



Unscrupulous people reportedly in collusion with local influential political leaders and a section of dishonest officials are devouring the huge hill, after Chittagong City Corporation levelled a portion of it for developing a housing project, VIP Residential Area.

# Hill cutting continues unabated

Chittagong City Corporation is levelling a vast hilly area to develop 'VIP Residential Area'

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Hill cutting continues unabated in the port city as Chittagong City Corporation is levelling a vast hilly area to develop a housing project.

CCC has been implementing the housing project - VIP Residential Area- on some seven acres of land dotted with hillocks at southern Khulshi area in the southern fringe of the city.

Several hills have already been levelled for implementation of the project that began around two years back.

As the development work goes on, some vested quarters are also trying to devour an adjoining huge hill there, reportedly using the bulldozers of city corporation at night amid darkness, an allegation

that CCC denies.

A vested quarter including, an Awami League backed commissioner and a local Jatiya Sechchhasebak Dal leader, purchased the hill spreading over some 55 gandas of land two months back, sources said. They are allegedly using the CCC bulldozer to level the hill that started immediately after the purchase, sources added.

Local people said that CCC use bulldozers to level the hillocks between 2.00am and 4.00am and the private developers between 4.00am and 6.00am.

One Mohammad Idris is engaged in looking after the levelling, they said.

However, CCC Chief Engineer Mokhterul Alam denied the allegation of using CCC bulldozers in hill

cutting by the private developers. He said that the bulldozers were being used for the development of the CCC housing project there. One can hire CCC bulldozers with approval of the authorities concerned, he said. But, no application seeking such approval came to us, he added.

Meanwhile, a top official of the Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) said that the CCC was developing the housing project without any permission from CDA levelling the hilly land.

Moreover, the CCC is not supposed to go for such a housing project as the CDA under the Ministry of Housing and Public Works has sufficient trained manpower having managerial skills to do such job, he said. "It was the responsibility of Housing and Public Works

Ministry to cater the need of housing," he added.

Besides, CCC has no sufficient manpower for such a project that will raise both the implementation cost and the price of plots being developed there, he said.

CCC Executive Engineer Abu Saleh said that CCC planned to develop some 80 residential plots on VIP Residential Area. Each 3.5 kantha plot will cost Tk 30 lakh, he said.

Meanwhile, CDA also initiated an urban village project, Nilima, on some 217 acres of land near CCC's VIP Residential Area. The Nilima project to be implemented at a cost of Tk 240 crore from CDA's own fund will have 1200 residential plots. Each five-katha plot will be allotted at Tk 3.25 lakh per kantha - around one third of what CCC plot will cost.

The CCC is implementing its project on seven out of 24 acres of land at South Khulshi following disputes regarding some portions, sources said.

CCC does not need any permission from CDA for developing the housing project or to level the hills.

CCC State Officer Ahmedul Haq said they needed CDA's permission for cutting hills. "But there is no hill at the project site," he said.

There were some hills that were cut down back in early nineties by the landowner from whom CCC purchased the land for the project, Haq said.

"At present we are just levelling some 35 residential plots that have already been prepared," he added.

## Child labour on rise at CU

SHAHADAT HOSSAIN RIAD

Child labour is on the rise on the Chittagong University (CU) campus in recent time.

Around 200 children are engaged in different odd jobs on the campus due to financial hardship of their parents.

Instead of going to school, they work on the campus for their survival and to support their families.

They are all under 12. They serve in different shops, restaurants, hall canteens and cafeterias.

Most of the children are from the villages surrounding the campus and from greater Chittagong and Noakhali district.

The wards of a section of fourth class employees of the university are also engaged in work in the shops and restaurants to support their families.

The shop and restaurant owners appoint such boys as they can easily hire them on the cheap.

Over 50 boys are working at five restaurants and other stationery shops at the Shah Jalal and Shah Amanat hall area and 50 others at the first food shops at the university station ground.

Besides, 25 teenagers also work at seven shops on Shamsunnahar hall premises, five at Kichhukhan snacks house, 20 at the Jhupries (thatched tea stall) of arts faculty, 10 at the Jhupries of Social Science and the rest at the canteens of different halls and the shops at gate number two.

A large number of children also serve foods at hall

canteens and get wages not over Tk 500 per month.

Some others sell their labour only for food and shelter.

Nine-year-old Shohag from Noakhali said, he joined the Pritilata hall canteen three months back.

My father supplies water to some restaurants in Dhaka and I am the third among four brothers and a sister, Shohag said. The canteen owner very often physically tortures canteen boys, including me, he said.

When asked, he said that he did not get any payment till today.

Saddam, aged about 10 who works at a tea stall in front of the Shamsunnahar hall, said that he got Tk 500 per month.

Some students of the Department of Communication and Journalism took an initiative to make the children literate that was stopped suddenly few months back due to political reason, a student said seeking anonymity.

Head of the Law Department Prof. Md Mohiuddin Khaleed expressed concern over the rise of child labour at CU and said that the university authorities should stop appointment of children in shops and canteens. Our socio-economical aspect is the cause for these, he said adding that the voluntary organisations or NGOs should come forward to reduce the child labour as well as to do something for them.

However, the university authorities pay no attention to this.

Unplanned and mindless installation of huge signboards and billboards putting up commercial advertisements blocks view of the scenic beauty of hills and nature on both sides of CDA Avenue stretching from Tigerpass intersection to Ispahani intersection in the city.



