

## HIGH-RISE BUILDINGS

# Rajuk starts door-to-door inspection to clean its own dirt

RIZANUZZAMAN LASKAR

After being in the dark for years, Rajuk has finally started door-to-door inspection of the countless number of high-rise buildings in the city to verify their legitimacy.

Around 40 building inspectors from 4 different zones of Rajuk are studying the high rise buildings and their surrounding areas including the width of the adjacent streets, open spaces and parking facilities.

An official source from Rajuk said that the new project was initiated to keep a record of the synopsis of high-rise buildings in the city. Detailed inspection would also help the authorities to smoke out the bottlenecks and irregularities that exist in the system for future developments.

According to the Building Construction Rules 1996, structures of 6 stories and above can be bracketed as high-rise buildings. The act also discloses that a 9-storey high-rise building would be permissible only if the adjacent street has a minimum width of 25 feet.

However, the entire city is virtually swarming with buildings crossing the 6-storey mark in even the most cramped of areas. Majority of these buildings were either constructed without any authorisation from Rajuk or are in total violation of the proper construction rules. All the while the same building operators, who are now engaged in door-to-door inspection, allegedly fattened their wallets.

Although rules prohibit the construction of any high-rise building if the adjacent street lengths are below 25 feet, there are countless instances where the city has as high as 20 storied buildings adjacent to streets as narrow as 10 feet.

Worst victim of this haphazard urbanization include city areas like Dhamondi, Jhigatola, Rayen Bazar, Green Road, Azimpur, Malibagh, Mogbazar, Rampura, Mirpur, Segunbagicha and numerous other



Rupayan Lotus, a 19-storey building in Segunbagicha, was completed recently on a 20-foot wide road.

STAR PHOTO

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areas.

A towering 19-storey building in Segunbagicha, near the Mukti Juddha Jagdhara is located next to a street of less than 20 feet while another 18-storey residential building was recently constructed in Dhamondi on the western side of Road 8A, where the width of the road is hardly 15 feet.

A survey conducted in 2005 suggests that there are around 4,376 buildings ranging from 6 to 22 storeys high in around 66 localities of the city. Although Rajuk officials have no idea on how many of these structures were built following proper construction rules, a source from Rajuk believes that almost 95 percent of the buildings deviated from the concerned rules.

According to competent sources, anomalies behind faulty approval or non-approval of high-rise buildings include mainly political and distractible pressures and lobbying in connivance with a corrupt section of Rajuk officials.

Corrupt practices at all the agencies

concerned and finally at Rajuk, connivance and political pressures are what have been applied for managing dubious approval of high-rise buildings.

A large section of landowners, developers, engineers and architects are involved in the irregularities. Rajuk, the sole authority to approve building plans and to monitor construction, is riddled with corruption where anyone can get anything done through a gang of highly influential and well-linked middlemen, said a competent source from Rajuk.

For approval of buildings above 6-storeys high, the developers have to seek clearances from 16 government agencies including Department of Environment, Civil Aviation, Fire services, Wasa, Desa, DCC, Caab and Titas gas.

However, a developer who built a ten-storey structure recently in Malibagh said that these clearances tend to be readily available through Rajuk middlemen for a hefty sum of money.

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## Family planning at Dhaka zoo

SHAHNAZ PARVEEN

Faced with a booming population, Dhaka zoo authorities have separated male and female animals as a part of their plan to introduce family planning.

Kazi Fazlul Haque, curator, Dhaka zoo, said that they are facing accommodation problems due to rapidly increasing population.

"This is the reproductive season of lions and tigers. We are keeping fertile males and females in separate cages to control birth of new babies," he said.

"We are facing severe accommodation problems as the current number of lion and tiger is already beyond our capacity," he added.

Dhaka Zoo has a good reputation of breeding. Currently a tigress has given birth to three cubs. Haque said that the current number of lions in the zoo is 19 and tiger population is 15 whereas their display capacity is only four pairs.

For accommodation problem, the authorities have kept six to eight lions in cages fit for only one pair. They also kept two pairs of lions in the quarantine centre of the zoo.

"Other than problem with accommodations we have to spend extra money to feed these animals," Haque said.

"For each lion and tiger 12kgs of meat is sanctioned. We feed them six days a week. For each additional tiger or lion we have to spend Tk. 1740. We are always in a budget constraints and this

only adds to the problem", Haque said.

