

Move to turn Cox's Bazar into a modern resort city

MUAZZEM HOSSAIN SHAKIL

An ambitious master plan has been undertaken to turn the resort town of Cox's Bazar into an ultramodern city which can be able to meet up the needs of the 21st century.

Major non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have expressed their keen interest to take part in the development work at an opinion exchange meeting at Hilltop Circuit

House here recently.

Entrepreneurs from Dhaka and Chittagong, local journalists, businessmen, administration and joint forces officials were present at the meeting. Cox's Bazar Deputy Commissioner (DC) Aminul. Islam presided.

Renowned sculptor Rasa and his three friends led by Ragib Uddin Ahmed enthralled the participants in the meeting by presenting the

master plan. The attractive feature was a global standard 'Beach Park' at Laboni Point and a major sculpture at its centre which to be built at an estimated cost of Tk 3 crore. Five more small sculptures surrounding the big one will be the added attraction. The main sculpture will be 60 feet high where portraits of different species of sharks can be seen along with sea wave. They said the dream city is now a matter of time.

A drawing of the probable sculptures along with a fountain which to be built at the entry point of the resort city was also shown to the participants.

Meanwhile, the existing shell market was demolished from the original site. It will be replaced by a modern one.

Through advertisement, attention of major organisations with social commitment have been drawn to construct the sculpture.

Meanwhile, the officials of Grameen Phone, City Bank, Grameen Bank including Aktel and other organisations have shown their keen interest to take part in construction of the main sculpture and the beautification work.

The scheme includes construction of city gate, installation of cable car service and observation tower including an open stage theatre where renowned artistes of the country are likely to perform in future. The observation tower and other establishment will be of different nature.

There will be touch of classic art in the work.

Cox's Bazar Tourism Development Committee has welcomed any other improved plan, if any, from individuals or organisations.

In the meantime, the Tourist Zone of Cox's Bazar was freed from billboard. Billboard owners have been asked to refrain from giving one sided advertisement, rather they were asked to add something environment-friendly component. Flower beds will beautify the town and its surroundings beyond 15-kilometre area.

All the initiatives will turn Cox's Bazar into a different city.



PHOTO: STAR

The design of sculpture, 'Sagorika,' of Beach Park at Laboni point in Cox's Bazar sea beach is on display at a meeting of Cox's Bazar Tourism Development Committee in the resort town recently.

Hilla still a common practice in Bogra village

23 incidents occurred at Dashtika village

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, BOGRA

Tota Mia had to part from his father Md Afsar about three months ago although he and other family members were rehabilitated in society after his mother Mosammat Aysha's *Hilla* marriage with neighbour Bulu Mia.

Mosammat Aysha told this correspondent, her husband Afsar pronounced the word 'Talak' aiming at her during a quarrel several years ago. As other villagers learnt this, village influentials decided to give *Hilla* marriage to Aysha. When Afsar opposed the decision, village elders abandoned him. They did not call Afsar or his family members in any social or religious function. Even Afsar was not allowed to say prayers in local mosque.

This is a typical situation at Dashtika village in Bogra suburb. The situation prevails here for years together, said *Hilla* marriage victims

Mosammat Rahima, Mosammat Rabeya, Mosammat Golapi and Mosammat Daisy.

Tota managed to normalise relationship with villagers by handing over Tk 500 in cash to Bulu Mia. But others like Bulu Mia raised the rate of *Hilla* marriage from Tk 500 to 4,000. So, Samsu Mia failed to give *Hilla* marriage to his wife Bilkis. Similar was the condition of Raihan's wife Habiba Begum and Kashem's wife Tahera Begum. Hanjela's first wife Sahera is still waiting for *Hilla* marriage Hanjela's second wife Saleha was compelled to marry her 70-year-old father-in-law Md Kanchan Mia through *Hilla* marriage about five years ago, but Sahera did not get an opportunity to get back to the social fold through such marriage.

However, local elders did not acknowledge this saying if anybody pronounces the word 'Talak' in presence of his wife their conjugal life will come to an end, according to Islamic



MOSAMMAT AYSHA

custom. In that case, *Hilla* marriage is a must to resume their conjugal life, they said.

But several years ago some Islamic scholars said, at a meeting in Kahalu upazila, that Islam does not permit such type of marriage. The meeting was told that any couple's conjugal life will end if any sane man

pronounces 'Talak' three times. But if he is angry, 'Talak' will not be effective, the meeting said.

Several incidents of *Hilla* marriage occurred in the aforesaid village in Bogra sadar upazila in last 25 years. In turn, Bulu Mia, Md Sattar, Md Jobbar, Md Akbar, Md Fakira and Md Samad were bridegrooms in *Hilla* marriages.

Although the situation improved slightly at Dashtika village following publication of stories, but no administrative action was taken against the culprits. Grameen Alo, an NGO, is working to improve the socio-economic condition there for the last few years. Grameen Alo Executive Director Ferdousi Betum said at least 23 incidents of *Hilla* marriage happened at the village, but the victim women did not dare to seek justice from any body. Still they do not dare to do so, Ferdousi added.

'Uphold philanthropic acts of Bangladeshi people'

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Speakers at an opinion exchange meeting in Chittagong stressed on upholding the philanthropic acts of Bangladeshi people to foreigners.

Bangladesh Freedom Foundation, UTSA, a local NGO and Media Professionals group (MPG) jointly organised the meeting titled, 'Practising Philanthropy in Bangladesh and its Impacts on HumanLife'.

Held at Nasirabad Lions' Foundation Auditorium recently, speakers dwelt on prospects and problems of charity works in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, philanthropy had been a major source of income for humanitarian causes, speakers said.

The meeting was presided by NGO organiser Abdul Bashar.

Chittagong City Corporation Acting Mayor M Manjur Alam was present as chief guest while UTSA executive director (ED) gave the welcome address.

Journalist Ramen Das Gupta, Chittagong representative of MPG placed his three-page key-note paper on 'Practising Philanthropy in Bangladesh: Chittagong Perspective.'

In his paper, he depicted a vivid picture of philanthropic acts in Chittagong from time immemorial. He cited the examples of century-old Probortok Sangha and Mostafa Hakim Welfare Foundation.

Among others, Ward Commission Advocate Rehana Begum Banu, Advocate M A Nasser, Mohammad Shahidul Alam, Social Welfare Directorate assistant director

Rashida Khatun, Chittagong Press Club general secretary (GS) Ezaz Yusufi and Shamim Shikder of MPG were present.

In a similar meeting in Khulna, speakers recalled the charitable acts of philanthropist Brojolal Shastri.

MPG Khulna representative, journalist SM Habib, in his report, mentioned the names of Brojolal University College founded by great

philanthropist Brojolal Shastri and century-old Umesh Chandra Library.

BFF, ADO, a local NGO, and MPG jointly organised the meeting which was attended, among others, by BFF Trustee and The Daily Tribune Editor Begum Ferdousi Ali, educationist researcher Prof Asit Baran Ghosh, Dainik Janokantho staff reporter Gourango Nandi and New Age staff reporter Tapos Kanti and Shamim

Shikder of MPG.

In his introductory address, BFF programme officer Shamimul Islam said BFF is now engaged in a country-wide research work on 'Practising Philanthropy in Bangladesh'. Names of organisations and individuals who were engaged in charity work are being enlisted, he said.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Bagmara police of Rajshahi sending 2 outlaws, Syeed and Abdul Quddus, to jail hajat from court after their arrest yesterday.



Shaheed Janoni Rizia Ahmed Memorial Scholarship

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

A new scholarship programme will be introduced soon in memory of Shaheed Janoni Rizia Ahmed.

Shaheed Janoni's eldest daughter Begum Hasina Joarder, also former headmistress of Gano Bhaban government High School, Dhaka and Jamalpur Government Girls' High School said this during a conversation with this correspondent at her parent's Sabuj Para residence in Nilphamari town recently.

Shaheed Janoni Rizia Ahmed Memorial Scholarship will be awarded to a poor but meritorious school student every year. The detail of the scholarship programme will be announced at a convenient time, Hasina said.

Wife of noted educationist and former headmaster of Nilphamari Government Boys' High School (formerly Nilphamari High English School) and mother of Shaheed freedom fighter Captain RAM Khairul Bashar (popularly known as Captain Bashar), Rizia Ahmed passed away in Dhaka on April 13.

Rizia Ahmed remained as an inspiration to her celebrated husband, Shikhya Guru Asir Uddin Ahmed who dedicated his entire life in kindling the light of education in Nilphamari and its surrounding areas in northern Bangladesh and Jamtara in Santal Pargana, India.

Captain Bashar inherited his 'dogmatic will power' and unusual strength of character from mother Rizia, a worthy daughter of Bashar Mohammad, a celebrated politician who led the independence struggle of British India, also former lawmaker from Rangpur Sadar constituency during British rule in India.

VISITS BY JOINT TEAM

A new hope among enclave people

BSS, Rangpur

The joint visits of a high-powered Bangladesh-India Joint Secretary level team in seven enclaves in either side of both the countries along Lalmonirhat border have ushered in a new hope among the enclave people of the two countries, official sources said.

The people of the enclaves started dreaming anew for a realistic solution following their first-ever cordial talks with the members of the high-profile joint delegations on Tuesday during their visits to Indian enclaves of Votbari, Lotamari and Khorkhorua under Patgram upazila in Lalmonirhat inside Bangladesh.

Later, the joint delegations similarly visited Bangladeshi enclaves of Dhubolsuti, Kuchlibar, Jyote Nizzoma and Belpukuri on the other side in West Bengal on Wednesday to end their two-day on-spot visits with a view to studying the possibility of resolving the enclave issue, they said.

1 killed, 30 hurt in Netrakona clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

One person was killed and 30 others were injured in two separate clashes over land dispute in Madan and Khalajury upazilas yesterday morning, police said.

In Madan upazila, one person was killed and 10 others were injured in a clash at about 9 am at Deo-Sahila village. At first there ensued a quarrel between Milon Mia and Abdul Haque over land. Hearing the news, about 25 persons led by Abdul Haque of Deo-Sahila village attacked the house of Milon Mia with lethal weapons. As Milon Mia and his relatives retaliated, it turned into a bloody clash resulting in death of Milon Mia, 40, on the spot and injuries to 10 others of both the groups. Seriously injured Ahmed Hossain, 33, and Rahela Khatun, 28, were sent to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital in a critical condition. Other injured were admitted to Madan Upazila Health Complex.

Twenty people were injured in another clash at Jimty village in Mohongan upazila at about 11 am. Police said, there was enmity between Saydur Rahman group and Mohosin Mia group for a few months over land. On the day, both the groups attacked each others with lethal weapons resulting in injuries to 20 persons of both the groups.

Re-excavate Kobadak

UP leaders of Satkhira, Jessore, Khulna urge govt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Union Parisad (UP) leaders of Satkhira, Jessore and Khulna at an opinion exchange meeting in Tala upazila yesterday urged the government to re-excavate the Kobadak river on emergency basis for the interest of over 50 lakh people of the districts.

Sarulia UP in Tala upazila organised the meeting to exchange opinion with local elite and NGO leaders. Held at its auditorium with Tentulia UP chairman SM Mokbul Hossain in the chair, the meeting attended by convenor of UP Forum of the region Nehalpur UP chairman Advocate Alhaj Kamruzzaman of Maniramour upazila in Jessore as chief guest and central water committee president Principal Safiqul Islam as special guest.

Speakers said if the government failed to take steps to re-excavate the dying Kobadak, over 70 UPs in the districts, will be flooded by overflowing water of the silted river in the coming rainy season causing huge probable loss of crops and property.

Flooding recurs every year as the Kobadak is dying, they said. Because of massive deposition of silt and loss of depth, the river lost its capacity to hold water properly or endure heavy pressure resulting in heavy flooding. Moreover, it creates

water logging in a vast area of land in Khulna, Jessore and Satkhira districts during the rainy season, they said. It has lost navigability due to deposition of silt as the flow of water decreased.

They alleged that over the years, encroachment by land grabbers and by raising bamboo barriers by so-called fish farmers its death has been hastened. Encroachers have built houses, shops, clubs, factories and fish farms on thousands of acres of land on the bank of the river. The river has lost navigability due to massive siltation and encroachment.

They said agriculture, transport, trade and commerce, socio-economic condition, environment and lifestyle of people in the localities are also changing fast.

They alleged that successive governments did not take any step to free the river from the clutch of illegal encroachers despite demands since 2001.

In the face of people's demand, the Bangladesh Water Development Board (WDB) took up a project to dredge the river at a cost of Tk 25 crore last year and implemented the project. But it does not bring back normal water flow of the river due to lack of continued dredging, they said.

They stressed the need for continued dredging of the river and urged the government to stop earth filling or

building structures on the banks of the river by illegal encroachers.

They demanded immediate demolition of all illegal structures from the river bed to save the river from extinction.

UP leaders took up a decision that if needed they will mobilise local people to re-excavate the Kobadak on self-help basis to save the river from extinction if the government failed to do so.

They will hold a series of meetings in different areas in the region to create awareness among people. They also took up a decision to hold a roundtable conference at Dhaka to press home their demand.

Among others, district Krishak League president Biswajit Sadhu, president of SETU, a local NGO, Hashem Ali Fakir, Patkelghata Press Club president Sheikh Abdul Hai, UP chairmen- Prof. Rafiqul Islam, Maulana Rahaj Ali, Tapan Kumar Saha, Nuruzzaman, Shawkat Ali and Sekendar Ali, journalist Majibar Rahman, SMA Ala Uddin addressed.

UP leaders, NGO activists, political leaders, journalists, teachers attended the meeting.



PHOTO: STAR

Once a mighty river, the Kobadak, is now virtually a dead river. It needs immediate re-excavation.

Tk 2.30 cr loss in PDB auction in Sirajganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Iron and sundries of an abandoned diesel run power plant of Power Development Board (PDB) were auctioned incurring loss about Tk 2.30 crore in Sirajganj.

This was disclosed by a written complaint of the bidder of the auction.

Sources said, a diesel running power plants was set up to tackle power crisis in the town during BNP Pakistan period. In the BNP regime the plant was declared abandoned

and auctioned.

Abdul Mannan, senior vice president of BNP and owner of Mrs Business Consortium purchased the goods by Tk 15,03,940 and Tk 1,43,512 in two arranged auctions held on 17 July and 20 October in 2003.

Mannan alleged that during transfer of the goods Advocate Mokaddes Ali, vice president of BNP realized Tk 61 lakh from him. BNP leaders were also engaged in alteration over distribution of the share of

the profit.

Abdul Mannan confessed to the Daily Star that, he sold the items to Habiur Rahman Habib, a Dhaka based Iron and Sundries trader by about Tk 2.5 crore at that time. He also confessed that 75% of his profit was spent to manage the officials and BNP leaders.

Local elites demanded investigation into the matter that why and how the goods of Tk 2.5 crore was sold at Tk 16,47,452.

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