

Dhanmandi, meaning 'paddy market,' until the 1950s was covered with paddy fields reaching right up to the Dhaka College-New Market area. Dhanmandi was a low-lying area between the higher lands where settlement had occurred.



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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 tube wells 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

MORSHEDE ALI KHAN

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 Haider 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 Chummar House

The British built the magnificent Chummar House just next to the National Press Club in 1911 along with the monumental Curzon Hall. Its original name, Chummar House, suggests that it was used for bachelor British officers. Later, as some female students from Dhaka University started using the building as a dormitory, the name was changed to Chameli House. This historic house is undoubtedly one of those rare buildings still bearing some vestige of the country's past.

Until recently, the public passing by Topkhana Road could enjoy the sight of Chameli House. However about six months ago CIRDAP officials, now having their office inside

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.

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Good morning Aski Para

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Waste goes private

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'Keep away from drugs, know'

hello dhaka

Weekly weather forecast for the city

source: accuweather.com

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

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

Wednesday High 33C Low 27C Thunderstorms

Thursday High 32C Low 27C Thunderstorms

Saturday High 32C Low 25C Cloudy and humid

Sunday High 32C Low 26C Possible

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 Bhoror Kakoj last week..

FOLLOW UP

Babupura basti

SULTANA RAHMAN

of the Babupura slum. Before starting construction work of the market, the extension was burnt to evict the slum people who had been living there since the 1960s, sources said.

Last week, about 300 shanties were gutted and over 1000 people rendered shelter-less in the fire which burnt the main slum. Slum dwellers suspect both fires are part of a conspiracy by the land-grabbers to evict them from the area and illegally occupy the government land.

Earlier, Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) had applied for the khas land to build a multi-storied building including car parking. The proposal is now under process in the Prime Minister's office, sources said.

RDC, Md Delwar Hossain, told Star City that the government will decide what to do with the khas land. "But we want to free all occupied land from grabbers."

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.