"The additional number of animal is holding back our development programmes. We wanted to add new animals to make the zoo more attractive", he said.

Haque mentioned that zoo would face the worst problem with hippopotamus if new babies were born.

"Since hippopotamus needs ponds in their habitat it is going to be really hard if they reproduce. We don't have space for new ponds," he said.

Currently the number of hippopotamus population is 9.

The zoo authority had a severe accommodation problem in the deer cages but they found a way to solve the problem. The zoo has a scheme of selling deer.



STAR PHOTO

### KHOKA'S CORNER



Uncollected kitchen wastes pile up on the Dhaka-Narayanganj Road, a busy thoroughfare at South Jatrabari, creating a public health hazard and also disrupting flow of traffic. The picture was taken on Saturday.

STAR PHOTO

## Organised gangs control begging business at traffic lights

CITY CORRESPONDENT

Physically challenged beggars of all ages, some with injuries and horrendous skin sores continue to create nuisance at almost every traffic signal of the city begging from commuters.

Commuters in vehicles can have their day marred and psychologically scarred while responding to the gentle taps on their car windows and confronting with such public nuisance, standing there displaying the infected sores and begging for alms.

Schedule 3, Item 57 and Section 150 of the Dhaka City Corporation Act 1983 clearly states that "begging unfortunately for alms or exposing or



Two beggars try to extort a handout from a motorist at Paltan intersection yesterday.

### the city that was

On the banks of the Buriganga in Dhaka stands the pink majestic Ahsan Manzil, an example of the nation's rich cultural heritage. It was the home of the Nawab of Dhaka and a silent spectator to many events. It has 31 rooms with a huge dome atop which can be seen from miles around. Ahsan Manzil has been renovated and turned into a museum recently which has now 23 galleries displaying portraits, furniture and household articles and utensils used by the Nawab.

### city express

The latest crop of quotes from the city's press -- words worth repeating, we feel, for their humour, insight or sheer outrageousness. Star City does not necessarily support the opinions expressed in this column.

"I was elected the chairperson by the council. Anyone can contest for the post and even become chairperson of the party if the council elects [him/her]"

 -- Khaleda Zia  
BNP Chairperson

Said in an exclusive interview with The Daily Star about the call for her to leave the top post of the party, on Monday. Source: The Daily Star

"Khelafat Majlis came to us promising a secular policy. And the deal no longer exists"

 -- Sheikh Hasina  
Awami League President

Said in a meeting with party leaders at the Bangabandhu Bhaban defending herself on the memorandum of understanding with the religion-based party, on Saturday. Source: The Daily Star

"It is not a matter of coercion"

 -- MA Matin  
Communication adviser

Told reporters when asked whether the government is forcing political parties to reform, on Tuesday. Source: The Daily Star

"From whatever I could know, former prime minister Khaleda Zia had the consent to the JMB activities. Her son Tarique Rahman had been supporting the vigilante activities of the militants and state minister for home Lutfozzaman Babar never helped me fight the JMB"

 -- Nur Mohammad  
Inspector General of Police

Told a reporter based on his memories when he was a helpless deputy inspector general of police of Rajshahi who witnessed the rise of Bangla Bhai under the cover of government and law enforcing agencies, on Wednesday. Source: The Daily Star

"I feel frightened when I go to inspect the ongoing work of the park's beautification"

 -- Abul Hasnat  
Executive engineer, DCC

Told a reporter about the Osmani Udyan which is currently under the grips of vagabonds, beggars, drug peddlers and other antisocial elements, on Thursday. Source: The Daily Star

"Bangladeshis have the right to know why people have been picked up, what are the charges against them, why they cannot travel and why they cannot leave the country"

 -- Patricia A Butenis  
Outgoing US Ambassador

Said in an interview with UNB at US embassy, on Monday. Source: The Daily Star

"This cannot go unpunished. Pakistan's propaganda denying the genocide of 1971 cannot go on"

 -- Akku Chowdhury  
Trustee, Liberation War Museum

Said at the inaugural ceremony of Jalladkhana, a killing field and torture chamber of Pakistan Army at Mirpur, excavated and renovated by Liberation War Museum, on Thursday. Source: The Daily Star

Compiled by Durdana Ghias