



star city

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DHAKA MONDAY JUNE 16, 2003

hello**dhaka**

Weekly weather forecast for the city

source: accuweather.com

Today High 33C Low 27C, Mostly cloudy, very humid

WEEK AHEAD

Tuesday
High 33C
Low 27C
Chance of rain in morning

Wednesday
High 32C
Low 26C
Thunderstorms

Thursday
High 33C
Low 27C
Possible

Friday
High 32C
Low 27C
Thunderstorms

Saturday
High 32C
Low 25C
Cloudy and

Sunday
High 32C
Low 26C
Possible

Water to run smoothly

SOHEL ISLAM

The Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) has undertaken a project to buy twenty mobile generators, eight water carrying trucks and two tractors to streamline the water supply for city-dwellers.

The project's total cost will be around Taka four crore, each mobile generator, water supplying truck and tractor costing Tk

15.5 lakh, Tk 15 lakh and Tk 12 lakh respectively. The capacity of the water-supplying trucks will be about 8000 litres of water.

"We are procuring these to supply water to the city smoothly. Even if the electricity is cut or any natural calamities like nor'westers sweep across the city we will be able to continue to provide a normal water supply after obtaining the generators, trucks and tractors," said WASA Managing Director Ataur

Rahman.

"We have already invited bidders to participate in the tender. At the end of this month, we will be able to finalise everything related to the purchase," said Ataur Rahman.

Currently, WASA supplies water to the city with the help of Saidabad Water Treatment Plant, three water treatment plants close to Narayanganj and 401 deep tube wells. Out of 401, only 230 deep tubewells have

fixed generators.

"We have only 17 mobile generators for the rest of the deep tube wells which do not have any generators. Sometimes we struggle to supply water in the city when the electricity supply falls apart. Therefore we are purchasing 20 mobile generators," said a highly placed source at WASA.

"On April 22, a massive nor'wester hit the city. Then many of the areas had to face

acute shortage of water due to very erratic electricity supply. Gulshan and Baridhara were the worst victims. The inhabitants of Baridhara had to live without water and electricity for a number of days," said another source of WASA.

Meanwhile, the demand for water is 160 crore litres a day for the city. WASA, which produces only 145 crore litres a day, barely meets the demand of the city.

"This shortfall of the water supply a day usually makes us suffer. If the electricity supply is erratic then the problems of water becomes worse. The introduction of mobile generators to the existing fleet will improve this situation a lot," said the managing director.



ALASDAIR MACDONALD



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Barriers a blight on city sites

The aesthetic sense of city planners should be questioned when buildings such as Chameli House (above) are concealed by ill-conceived walls (top).

MORSHED ALI KHAN

The Old Airport

Only three years ago, the old airport was a rare sight for thousands of commuters on the Begum Rokeya Swarani. The green open space of the near-abandoned airport was a reprieve for the people of the city, who are otherwise surrounded by unplanned building, fuming vehicles and stinking garbage on the streets of Dhaka.

But the view of the old airport is now no longer to be enjoyed, thanks to the action of some over concerned officials of the Bangladesh Air Force.

Along the 1.5-kilometre

stretch of road the concerned authorities have built a high wall, that has become a blot on the landscape.

When contacted, the Inter Service Public Relations Directorate (ISPRD) in a written statement said that the wall has been built to provide security for the air force, VVIPs and VIPs who use the airport. Moreover, it said that the wall was also a deterrence to encroachment.

One thing is sure. For the foreign dignitaries who come to the China Bangladesh Friendship Convention Center, the political graffiti on the old airport wall will give them an insight into the country's spirited politics and the aesthetic sense of the city planners.

What is happening inside the old airport now?

Well, who knows?

The Flood Protection Embankment

To the relief of city dwellers, engineers of the Water Development Board (WDB) negotiated with thousands of slum dwellers in order to build a 12-kilometre long road along the flood protection embankment last year.

Today, as you ride along the embankment towards Badamtali with Kamrangirchar on your right, an all too typical urban tragedy unfolds before you. The Buriganga estuary is being encroached at an ever-increasing rate. It has become

open season on this precious waterway!

