18 last year, seeking necessary order on the issue.

Yesterday, the HC bench of Justice Md Khasruzzaman and Justice Md Mahmud Hassan Talukder accepted the report and said it will hold hearing on the issue after a month, Deputy Attorney General Abdullah Al Mahmud Bashar told The Daily Star.

He said the directorate general of health services has issued a notice asking the civil surgeons across the country to assign doctors for treating prisoners in jails where the posts of doctors are lying vacant.

MINI BYTES



The most anticipated game of 2077. Is it breathtaking though?

EH SANUR RAZA RONNY

Finally, right? CD Projekt Red: Cyberpunk 2077 received over 8 million pre-orders. That's a game that fans have been waiting over 8 years for, with three delays happening this year.

The open-world, action-adventure story surrounds people of Night City and their obsession with power and body modification. The RPG is led by your character V, a mercenary outlaw hunting for a unique body implant that grants immortality. It has five endings and two secret endings that need to be unlocked. And it has Keanu Reeves in it, darling of the internet and coolest dude of 2020.

The developer revealed 26% of the game's sales are physical copies. 74% sales happened on Steam, GOG, and the PlayStation and Microsoft stores. Hello digital world of Covid. On Steam, it has overtaken Dota 2 and CS:GO with over one million peak concurrent players.

Nine separate versions of the game were prepared and tested during the pandemic so that it could work on PCs and as well as current gen and next gen consoles. Despite that, many console players have been unable to play for bugs and were offered refunds. Complaints? Sub-par visual quality and repeated frame drops.

Weirdly though, people can play a pretty good version of the game on Google's game-streaming platform Stadia. With a decent internet connection, you can play the game pretty well. On top of that, you don't need to download the game meaning you need zero storage space. You



can play on PC, TV or mobile. It's also cheap. \$99.99 gets you a Stadia controller and a Chromecast Ultra. And that's all you need. The service isn't available in Bangladesh and most of Asia yet but you can play through VPN. Just make sure your net speed is above 10mbps. And because Cyberpunk isn't a multiplayer, you don't need to wait for other players to show up. Something that even PUBG players face these days.

Despite the hiccups, the game has a superb storyline, or seven. It's engaging and heavy on the immersive details. Dystopia never looked this good. You will get lost for hours just taking in the views of the city. The developers hired real city planners to help map out Night City so it feels more natural. Fans of 1982's Blade Runner will find a lot of similarities.

The main story of Cyberpunk 2077 takes under 50 hours to complete. There are plenty of side quests and Easter eggs that account for about a 100 hours of play time. This is similar to Witcher 3 which can actually take up to 200 hours if you play everything. That's a lot of time to kill.

Note: Bug patches are out already.



The shopkeepers of New Market know how to capture children's attention -- with a beautiful mess of cute and colourful stuffed toys. As seen in the photo, a father can barely hold his little girl as she gets excited to check out the stuffed versions of Hello Kitty, Pikachu, and little ponies. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS