

FOLLOW-UP

SHANKHANIDHI HOUSE

DC to take 'step' to cancel lease

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Dhaka has said he will take steps to cancel the lease of Shankhanidhi House, a listed historical structure of the Department of Archaeology (DoA). The DC, Kamaluddin, confirmed the receipt of a letter from DoA asking for cancellation of the lease and handing it over to DoA. Shankhanidhi House is a building with significant architectural features on Tipu Sultan Road in the old part of the city. Defying the law, the then ADC (Revenue) of DC office leased out two-thirds of this listed archaeological heritage building on February 2, 2002. The place now houses an automobile workshop, lube shops and an office of workshop owners' association. Besides, two families reside there. Present inhabitants of the house have changed its original features according to their whims. An automobile workshop rented out by the lessees



Shankhanidhi House on Tipu Sultan Road in the old part of the city.

on the ground floor has blackened the beautiful courtyard. Following reports published in Star City, the DoA said that they would send a letter to the DC office asking them to cancel the lease.

A n a n d a G o p a l

Sankhanidhi, the successor of Sankhanidhi family who lives in India, visited Dhaka in May and urged the authorities to preserve this historical site. According to an inscription, whitewashed at present, it was built in 1921 by two mer-

chant brothers Lal Mohan Saha and Gaur Nitai Saha. Paribesh Bachao Andolon, an environmentalist group, urged the DoA to free the historical site from an illegal lease issued by the DC office.

Madhubazar road remains closed for days

CITY CORRESPONDENT

To the suffering of thousands of people, Madhubazar road, a vital link road between Dhanmondi and Rayer Bazar has remained closed for nearly week as the Dhaka City Corporation took up a program to clean underground drain. The job of cleaning the small underground drain over an area of hardly 150 meters, could be completed within a day. Local residents said that negligence of the authorities had to be blamed for the delay. Meanwhile diverted traffic mostly consisting of rickshaws is now choking other roads in the area. "This is the only road that directly links Rayerbazar with Dhanmondi and it is mostly used by the people who do not have private cars so the authorities do not care much for the non-VIPs," said Kamrul, a resident of Madhubazar. "We understand that the cleaning is being done to reduce waterlogging in the area but this simple work could never take so long to finish," Kamrul added. DCC's conservative officials said that they would immediately look into the matter and take steps to open the road.



Madhubazar Road remains closed for DCC's delay in cleaning underground drains.

Experts demand immediate scrutiny

FROM PAGE 21 All present at Saturday's meeting expressed grave concern over what will happen to Dhaka's cityscape when 16,000 buildings will come in place, said the president of Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (Rehab) Abdul Awal. "But Rajuk has to at least make sure that building rules of 1996 is enforced properly in those cases," said Awal, who is a vice-chairman of Urban Development Committee. Director of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela) Syeda Rizwana Hasan said that consequence of putting so many more buildings approved under old rules would surely worsen the present environmental situation in the city. Such approval of buildings is contrary to three foremost objectives of the new build-

ing rules, including percolation of groundwater level, creating green and open spaces and addressing neighbourhood concerns, she said demanding immediate implementation of the new rules. The plans were submitted with a lot of flaws and anomalies, said an engineer who attended the meeting. Such anomalous plans were submitted and approved in connivance with a section of dishonest Rajuk officials. The anomalies include suppression of information regarding road width and land ownership disputes. "I think all the building plans approved hurriedly under old rules should be cancelled and now reviewed under the new rules," he said. "Plans were approved without the surveyors and building inspectors visiting the sites." Architect Iqbal Habib, member secretary of the

environmentalist group Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), said that his organisation has all along been against hurried approval of so many plans under the old rules. "The approvals were made despite uncounted flaws and the act has been unfair," he said. Iqbal underscored that a properly drawn up Detailed Area Plan (DAP) is crucially complimentary to the building rules. An environmentalist and vice-chairman of Urban Development Committee, Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed said that the hurriedly approved plans could be reviewed if the government intends to do so. He said the new building rules are beneficial in all respects particularly in conservation of urban environment. But some unscrupulous quarters, including some

Rajuk staff, spread a rumour that a builder would lose half of the plot under the new rules and created hindrance to its implementation. "Some sections at Rajuk are unhappy with the building rules of 2006," said Prof Sayeed. Chairman of Rajuk KAM Haroon said, "There is no scope for plan approval with deficiency in the applications." He said that anyone interested can visit Rajuk website, see the gazette and buy copy of the rules from market. After 20 days of gazette notification of Metropolitan Building Construction Rules of 2006, the government by an order on June 4 extended effectiveness of the old building construction rules of 1996 until June 30. The chance prompted the builders, both commercial and private, to indulge in a rat race of plan-pass exploiting

the interim opportunity. In a similar order, the government further extended the effectiveness of the building rules of 1996 for next six months until December 31. Rehab President Awal said, "It was not appropriate on the part of the government to extend the effectiveness of the building rules of 1996 by six months." But the then public works secretary Iqbal Uddin Chowdhury said publicly at a meeting at a city hotel that the government extended the old rules in the face of tremendous pressure from an association of commercial builders. By December 2006, Rajuk received a backlog of 16,200 applications for approval within January 31, 2007. Rajuk approved around 10,000 plans in one month and 13,500 by end of May with unspecified number of high-rises (above six-storey).

Ferrying thousands without

FROM PAGE 21 "Launch usually starts at 5pm and reaches my home terminal at around 6 next morning. Imagine the suffering of a 13-hour journey without water," said Mridha. "I have been coming to Dhaka for the last 20 years. I am a regular deck passenger. Every time I travel I have to carry drinking water in bottles," Mridha added. He said that using toilet in a launch is the most awful experience. "For deck passengers toilets are situated at the back. They keep a bucket there with rope attached to its handle. Whoever goes to the toilet has to lift water from the river using the bucket. I am an old man and it is a painful task for me," he said. "I saw many incidents when people fell into the river trying to get water from the river", said Mridha. "Some launches have installed tube-well recently. Toilet waste is directly released into the river. The distance between the pipes that release water from the toilet and the tube-well pipe is hardly one or two feet," said Jalal Khan, a

regular passenger. A large passenger launch can carry around 500 to 800 people on board. Launch companies always carry more than the capacity. During festival season they carry unlimited number of passengers. Food served in the launch canteen always seems stale. Drinking water provided there is also filthy. BIWTA officials never inspect the condition. "Canteen staff claim that they serve tube-well water and also use it to wash dishes but I have doubt," Jalal said. Fatema Mannan, a resident of Mirpur and regular passenger of Dhaka-Jhalakathi route said, "Launch workers claim that they fetch water from tube-wells when they start from Dhaka and again from Barisal. But I found the water in the cabin dirty always." "I can never imagine eating at the restaurant of any launch. So I always carry food and water from home," she added. When contacted, Badiuzzaman Badal, acting chairman of Bangladesh Inland

Waterways Passenger Carrier Association, refuted the allegation. He said that they are providing deep tube-well water for drinking. However, he admitted that they get water from the river for toilet use. "We collect water from large rivers like Meghna, not from Buriganga, Shitalakhya or any other polluted rivers," he claimed. "Passengers want tube-well water for every purpose including toilet use, but it is not possible to carry that amount of water while travelling," he added. "We pay taxes to the BIWTA. The passengers pay Tk 3 while entering the terminal. So BIWTA should consider this and arrange safe water for passengers," he said. Magistrate Rokon-ud Dowlah told Star City, "I was not aware of this awful condition. I will definitely look into the matter."

health,busservices,airlines&traintiming

OSPITALS & CLINICS

Ahsania Mission Cancer & General Hospital 9008919, 8051618	8311721-25
Apollo Hospitals Dhaka 9891680-4, 01713046684/85 Emergency no. 9896623, 0171409000	Islami Bank Hospital 9333739
Bangladesh Medical College & Hospital 9118202, 8115843	Japan Bangladesh Friendship Hospital 8828855, 8827575
Central Hospital 9660015-19,	Labaid Cardiac Hospital 8610793-8
China Bangla Hospital (JV) Ltd 8913674	Marie Stopes Clinic 8821874
Dhaka Medical College Hospital 8626812-16	Medinova Medical Services Ltd 8620353,
Gana Shasthyo Kendra 8617208, 8617383, 8620178,	Monowara Hospital 8318135, 8319802
Greenland Hospital 8912663	Pangu Hospital 9112150, 9113041
Gulshan Mother & Child Clinic 8822738, 8812992	PG Hospital (BSMMU) 9614545-9, 9612550-4
Holy Family Hospital	Rashmono General Hospital 8317606, 9557354, 8317819

BUS SERVICES

Ratan's Dental Clinic 9111090	Drooti 8014563
Salimullah Medical College Hospital 7319002-6	Eagle Paribahan 7101504
Samorita Hospital Ltd 9131901	Green Line Paribahan 9339623, 9342580, 8353005
Shahid Suhrawardy Hospital 9122560-78	Hanif Enterprise 9120116
Shishu Hospital 8116061-2, 9119119	Keya Paribahan 7101894, 7101250, 9121280
United Hospital 8836444, 0194001234	Modern Enterprise 9123743
BLOOD BANK	Neptune A/C Coach Service 7101945, 7101951, 9123092
Bangladesh Red Crescent Blood Bank 9116563	Shohag Paribahan (Pvt) Ltd 9334152, 8316766, 8126293
Modern Clinic & Blood Center 9883948	Shoukhin Paribahan 8014397, 9001796
Sandhani, Dhaka Medical College 9668690	Silk Line 7102461
	Shyamoli Paribahan 9333803

AIRLINES

lines Aeroflot 9559930, 9559111, Fax: 9563787	Druk Air 9862243, 9892862,	Malaysia Airlines 9888211-20 Airport Office: 8916953, Fax: 9890478
Air India 8617783, 8611929, Fax: 9670591	Emirates 9892801, 9885574-75	PIA 9349293-5, Fax: 9345300
Biman Bangladesh Airlines 8917400-19 9560151, 9559610 Airport Office: 8917400, Fax:8913005	GMG Airlines 8825845-9, Airport Office: 8960404,8915699, Fax: 8826115	Singapore Airlines 8811504-7, 9883259 Airport Office: 8911928, Fax: 8811503
British Airways 8815111, Fax: 8815346,	Gulf Air 9130123-5, Airport Office: 8914573	Thai Airways 8314711-18, 8914343
Cathay Pacific 9557117, Fax: 9562667	Indian Airlines Ltd 9555915, 9557813,	Virgin Atlantic Airways 8816324-5, Fax: 9896481
Kuwait Airways 9115182, 9118829		
TRAIN TIMING		
Subarna Express Mahanagar Prabhati Mahanagar Godhuli Turna Parabat Express Joyantika Express Upaban Express Tista Express Ekata Express Upakul Express Agnibeena Express	Leaves Dhaka at 4:30 pm Leaves Dhaka at 7-30 am Leaves Dhaka at 3-15 pm Leaves Dhaka at 11-00 pm Leaves Dhaka at 6-40 am Leaves Dhaka at 12-45 pm Leaves Dhaka at 9-45 pm Leaves Dhaka at 7-00 am Leaves Dhaka at 5-00 pm Leaves Dhaka at 8-00 pm Leaves Dhaka at 9-20 pm	Reaches Chittagong at 10:35 pm Reaches Chittagong at 1-55 pm Reaches Chittagong at 10-55 pm Reaches Chittagong at 6-40 am Reaches Sylhet at 2-30 pm Reaches Sylhet at 9-20 pm Reaches Sylhet at 6-40 am Reaches Bahadurabad at 1-05 pm Reaches Bahadurabad at 11-15 Reaches Noakhali at 5-00 am Reaches Jagannath at 2-30 pm

LIBRARY & INFO-

Libraries, Cultural and Information Centers
Central Public Library- 8626001-4,
Shishu Academy- 9564128
Shilpakala Academy- 8614673
Bangla Academy- 8619550
Islamic Foundation- 9550280, 9556407
Nazrul Institute- 9114602
Ford Foundation- 8116133
Alliance Francaise- 8611557
Information Resource Center, The American Center - 8813440-4, 9886395-9
British Council- 8618867-8, 8618905-7
Community Development Library- 8113769, 8113604
Goethe Institute Int'l- Dhaka- 9126525-6
Indian Information Centre & Cultural Library- 8850141-2
The Russian Cultural Centre- 9116314, 9118531, 9118314
Drik Photo Gallery- 9120125, 8112954, 8123412
Press Institute of Bangladesh