

# DOWN TO EARTH

## Scarcity of Playgrounds for Children in City

By ASM Nurunnabi

In the metropolis we are desperately short of open spaces where our children can spend free time playing games. Because of absence of sufficient open spaces in most areas of the city, children are often seen playing in the open streets. This entails hazards, but children being what they are, hardly listen to the counsel of caution. School children also suffer greatly on account of dearth of playgrounds. In the city a good number of kindergartens have come up, but most of them are housed in such limited space that provision of playground for the students is out of question. The same is true in respect of other educational institutions. In the past two decades, the Dhaka city has expanded manifold. In this rapid growth, though housing on a large scale has come up to meet the needs of the increased population, no comparable growth has taken place in respect of educational institutions where there is adequate provision for playing fields to meet the needs of the students.

Previously there were many public playgrounds in the city where children from adjoining neighbourhoods used to play. Such open spaces have either been taken over by the City Corporation for construction of shopping complex or by the government for allotment to others. In many areas of the city also, there were small open spaces where the children of the neighbourhood used to play. Such open spaces are no longer in existence, as they have been built upon by their owners. As a result of these developments, children have become prisoners in their own homes. That this situation is not conducive to the healthy growth of mind and body of the children is apparent to anybody. Perhaps the relevant ministry RAJUK or the City

Corporation have not looked into this aspect of the problem seriously. As compared with the old part of the city, the situation of open space in the new part is a little better. This is mainly due, among other things, to the existence of the Osmany Uddyan, Ramna Park, Suhrawardy Uddyan, Shishu Park and the open spaces in the Sher-e-Bangla Nagar area. Most of these open spaces are hardly considered fit for the children's recreational use. The Ramna Park and the Suhrawardy Uddyan which were previously favourite haunts of fresh air seekers have lately lost much of their attraction because of growing presence of dubious elements. The Shishu Park is an attractive place for children. Lately its attraction has greatly eroded on account of presence of too many elders and overcrowding. The Sher-e-Bangla Nagar area is also an attractive place but they are not also free from the presence of anti-social elements.

In this respect the old part of the city suffers the most. Here the paucity of open spaces is acute. There is only a handful of parks, the Armanitola Maidan, the Bahadur Shah Park and the Sirajuddowla Park. In these places, encroachment in one form or another always goes on. The concrete benches there shelter beggars and vagrants making the environment unfit for playing games.

Some of the wards of the City Corporation maintains small parks for children. Most of these parks are now in a deplorable state so much so that they have become an apology for parks. The equipment for the children's games such as swings, seesaws which were initially installed are either now non-existent or unusable. These places are now

filled with weeds and litters and become haunts of undesirable elements. It behoves the City Corporation not only to maintain properly the existing parks but also to find out open spaces for children's parks in such wards which lack them.

Recently an incident, took place at Mirpur in which students of a primary school clashed with the police over a plot of land adjacent to the school which was used by the children of that school as playground. The cause of that unhappy incident was that students protested the allotment of that vacant plot of land made by the Works Ministry to somebody in disregard of the compelling needs of the children for a playground. It is felt that such allotment without taking into consideration the needs of the school children for a playground was deplorable. It will contribute to the healthy growth of proper recreational atmosphere for school children if government follows a policy as far as possible under which wherever in the city there is vacant government land adjacent to any educational institution such land be kept free for use for students of those institutions as playgrounds without allotting it for any other purpose.

As regards other open spaces in the city, according to some people, what is important is to ensure adoption of appropriate measures to keep them free from encroachment and also to remain vigilant that the atmosphere in these areas is not vitiated through the presence of undesirable elements. This can be possible if the law-enforcing agencies, the City Corporation and RAJUK remain alert and active in their respective spheres. We owe this to our children to help them in their physical and mental development.



Bemused visitors in front of a brush work of a promising young artist at the Shilpakala Academy on the city yesterday. — Star photo

## BNP policy-makers

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“All our efforts foiled because of the Opposition's intransigence,” he said, “so our policymakers have now decided to keep quiet.”

An initiative taken by Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali for resolving the crisis also failed, he pointed out.

Asked if there can still be any dialogue with the Opposition, he said, “We still believe that there are sensible negotiators on both the sides and they will be able to work out something.”

Meanwhile, the Opposition sources said that they would not change their stand unless the ruling party tabled a bill in Parliament proposing constitutional provision for holding of general elections under a caretaker government.

## Lankan Tamils, Muslims submit autonomy plan

COLOMBO, June 10: A Tamil group and a Muslim political party have sought the government's endorsement for a plan to create autonomous administrative councils in northern and eastern Sri Lanka in a bid to end an 11-year-old Tamil insurgency, reports AP.

## Japanese team

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in Chittagong and Savar to see the available infrastructures. They will also visit the Karnaphuli Fertiliser Company (KAFCO) in Chittagong.

The delegation will also inspect the proposed site for a special industrial estate in Chittagong, being planned exclusively for Japanese investors.

Discussions between the two sides during the visit are likely to focus on the investment opportunities in areas like textiles, shrimps, ceramics, electronics and stock market.

## PM: Rupsha bridge

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struction of proposed Khulna Airport.

The Prime Minister gave a patient hearing to the demands placed to her by leaders of the committee and assured them of looking into their demands.

The delegation thanked the Prime Minister for establishing a number of educational institutions, setting up of the Khulna University and Khulna Medical College, constructing roads and highways and also for undertaking massive programmes for the development of Khulna.

Meanwhile, newly elected office-bearers of 13 colleges of Khulna also met the Prime Minister at Sugandha last night.

Addressing at the students' gathering, Begum Zia asked them to devote themselves to study and maintain peaceful academic atmosphere and discipline in their respective educational institutions.

She advised the students not to go for any untoward incident despite provocation by their rivals and show high degree of tolerance.

“We are now in power. We are entrusted with great responsibilities. So, we have to work sincerely and honestly for upholding the glorious image of BNP,” Begum Zia said and warned that if any one tries to create any trouble should be dealt with iron hand.

The Prime Minister reminded the students that her government has given top priority to education sector and highest budgetary allocation to it for last three years.

“Your main duty is to study and pursue knowledge. Besides study, you have to be sincere in maintaining peace and discipline in your colleges,” she said.

Four newly elected ward commissioners of Khulna City Corporation formally joined BNP expressing their total support under the dynamic leadership of Begum Khaleda Zia.

## Business leaders hail budget

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cent.  
“The exemption limit of individual income tax had been raised from Tk 50,000 to Tk 55,000. The chamber believes the exemption limit should be increased to a minimum of Tk 75,000.”

The DCCI said the withdrawal of income tax credit on national savings certificate up to Tk one lakh purchased after June 30 would adversely affect capital formation in the country.

It proposed that the current investment allowance of upto to Tk one lakh should be increased to five lakh or should be one third of the invested income or be equal to the lower amount of the two. It suggested that the Tax holiday provision should be extended up to the year 2000, instead of 1995.

Welcoming the proposal to withdraw all duties and taxes on capital machinery used in 100 per cent export-oriented industries, the DCCI demanded duty-free capital machinery for all kinds of industries.

It also demanded reduction of VAT rate to 7.5 per cent from 15 and urged the government to refrain from issuing statutory regulatory order (SRO).

“The desired economic growth could be attained provided the government and its administrative machinery are serious enough for in implementing the budget objectives, the DCCI said.

spinning mills.  
The BTMA further suggested that the government should waive import duty on textile spares.

Bangladesh Bus-Truck Owners' Association, in a statement, hailed the budget proposal for reducing the price of diesel by Tk one per litre.

It, however, described the reduction as ‘token’ in nature.

**BGMEA**  
Redwan Ahmed, MP, President of the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association, said the new budget would help the country reduce its dependence on foreign aid.

“It will also help the middle and lower middle classes to solve their housing problem.”

