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Hazardous hoardings deck rooftops despite ban

No move yet to remove illegal roadside billboards

KAILASH SARKAR

Rooftop billboards that are banned by the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) continue to be installed on building tops, causing injuries and fatalities to residents of the capital during even gusty winds.

Besides that, other billboards set up on roadsides are built without conforming to DCC safety requirements and are equally hazardous, said DCC officials.

These haphazard hoardings, erected ignoring the aesthetics of the city, are turning into eyesores and depriving the city dwellers of a clear view of the sky and the adjacent landscape, said a number of city residents.

DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka said the DCC cannot take any action against owners of the illegal hoardings as court order is pending on the matter. "Until the court settles the issue, we have nothing to do in this regard."

"I have asked the officials concerned to follow up on the proceedings and take necessary steps," the mayor added.

Out of a total 5,000 billboards set up in Dhaka city under the jurisdiction of DCC, at least 2,000 are on rooftops, sources said.

According to DCC rules, the



Large billboards of popular consumer products on the Dhaka University campus seem to outshine the grandeur of famous sculpture like Aparajeyo Bangla.

Bogra's Kherua Mosque falling into ruin

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

Kherua Mosque, a beautiful archaeological site at Sherpur in Bogra, is falling into ruin because of lack of proper maintenance and heavy salinity of soil in the area.

Archaeology Department Director Shafiqul Alam said the department does not have enough fund and manpower to maintain the mosque properly.

The mosque was built in Kandakertola village in Sherpur upazila of the district during the rule of Nawab Gias Uddin Abul Mozaffer Zaman over 500 years ago, according to a Persian inscription on the mosque.

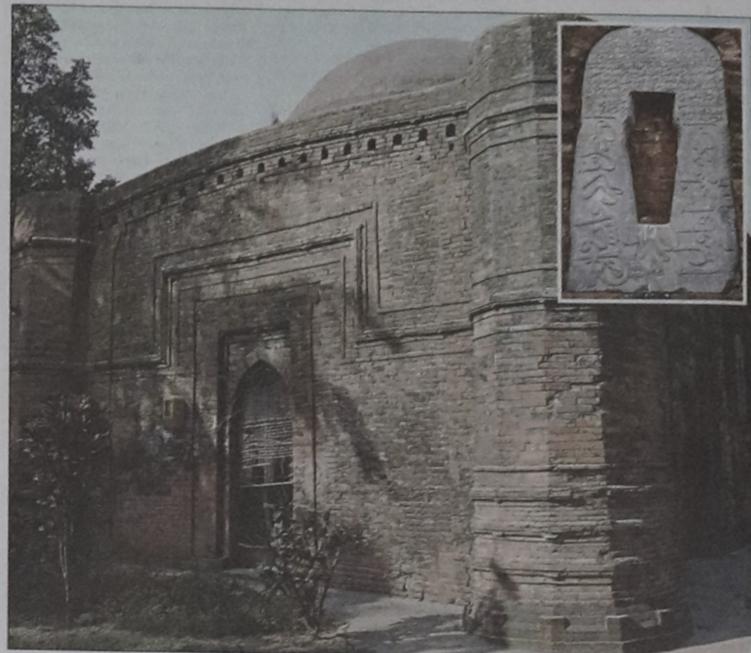
Another similar inscription was lost long ago.

Shafiqul Alam said the ancient architecture was declared protected during the Pakistan period.

Archaeology Department Field Officer Badrul Alam said the mosque, which still bears decorated domes, has 2m thick walls built with bricks and stone.

A senior official said some parts of the walls along with decoration on them have been damaged because of lack of maintenance

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Bricks on the walls of over-500-year-old Kherua Mosque at Sherpur in Bogra have been damaged due to salinity of soil. The Persian inscription, inset, kept inside the mosque.

Amnesty team to discuss HR issues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Amnesty International Secretary General Irene Khan will begin a six-day programme in Bangladesh today to discuss human rights situation in the country.

Her visit comes on the eve of anniversary of the declaration of state of emergency and it will also focus on the rule of law and institutional reforms needed to promote and protect human rights.

The Amnesty International delegation and Manusher Jonno will jointly organise a seminar at LGED extension building on "campaign in establishing dignity of human being" today.

The team, led by Irene Khan, will

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BENAZIR KILLING Scotland Yard team in Pakistan for probe

APP, Rawalpindi

A team of British anti-terrorism police flew into Pakistan on Friday to help investigate the killing of Benazir Bhutto, a move rejected by the opposition leader's party as "meaningless."

The specialists from Scotland Yard arrived amid raging controversy over the assassination of the former premier, which sparked a wave of bloody unrest across Pakistan and forced the postponement of elections.

President Pervez Musharraf said he had invited the British squad

because he was unhappy with his country's handling of the probe, including the possible washing away of evidence after the gun and suicide attack.

"The team has arrived," British High Commission (embassy) spokesman Aidan Liddle told AFP. "They are here to offer assistance to the Pakistani inquiry and do whatever they can."

Around six suited men believed to be the British team were ushered out of the airport at Rawalpindi, near Islamabad, and into a white minibus before shutting the curtains and speeding off without

talking to reporters. The team is due to meet Pakistani investigators, examine evidence and visit the crime scene security officials said.

Musharraf said on Thursday that he hoped the Scotland Yard team would help dispel "conspiracy theories" about Benazir's death at an election rally on December 27, which the government has blamed on al-Qaeda.

The anger of Benazir's followers was still raw at the family mausoleum in the rural southern village of Ghari Khuda Baksh, where

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SATKHIRA BLAST CASES Trials could not go ahead as witnesses did not turn up

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Trials of five cases in connection with the August 17, 2005 series of bomb blasts could not resume in Satkhira on Thursday as the prosecution failed to produce the witnesses before the court.

The cases were sent back to Satkhira Judge's Court by Khulna Speedy Trial Tribunal for trials in November last year.

Judge Mahbubul Alam of the Additional Session Judge's Court in Satkhira scheduled February 14 for recording statements of the witnesses, asking the prosecution lawyers to take measures ensuring the presence of the witnesses

before the court on that day. Eleven out of 19 accused in the cases in connection with the series of five blasts, were produced before the court amid tight security on and around the court premises, court sources said.

The accused who were produced in the court were Nasir Uddin Dafadar, Monowar Hossain Ujjal, Maniruzzaman Munna, Nur Ali Member, Anisur Rahman Khokon, Gias Uddin, Mahbubur Rahman Liton, Billal Hossain, Asadul Haque, Ismail alias Habibur, and Rakib Hasan alias Russel.

Accused Montaz alias Momtaz, Abul Khair, Fakar Uddin, Nayeem, Syed alias Asaduzzaman have been absconding since the series of blasts in Satkhira town, sources said.

Banned Jama'at ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) chief Shaikh Abdur Rahman, banned Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) chief Siddiqul Islam Bangla Bhai, and JMB military chief Ataur Rahman Sunny, who had also been

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Prayer Timing		
January 5		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-30	5-35
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

NATURAL RESOURCES 'Co-ordinated policy a must for proper exploration, use'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country needs a coordinated policy for exploration and proper utilisation of natural resources, and to have food and fuel security as all these are interrelated.

Even if one of these is not attended properly, it is certain that the other ones will be affected. This was the resounding view of eminent economists, academics and politicians at a roundtable on "Endangered Power Sector and National Interest" in the capital yesterday.

The existing power crisis has been created deliberately through improper utilisation of natural resources and unbridled corruption in the sector over the years. And this eventually triggered the acute crisis of rice now, the speakers noted.

This deliberate fault in dealing with natural resources and power has given the crisis a disastrous proportion, also affecting industries, they said.

The National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral

Resources, Electricity and Port organised the roundtable held at the Jatiya Press Club.

They pointed out numerous irregularities and corruption involving bureaucrats, lawmakers and even former premiers in striking deals with multinational power, oil and gas companies.

They urged the government to initiate steps to involve local experts in the exploration of natural resources and their proper utilisation.

The power crisis has been created deliberately, and due to improper development policy. This has also resulted in poverty and unemployment in the country. The government must be careful also in dealing with organisations like the World Bank and IMF as they stand for global corporate interest, said renowned economist Prof Anu Muhammad.

Prof Muzaffer Ahmed, convener of Sujon, a civil society initiative to promote good governance, stressed ensuring power supply to different productive sectors on a

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Workers carry sacks of fertiliser from small boats to Baghabari port in Sirajganj yesterday. Large vessels loaded with fertiliser, fuel and rice remained stuck in mid-Jamuna due to poor navigability.

POOR NAVIGABILITY 37 vessels with fuel, rice, fertiliser stuck in Jamuna

GOLAM MOSTAFA JIBON, back from Kazirhat, Pabna

Thirty-seven large vessels and barges loaded with fertiliser, fuel and rice have remained stuck at different points in the Jamuna for the last three days because of poor navigability, hampering supply of the essentials to different destinations though the Baghabari port.

This has left sufficient supply of fertiliser and fuel uncertain at the beginning of rabi cultivation.

The vessels have remained stuck at different points, including Nakalia, Berakhola, Kazirhat, Pechakhola, Latifpur and Notakhola, as water levels in the Jamuna and its tributaries have fallen drastically.

Baghabari port sources said the movement of vessels between Nagarbari and Baghabari has become difficult because of poor navigability caused by hundreds of underwater shoals.

The vessels are carrying around 17,000 tonnes of fertiliser, they said, adding that a few traders started unloading fertiliser from a few vessels and bringing to the port by small boats at additional transportation cost.

Shafiqul Islam, director of Baghabari port, said this extra cost is forcing traders to change transportation routes for their goods, which is ultimately paralysing the port gradually.

It costs additional sums of Tk 60,000-70,000 for carrying goods from mid-river to the port.

Bahar Uddin, master of MV Heart, said his vessel carrying 1,500 tonnes of rice was stuck at Latifpur two weeks ago. The rice is now being unloaded and taken to the port by small boats and this is costing an additional Tk 60,000.

To avoid this additional cost, most traders are now showing interest in transporting goods

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AL softens stance on election issue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Softening its Thursday's position of having the next parliamentary election by June-July, Awami League (AL) yesterday put out a call to the caretaker government for holding the polls earlier than the time stipulated in the announced electoral roadmap 'if possible'.

Addressing a discussion marking the 60th founding anniversary of the party's student front, Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), at its Dhanmondi office, Acting

President of AL Zillur Rahman said

the government is about to take two years to hold the election although it should not do that.

AL on Thursday at its presidium meeting demanded the election by June-July, and an immediate hand-over of power to an elected government to resolve the prevailing crisis in the country.

Supporting the announced electoral roadmap Zillur said they thought if the government was sincere then the election could have been held earlier than the time stipulated in the roadmap.

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Batsmen let Tigers down

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh could not make their golden jubilee Test memorable after yet another batting failure on the first day of the first Test at the University Oval in Dunedin yesterday.

Bangladesh were bowled out for 137 before tea and then saw New Zealand go on top and reach 156-4 at stumps, through a half-century from Matthew Bell.

Opener Bell made an unbeaten 74 to help the Kiwis recover from a slow start. Bell's unbeaten half-century, in his first Test in over six years, saw New Zealand end Day

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The Daily Star

Coming out tomorrow - Star Campus

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The Daily Star offers campus based weekly magazine 'Star Campus' - the ultimate magazine for the young generation - a common platform for the college and university students and academicians - to share their ideas, thoughts, dreams, opinions and views.

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Star Campus helps link young minds together.