On traveling further, just as the river should appear before you, near Shaheednagar, the view is totally marred by a solid thick wall along the embankment. Engineers of the Dhaka Integrated Flood Protection Project said that the wall was a part of the 7.5-metre high flood protection barrier.

Ali Akbar Haidar of the DIFPP admitted that the wall created "some sort of undesirable vision hindrance" but said that once the road level is elevated, the river would be visible again.

Chameli House or The Chummari House

the building, asked the Public Works Department to raise a high wall around the historic building.

Chameli House, according to Dr Momin of CIRDAP has now been secured.

"We have had demonstrators from the Press Club area entering our office after the police chased them onto the street. The public also used the fences around the building as a toilet," said Dr Momin, adding, "The wall was necessary because we needed to protect our office first."

What experts say

Architect ASM Ismail, Assistant Chief Architect of the Department of Architecture, said that for a healthy urban landscape it is extremely important that public places or structures are kept visible to the public.

"When commuters see a decent building, greenery or a river they feel good and this is known as aesthetic sense or good taste in planning," said Ismail who is also a former general secretary of the Institute of Architects, Bangladesh.

About the security of these buildings, Architect Ismail said that the White House in Washington is surrounded by a fence that enables the public to see it from any direction and yet it is one of the most security-conscious buildings in the world.

Former Chief Architect of the Department of Architecture and Head of BUET, Shah Alam Zahiruddin said that no one has the right to destroy the beauty of a public building or space in such a manner.

"These historic buildings and open places create the image of the city and these walls are in no way applicable to the city's landscape," Zahiruddin said.

He said that these small projects of constructing walls are not usually undertaken 'out of necessity' but to 'generate some quick funds'.

"It is a criminal act to visually block historic sites," Zahiruddin said.

city express

A new column bringing you some of the week's most memorable words about the city. Words that we feel are worth repeating for their significance, humour or just plain stupidity! If you, our readers, spot any 'gems,' please feel free to send them to us at: Star City, Daily Star, 19 Karwan Bazaar, Dhaka 1215.



"All [road] projects are not funded by the government of Bangladesh. Sometimes donors threaten to withdraw funds and we cannot maintain our time schedule."

-- Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka

Explaining why 290 kms of roads are to be dug up during the monsoon season

"That is BTV style."

-- Journalists at the Press Club

When BTV cameras arrived to interview them about their reaction to the budget, before it had been announced by the finance minister in parliament

"Whatever the legal consequences, until the day I die, I will call a Razakar a Razakar."

-- Abdul Jalil

Awami League General Secretary

Speaking at a meeting of the Awami Lawyer's Association, reported by Bhorer Kakoj last week..

FOLLOW UP

Babupura basti

SULTANA RAHMAN

The Revenue Deputy Collector (RDC) has sent a letter, to the concerned police commissioner and the ward commissioner, to protect the khas land at Babupura following a report in Star City on June 11.

A shady deal was reported by slum dwellers and the authorities to grab the khas land after a fire a week back. At least three groups of land grabbers supported by some officials of the land department are allegedly involved in the deal, sources said.

Meanwhile, an application by the ward commissioner has also been made over the illegal attempt to occupy the Babupura slum after setting it on fire, even though he has been accused as one of those involved in the land grabbing.

Sources at Dhanmondi Police Station said that immediately after the fire, the ward commissioner, Motahar Hossain Jahangir, who wants to build a community center on the land, rushed to the police to permanently evict the poor slum dwellers.

Bellal Hossain Mollah, the secretary of the slum welfare association, and Gausul Azam Market authorities were the other two parties in the eviction action, which made police suspicious about their involvement in the fire. But nobody has yet filed a case against them so police have been unable to issue a warrant.

Meanwhile, the Ministry for Land has filed a case against the Gausul Azam Super Market authority as it was built illegally on khas land that was an extension



ALASDAIR MACDONALD

ANNOUNCEMENT

We apologise to our readers, who were expecting to see Star City on Sunday. Due to a technical problem we were unable to publish our issue yesterday.