

DU DEFIES BUILDING RULES AND CODES - I

High-rise, extension projects on without Rajuk's say

TAWFIQUE ALI

Dhaka University (DU) authorities continue to violate building laws, rules and codes in construction of buildings one after another without approval from Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk) though they are required to obtain such approval.

They have recently undertaken projects to construct a number of high-rise buildings and reconstruction and extension of some existing ones with-

out any approval from the government agency concerned.

The projects include a 12-storey building for Social Sciences faculty, a 10-storey Mathematics Building, vertical extension of a tall building in the Commerce Faculty and reconstruction of Fazlul Haq Hall's north block.

President of the Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB) Mubasshar Hussain said it gives a wrong message to the general public that laws are not equally

applicable to all when authorities of the country's highest seat of learning defy laws of the land.

"This is not acceptable," said Hussain, who is also chairman-elect of Architects Regional Council Asia (Arch-Asia).

As per the Building Act of 1952, any building must be approved by an authorised officer or a designated building official, he said. "But it seems that the DU authorities violate the law exploiting their respectable image."

As per the Metropolitan Building Construction Rules of 2007, any organisation or individual within the Rajuk area (590 square kilometres) have to obtain building approval in compliance with the rules. As per the rules of 2006, repair and maintenance of any building too have to be approved by Rajuk.

The Building Construction Act of 1952 (amended in 1987) made it mandatory for any organisations to obtain building approval from an authorised

officer. Only the armed forces are exempted for strategic reasons.

Anyone has to follow the law for any addition, alteration, modification and reconstruction of any building. Besides, any agency or individual has to follow the Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC), a mandatory code for construction or renovation of any building.

Rajuk very recently issued a public notice in the mass media notifying all that any organisation or individual has to obtain land use clearance and approval of building design from Rajuk within its jurisdiction.

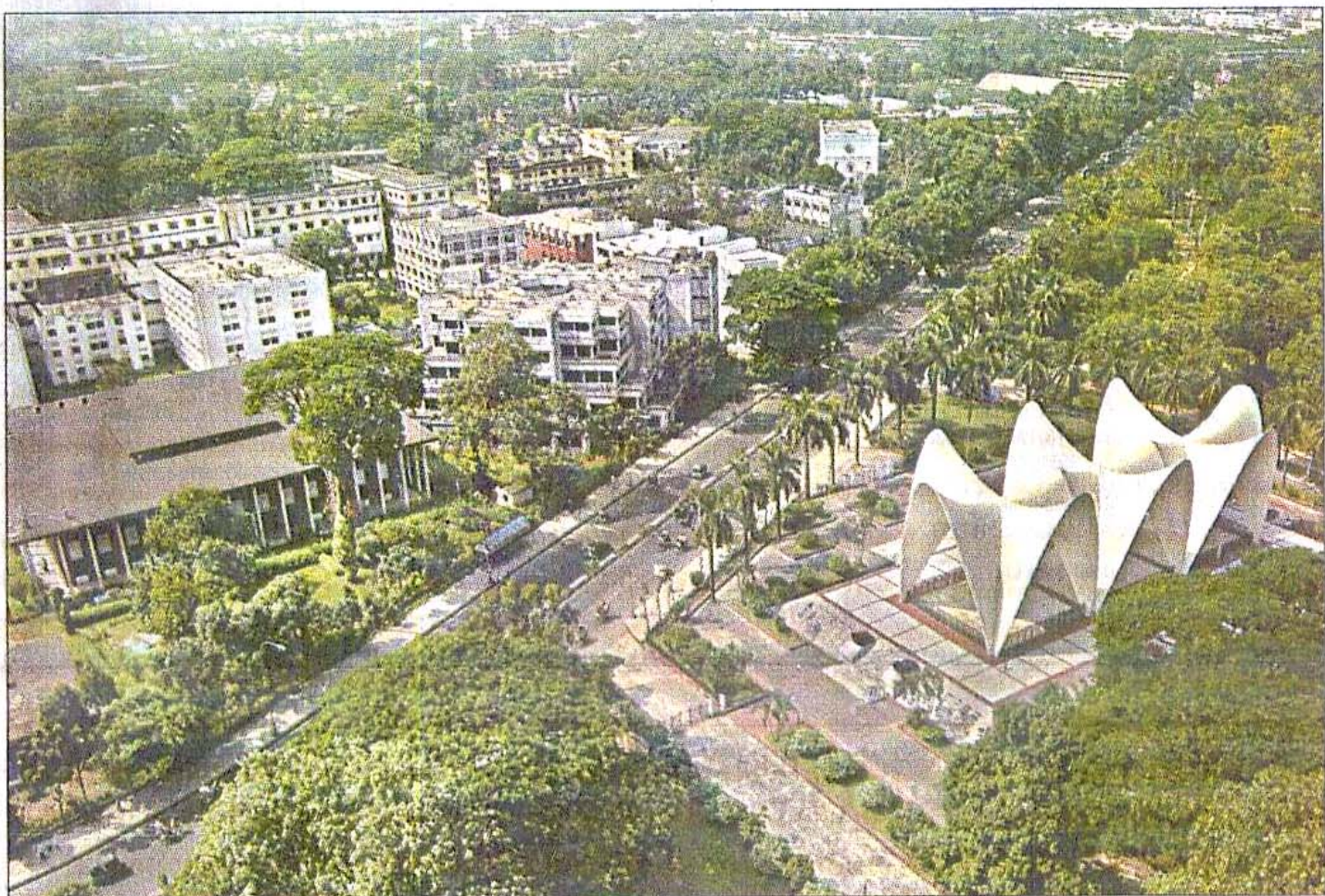
Vice-chancellor of Dhaka University Prof SMA Faiz said it

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COBBLER AT LEISURE



While his mates struggle to win a day's bread and survive the rising price hike, a cobbler, at Nilkhet near New Market, seeks to have a respite in a newspaper under his patched up umbrella amid scorching sun.



An aerial view of the Dhaka University campus dotted with 'self-planned' buildings.

No fare chart yet to ensure fair rickshaw fare

RAIHAN SABUKTAGIN

Rickshaw fare has increased unusually in the last few years but the city corporation is yet to implement a fare chart for this essential mode of transport for the city commuters.

Due to absence of a fare chart for rickshaws, the pullers demand fare at their will, leading to alterations with the passengers regularly on the city streets.

Rickshaw users, DCC officials and leaders of the rickshaw owners' associations said that rickshaw fare has almost doubled in the city in the last couple of years.

The rickshaw fare for a distance of one and a half kilometres between Rupnagar residential area and Mirpur Section 10 was Tk 8 a year ago but now it is Tk 15, said Masud Mia, a resident of Rupnagar who regularly uses rickshaw.

He said if a passenger hires a rickshaw without fixing the fare beforehand, he or she has to suffer at the end of the travel when the rickshawpuller charges high fare.

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and the rickshaw owners' associations remain silent over the issue of fixing a fare chart for rickshaws.

In 1982-83, DCC fixed rickshaw fare at Tk 1 for each kilometre and planned to implement a fare chart but it did not see the light, a source at DCC

said. "After that, DCC did not take any step to control rickshaw fare," he added.

Now rickshaw fare in the city is on average Tk 8 per kilometre.

For about four kilometres distance between Motijheel and Jatrahari, the rickshawpullers charge at least Tk 30 while for the same distance between Dainik Bangla crossing and New Market, the pullers demand between Tk 35 and Tk 40.

According to Traffic Control and Public Transport Regulation approved in 1973, the city corporation is mandated to fixing and upgrading fare charts for the non-motorised vehicles. The corporation is supposed to publish such charts and distribute among the pullers who should carry the fare chart along with other documents.

Sayed Jahangir, chief of the Wheel Tax Department of DCC, said the fixed rickshaw fare chart is too unjust to implement now. "No puller would follow the chart if it remains Tk 1 for a kilometre. The fare chart should be upgraded before implementation."

He said the Wheel Tax Department would inform the higher authority about the issue.

Ohidul Islam, a rickshawpuller, said Tk 1 fare for a kilometre is now absurd. "It was fixed more than 20 years

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

Bangla Motors point finally to have its long-awaited footbridge

Construction of four more bridges begins

SHAHNAZ PARVEEN

To enhance pedestrian safety, the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has finally started the long-awaited construction work of four foot over bridges at some of the busiest and hazardous thoroughfares of the city.

DCC traffic engineering department officials told Star City that work is underway to build the over bridges at Bangla Motors intersection, Paribagh, near the Chief Adviser's Office and near Maleka Banu High School at Uttara.

It will take about six months to finish the work. With the completion of these four, total number of foot over bridges in the city will

stand at 42, the officials added.

Locals, office goers and others -- who have to cross these extremely busy roads everyday -- have been demanding foot over bridges at these locations for years as numerous accidents have been taking place at these places over the past few years.

At Bangla Motors, pedestrians sometimes have to wait nearly an hour to be able to cross the road. In 2005, a journalist died on this spot after falling victim to an accident while crossing the road.

Pedestrians risk their lives everyday to cross the road near the Chief Adviser's Office as the sidewalk in front of the office complex is restricted for public use for security reasons.

Hundreds of garment workers go through a similar experience everyday to cross the road near Maleka Banu High School.

The DCC also has plans to build six more foot over bridges in the city after the construction in hand is completed, sources at DCC said.

One such over bridge will be built at Shahbagh intersection near national museum. In 2005, a Dhaka University student, Shammee Akhter Happy, was crushed to death by a speeding bus while crossing the intersection.

A private sector bank has proposed to build the bridge here with two toilets on both sides. The bank, in exchange, will be

able to post advertisements on the bridge.

Among the under construction bridges, the Paribagh bridge is being funded by Exim Bank with similar privilege, said sources.

Cost of each over bridge is estimated at around Tk 80 lakh to Tk 1 crore, added the sources.

Limited roads overcrowded with vehicles and pedestrians more than the capacity coupled with frequent traffic rule violations have turned Dhaka city into one of the most congested and dangerous cities in the world.

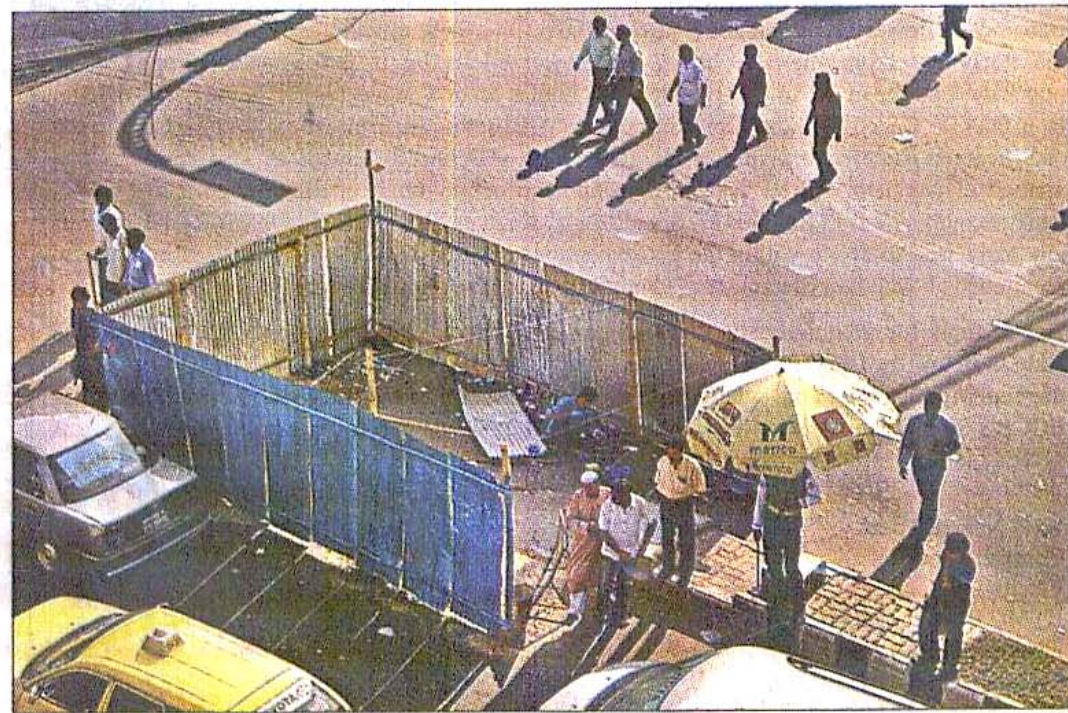
Pedestrians are the most vulnerable group on the streets of this city and almost 75 percent of total road fatalities involve pedestrians.

Even though sometimes it takes a long while to cross the busy city streets safely, "majority of city dwellers have a serious loathing towards using the over bridges," said one of the engineers at DCC.

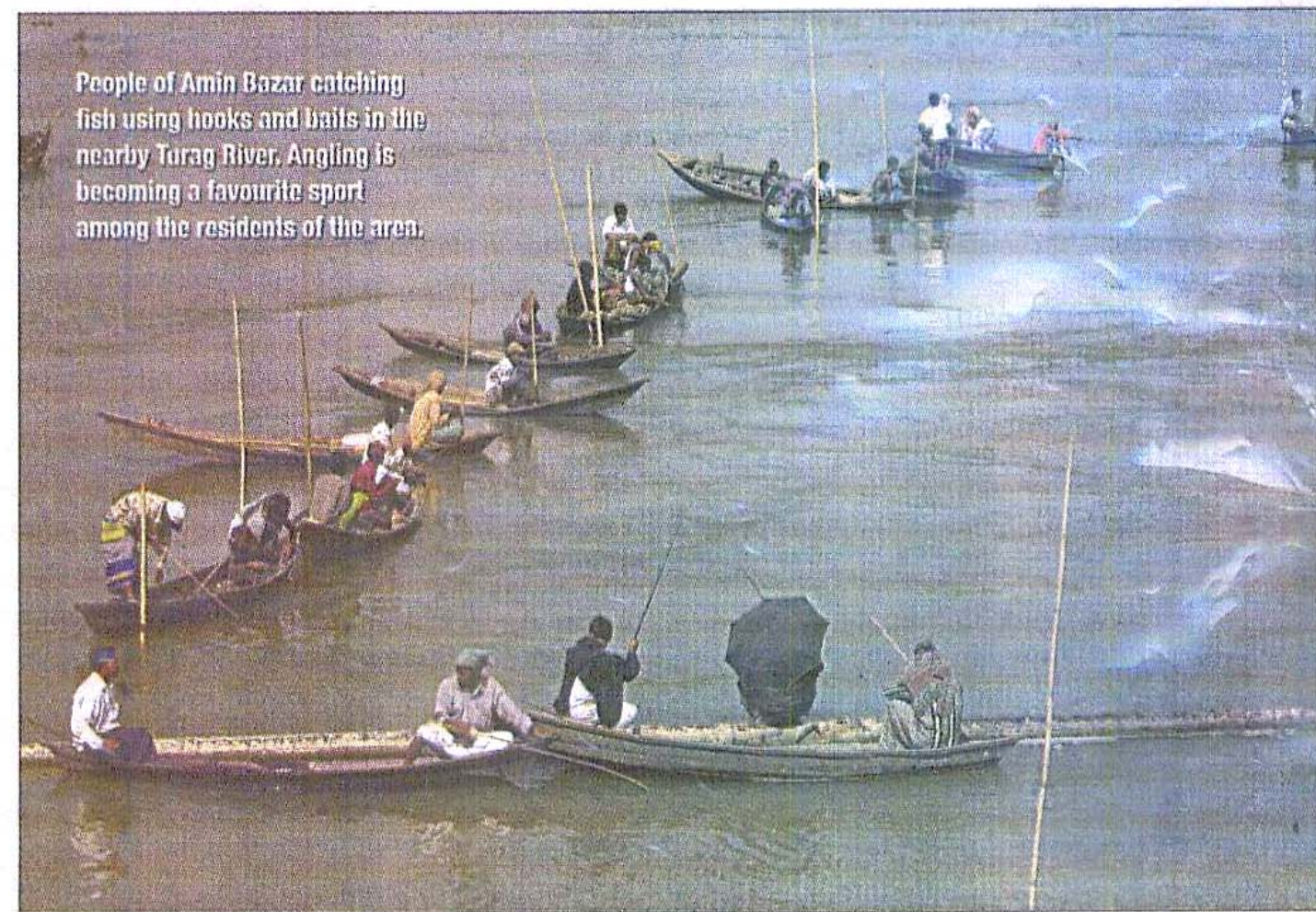
The over bridges in the city are constructed with 25 feet clearance below so that double-decker buses can pass underneath. Most pedestrians, less concerned about their own safety, avoid climbing up the 25-foot-high bridges and risk their lives by hastily crossing the busy thoroughfares instead, he added.

"It is really mysterious why the pedestrians tend to cross the road this way even though there are safer ways," he said.

Radio stations have been running pedestrian safety awareness announcements every day while the DCC has plans to seek assistance from law enforcers in encouraging pedestrians to use foot over bridges, the official added.



Construction of the much-needed footbridge has started at the Bangla Motors intersection.



People of Amin Bazar catching fish using hooks and baits in the nearby Turag River. Angling is becoming a favourite sport among the residents of the area.

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.

"In fact anti-liberation forces never even existed."

-- Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed

Jamaat Secretary General
Told reporters replying to a question after talks with the Election Commission on electoral reforms, on Thursday.
Source: The Daily Star

"Jamaat leaders claims now have once again proved how important it is to make them face court."

-- Lt Gen Harun-ur-Rashid

Former army chief
Told a reporter reacting to Mojaheed's denial on the existence of war criminals, on Friday.
Source: The Daily Star

"What is more important is the fact that the zebra managed to stay alive this long."

-- Kazi Fazlul Haque

Curator, Dhaka Zoo
Told a reporter when asked about the death of a striped mountain zebra, on Friday.
Source: Jugantor

"I may have failed to win the hearts of my masters."

-- Badiur Rahman

Former NBR chairman
Told reporters after seeking voluntary retirement on October 18, the day of his transfer to the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management from the board, on Monday.
Source: The Daily Star

Compiled by Durdana Ghilas