

DOWN TO EARTH

Let Rajuk allot plots for graves instead of residences

By Khalilur Rahman

Is it true that the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartirpakkha (Rajuk) has allotted a large number of plots at 'J' block of Baridhara model town but the land is not in its possession?

Why Rajuk did not hand over possession to the original allottees of 'J' block during the last five years even after they made full payment for the plots?

Why Rajuk abruptly suspended the earth filling of plots at 'J' block after the work was undertaken a year ago?

These are some of the big questions agitating the minds of 377 individuals who were allotted plots at 'J' block of Baridhara about half a decade ago. Some of them came to the Daily Star office last week with an appeal to the concerned authorities to redress their grievances. Despite repeated complaints to the Rajuk and to the Works Ministry nothing has been done as yet to meet their genuine demand, the group of allottees resented.

We took the last few days to make a thorough investigation into the complaints and corroborated versions received from different related agencies. Here we narrate the findings of the Daily Star Correspondent on the allegations mentioned at the introduction of this column.

The Rajuk, formerly known as Dhaka Improvement Trust (DIT), invited applications for allotment of residential plots of varying sizes from five kathas to 10 kathas in Gulshan, Banani and Baridhara model towns through press advertisements in November 1984. The last date for submission of applications was March 15, 1985 for the applicants residing in Bangladesh and April 15 the same year for overseas Bangladeshi nationals. The price of land was fixed at Taka 12 lakh per bigha (20 kathas of land constitute one bigha). The authority asked to pay Taka 30,000 with each application as earnest money in favour of the then DIT.

Thousands of applications

were submitted for allotment of DIT plots and on December 21, 1985 names of 673 applicants selected by the authority were published in several national dailies. On January 1, 1986 the allottees were officially intimated through letters by the authority. The publication of the names of allottees caused an uproar among different quarters with allegations of gross irregularities on the part of DIT in selecting candidates. The allotment was temporarily suspended and a martial law enquiry committee headed by Major General M A Muneim was formed to probe into alleged malpractices.

Final letters of allotment were issued in December 1986 to the selected applicants specifying the area, size, road number and plot to each allottee. The allotment letter had contained instructions for the mode of payment either in a single instalment without interest or in four annual instalments with interest. The allottees of Baridhara 'J' block included many in-service and retired officers, corporation executives and teachers of universities and colleges.

Some of the 'J' block allottees said that the selected applicants for Gulshan and Banani got possession of their plots from Rajuk in due course and began construction of houses. They have completed their houses on the allotted plots long ago but the 'J' block allottees are yet to get possession of their plots even after depositing full instalment for the land. As per allotment rule, the allottees of Gulshan and Banani model towns got their plots registered on payment of first instalment and secured possession. But on various pretexts the Rajuk held up registration and handing over of possession to the allottees of Baridhara 'J' block.

Many of the aggrieved 'J' block allottees told our Correspondent that their appeals for early solution of the problem to the Rajuk and works ministry went totally

unheeded and already over a dozen allottees have died without seeing their only dream fulfilled. Of them the names of six dead persons have been collected. They are Mosabbir, Gyanranjan Saha, Brigadier (Retd) Abdur Rouf, Habibur Rashid a former Vice-Principal of Dhaka College, Dr. Ali Asghar and Dr. Shamsur Ali. A group of 'J' block allottees, a few years ago, met the former chairman of Rajuk, Mr. Rahmatullah (later taken into custody after the fall of Ershad regime) who disclosed that the land allotted at 'J' block under Badda mouja was not in possession of Rajuk. A representation to the then works ministry yielded nothing. The ministry replied that the Rajuk being an autonomous body was not controlled by the ministry. The Star learnt that the chairman of Rajuk is appointed by the ministry.

Meanwhile some of the allottees of 'J' block managed to change their plots to other areas with the help of some high ups in the past government while a majority has been suffering. The plots for 377 allottees are in full possession of Rajuk. But the land for a large number of allottees who were given plots at 'J' block by Rajuk through an underhand deal at a later stage is not in possession of the authority, it is learnt.