He said, duty rebate in various sectors would facilitate more investments in the country. Besides, he added, reduction of tax at source would help the growth of export-oriented industries.

The ruling party legislator pointed out that reduction and withdrawal of taxes on the import of raw materials and capital machinery in the textile sector would have a tremendous positive impact in the sector.

reduction on soda ash, educational and scientific instruments and imposition of duty on the basis of pre-shipment inspection certificate.

However, he criticised the budget saying that it lacked special allocation for infra-structural development towards promotion of investment and export.

**KCCI**  
UNB adds: President of Khulna Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) S M A Rab said, it would hamper development as the prices of the construction materials have been increased.

He, however, praised the budget for keeping provisions for reducing price of essentials, highest allocation in education and health sectors.

Khulna City Corporation Mayor Sheikh Tayebur Rahman termed the budget as “pro-people” and added that this budget has reflected the aspirations of the people.

Reacting sharply Khulna city Awami League President Manzurul Imam termed the budget as “foreign-dependent.”

The Khulna city unit of Jatiya Party has termed the budget as anti-people and added “the budget will make the country a market for Indian goods.”

**SCCI**  
Our Correspondent says the Sylhet Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) hailed the budget proposals for reducing expenditure in the public sector, increase of exports and encouraging domestic and foreign investments.

**BTMA**  
The Bangladesh Textile Mills Association (BTMA) appreciated the budget proposal for withdrawing import duty on capital machinery but said no definite proposal had been made in respect of tax holiday.

“We feel that while withdrawing import duty on capital machinery, it was also imperative to allow tax holiday for longer period,” BTMA said.

“Import liberalisation, reduction and in some cases 100 per cent waiving of import duty on industrial raw materials like raw cotton for textile industries will have definite positive impact on the existing industries. But at the same time proposal for the reduction of duty on finished goods will have adverse effect on many such industries,” it said.

The proposal for reduction of import duty on cotton yarn is likely to have direct adverse effect on the existing textile

**Sohel Rahman**  
Chairman of the BEXIMCO Group Sohul Rahman said the new budget would encourage investment in the industrial sector. It would also help improve the capital market since the incentives for savings were reduced.

Rahman also said the new budget would give a strong fillip to the textiles sector because import duty on raw cotton has been withdrawn.

It is also a good sign that utilisation of local resources in the ADP will increase, Sohul Rahman said, adding that as a whole the budget will be very good for the country.”

**CCCI**  
Our Chittagong Correspondent informs that the president of Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry S M Abul Kalam said that the proposed budget contains some good steps.

The country will be benefited if those steps were implemented in the practical field, the chamber president added.

Kalam expressed satisfaction at the reflection of some recommendations of Chittagong chamber in this new budget particularly for duty

## 3 arrested with forged currency in Ctg

From Staff Correspondent  
CHITTAGONG, June 10: Detective Branch personnel of Chittagong Metropolitan Police last night seized huge forged foreign currency, printing materials from different parts of the city and arrested three persons of an organised ring involved in printing fake notes.

The seized forged currency included US dollars, Indian rupees, Myanmar kiat and Bangladeshi 500 taka notes, according to DB sources.

## 89 pupils die in Angolan firing

LONDON, June 10: Eighty-nine children were killed and their school destroyed when an Angolan air force plane accidentally opened fire on them. Angolan radio, monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation, reported on Thursday, says Reuter.

## Tenth exhibition of young artists begins

By Staff Correspondent  
A fortnight-long ‘tenth art exhibition of the young artists’ began at the Shilpakala Academy in the city yesterday.

The panel of judges awarded the best prize for all media to Mohammad Iqbal.

The top prizes in the fine arts, graphics and sculpture went to Sheikh Afzal, Wajidul Rahman and Mahbubur Rahman respectively.

Three consolation prizes were also given to Saidul Huq Juice, Rafi Haq and Mainul Islam Paul.

In the exhibition some 114 exhibits of 94 promising artists are on display.

