

# Slow-going Liberation War projects

SULTANA RAHMAN

Ministry of Liberation War Affairs is moving at a snail's pace to complete its development projects taken since its establishment in 2001.

The ministry's officials have attributed the slow progress to lack of spot identification and repeated revision of projects and the lengthy process to get approval from the planning commission.

"I had to revise all projects after taking responsibility of the ministry nearly one and half a year ago. That has delayed the projects," said state minister for liberation war affairs Rezaul Karim.

Since October 23, 2001 when the ministry came into being, it has taken up four fresh development projects and decided to continue three previous projects of the immediate past government. The fresh projects are constructions of the Shaheed Zia memorial complex at

Kalurghat in Chittagong, commemorative stones in all districts with names of local martyrs on them, mausoleums and preservation of killing fields of the Liberation War of 1971 and monuments of seven Bir Shresthas. All these projects were finalised during the early months of 2002.

"These projects were reviewed considering the facts and reality soon after I had taken over. I do not know about the progress of the previous two years as I was not here," the state minister said.

"Getting approval from the planning commission is a lengthy process that upsets the estimated duration of most of the projects," the state minister observed.

Officials in the ministry said that progress of the projects have slowed down after the former state minister Redawan Ahmed was replaced by Karim who sent the projects for fresh revision.

"I found some of the projects

unrealistic as well as costly. I had them reviewed and cut down the cost. We are trying to ensure more works at less cost," said Rezaul Karim. But according to sources, around Tk 211 crore 98 lakh 74 thousands has been allocated since the establishment of the ministry while the construction cost of the seven development projects require Tk 202 crore 38 lakh.

The construction of nine mausoleums and preservation of killing fields of 1971 at a cost of Tk 5.97 crore were supposed to end within 2004. However, only one Mausoleum in Rajshahi has been completed while the rest are either half-complete or work on them has halted.

"Land accusation is the main obstacle to this project," said the state minister.

The commemorative stones with names of martyrs in 64 districts are also facing land-related problems. Work has not started on any of these.

"We want to establish the monuments in a central location in each district but we are not getting our desired spots to construct them," said Karim.

The construction of monuments of seven Bir Shresthas at a cost of 5.98 crore was initiated in 2002 and is scheduled to be completed by 2005. That project has been sent for revision.

Among the projects initiated by the previous Awami League government, work on the Swadhinata Stambha at Suhrawardy Uddyan started in July, 1998 at a cost of Tk 81.27 crore. After 60 per cent of its work had been completed, the present government halted construction in late 2001 and filled a case citing irregularities and corruption.

Following a revision, Swadhinata Stambha's budget was cut to Tk 76 crore and it got approved in November this year. It is expected to be complete in June 2006.



Swadhinata Stambha at Suhrawardy Uddyan, a project under the Liberation War Affairs ministry, is progressing rather slowly, like most other projects.

# Jute fair showcases possibilities

MANISHA GANGOPADHYAY

The Jute Mela (jute fair) which began on December 8 and ended yesterday, has presented a myriad of unexpected jute products that include car parts and even pharmaceutical items.

Hosted by the Jute Diversification Promotion Center, a government initiative under the Ministry of Jute, the fair had a 2-part purpose to rejuvenate jute's decline in the domestic market and to improve the environment by encouraging the use of jute in

place of synthetic materials. Typically used in making ropes, sacks and handicrafts, the stalls at the jute fair presented many more diversified options. While the car material and pharmaceutical products were intended for export, some of the more interest-

ing items designed to draw the local consumers included jute CD travel cases (at Tk 100), jute tissue boxes and jute attaché cases with metal clasps and hard board support. The more expensive and posh attaché case had leather trim and handle.

While diverse jute products were mostly designed for women jute bags, plant holders and jute rugs, the jute fair also presented many options for various segments of society.

For the students there were jute files for a mere Tk 60 while the official file which is larger with several pockets and reinforced with plastic is available for Tk 100-120. There were even jute backpacks.

