

CU Arts Faculty building may cave in any time



The dilapidated Arts Faculty Building of Chittagong University, *left*, and its latrine, *right*, that often remains flooded with stinky water.

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR

The 40-year old Chittagong University (CU) Arts Faculty building is now at risk of caving in due to years of negligence in maintenance.

The students, teachers and employees said that they fear working under the roof of this dilapidated four-storey structure. If anything happens many lives will be lost, they said.

They said whenever asked, "the authorities concerned assure us of repairing the building and increasing other facilities. But, the problems are not addressed yet posing a threat to our lives," they added.

They said they will launch an agitation demanding thorough renovation of the building.

Since its construction in 1966, the huge 4-storey building -- presently housing classes of eleven departments and several offices -- has been repaired only once immediately after the cyclonic storm in 1991.

The walls, floors and roof become soggy and leak water even after a little downpour, and plaster starts to come off the ceiling and walls, the students said.

The sewerage system remains blocked due to lack of proper maintenance and often causes inundation on the ground floor during the monsoon, said Rashedul Hasan Sumon, a student of the Communication and Journalism department. Besides, the poor ventilation system presents a suffocating experience in the summer, he said.

"We don't want any repair of the risky building. We are contemplating of a movement for construction of a new arts faculty building or at least a massive renovation work on it," said Mohammed Saifuddin, a student of the journalism department.

The teachers, who take classes

Communication and Journalism Department Chairman Ali Asgar Chowdhury said teachers might follow the path of students and boycott classes if the building is not renovated immediately. He said the condition of the faculty building is indescribable.

The building is also beset with other problems such as serious water and power crises and poor toilet facilities.

The University Engineering Department blamed the faulty design and use of lower quality construction materials for the building's 'vulnerable' state.

Bricks used in it were procured from the coastal area with salinity beyond acceptable levels, sources at the engineering department said. Such bricks don't allow cement to stick to them for long and cause plaster to come out very often, they added.

Vice Chancellor Professor AJM Nuruddin Chowdhury said "the University Grant Commission (UGC) granted more than Tk 2 crore this year for the renovation of the building and hopefully we would start as early as possible."

"Tender will be floated soon in this regard," he said.

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"Since no repair work was done for years, we live in fear of major casualties at any moment. It appears that the authorities won't wake up until something like 'Jagannath Hall tragedy' occurs here," AKM Moin Uddin, a student of the philosophy department,

under the same roof, also echoed the same sentiment.

The teachers of the Islamic History and Culture Department a few months ago threatened to refrain from taking classes when some plasters fell from the roof of an office room.



Almas Khatun, the octogenarian mother of businessman Jamaluddin, weeps to look at her abducted son's photograph.

Haunted family longs for end of ordeal

SHAHIDUL ISLAM

"We want the body of our father only, nothing else. Enough is enough."

This is how the son of businessman Jamaluddin Ahmed Chowdhury now reacts abandoning hopes to get back their beloved father, abducted two years ago.

If each and every single day is considered, the broken-down family has shown all the levels of endurance.

Once a happy family is now devastated in the absence of its chief. They have virtually lost their businesses in the last 25 months.

The clearing and forwarding firm is gone. The restaurant, Jabal-e-Rahman, at the city's Chawk Bazar area, is closed since Jamaluddin was abducted on July 24, 2003. The steel and rod-cement business is no more. The family is even unable to draw the money from Jamaluddin's bank accounts in his absence.

Jamaluddin's wife Nazma Akhtar, sons Chowdhury Forman Reza Liton and Chowdhury Arman Reza, and close relatives had tried everything possible to get him back alive. They even paid Tk 25

lakh to police at the 'request' of the then Chittagong Metropolitan Police Commissioner Shahidullah Khan, who assured them of rescuing the businessman with the money from the custody of abductors. But he failed to keep his word.

Meanwhile, Liton and his family members met the Prime Minister and Home Minister and staged a token demonstration in front of the National Press Club in the capital.

All these efforts, however, went fruitless. "What else can we do to get our father back?" questioned Liton.

The family members saw a glimmer of hope last week when the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) got involved in the sensational abduction case and netted prime suspect Shahidul Islam alias Shahid Chairman of Anwara upazila. The elite force also arrested another UP chairman Shahjahan.

Earlier, two key accused, Kala Mahbub, a close aide to another prime suspect Kashem Chairman, and Sobhan, the microbus driver, were arrested. The family members met the

Rab-7 top officials, talked with Shahid Chairman and three other suspects. The accused reportedly divulged stunning revelations to the family and Rab.

Liton said Shahid Chairman had mentioned the name of Maruf Nizam, brother of local lawmaker Sarwar Jamal Nizam, as the mastermind of his father's abduction.

Rab chief Lt Col Kazi Emdadul Haque also said that Shahid told the name of Maruf Nizam to them during the interrogation.

"Then where is the problem to arrest Maruf Nizam when the prime suspect is revealing his involvement," said Liton.

Col Emdad said they can not detain or quiz Maruf Nizam or any other person according to the initial confessions of Shahid in the abduction case. "To do that it needs a legal basis. At least the confession has to be made under Section 164 for us to make such a move."

"The family still keeps hope against hope about the fate of Jamaluddin."

"We found some real progress after Rab had started handling the matter," they said.

the week that was

ATN Bangla to set up studio

ATN Bangla will set up a separate studio at its Chittagong office at the Chittagong Press Club (CPC) soon.

The studio will telecast programmes based on cultural heritage and history of Chittagong to familiarise the city to the world.

Director of ATN Bangla Nesar Ahmad said this at a view exchange meeting at CPC VIP Lounge on Friday.

He said ATN Bangla recently established a specious office in Chittagong considering the potential, particularly the commercial prospect, of the port city.

Chittagong Press Club President Abu Sufian presided. General Secretary Kalim Sarwar, Senior Vice President Ali Abbas and ATN Bangla special correspondent Ashoke Chowdhury also spoke.

CU IT faculty gets internet connectivity

With a view to helping students in research work, the Information Technology (IT) faculty of Chittagong University (CU) came under Internet connectivity on Tuesday.

The IT faculty was brought under the connectivity under the Sustainable Development Networking Programme (SDNP) of the Sustainable Environment Management Programme (Semp) of the

Ministry of Environment and Forest. Minister for Environment and Forest Tariqul Islam inaugurated the cyber connectivity as the chief guest at a ceremony at the Social Science Faculty auditorium.

State Minister for Environment and Forest Jafrul Islam Chowdhury was the special guest at the inaugural ceremony chaired by CU Vice Chancellor Prof AJM Nuruddin Chowdhury.

Tariqul assured the students of extending the network from existing capacity of 128 kbps to 256 kbps to make the facility available to all students.

IUB Launches MBA programme

Independent University of Bangladesh (IUB), Chittagong formally launched a Master of Business Administration (MBA) programme on Tuesday.

Addressing the launching ceremony as the chief guest, former commerce minister Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury observed that compared to the increasing entrepreneurship and business expansion Chittagong was lacking in an efficient workforce and business professionals.

In this regard the newly introduced MBA programme at IUB, Chittagong would play significant role and help to meet the demand of professionals to some extent, he hoped.

Vice Chancellor (VC) of IUB, Chittagong Bazul Mobin Chowdhury presided over the launching ceremony where Chittagong Stock Exchange



The commuters and vehicles face problems due to the dilapidated condition of the lone road that leads to the city's Karnaphuli Police Station on the bank of the Karnaphuli. The authorities concerned are indifferent to the problems.

President Habib Ullah Khan, PHP Group Chairman Alhaj Sufi Mijanur Rahman and Professor Syed Safdarul Hoque also addressed among others.

IUB VC Bazul Mobin at the ceremony said that IUB Chittagong would provide the highest standard and quality education in the MBA course.