When contacted, an official of the Rajuk told the Star that the allottees of 'J' block could not be given plots for quite a long time due to 'indecision' at the highest level during the rule of previous government. But the present government has taken steps to redress their grievances soon, he added. The official admitted that more plots were created at 'J' block to accommodate other people.

Whatever is done to alleviate the sufferings of 'J' block allottees of Baridhara will be appreciated by all. But we deeply condole the death of those who could not see their last hope come true.



Awami League rally in the city protesting introduction of VAT.

— Star photo

MPs will lose rights if BNP bill passed: AL

By Staff Correspondent

Awami League leader Amir Hossain Amu said on Thursday that if the Constitution amendment bill introduced by the ruling party was passed, the members of Parliament would lose their fundamental rights.

He was addressing a rally at Bangabandhu Avenue protesting new tax proposals in the budget including the Value Added Tax (VAT).

Claiming the Constitution amendment bill tabled by the AL on Thursday as more democratic, he said that the BNP bill would make the MPs no more than political workers of the party.

He also said that the hasty imposition of VAT has increased the price of essentials in the market. It is an extra burden on the people.

Amu said that Begum Zia dreamt of becoming the President of the country but she had to place the bill in the face of continued pressure by the people. However, she has inserted some autocratic clauses in the bill, Amu alleged.

"People are prepared for another movement if the VAT is not withdrawn," he said.

City unit President of the AL, Mozaffar Hossain Paltu in his presidential address said that the present government imposed VAT according to the prescription of the World Bank

and now it is citing examples of some foreign countries to justify the imposition.

But the government should know that it took 10 years to introduce VAT in England, Paltu added.

City unit Vice-President Mozaffar Chowdhury Maya said in the rally that this government did never think about the welfare of the people and so the government did not hesitate to impose VAT on the people.

"People did not oust the past autocratic regime to bear the extra burden of VAT," he added.

Maya said that the 10 crore people who are suffering due to VAT would come to the streets again to protest such a unilateral decision by the ruling party.

City unit Secretary MA Aziz, Organising Secretary Aktarul Alam, Publicity Secretary Salauddin Badal, Office Secretary Adv Kamrul Islam and other city unit leaders addressed the brief rally.

Y'slav presidency

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population, he told a news conference.

Hittce said the army, which sent a column of 150 tanks and armoured vehicles with artillery and thousands of troops from Belgrade on Wednesday,

ROK keen

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favoured more foreign investment and development of private sector enterprises, particularly small and cottage industries.

Expressing her desire for closer relations with the Republic of Korea (South Korea) in the fields of commerce and industry, she invited more Korean investment in Bangladesh.

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CPB welcomes

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termed the proposed amendment as a primary step towards establishing parliamentary democracy and viewed that more steps needed to be taken to free the constitution from its undemocratic and autocratic characteristics.

30 injured in train accident in Karachi

KARACHI, July 4: Two passenger trains collided on the outskirts of the port city of Karachi early Thursday, injuring 30 people, the state-run news agency reported, says AP.

Pabna

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house near Bani Cinema Hall at Abdul Hamid Road.

Soon after the blast, chase and counter-chase began between the activists of the two rival student groups amid blasts and shots, leaving at least another 8 injured with bullet.

Hold nation's image high, Noor Uddin asks soldiers

Chief of Army Staff Lt Gen Noor Uddin Khan has asked soldiers to hold high the image of the nation and the armed forces abroad, reports BSS quoting an ISPR press release.

General Noor Uddin was addressing the members of the Bangladesh military contingent for Kuwait at the Sena Kunja at the Dhaka Cantonment Thursday morning.

The contingent led by Col M Shah Jalal will be leaving Dhaka soon for Kuwait to take part in the reconstruction of the friendly country.

The Chief of the Army Staff called upon the members of the contingent to discharge their duties in Kuwait with utmost sincerity and devotion to keep up the reputation and appreciation earned by Bangladesh military contingent in Saudi Arabia.

Members of the contingent would represent Bangladesh abroad they must earn respect from all by their personal behaviours and manners so that the image of our armed forces as well as our national prestige is held high.

