

OSMANI UDYAN

Development work to start soon

ABDUL KADER

The development work of the Osmani Udyan, which once was a prominent public park, is likely to start within July with an aim of bringing back the greenery and beauty of the place by evicting all kinds of illegal structures and occupants.

development work of Osmani Udyan between June and July after completing the tender procedures and other formalities," said Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka while talking to Star City.

A DCC official said that the work would be completed in phases. The first phase includes demarcation of the boundary wall, building walkways, tree plantation after felling

some of the old trees which are not environment-friendly, digging a lake on the eastern side of the park, construction of a children's park, benches and a fountain. The total cost for the development and beautification of the park could be around Tk five crore, said a concerned official of the DCC.

The suggestions and recommendations came from a committee headed by noted intellectual and

environmentalist Prof. Serajul Islam Chowdhury. The committee included environmentalists and DCC officials.

At present, the park is a turn-off for the common public. Human haulers are parked inside its premises, makeshift shops have been set up encroaching park space and floating people have turned it into their safe abode. Extortionists also take the opportunity to collect tolls from the encroachers. After dark, the whole area becomes a den of sex-workers, pimps and clients. Drug-addicts and muggers also roam around the park.

"One person named Ershad collects Tk 220 from each human hauler in extortion money. The amount is then distributed among the police, local goons and various associations of transport owners," said one transport worker.

Shopkeepers of makeshift stalls on the other hand claimed that they had to pay Tk 40 each on a daily basis to a toll collector named Shahjahan for continuing their business.

According to DCC sources, the park now has an area of 19.6 acres although originally it was 23.14 acres. Some 2.81 acres of land on the eastern side is the subject of a legal dispute with one woman claiming ownership of that land. She has also filed a case with the high court. Besides some portions have been handed over to the Golap Shah Mosque while Muktijoddha Sangsad Kirra Chakra club, a group of typists, Titas Gas, the Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) and Dhaka Metropolitan Police are using land originally belonging to the park.



A seven-day old at the Shishu Hospital suffers from jaundice caused by the acute heat according to the duty doctor.

Heat-related diseases on the rise

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The prolonged spell of unbearable heat has resulted in an outbreak of diarrhoea, heat stroke, dehydration, heat allergy, stomach-ache, viral fever and other diseases which are affecting mostly children and the aged.

Dhaka Shishu Hospital has a capacity of 400 beds, all of which have been filled up and new patients are arriving everyday.

"We are dealing with new patients continuously. Diarrhoea, pneumonia and skin-rash are the most common diseases the children are suffering from," said Ummey Nazneen Zakia, the on-duty emergency medical officer of Shishu Hospital. The hospital is unable to accommodate the growing number of patients.

Dhaka Medical College Hospital

(DMCH)'s emergency section doctor Mostak said that the present rate of arriving patients were three times more than in normal times. Most are coming with diarrhoea and stomach related problems.

The severe heat wave has continued for the last three weeks. Residents in many parts of the city are not getting sufficient water supply. In some areas, the water is dirty and even stinky. Apart from drinking, household chores have also become difficult.

"For the last two to three days, no one in my family could take a bath. The quality of water is so poor that we get stomach-ache after drinking it. On the other hand, rashes and spots come out on the skin after taking bath with that water," said Rahmatullah of Mirpur.

In offices, a good number of employees are on sick leave. "Colds, headaches and fever are the most common complaints," said Ahmed Sharif who works at

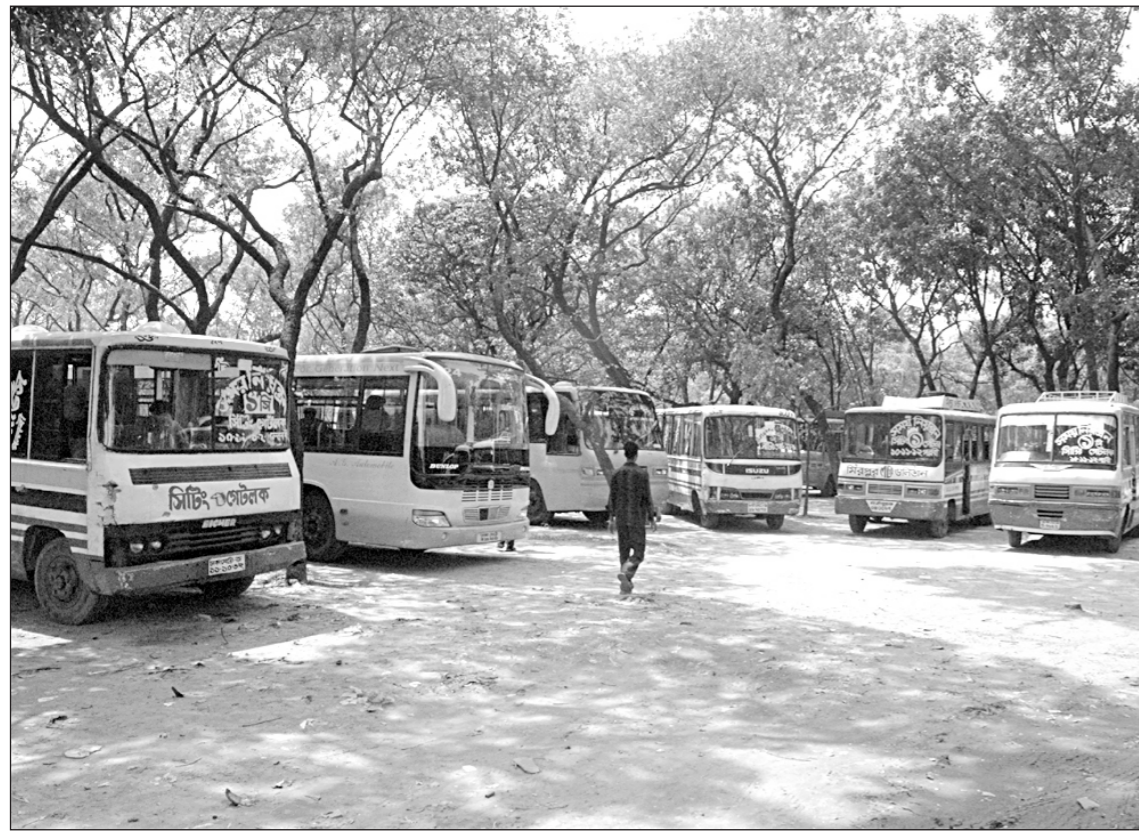
the Sena Kalyan Bhaban in Motijheel.

Many people are experiencing stomach troubles after taking food from cheap and street-side eateries.

Although the juice sellers are enjoying brisk business, the ice they are using to cool the drink is often brought from dubious sources. Health experts believe that ice has every chance of carrying germs and can cause serious food poisoning.

The majority of the sick are poor people who do not have access to clean and pure water and food. To quench thirst and to avoid dehydration, they take liquid which are not safe to drink.

The heat spell meanwhile looks set to make people suffer for a few weeks more. Meteorologists said that as we are still in the pre-monsoon stage, the weather won't become cooler until the monsoon rains arrive.



A park or a bus stand? Is this Osmani Udyan?

6x3

4x2

4x3

7x3

9x2

6x3