Artists and memorabilia collectors could be found checking out photo albums and scrap books made completely out of jute and dyed in bright, attractive colours.

Many of the vendors and promoters not only introduced different fused materials but also fused different styles. One stall, a winner of the National Award for Jute Crafts, displayed several bags and wall hangings with Nakshikatha embroidery work and artistic hand painting.

"The key to increasing demand for jute is to make it more fashionable," said the stall's owner Rokeya Begum.

Although not a major draw for the majority of visitors, the production of the lightweight jute bag is expected to have a major impact in the retail sector in near future. After the banning of polythene, finding an eco-friendly replacement has been difficult leaving both the vendors and customers frustrated by the limitations of the alternative - netted canvas bags.

"The light-weight jute bag comes in two forms," said Abdullah-Al-Mamoon, executive director of Janata Jute Mills Ltd and Sadat Jute Industries Ltd. "One will be introduced in the market to replace polythene bags throughout the country. It will

cost between Tk 1.5-2.5. The other is made of jute and strengthened with paper for more heavy shopping with a load-bearing capacity of 10-15 kg and will cost from Tk 2-3," Al-Mamoon added.

The secret to the low price of the bags lie in the composition of

demands.

"We are trying to pitch jute car body parts to Mercedes and BMW," said Md. Kamal Uddin, director of technological research.

Over 40 different car parts have been made out of non-woven composite jute, including trans-

Ministry of Jute as a separate entity. Bangladesh is the only country in the world having an exclusive ministry to look after the cause of jute.

However, despite the significant role played by jute in the Asian economies, the ever-



The Jute fair, which concluded yesterday attracted many visitors, showing the potential jute has in the market.



the product - both bags will be made from jute mill waste.

Many of the most unexpected jute-composite products came from the display-only Made-for-Export stalls. Apparently, these products were made to conform to a European import provision that export products with 40% biodegradable material will be allowed duty-free sale.

Bangladesh Jute Research Institute, funded by the government, has made incredible strides in technology to meet these

mission material, upholstery, carpeting, and sunroofs and significantly, all parts are flame retardant.

According to the government's statistics, in the past more than 80% of the total foreign exchange of the country came from the jute sector. Almost one fifth of the total population of the country was directly or indirectly involved in

jute production, transportation, processing and marketing. Its importance to the national economy led to the creation of the

increasing use of synthetic substitutes such as plastic has made serious inroads into the global trade.

With the new items presented at the mela meeting the new eco-friendly trend of international trade bodies, promoters were eager to explore the potential in a bid to return to glory days.

"Other natural fibres such as hemp and flax are costly, but jute is relatively inexpensive," said Kamal Uddin.

## useful telephone numbers

### COURIER SERVICES

#### International

Air Borne Express- 9561371, 9561372, 9550724  
Air Couriers Intl (BD) Ltd.- 8815970  
Aramax International Courier- 9558003, 9559582, 9565075  
Airspeed Express- 9563494  
Asian Courier Services Ltd.- 8313543  
Baishakhi Courier Service- 9558606  
Banladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114  
Bangladesh Courier Service- 9563989  
Bengal Express- 9560642, 9552666  
Bangladesh Intl Courier- 953636  
Continental Service Ltd.- 9552948, 9558425  
DHL Worldwide Express- 9881703-7, 9886305-9, 9882057  
Enam Express- 9330699  
Fedex Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.- 9565114  
Modhuban Courier Service-

9550884  
Overseas Courier Service- 9352431, 8321169  
Pacific Courier- 9568446  
Reliance Express Service- 9558515, 7110249  
Sky International service- 9660442  
Skynet world Wide Express- 9558062, 9560258, 7114787, 7113184  
TNT Express- 9566662, 9558239, 8618155  
Union Courier Service- 9341722  
United Parcel Service Air alliance Ltd.- 8826429, 8810223

#### National

Asian courier Service Ltd.- 8313543  
BAE- 9884851  
Central Courier Service- 9881118  
Confidence Courier Service Ltd.- 9567036  
Chisty Courier- 7110177-9,  
Cosmopol Services- 9552793, 9557975  
Dhaka Courier Services- 7236222

Dolphin Courier- 9558802  
Dreamland Courier Service- 9550326, 9566975  
Pioneer Courier Services- 9561727, 9569759  
Probashi Courier Services- 9346359  
Rainbow Express Parcel Services Ltd.- 8322773, 8315703  
Reliance Express Services- 9558515, 7110249  
Sundarban Courier Services- 9551984, 9556189, 9551656  
Sunrise Courier Services- 9568751  
World Runner Express Ltd.- 9112068, Fax- 880-2-9112068

#### TIPS

Do you know according to Dhaka City Corporation, you must deposit your waste at the collection site between 4pm and 10pm

### LIBRARY & INFO-

#### Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers

Central Public Library- 8626001-4,  
Shishu Academy- 9564128  
Shilpakala Academy- 8614673  
Bangla Academy- 8619550  
Islamic Foundation- 9550280, 955640  
The American Centre (IRC)- 8813440-4, 9886395  
The Nazrul Institute- 9114602  
Ford Foundation- 8116133  
Alliance Francaise- 8611557  
British Council- 8618867-8, 8618905-7  
Community Development Library- 8113769, 8113604  
Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka- 9126525-6  
Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library- 8615096  
The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314  
Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412

### OUTING

#### Museum and Zoo

National Museum- 8619396-9  
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday 3 pm- 8 pm, Thursday closed  
Muktijuddha Jadughar- 9559091  
Open: 10:30 am 6:30 pm, Sunday Closed  
Bangabandhu Smiti Jadughar- 8110046  
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Wednesday closed  
Ahsan Manzil  
Open: 10 am 5 pm, Friday: 3 pm - 7 pm, Thursday Closed  
Shishu Jadughar- 9666466  
Open: 10 am- 6 pm, Sunday Closed

### CITY BUS ROUTE

Bus No.	Route	Starts from
1	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 10, 11, 12	Golap Shah Mazar
2	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Mirpur 1, 2	Phoolbaria bus station
3	Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mahakhali-Airport-Azampur	Phoolbaria bus station
4	Shyampur-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Airport-Tongi	Shyampur
5	Sayedabad-Kamalapur-Motijheel-Airport-Joydebpur-Gazipur	Sayedabad
6A	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6B	Kamalapur-Motijheel-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 1, 2	Kamalapur
6C	Motijheel Shapla chattr- Malibagh- Farmgate- Gulshan 2	Motijheel Shaplachattr
7	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Maghbazar-Nabisco-Gulshan 2	Sadarghat
8	Chittagong-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asad Gate-Kalyanpur-Gabtoi	Chittagong Road
9	Demra Rani mahal-Motijheel-Kalbagan-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 10, 11, 12	Demra Ranimalah
10	Sadarghat-Gulistan-Kakrail-Malibagh-Rampura-Biswas Road-Tongi Bridge	Sadarghat
11	Sayedabad-Motijheel-Fakirapool-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Tongi Bridge	Sayedabad
11/A	Sayedabad-Khilgoan-Malibagh-Rampura-Airport-Tongi Bridge	Syedabad
12	Shanir Akhra-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Asadgate-Mohammadpur	Shanir Akhra
13	Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Jhigatola-Shangkar-Mohammedpur	Motijheel
14	Signboard - Motijheel-Shahbagh-New Market-Shyamoli-Mirpur 1, 12	Signboard (Chittagong Road)
15	Chittagong Road-Motijheel-Shahbagh-Farmgate-Mirpur 12	Chittagong Road
24	Gulistan-Maghbazar-Mohakhali-Airport-Uttara-Bliple	Gulistan