The Chief of Army Staff said that the Bangladesh military contingent in Saudi Arabia successfully carried out their responsibilities in defending the holy land of the country and opened avenues for our army to work with other armies abroad. Another contingent would leave for Bahrain sometime in next December. Success of the Bangladesh military contingent for Kuwait would bring more such opportunities from other countries in the Middle East, he told.

General Noor Uddin expected that professional efficiency and discipline of our soldiers would enable them to succeed in their mission abroad. Members of the contingent would be able to overcome the climatic differences and other hazards with perseverance and endurance, he added.

Principal staff officers and other senior Army officers including the Savar Area Commander were among others present on the occasion.

Chinese team

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aputra flood control and river training prepared jointly by the China-Bangladesh team of experts with Chinese technical and financial assistance will be reviewed, approved and adopted.

The study report will then be formally presented to the Prime Minister on July 6 jointly by the Chinese Vice Minister and the Bangladesh Secretary of Irrigation.

Dolly

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her younger sister, filed a case in this connection with the Dhanmondi police.

He informed police Thursday morning that Dolly fell sick at around mid-night and was rushed to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital. The physician on duty pronounced her dead upon arrival and observed that it was a case of unnatural death, police said.

She also left a hand-written suicide note, police said. "No one will bear any responsibility for my death," the note read, reported police.

I want that my husband take a snap of my dead body before I am given a simple burial which should be taken care of by Anjumana-e-Mufidul-Islam," she wrote.

Wife of photographer Anwar Hossain and daughter of Dr Nilima Ibrahim, a former Professor of the Dhaka University, Dolly Ibrahim received the national award for her lead role in the feature film "Surya Dighal Bari".

She acted in numerous TV and radio plays and was a founding member of Theatre, a leading stage-theatre ground.

After post mortem her body was taken by her relatives for burial.

She is survived by her only son, relatives and a host of friends.

Meanwhile, different cultural organisations condoled the death of Dolly Ibrahim. Theatre in a statement said with the death of Dolly Ibrahim, a talented artist exit has taken her from the acting scenario.

The other organisations that expressed their condolences are: Shilpakala Academy, Television Broadcasting Officers Welfare Association and Radio-Television Artists Council.

Release of Anisul Islam Mahmood ordered

A Division Bench of the High Court Division on Thursday ordered release of former Foreign Minister Anisul Islam Mahmood, from detention, if he is not required in any other case, reports BSS.

The court comprised Justice Fazle Hussain, Mohammad Habibur Rahman and Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury.

Scrutiny

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tee to facilitate negotiations between the government and opposition.

However, the matter has not yet been settled.

According to Parliament Secretariat sources, after the scrutiny of the Constitution amendment bills by the select committee, the Business Advisory Committee of Parliament will decide about the procedure to pass the bills.

The sources said that during that meeting the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition may sit together to discuss the procedure.

The Awami League sources said that they would exert pressure to take up the three bills of the Treasury and the Opposition benches together for consideration.

On the other hand the Treasury Bench members said that the House could take decision on the basis of the two amendment bills introduced by the Treasury Bench.

They made it clear that though the objectives of the two bills were quite separate from each other — one for the ratification of actions taken by the incumbent Acting President and the other for the switching over to a parliamentary form of government from the existing presidential one — the two bills could be passed simultaneously.

They said that the eleventh amendment bill which would be incorporated in the fourth schedule would not require any referendum while the twelfth amendment bill would require referendum for authentication by the President.

There are some differences between the bills of the Treasury Bench and the bill of the Opposition over the form of government.

The select committee which will be formed with representatives of both the Treasury and the Opposition benches is to work to narrow down the gap between the two bills.



Arms recovered from the City College.

— Star photo

3 DU students 4 others arrested: Arms recovered

By DU Correspondent

Police Thursday arrested seven persons including three Dhaka University students and recovered some arms and ammunitions from their possession.

Of the seven persons, six, including the students, were arrested from the university campus and the arms were recovered on their confessions from two rooms of City Law College at Agra Masef Lane.

