

Dhaka Kendro: A quiet retreat for soul searchers

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A feeling of tranquility pervades one's mind as soon as he enters the premises of Dhaka Kendro, a quiet retreat for bookworms and soul searchers in the heart of the congested old part of the city.

The entire complex, situated on 11,520 square feet (16 katha), is enveloped in greenery that appeals to those looking for some moments of peaceful stillness. It is quite beyond imagination that such a place is ensconced in a quiet corner of Mohini Das Lane of Farashganj in the city.

A rooftop garden and a sculpture of the Liberation War have added to the beauty of the centre.

Azim Bakhsh, founder of Dhaka Kendro, said: "In our childhood every neighbourhood organised cultural shows and had a library of its own, which are now extinct. I was involved with these activities. At that time the Sardar Bari in Farashganj was the centre of cultural activities. Open drama shows, cottage industry shows, kochi kachar mela and mukul fouz are some of the things to be mentioned. Then gradually these activities went into oblivion."

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Persian drama.

Dhaka Kendro has published a book 'The bibliography of Dhaka' which has a rich collection of articles on the city. The library has many rare pictures including those of Lord Curzon and some precious photographs of the Language Movement. There are also many antiques like old telephones, gramophones and crockery used by families living in Dhaka in the early times.

Every week four discussions are organised in the center where discussants dwell on literature, travel, Dhaka city and freedom fighters. Slides shows on the birds of Bangladesh, Sundarbans, St Martin's Island, Antarctica, ancient ships of Bengal and on

many other topics are frequent.

From next month a short film show will be organised. It will aim to increase awareness among the people of Old Dhaka through short films.

Dhaka Kendro has a reading room, an office room, a book sale centre and an exhibition room. The library can accommodate 40 readers at a time. It was set up in 1997 and is a project of the Maola Bakhsh Sardar memorial trust.

The library is open to all from 5pm to 8pm. For researchers the time is from 9am to 1pm.



The rich library of Dhaka Kendro.

DoE wakes up from its long siesta

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Director of DoE's Dhaka Division Nazimuddin Chowdhury ordered immediate disconnection of the factory's utility services as directed in the conservation act.

Management of the factory rushed to the scene. They tried to manage the situation by saying that their 600 labourers will be unemployed if they shut down the factory. They sought more time for correction. It didn't however work. Titas and REB workers disconnected their services.

DoE officials said the factory had been fined Tk. 50,000 for the same offence a month back.

While the Pakija management was assessing their loss, the mobile court moved

on to Anlima Yarn Dyeing. The same story was there. The factory officials claimed that the treatment plant was out of order. They were not spared either.

Meanwhile, DoE took special precaution to maintain confidentiality about the list of names, so that any 'dishonest staff' cannot warn the factory owners beforehand.

Noon approaches. DoE faced difficulties when they tried to disconnect the utility services of the HR Textiles, popularly known as Pride Textiles, for the same offence as there is a pending lawsuit between HR and DoE in the court. They too asked for time.

The next offender is Doel Textiles. They did not even bother to install ETP. They have applied for an ETP but contin-

ued their production without it.

DoE served 487 notices to various polluting factories since February 2006 regarding the use of ETP. These notices however failed to have an effect on the situation. Most factories continued polluting the nature.

According to DoE findings, the quality of water in the canals and rivers around Dhaka city including Bangshi have become extremely poisonous due to industrial pollution.

Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) has reached to a very high level in the rivers. Toxic wastes from the dyeing units severely increased the acidity and alkalinity of the water.

One of the major obstacles in preventing pollution is that the idea of environment remains very abstract to most

Bangladeshis. Since there is no immediate pain and suffering most people fail to comprehend the harm they are causing.

Factory owners are very difficult to handle with. Most cases they play ignorance. To save money they are ready to ruin the future of their children.

DoE is not equipped with high-tech gadgets. With current equipment they can only detect a few agents in the water, mostly BOD. Level of heavy metal remains undetected.

DoE officials said drive against polluters will continue. But questions remains how much is it going to help if only a few polluters face crackdown? Stronger effort is expected from DoE, efforts that will play permanent role in the future.

Inactive

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urgent support. Besides, reactivating TCB would be very difficult and time-consuming.

A source at TCB told Star City that TCB could not play its role against hoarding of essentials as politically influential traders with the connivance of corrupt TCB officials successfully turned TCB ineffective.

The organisation started to nosedive after new recruitment at TCB was suspended in 1992.

Using BDR to restrain the price hike can work for the time being, but the government should also find a sustainable long-term solution to the issue, the source added.

Rajuk drives

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rebuilding illegal portions encroaching on car park and public spaces as they have not yet been punished with fine or imprisonment, officials said.

Most of the shops and other commercial set-ups that have been meanwhile punished for occupying car parking space for other purposes, particularly along the Gulshan Avenue and in Dhanmondi areas, have meanwhile come back to their earlier state.

They just rebuild the illegal portions of their buildings within a couple of days of Rajuk demolishes such set-ups.

For an instance, Rajuk had to bulldoze the unauthorised extended part of the ground floor of Genetic Plaza in Dhanmondi for the second time on March 14. Rajuk demolished the same portion earlier but the building owner soon reconstructed it.

"How can we manage the situation if the building occupiers keep on rebuilding illegal structures?" said a top official of Rajuk.

Authorities have so far punished them with only demolition of illegal portions. The Rajuk magistrate at present looks after only

various legal aspects but cannot act as a court to hand down penalty in terms of fine and imprisonment unless empowered so.

Another high official of Rajuk said, "In case the offenders face high amount of fine and imprisonment, they would not dare repeating the same crime again and again."

Chairman of Rajuk KAM Haroon said: "The housing works ministry has forwarded the proposal to the establishment ministry where the matter is pending for disposal."

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Gulshan 1, 2 markets-Friday

Elephant Road-Friday

Bishal Center-Friday

Baitul Mukarram Market-Friday

Polwell Market-Friday

BCS Computer City-Friday

Isha Khan Shopping Complex-Friday

Rajlaxmi Complex-Friday

Stadium Market-Friday

Bangabazar Market-Friday

National Museum-Thursday