

Construction of Saikat Complex uncertain

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia laid the foundation stone of Tk 82.55 crore project in 2004

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR
Construction of Saikat Complex, a modern shopping mall cum three-star hotel of Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC), is yet to start even one and a half years after the foundation stone was laid by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

BPC took the project of Tk 82.55 crore, scheduled to be completed by 2006, to provide world-class services to the tourists and promote tourism in the port city.

Sources at BPC blamed the bureaucratic tangle for the delay in implementing the project.

The construction could not be started as the project is yet to get approval from the purchase committee of the ministry concerned, they said.

To implement the project, the authorities demolished the previous four-storey motel complex at Station Road in the city immediately after the foundation stone was laid on April 19 in 2004.

BPC now runs the Motel Saikat at a rented space on the first floor of Chittagong New Railway Station building and spends around Tk 70,000, including rent and bills for utility services, a month.

The motel now has only 14 rooms with

double beds without any modern facility. They don't have facilities for the foreign tourists. Only two rooms are air-conditioned.

The motel charge Tk 1000 for each air-conditioned (AC) room and Tk 500 for non-AC room, sources said.

There is no electric generator for uninterrupted power supply when the frequent

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power failure creates an unbearable situation.

Besides, the boarders are to take foods outside the motel as there is no restaurant facility for them.

The situation discourages the local tourists and the foreign tourists do not come here, said a BPC staff on condition of anonymity.

Motel Saikat now has a mere sale of Tk 60,000 to one lakh a month whereas it had a monthly profit of over Tk 3 lakh. Earlier, the government would get handsome revenue as VAT (Value Added Tax) from it, sources said.

Meanwhile, the authorities have already transferred 27 of the 40 staffs to other places as the project has become uncertain.

BPC entrusted Engineers Consultants Associates Limited with the responsibility of implementing the project with the technical assistance from the Inter Design Limited of Thailand.

It planned to raise the eight-storey Saikat Complex with modern architectural designs on one acre of land.

The complex was to house a huge car

parking lot, shops and departmental stores on the first three floors, bank and insurance offices on third floor, tourist information centre, a 300-seat hall room and 200-seat restaurant, including swimming pool and bar on the fourth floor and residential hotel of three-star standard for the tourists on fifth, sixth and seventh floors.

"For possessions of different business establishments at the complex, the rate was fixed at Tk10,500 to Tk 12,000 per square feet," said BPC General Manager (Works) Abul Kashem in Dhaka over phone.

He said, "Having the complex adjoining the busy commercial and business centres like New Market, Reazuddin Bazar as well as Chittagong Railway Station and bus terminals of Station Road and Kadamtali we expected a tremendous response."

"But, we are yet to have expected response," he added.

In order to implement the project by own fund BPC gave advertisements in different dailies for space booking in the Saikat Complex, which failed to draw satisfactory response, sources at BPC said.

The authorities sold a total of 426 forms for handing over 260 possessions while only 19 of them were submitted so far.



Abu Musa Chowdhury with his wife and daughter.

FF needs help to survive

Avluse Operation Commander Abu Musa Chowdhury is fighting for life

SHAHIDUL ISLAM

Abu Musa Chowdhury, a valiant freedom fighter, is now fighting for life at his city residence for lack of treatment.

His wife Marium Akhtar, son AHM Sultanul Islam, who passed HSC this year, and daughter Halima Sadia, a class nine student at Ishani Public School and College, are hapless as they are unable to bear the cost of treatment of Musa on their own.

"Physicians suggested my husband's complete angiogram and other relevant treatment abroad. At least Tk 25 lakh to Tk 30 lakh is needed, which is beyond our capacity," Marium Akhtar told The Daily Star.

The 'traumatised' family on October 25 appeared for the first time at a press conference to inform the nation of their grievances, agonies and financial inability for his treatment.

"This (press meet) is our last hope. What else can we do? We can't beg money knocking door-to-door for his treatment," Marium said.

Musa Chowdhury, 51, was only a 15-year-teen and a secondary school certificate (SSC) examinee from Narayanhat High School in Fatikchhari when he joined the War of Liberation.

He was the mastermind of a successful 'under-water' operation to blow away two foreign ships at Chittagong port. It was one of the most thrilling and courageous operations at the fag end of the war that immediately drew international attention.