The seven arrested persons were Abu Hassan Murad (27), Mustafizur Rahman Shahhan (25), Aminur Rasheed Lal (25), Sahirul Islam Khan Kochi, Ashrafur Alam Labu (23), Shahadat Mohammad Gani (24) and Abdul Wahab, Librarian of City College.

Police said a special squad of detective branch arrested the six persons acting on a secret tip off.

The arms included one G-3 rifle, one 7-mm rifle, one .25 bore pistol, 2 cut-rifles, 54 rounds of SMG bullet, 5 chargers and two magazines.

Murad, the alleged gang leader, along with 11 others was expelled from the University in 1987 on charge of involvement in campus violence.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Chhatra League (N-S), the student wing of JSD (Inu) brought out a procession on the campus protesting the arrest of Murad.

Sangsad to discuss campus situation

Deputy Leader of the House Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury on Thursday called for united initiatives to free the campus of violence as some opposition MPs strongly resented continued armed terrorism in the educational institutions, reports UNB.

The opposition MPs criticised the government for its failure to stop campus violence and suggested discussion in the House to find out ways to cleanse the campus of terrorism and restore normal academic atmosphere in the country.

Reciprocating the opposition concern, Prof Chowdhury who is in charge of the Education Ministry said violence has become widespread in the country's educational institutions.

Government is ready to discuss and resolve the problem, he assured the opposition members and requested the chair to allot a day for discussion on the question.

Earlier rising on a point of order, Rashed Khan Menon of Workers Party drew the attention of the chair to the gunfight between two groups of students at the Jagannath University College Wednesday.

He also referred to the situation at the universities in Dhaka and Chittagong and said the law and order situation in the educational institutions had been deteriorating with every passing day. The matter should be discussed in the

House, Menon said.

Menon was supported by Tofael Ahmed of Awami League and Matur Rahman Nizami of Jamaat-e-Islami. They said the government remained silent and was yet to take any pragmatic steps in this regard.

Tofael held the pro-BNP Chhatra Dal responsible for terrorism at the Jagannath University College. He alleged that the Chhatra Dal workers in cooperation with police attacked and forced out general students from the college hostels.

Nizami said terrorism in the campus led to virtual collapse of the higher education system at different universities in the country.

JN College

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from Dr Milton Hall and BCL gunmen from nearby Shakhari Bazar area Wednesday evening.

During a search of the Milton Hall, police recovered two pipe guns.

The college was closed indefinitely and its halls vacated on June 15 when the same student groups fought a night-long battle killing two students and injuring over 100 others.

Local people reported they had seen armed youths moving in various localities.

The Midnight File

PLO, Lebanon agree on army deployment

SIDON, July 4: The PLO and Lebanon agreed today to allow the Lebanese army to deploy peacefully in South Lebanon and end fighting between them, a government minister said, reports Reuter.

SAARC to suppress terrorism

MALE (Maldives), July 4: South Asian Foreign Ministers ended a two-day meeting in the Maldives today deciding to take further joint action to suppress terrorism in the region, a conference official said. The ministers focused on terrorism following the assassination of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on May 21 by a woman suicide bomber, reports Reuter.

Japan rejects Soviet plea for help

TOKYO, July 4: Japan turned down today a Soviet plea for financial assistance, just 11 days ahead of the London summit of the Group of Seven (G-7) industrialised nations, a Foreign Ministry official said, report AFP.

AL moves bill

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chief executive. The post of deputy Prime Ministers would thus stand abolished.

The bill proposed to restore Chapter III of the 1972 Constitution relating to local government. This chapter was omitted in 1975. In this chapter the AL bill says local government in every administrative unit of the Republic will be entrusted to bodies composed of persons elected in accordance with law.

The bill proposes to abolish Article 92A which authorises the President to authorise withdrawal of money from the consolidated fund, and recast Article 119 in respect of functions of the election commission.

It seeks to restore the original Article 123 relating to time for holding of elections.

The bill provides that for declaring a state of emergency under Article 141A counter-signature of the Prime Minister will be required.

