

Massive beautification of city for Saarc Summit

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The city's beautification plan for the upcoming the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (Saarc) Summit is expected to complete by mid November, a month ahead of the high-profile conference slated for January 2005.

"We hope the executing agencies will not miss the November 15 deadline for finishing the project as 80 percent work has already been done," said Commodore Sohel Faruque, member secretary of the Dhaka City Beautification Cell (DCBC).

The cell has been formed comprising officials of the DCC, Dhaka Electric Supply Authority, Dhaka Urban Transport Project, Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority, Dhaka Electric Supply Company, and the Police Department to assist in implementation of the beautification programmes.

The beautification project, undertaken at the directives of the Prime Minister's Office, is being executed by various government agencies and private organisations under the supervision of the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC).

Under the project, almost all important medians and road islands stretching from Bangabhaban to airport have been brought under fresh plantation. A total of 71 public and private organisations are implementing the project.

The authorities have divided the city into 109 zones and asked the executing agencies to beautify these areas. The private organisations will plant trees on medians and road dividers and maintain the plants for the next four years.

Besides, two parks have been handed over to private organisations for eight years for maintenance and beautification.

"The government does not need to spend on this project. Government agencies and private organisations are implementing this plan with their own funds," Commodore Sohel Faruque said. "DCC is co-ordinating the whole project."

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) has decided to award the



The Airport Road adorned with a new look as part of the beautification process of the city ahead of the Saarc Summit.

best organisations for their efforts in planting and maintaining the medians of the city roads, ANM Ifekharul Hoque, officer-in-charge of DCBC said.

He said the DCC will allow the organisations to put a maximum of three advertisement boards in their designated areas on completion of the beautification work. "The size of the billboards needs to be approved by the city corporation."

Bangladesh Navy has been assigned for the beautification of the road from Banani level crossing to Kakoli, and the 'Advance Ad' is beautifying the road from Kakoli

point to Jahangir Gate via

Mohakhali level crossing. The stretch from Jahangir Gate of Dhaka Cantonment to Bijoy Sarani is being beautified by GrameenPhone Limited and Bijoy Sarani to Farmgate Police Box by the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI).

The Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) has been engaged in maintenance of the park to the west of Adamjee Court at Dilkusha while Arkay Group has taken the Panthakunja Park near Sonargaon Hotel.

Bata Shoe Company Limited is beautifying the roads from Zia

International Airport to Tongi Bridge, and the Roads and Highways Department is beautifying the stretch from the airport to Banani level crossing.

Brac has been nominated to beautify the road from Manik Mia Avenue to Gono Bhaban while Lions Club for Agargaon link road to Taltala bus stand, and Grameen Bank for the stretch from Mirpur Section-10 to Sony Cinema.

Farmgate Police Box to Bangla Motor crossing and the road from Dhaka Sheraton Hotel to Shahbagh crossing were handed over to Arkay Group for beautification.

Gonosasthya Kendra has been

nominated to beautify from Dhanmondi Road no 5 to the, Sonargaon-Panthapath Road via Russell Square.

Among other organisations, Transcom Limited, Concord Group, Bangladesh Army, Exim Bank, City Bank, Dutch-Bangla Bank, LGED, Bangladesh Railway, Lab Aid, CityCell, Hotel Sonargaon, Desco, ATN Bangla, Bhorer Kagoj, British American Tobacco, Bashundhara Group, Prime Textile, and MCCI are beautifying the city under the project.

"We are taking part in this project to perform our corporate social responsibility," said Syed Shawkat

Imam, deputy manager (information) of GrameenPhone Limited.

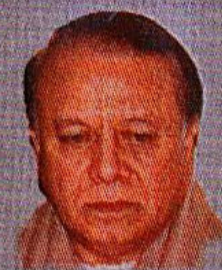
All the organisations had to take DCC's prior approval to the designs and work for beautification. DCBC officials said the contract with any organisation would be cancelled if it failed to follow the approved design and complete the work on time.

The authorities had earlier planned to relocate the Saarc Fountain in front of Sonargaon Hotel but officials said it will remain at its present position until the summit. It will then be relocated to Pantho Kunjo park.

city express

The latest crop of quotes from the city's press -- words worth repeating, we feel, for their humour, insight or sheer outrageousness. Star City does not necessarily support the opinions expressed in this column.

"But to shove people by their necks into another country is beyond all international rules and regulations"



-- M. Morshed Khan

Foreign Minister
Told reporters on October 28 while commenting on BSF push-in attempts. Source: The Daily Star

"He spends time chatting with the state minister for communication. Or else being a journalist how could he know about the file?"

-- Nazmul Huda

Communications Minister

Said on October 26 commenting on a report in the Prothom Alo on an allocation of some public (railway) land to a human rights organisation headed by his wife at a minimal price. Source: Prothom Alo



"Throwing eggs, tomatoes and attacking us with batons cannot keep the people mum"

-- Badrudroza Choudhury

Former president and Bikalpa Dhara

Bangladesh Chief
Said on October 29 at a meeting in Narayanganj. Source: Prothom Alo

"It is not necessary to go to the Supreme Judicial Council to have a justice who is accused of tampering with certificates removed. It is a crime under the Code of Criminal Procedure"

-- Rokanuddin Mahmud

President, Supreme Court Bar Association

Told newsmen on October 30 when asked if the Bar would take up the issue of an 'additional High court judge allegedly tampering with his LLB certificate' with the Supreme Judicial Council. Source: The Daily Star

