

Monsoon clouds, rains and the spectacular skies



A magnificent crimson sky bursts into a veritable canvas by the river Buriganga. The picture was taken on Monday from the rejuvenated Buriganga at Looterchar area.

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The city skyline sizzle with its glimmering flames during a stunning sunset, creating a momentary bliss for the jaded city dwellers! While many city dwellers suffer in waterlogged areas during this active monsoon, many more are enthralled by the herds of clouds and spectacular skies during sunrise and sunsets.

From the very onset of the monsoon, fluffily textured clouds adorned the sapphire blue skies when not roofed with dark and grisly monsoon clouds. While the blistering tropical sun kept the air sweltered with heat, it also kept itself busy playing hide and seek amidst the clouds while it glimmered with all its might

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Weathermen predict more rains to come, as usual. They say the monsoon is here to stay till September. The current weather conditions would persist for a few more days, only to make way for some moderate to heavy showers.

"The marvels of season's

change and the wonders of nature is obvious in the skyline especially during this time of the year," said Mahmudul Huq, on-duty fore-caster from the weather office.

"The sky would remain this way for a few more days until there is a shift in the southern winds resulting in showers. This cycle of exquisite looking skies and moderate to heavy showers would continue in nature's own pace till September," Huq added.

According to weather forecasters, the depression in the Bay of Bengal has been more intense this year, resulting in the odd pours of heavy rains. They predict this depression would continue till the very end of the monsoon and might surprise city dwellers with the odd downpour or two.

However, the skies would remain in its current buoyant self, adorned with vibrant shades of sapphire blue soothing the weary eyes of city dwellers from a city devoid of any colour and life.

DHAKA UNIVERSITY

Helplessly felling age-old trees!

DURDANA GHIAS

Once again the Dhaka University (DU) authorities felled trees on the campus to launch a multi-storey building project. This time the tree-chopping spree took place near the Madhur Canteen.

Around 20 trees were felled on Monday on the eastern side of the canteen, popularly known as 'Shalik Chatter'. It is an admired place for gathering for many studying in the arts, commerce and social science faculties.

"Once upon a time many shalik birds would come to this place but later the authorities cleared the place and those birds are not seen any more. Now the big trees are also being felled. This is very unfortunate," said a student.

Pro-VC AFM Yusuf Haidar said that they do not want to chop down trees but they are 'helpless'

and left with no other options.

"We want to save the trees but what can we do? We have to accommodate students. We are helpless," he said.

"We will plant more trees in a planned way," he added.

"DU campus has been shrunk from its original area of 600 acres to 249 acres and the number of students has increased many times. So we have to chop down trees to create more space, accommodate more students," said Haidar.

The authorities are planning to extend its campus to the suburbs of the city as the space is shrinking gradually. "We will apply to the government for 200 acres of land," he said.

Suhrawardi Udyan, Bangla Academy, Attorney General's Office, National Museum and many other important buildings and parks are situated on the DU campus. These buildings have

shrunk the area of the campus.

"But we have nothing to do about it because these are important buildings," he said.

A 10-storey building for the faculty of social science will be built on the place at a cost of Tk 20 crore. DU's internal committee took the decision on site selection and construction two years ago.

About taking Rajuk's permission for the construction, Haidar said, "Traditionally DU does not take permission from any organisation for building construction since its inception."

About the master plan of DU campus, he said that it is assigned to a committee headed by Prof Nazrul Islam. "But there has not been much progress [on the master plan]," the pro-VC admitted.



Around 20 trees were felled by the DU authority on the open patch beside Madhur Canteen.

RAJUK'S PLAN APPROVAL

Experts demand immediate scrutiny of 16,000 building plans

TAWFIQUE ALI

Urban experts and environmentalists have expressed grave concern over the hurried approval of as many as 16,000 building plans by Rajdhanī Unnayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk) and demanded re-examination of those under the latest building rules.

They apprehended that Dhaka's planned urbanisation might suffer a serious blow with overwhelming number of building plans approved hurriedly over a short span of time under the flawed 1996 law that shows extreme leniency in construction.

Although the 1996 law was supposed to be replaced by the building construction rules of

2006, the authorities continued deferring its implementation.

The experts expressed the concern at a meeting on Saturday organised by Rajuk on how to implement the Metropolitan Building Construction Rules of 2006.

The discussants condemned the passage of so many building designs hurriedly, said president

of the Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB) Mubasshar Hussain. "I think the building plans approved hurriedly under the 1996 rules should be reviewed," he said.

The already messed up urban environment of Dhaka will deteriorate voluminously if those buildings come into existence, he said adding that the new building rules are of international standard with provision of Floor Area Ratio (FAR).

But the role of Rajuk has created a serious misperception about the new rules and its benefits, he said. "Rajuk should have carried out massive advertisements highlighting beneficial aspects of the rules and make the public aware of them."

According to a top official of Rajuk, several thousand of the applications which have been approved were grossly anomalous, inadequate and incomplete.

Most of the plans were faulty and some were submitted with counterfeit clearance certificates. Besides, many plans were placed without relevant clearances and proper documents including the land ownership papers, Hussain said.

Technical faults of those applications include faulty structural design, no or counterfeit soil test report and absence of competent engineers and architects in designing the plan, said highly-placed sources at Rajuk.

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Hurried approval of plans turn the city into a concrete jungle.

PASSENGER LAUNCHES IN SADARGHAT

Ferrying thousands without hygiene, safe water

SHAHNAZ PARVEEN

A severe crisis of safe water is causing sufferings to thousands of people travelling in passenger launches to and from Sadarghat every day.

Nearly 250 launches are operated from Sadarghat and around half of them claim to be luxury vessels, but most of them

do not maintain any safe water system on board.

For millions of people living in the southern part of Bangladesh, waterway is the most favourite mode of transport. A nightlong sleep in the motor launch usually ships them to the capital city or to their destinations out of the capital.

There is a 5,968 km long network of navigable inland

waterways in the country. During rainy season about 8,400 km is navigable by large vessels.

During journey the passengers are compelled to rely on the river water as all vessels fill their reservoir with severely polluted river water. The problem aggravates in dry season when river water are extremely contaminated.

Nazem Ali Mridha, 85, comes

to Dhaka from Mirzaganj, Patuakhali several times every year to see his sons and grandchildren. To reach Dhaka, he usually takes launches of Dhaka-Amtoli route. As long as Mridha can remember, river water is the only source of water for launch passengers, especially those who travel on the deck.

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