Protect consumers' right

The speakers at a roundtable here on

Friday emphasised protecting the consumers' right and called for introducing a special act in this regard.

At the roundtable organized at Chittagong Press Club by Chittagong Kreta Swartha Sangrakshak Committee (CKSSC), they said that in the absence of a specific law, the consumers are being cheated in different ways. It also encouraged food adulteration that exposed the city dwellers to different health hazards, they said.

Economist Dr Moinul Islam, Prof Shamsul Hossain, Advocate Rana Dasgupta, Prof Dr AQM Sirajuddin,

Chittagong City Corporation Chief Health Officer Dr Sarfaraz Khan, BSTI Deputy Director Shawkat Osman and CKSSC Member Secretary Shahriar Khaled were present with CKSSC President Khorshed Alam Sujon in the chair.

New DoE building opens

A new building of the Department of Environment (DoE), Chittagong division was inaugurated at Foy's Lake under

Khulshi thana on Tuesday.

Inaugurating the building Environment and Forest Minister Tariqul Islam called for collective efforts to help intensify the on-going movement against the food adulteration and environmental pollution.

He underscored the need for keeping the environment harmless and healthy to ensure a better living place for the people.

He said the government is taking measures to put an end to industrial pollution and water pollution in the port city.

State Minister for Forest and Environment Jafrul Islam Chowdhury was the special guest at the ceremony with DoE Director General Khan M Ibrahim Hossain in the chair.

DoE, Chittagong division Director Md Mosharraf Hossain in his address of welcome said that the four-storey new building was constructed under a project involving Tk 2.5 crore.

The building includes a bacteriological laboratory with necessary equipment and is the fourth divisional office building of DoE in the country, he said.

Australia to help train nurses

Australian Deputy High Commissioner in Bangladesh Richard Roger said that Australia might help the nurses of Bangladesh with higher training.

Richard Roger said this during a courtesy call with Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Mayor AQM Mohiuddin Chowdhury at the latter's

office on Sunday.

He congratulated Mohiuddin Chowdhury for being re-elected as the CCC mayor for the third consecutive time.

Richard highly appreciated the developmental, cultural and other programmes being carried out in Chittagong under the leadership of Mohiuddin Chowdhury.

Human chain protesting Tengratila blow out

Chittagong Environment Development Alliance (CEDA) formed a huge human chain in front of the Chittagong Press Club (CPC) protesting Tengratila blow-out on Saturday.

The human chain was followed by a discussion at the CPC auditorium.

The speakers at the meeting demanded compensation for victims of the blowout.

Chittagong Nagarik Udyog Convenor Mohammed Idris presided. Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) President Mostaq Ahmed, former general secretary of Bangladesh Medical Association, Chittagong Dr AQM Sirajul Islam, Advocate Rehena Kabir Ranu, Engineer Delwar Majumder, Manatosh Barua, and Action Aid representative Shihab Uddin Ahmed also spoke.

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Rehabilitation

demanded

The people evicted from Laldiar Char here on Sunday demanded their rehabilitation at the same area.

They submitted a memorandum to Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury in this regard. They said that they were not occupying the area at Laldiar Char as the government rehabilitated 400 families in 1972, they added.

They urged the mayor to take necessary steps for their rehabilitation.

The city mayor assured them of putting the demand forward to the concerned higher authorities for necessary steps.

Seminar on photo journalism

A two-day seminar on photo journalism ended on Saturday.

View Finder Photographic Institute (VFPI) organised the seminar on the occasion of the World Photographic Day at Chittagong Shilpakala Academy on Friday.

Whip Syed Wahidul Alam MP, at the closing ceremony, lauded the role of photo journalists.

Monjurul Alam Monju, the chief photo journalist of the Dainik Purbokone, gave away the VFPI medal to photo journalist Mortoja Towfik Islam for his contribution in this field.

Later, Wahidul Alam handed over the certificates among the participants.