It seeks to omit Clause 1A, 1B and 1C of Article 42 of the Constitution. Under these clauses, provisions were made in 1978 to the effect that amendment of the preamble or any provisions of Articles 8, 48, 56, 58, 80 and 92A of the Constitution would have to be okayed through referendum.

The bill seeks to revive the Second Schedule of the Constitution under Article 48. The Schedule relating to the election of the President was abolished by the Fourth Amendment Act of 1975.

It also proposes to amend the Third and the Fourth Schedules of the Constitution. In the Third Schedule it provides to omit the oath prescribed for the Vice-President, and delete the words deputy prime ministers.

Finally by inserting new provisions in the Fourth Schedule, the bill seeks to facilitate the return of Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, the Acting President to the office of the Chief Justice of Bangladesh.

The row over the numbering of the bill developed in the afternoon sitting.

Law Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz had earlier in the morning sitting called for correcting the name of the bill, named 'Constitution (eleventh amendment) bill, 1991' because a bill by the same name was introduced on July 2 by the government. He suggested that the AL bill be called Constitution (thirteenth amendment) bill, 1991.

Opposition bench members vehemently protested this saying that a number would be given to a bill only after it was passed and that there was no harm in giving the same number to the AL bill and the government bill.

Opposition bench members argued that their bill was cleared by the Parliament Secretariat, the Law Ministry and the President and since it was submitted on April 14 it should be called the eleventh amendment bill.

Law Minister Mirza Golam Hafiz submitted that two bills could be introduced under the same name. He said that the AL leaders did not raise objections when the eleventh and

the twelfth amendment bills were introduced in the House on July 2. Leaders of the two benches debated over it for about two hours.

Speaker Abdur Rahman Biswas told the House after the Magreb recess that due to human error a number was put on the AL bill — a private member's bill which is not supposed to carry any number.

The Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina protested this and requested the Speaker to keep the name of the bill intact because it was already introduced in the morning.

The Speaker said that he had the right to correct the mistake.

Sheikh Hasina then staged a walkout.

Workers Party member Rashed Khan Menon, Communist Party member Shamsud-doha, National Democratic Party MP Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury, MPs belonging to Jamaat and independents did not join the walkout.

Earlier introducing the bill without any opposition in the morning Abdus Samad Azad said it was a historic day. He said that AL chief Sheikh Hasina had demonstrated her greatness by taking the initiative to amend the Constitution even though Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia would be its beneficiary.

The government bills differ from the AL bill in that they seek to make strict provisions against floor crossing by MPs by further amending Article 70 of the Constitution.

Other extra points in the government bills are: It proposes to make dissolution of parliament by the president subject to written advice from the Prime Minister, and seeks to conduct the election of the president by the Speakers of Parliament.

The Awami League bill seeks to conduct the election of the president by the chief election commissioner. The BNP bill also seeks to retain the provision to appoint one-fifth of ministers from non-MPs.

Those who participated in the debate on the numbering of the AL bill were: Chief Whip of BNP Khadaker Delwar Hossain, State Minister for Food Bannister Nazmul Huda and Land Minister, Barrister Zamrudin Sirer AL leaders Sajeda Chowdhury, Tofael Ahmed and Sudhangsu Skekhar Haldar, Ganatantri Dal MP Suranjit Sengupta, Workers Party member Rashed Khan Menon, Abdus Sobhan and Mohammad Nasim.

VAT exemption

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fibre and the textiles made of it, synthetic fibre yarn and textiles made of it. These items were already exempted from excise duty.

To facilitate preservation of agricultural produce like potato and seeds, cold storage services have been exempted from VAT, introduced on July 1.

Navy, Airforce

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the Japanese ship was allowed to leave the country after paying a penalty of Taka 27,22,50,000.

The amount has been deposited with the consolidated fund of the government under Articles 84 and 86 of the Constitution.

The Minister informed the Sangsad that "Eagle Breeze" was detained for 142 days, from November 13, 1989.

DU

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The DUEAC meeting urged the student organisations to expel all armed activists from their organisations and called upon the university authorities to take effective measures against terrorist acts on the campus.

The meeting also called upon the government and the law enforcing agencies to take steps against the terrorists.