The historic day was October 1, 1971. The then Indian naval commander Saber Singh had initially hesitated to give the 'dangerous' task to Musa considering his tender age. But it was Musa's courage and youthful exuberance that ultimately compelled commander Singh to oblige and allow him to lead the operation, popularly known as "Avluse Operation."

Musa and his two fellow freedom fighters Taher and Manoj were finally given the responsibility to detonate two foreign vessels, one is Greek flag carrier MT Avluse and the other US ship MV Mana, anchored at Chittagong port jetty.

Musa and his comrades had successfully laid, under cover of thick dark, two limpet mines on the vessels. One of the mines exploded in 45 minutes and another, unfortunately, in just 10 minutes.

The mission was accomplished but as ill luck would have it Musa became the victim for the rest of his life off the second

mine that took 10 minutes to set off. He was injured due to untimely blast.

The injury in fact wrought life-long havoc on him. He underwent treatment in Bangladesh and India with little remedy. His condition deteriorated since 1986. He went to the United States, thanks to the benevolence of a few freedom fighters like Col (Retd) Oli Ahmad Bir Bikram, Dr Mahfuzur Rahman and Jahangir Alam. Musa stayed in the US for treatment until 2003 and compel to return home being unable to bear the cost.

Back in country, his condition deteriorated fast. Now, he very often gets unconscious and once that happens it takes around five to six hours to regain the consciousness. The family, quoting physicians, said that he needs immediate treatment abroad.

Musa's family is now looking forward for help from the government or the affluent section of the society.

"We feel proud of our father for what he did for the country's cause in 1971. But we are not sure whether that valour is enough to save his life now," said Sultan and Sadia, two children of Musa.



Site for construction of Motel Saikat, left, and the foundation stone, right, laid by the prime minister in 2004.

theweekthatwas

Ten get gold medals

Speakers at a discussion here on Wednesday urged the people to follow the footsteps of philanthropic personalities like Maulana Moniruzzaman Islamabadi to establish peace in the society.

Maulana Moniruzzaman Islamabadi Gobeshana Parishad organised the discussion at Kadam Mobarak Yateemkhana hall at Momin Road to mark his 55th death anniversary.

Maolana Islamabadi, a social worker, established many orphanages and worked for welfare of the distressed people in the port city.

Ten people were awarded gold medals for their contribution to the society in different sectors.

The awardees are Dr Shamsuddin (Education), Dr Rezaul Karim (Medicine), Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury (Banking), Helal Humayun (Journalism), Maulana Abdul Hai Nadvi (Islamic thought and literature), Borhan Kabir (Social work), Parveen Akhter (Human rights), Alia Chowdhury (Education), Yakub Ali (Social work) and Ahmad Jibrin (Social work).

The Parishad also awarded five organisers -- Freedom fighter Nurul Islam, Advocate Delwar Hossain, Sadat Ullah, SM Rahman and Alamgir Boidi. Southern University Vice Chancellor Dr Moinuddin was the chief guest at the

ceremony with Parishad President Md Ali Kusumpuri in the chair.

Noman distributes clothes

Livestock and Fisheries Minister Abdullah Al Noman said Eid is a festival of all irrespective of the rich or the poor.

He called upon the affluent to come forward to help the distressed of the society.

He made the call while he was distributing sari, panjabi, lungi and money among the poor at Dewan Bazaar Ward on Wednesday. The people of Machua Jhama Lane, Khalifa Patti, Ghatfarhadbeg and Baluar Dighia received the gifts.

City BNP leaders MA Sabur, Abu Sufian, Mohammad Ali, Foyez Ullah, ward president Jamal Uddin, general secretary Abdul Mannan, Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) leaders Borhanul Hoque and Moinuddin Mohammad Shahid were present.

Medicine for leukaemia patients

Children Leukaemia Assistance and Support Services (Class) on the eve of Eid-ul-Fitr distributed medicine, clothes and gifts among the leukaemia-affected children at Chittagong

Medical College Hospital (CMCH) on Wednesday.

The members of the Class, an organisation working on the leukaemia patients, handed over the medicine and gifts to CMCH Acting Director Dr Nur Nahar Begum at a simple ceremony at the paediatrics department of the hospital.