STAR PHOTO



## theweekthatwas



Tanchanga Sangskritik Dai, a cultural organisation of Tanchanga tribe, took out a colourful procession at Rangamati town on August 10 on the occasion of the International Indigenous People's Day. 'Our Land, Our Right,' was the theme of the day.

### Easy loan for agro-based unit

The commercial banks were directed to give easy loan with eight per cent interest for the development of agro-based industry said Minister for Fisheries and Livestock Abdullah Al Noman.

Initiative was also taken to provide flood-affected fish farmers with fish fries and quality feed free of cost, he said.

Noman said this while he was inaugurating a workshop titled, "Production of inbred-free aquaculture seeds and good quality feed" at the Chittagong chamber auditorium here on Saturday.

Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) and Agro-based Industries & Technology Development Project -II (ATDP II) jointly organised the workshop.

He stressed the need for development of livestock and fisheries sector for the development of agro-based industries.

Noman also underscored the need for inclusion of agriculture and related livestock and fisheries sectors in the export sector.

CCCI President Amir Humayun Mahmud Chowdhury was present as special guest at the workshop. CCCI Senior Vice-President Ershad Ullah and Vice-President Monzoor-Ul-Amin Chowdhury also spoke with ATDP's Chittagong Regional Agribusiness Manager Rafiq Sarker in the chair.

### Timber worth Tk 1 crore seized

Army personnel of Khagrachhari and Guimara seized huge quantity of timber including teaks worth around Tk 1 crore from Khagrachhari district in 18 months till July 31 this year.

They seized the timbers while being felled and trafficked illegally from different areas of the hilly district.

Of these, army of Khagrachhari (Headquarter) region seized 9300 C-ft of timber worth around Tk 70 lakh while Guimara Region Army 2741 C-ft worth around Tk 15 lakh in separate drives during this period.

The seized timbers including those of valuable species of teak, Gamari, Karai and Chapalish, were handed over to Department of Forest authorities and sold on auction.

### Govt firm to ensure facilities for teachers

Minister for Education Dr M. Osman Faruq on Saturday said that government was determined to ensure facilities including pension for welfare of private teachers.

He also underlined the need for introducing an identical set of rules for recruiting teachers and reforming the rules for governing bodies of private educational institutions to bring about a positive change in the educational system.

He was addressing a function as the chief guest at Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board, Chittagong

Office at Chandgaon.

Chittagong Education Board (CEB) organised the ceremony on the occasion of distribution of computers among educational institutions that achieved good results in the SSC and Dakhil examinations this year.

With CEB Chairman AJM Shahidullah in the chair, Exam Controller Professor Obayedul Akber, Department of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Deputy Director Rahenara Begum and Md Nurun Nabi also spoke. The heads and the governing body presidents of different educational institutions were present.

### CPA removes illegal signboards, billboards

Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) in a drive on Saturday removed illegal signboards and billboards from a 2km stretch of its land along the north bank of the river Karnaphuli.

The signboards and billboards were raised along the airport road stretching from old airport connecting road to Naval Base without any approval from CPA. They put up advertisements of 10 industrial and commercial firms.



Residents of Laldiarchar adjacent to Chittagong port observe a token hunger strike on Chittagong Press Club premises on Wednesday protesting eviction by Chittagong Port Authority. The people, who were rehabilitated in Laldiarchar after losing their houses to river erosion, would become homeless once again as CPA acquired their land for construction of a container terminal.

Earlier, CPA issued notice asking the concerned firms to remove the boards.

CPA Magistrate Md Munir Chowdhury led the five-hour eviction drive. One and a half platoon of police force and some 30 workers from different departments took part in the eviction drive.

Chowdhury MP, also the founding chairman of Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE), at the latter's residence here on Friday.

During the meeting the Thai bourse president exchanged views with CSE founding chairman on issues of cooperation identified by the two bourses.

Amir Khosru appreciated the initiative taken by the two bourses to exchange information and share experience to benefit each other. He also stressed the need for transforming the experience into reality for increasing trade volume of both the exchanges.

He briefed the SET president about the objectives of the South Asian Federation of Exchanges (SAFE) formed in 2002 and said that the SAFE members would be greatly benefited when it starts cross border trading.

CSE Chief Executive Officer Wali-ul-Marooof Matin was present at the meeting.

### Install scanning machine at Ctg port

Chittagong chamber president in a fax message on Tuesday urged the finance minister for installing scanning machine at Chittagong port on an urgent basis to save the importers from losses due to physical examining of suspected containers.

Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) President Amir Humayun Mahmud Chowdhury sent the message as on the basis of "secret information" two vessels were detained and searched for "smuggled arms" into their containers at Chittagong port.

CCCI president in the fax message

said that a special team comprising members from customs and ports started examining over 800 containers carried by the two vessels in presence of police, army and intelligence personnel on August 10.

The team was scheduled to conduct the appraisal of all the goods imported in the containers as well, he said. As such it might take around a month for the importers to take delivery of the goods causing financial losses to all the businessmen concerned and industrialists as well as to the general consumers, he said.

### Ershad for provincial government

Former President and Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman HM Ershad in the port city on Wednesday proposed for introducing provincial government system for equitable distribution of property and governing the country on the basis of justice.

He made the proposal at a daylong seminar on provincial government system organised by Provincial System Implementation Coordination Committee (PSICC) at a local hotel.

Ershad proposed for introducing federal system of government dividing the country into eight provinces, namely Rajshahi, Rangpur, Mymensingh, Sylhet, Chittagong, Comilla, Barisal and Khulna. Each province will be formed with two to three of the existing greater districts covering an area of 13,000 sq km to 25,000 sq km.