"I will call Shibir if you people do not move out of here"

-- Prof. Nazrul Islam

Director, IER and syndicate member of Rajshahi University

Said on October 30, threatening the students when they made a blockade in front of vice-chancellor's house. Source: Prothom Alo

"Because of a few bad guys we are forced to protest on the streets"

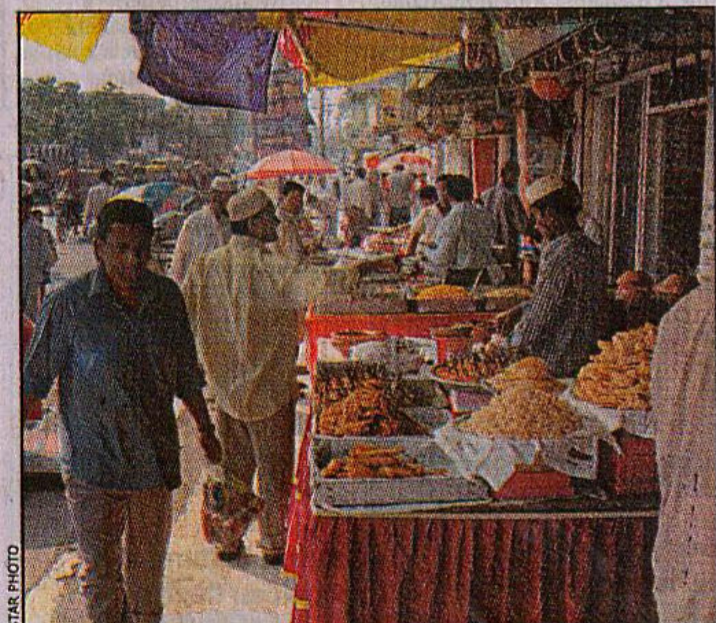
-- Razzak

Film Actor

Said after film personalities formed a human chain on October 26 protesting vulgarity in present films. Source: Prothom Alo



Makeshift Iftari houses on footpaths



FAIZULATANIEM

Makeshift *iftari* outlets have encroached most footpaths along Road No 27, Satmajid Road in Dhanmondi and the stretch from Mirpur Road to Dhanmondi, while footpaths of Old Dhaka are overcrowded with such shops.

Most shop owners said they begin sales an hour prior to *iftari* time, but residents of the area complained that sales start just after midday.

With the footpaths occupied by these outlets, pedestrians walk on the main roads, increasing the chaos on the already congested streets.

A manager of a *halim* house in Kalabagan admitted that selling *iftari* on public property is illegal. "It is only during the Ramadan

month that situation arise. Police and DCC officials warn us from time to time but since many outlets are on the footpaths, we take our chance as well," he said.

"We are continuing eviction drives on these makeshift outlets and on Saturday we evicted some shops in Fulbaria near Gulistan with the help of the police," Chief Estate Officer of DCC, Abu Taleb told the Star City.

"But an hour after the eviction, residents complained that the shops came out again. The police has to handle these situations as they are the law enforcers and have the authority to curtail such activities," Taleb added.

Abdul Noor, a resident said that right after DCC officials left, the business started again with a bribe given to the police, while

Rahman Miah from a Satmasjid road outlet confirmed that a bribe of Tk 50-60 business could go on without any hindrance.

We raised the issue of increasing police patrol in the eviction drive in a meeting with the Mayor and Police Commissioner," said Abu Taleb.

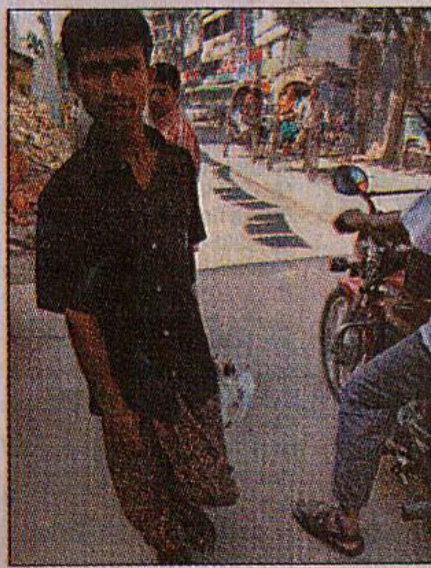
There are two types of *iftari* vendors -- those who own shops and others with a single table catering to the low-income group. Some of them are can be seen in the open just selling *chola* and *muri*.

Vendors said that there was no specific space allotted to them by the DCC to sell *iftari*. "Sales will not be good if we are located inside a building or market place, as we cater to the low income group that pass by from work," said a vendor from

Panthapath.

"As rickshaws are off-limit on many VIP roads, we have to walk home from office for *iftari*. But as the footpaths are intruded, it takes about 15 minutes more than the usual time to reach home and on quite a few occasions, I missed breaking fast with my family," said a pedestrian returning home from office.

Speaking to the police crimes division, an officer requesting anonymity told the Star City that they cannot evict these makeshift shops as this duty fell under the jurisdiction of the 24 mobile courts in the city. Each court has a magistrate who has the authority to remove such temporary shop. The police can only provide law-related support in the operations led by DCC teams.



MY PHOTO! THANKS, BUT NO THANKS

As winter draws near bird sellers are taking to by-lanes to attract customers in the city. A vendor was seen at Puarana Paltan last afternoon illegally selling herons in broad daylight. Although he was able to escape law enforcers he could not get away from the sharp, roving eye of our photographer and tried to avoid being photographed.