Class Chairman and Daily Ittefaq Bureau Chief Osman Gani Mansur, Director Shafiqul Alam Khan, Md Amanur Rashid, Dr Jhulan Das, Dr Sadek, Abu Mohammad Shahin, Khaled Belal, Ayesha Ali and Naznin Akhter were present at the ceremony.

Infants Right Week observed

A cultural competition of the working



People through different tourist spots on the Eid day. From left are Patenga Sea beach, Safari Park and Chittagong Zoo.

and the distressed infants was held here on Monday on the eve of "Infants Right Week".

Bright Bangladesh Forum, a non-government organisation, organised the programme at the Bakalia Ward Office.

Zinnah Chowdhury of Bright Bangladesh was the chief guest at the programme with local ward commissioner Shahidul Alam in the chair.

A total of 120 infants participated in the cultural competition of the programme in 10 different groups. The events included singing, dance, recitation, painting, acting, comedy and speech.

Organisation's Chief Executive Officer Utpal Barua, Advocacy Officer Nasrin Sultana Khanam and Sub Advocacy Officer Morshedul Alam spoke.

Price hike of essentials protested

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), West Madarbari Ward unit, organised a rally on Wednesday on the Chittagong Railway Station premises protesting the price hike of essentials, continuous loadshedding and countrywide serial bomb blasts.

The BCL leaders at the rally said the prices of the essentials have increased beyond tolerance due to the four-party coalition government's failure to control the market system and the unscrupulous traders.

"The erratic power supply and loadshedding have become a matter of concern for the citizens," they said.

They also demanded resignation of the government for its failure to serve the people.

City BCL leaders SM Nasir Uddin, Azizul Hoque, Sarif Ahmad, Basu Devnath, Anisur Rahman, Gias Uddin, Rahul Jaman Dalim, Atiqur Rahman and Faisal Mahmud spoke at the rally with BCL Madarbari unit president Tapash Bishwas in the chair.

Resist conspiracy against power sector

Former minister and city Awami League President MA Mannan urged the workers and staffs to elect Bidyut Sramik League in the incoming CBA election in order to resist the conspir-

acy against the power sector.

He was addressing as chief guest a protest rally organised by Bidyut Sramik League on the Bidyut Bhawan premises at Agrabad Commercial Area on Wednesday.

AFM Nurul Islam Khan presided over the rally while central general secretary of the organisation Zahirul Islam Chowdhury focused on the problems prevailing in the power sector.

The speakers at the rally demanded of the government stop a move to turn the Power Development Board into a Holding Company and threatened a tougher movement.

Senior vice president of city Awami League Md Ishaque Meah, organising secretary Dr Alfarul Amin, Safiq Adnan, city Sramik League president Bakhtiar Uddin Khan, Wasa CBA president Md Gias Uddin, SKOP leader Abdul Ohab, city Jubo League leader Delwar Hossain Khoka, Hafiz Uddin Ansary and Akram Hossain Sabuj also spoke.

SCF seminar on education

Speakers at a seminar condemned the decision to publish the textbooks in private sector.

They said it will raise the prices of textbooks.

Panchlaish thana Samajtantrik Chhatra Front (SCF) organised the seminar titled "Privatisation of

Textbooks, proposed uni-track curriculum of education and the crisis in present education system" at the Prabartak Bidyapith auditorium on Thursday.

The speakers said the proposed uni-track curriculum will not match the students' demand.

SCF city unit president Fakhruddin Kabir Atik was present as the chief guest at the seminar with Accyutananda Dey in the chair.

City unit general secretary Saifuzzaman Sakon, thana unit leader Regan Mazumder and Fazlul Kabir Nizam also spoke at the seminar.

Work under cooperatives to cut poverty

Speakers at a meeting here on Saturday underscored the need for working unitedly under the cooperatives to reduce poverty and attain self-reliance.

They called for forging the cooperatives movement further for the socio-economic development of the country.

The Chittagong district cooperatives union organised the meeting on the eve of "National Cooperatives Day" at the Samabaya Bank auditorium in the city.

Joint-registrar of divisional cooperative office Mohammed Manjurul Alam inaugurated the programme.