The exhibition will remain open to visitors everyday (except Thursday) from 3pm to 8 pm till June 24.

## Taka

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Monetary Fund (IMF) charter in April last, thus agreeing to refrain from putting any restrictions on international current account transactions.

Asked whether there would be any capital flight due to unrestricted current account transactions, the minister said “There will be, no capital flight because of accepting Article Eight.”

## The Midnight File

**Fresh US sanctions on Haiti**  
WASHINGTON, June 10: President Clinton today announced new US sanctions intended to force Haiti's military rulers out of power, including a ban on commercial air traffic and sanctions on financial transactions. “The message is simple: Democracy must be restored, the coup must not endure,” Clinton said in a White House press briefing on the latest US effort to oust the military chiefs who drove Haiti's first democratically elected President, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, into exile in 1991, reports Reuter.

**Tehran accuses Riyadh of interfering in Yemen's war**  
NICOSIA, June 10: Iran intensified a diplomatic row with Saudi Arabia Wednesday, accusing Riyadh of interfering in Yemen's civil war and fomenting regional crises. Parliament Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri, a hard-line fundamentalist who is becoming increasingly powerful, also declared that Iran will never surrender three tiny islands in the southern Gulf to the United Arab Emirates, reports AP.

## Saifur : Budget pro-people

From Page 1 Col 5  
published human development report. Bangladesh spends around 220 million US dollars a year in arms procurement. The doctor to soldier ratio in Bangladesh stands at one to six.

On the effects of tariff reductions on local industries, he said, “I have personally looked into the tariff reductions and I don't see any circumstances under which local industries will not be also to compete.”

He said that the tariff reductions were primarily targeted at the leather and uncompetitive textile sectors. However, he acknowledged that the budgetary process is a balancing of interests and inherent conflicts.

He noted that after the conclusion of the GATT agreements, it has become imperative to make the country's textile sector competitive as a backward linkage to the export-oriented garment sector. The GATT agreement, he pointed out, would not affect Bangladesh immediately as developing countries have been given a grace period to catch up before it is applied to them.

Replying to a question, the Finance Minister said he dislikes raising revenue through statutory regulatory orders (SROs) outside budgetary provisions.

National Board of Revenue Chairman Dr. Akbar Ali said it is not true that SROs are used to raise revenues and asserted that it is only used to remove

existing anomalies. As an example, he said that during the current fiscal only four SROs were issued out of over 6,000 import products and that too was done at the recommendation of the Tariff Commission.

On the collection of defaulting loans by the nationalised commercial banks, he said, “The legal framework is lacking and acting as a hindrance. But I think there has been significant progress, although I will not say it is satisfactory.” He added that appropriate regulatory measures are being taken against those responsible for the insider-loan debacle at the IFIC Bank.

Acknowledging that much improvement is still needed in the implementation of development projects, Rahman said ADP allocations for 1994-95 could have been even higher than the Tk 11,000 crore as external and internal funds were available. Asked how much of the revised ADP of Tk 9,600 crore for the current fiscal year could be used, given that only 22 per cent was utilised upto December, 1993, he added, “I expect we will reach not less than 90 per cent implementation for the revised ADP.”

Among others present at the press conference were Education Minister Jamiruddin Sircar, State Minister for Finance Mozibur Rahman, State Minister for Planning Dr. Moyn Khan, Finance Secretary Nasiruddin Ahmed and ERD Secretary Lutfullah Majid.

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**Editor: Mahfuz Anam**  
Printed & Published by A. S. Mahmud, Managing Director, on behalf of Mediaworld Ltd, 52, Motijheel C/A, Dhaka-1000, from City Publishing House Ltd, 90 Kakrai, Dhaka-1000. Editorial, News & Commercial Offices: House No: 11, Road No: 3, Dhanmandi R/A, Dhaka-1205. PABX: 500092-4, Commercial: 500091 (Direct), Fax No: 88-02-863035, GPO Box No: 3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA.