

AZIMPUR GRAVEYARD

Expansion starts soon

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The planned expansion of Azimpur graveyard is likely to start soon as the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has procured 2.13 acres of land adjacent to the burial place from the directorate of food in exchange of 1.2 acres of DCC land at Sayedabad.

The land adjacent to the Azimpur graveyard was handed over six months after the December 31, 2004 deadline. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) had taken the initiative to expand the graveyard, the most crowded burial place in the city, last year.

The DCC is hopeful of completing the development work within a short time although it took some 15 months to complete the land exchange process.

"The procured land needs earth filling which we shall start within a month. The extended portion should be useable by the end of this year," said Abu Taleb, chief estate officer of



DCC.

DCC sources informed that no permanent graves would be allotted in the extended portion.

"We understand the emotion relatives of a deceased go through but they must understand that due to the scarcity of space in the city, we can not allow permanent graves," said a DCC official.

Dhaka is now facing an acute shortage of burial grounds and the DCC has already stopped preservation of graves at Azimpur and Banani graveyards and is not entertaining

advanced bookings.

According to the DCC's estimate, about 100 - 120 burials take place in the city everyday and fifty percent of those are at Azimpur. The Azimpur graveyard previously had 17.5 acres of land full of permanent graves.

Following the land procurement, the second largest among the five DCC graveyards in the city now has an area of 19.63 acres.

"This will help us a lot in handling the existing crisis until we establish the planned four new graveyards," said the chief estate officer.

Among the five municipal graveyards, only the Jurain graveyard near Postogola still has space to accommodate more burials as it has been slightly expanded.

The Graveyard for Martyred Intellectuals at Mirpur with 65 acres of land is the largest among the DCC-managed burial places followed by Azimpur (19.63 acres), Jurain (10.1 acres), Banani (4.5 acres) and Uttara (0.5 acres).

Delay in plot allotment at Uttara Model Town

IMRUL HASAN

Some plot winners of Uttara Model Town, one of Rajuk's land development projects in the city, are frustrated as they have not been handed over plots in eight years.

Rajuk had issued an advertisement to allot three-katha plots at Tk 1.5 lakh per katha at sectors 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 of Uttara under Phase Two to government and non-government officials. Under Phase One, it had completed the processing formalities of handing over plots in sectors 1-9 before 1997. At the moment, the allotment process in sectors 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 is going on.

"The number of plots allotted by Rajuk in 1997 was 2,700. In 2002 a committee under the Ministry of Housing and Public Works revalued the price of plots and fixed Tk three lakh for each katha. At the same time, the committee rejected the allotment of 567 plots. The committee will re-allot these plots by turn," said Md. Mofazzel Hussain Khan, the superintendent of Rajuk's estate department.

"It had taken us 18 years to complete the process and hand over the plots before the introduction of the Management Information System (MIS) in 2004. The time duration will decrease because of the new system," he added.

Concerned sources in Rajuk said bureaucratic wrangles delay the allotment process.

A file usually starts off from the table of the assistant superintendent and ends at the chairman's one via five other tables. Then it takes a reverse route and finally arrives back with the assistant superintendent. This cycle may take months to complete.

In sectors 10 - 17 of Uttara Model Town, very few houses have been built. Some plots remain underwater.

"The condition of most of these plots have remained unchanged during the last eight years," said Naimul Islam, a local grocer of sector 13. Landholders allege that some political leaders and corrupt officials of Rajuk are trying to get their own people possession of plots and thus delaying the process for genuine plot owners.

"There is no certainty when I will be able to build my own house. I do not know whether I will live to see that day," said a landholder who won a plot in sector 10 in 1997.

"Land related legal complexities are the principal obstacles in cases of possession. The procedure has been disrupted as sufferers and some institutions have filed cases. Land development rules and regulations also create hindrance," said Md. Saukat Ali, the deputy director (Estate) of Rajuk.



A plot allocated in 1997 breeding water-hyacinth, is yet to be handed over to the allottee.

12x3

2x2

4x2

6x2

4x3