

Mushrooming illegal outlets at Wonderland raise eyebrows

TAWFIQUE ALI

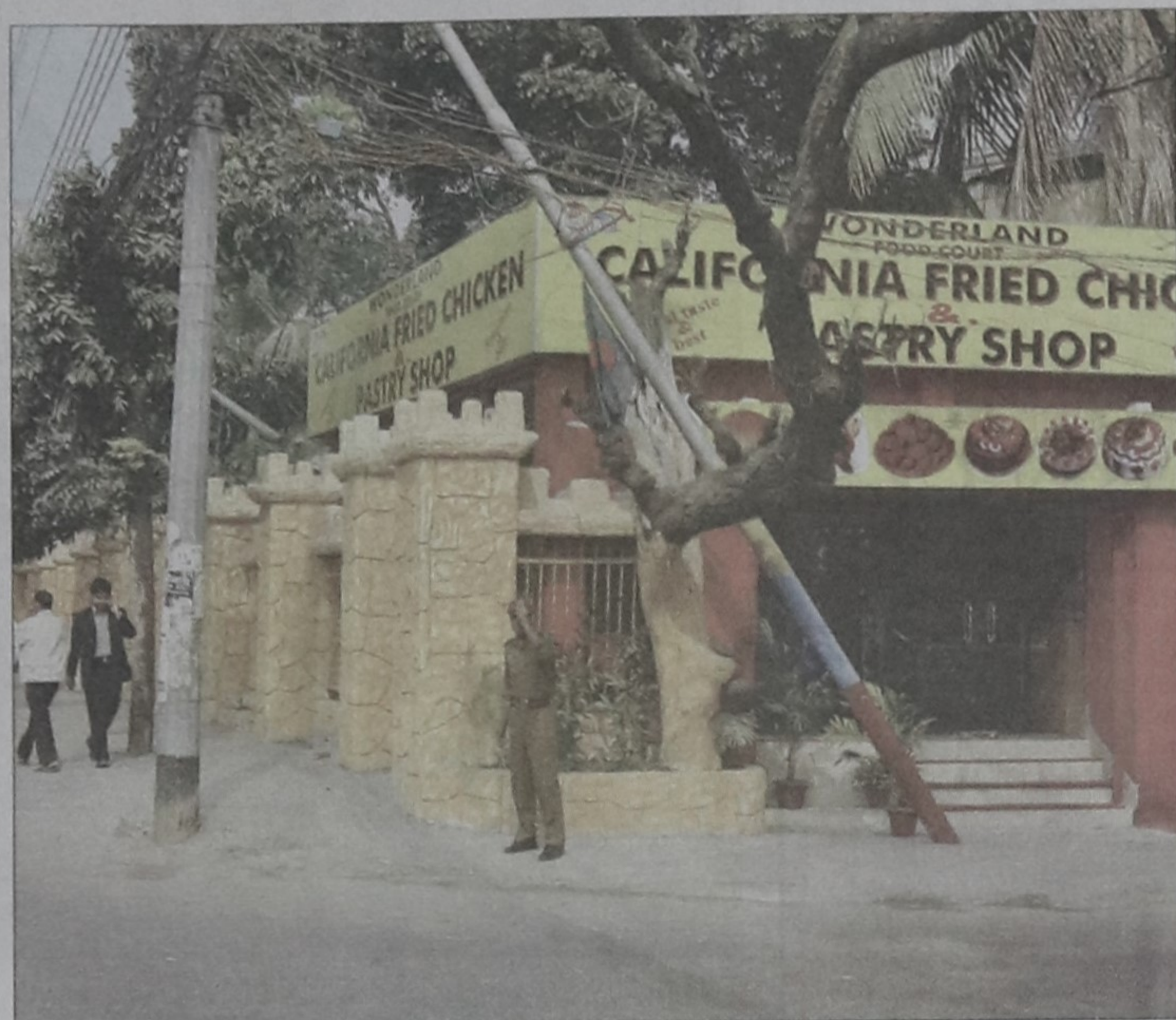
Authorities of Wonderland amusement park in Gulshan are setting up unauthorised restaurants and shops on the park premises one after another adding to public nuisance and traffic congestions in the neighborhood, local residents alleged.

The latest addition is a food court, California Fried Chicken, that faces the park's southwest boundary wall apparently in a bid to cater mainly to the general public and not the park's visitors, they said.

Other shops and restaurants inside the Wonderland compound are open to public towards footpaths in such a way that crowds and visitors' vehicles keep the sidewalk occupied obstructing pedestrian passage, they said.

They complained of public nuisance, traffic congestion and crowds on the main avenue of Gulshan and adjoining internal roads due to operation of Wonderland.

M Abdul Hannan, general secretary of Gulshan Central Masjid and Eidgah Society (Azad Mosque), said, "Deafening sound of music and huge gathering create public nuisance and disturbance."



It is an open playground and children's park, as designated in the master plan of Gulshan model town, and is meant for free public use, he said, adding that it must not be a commercial centre and source of any profit-making venture.

"We want it as an open park with free access for games and strolls," Hannan said. "It was used as a playground before it was leased out for a commercial amusement park."

Fazlur Rahman, vice-president of Gulshan Society, said that private cars parked on the footpath in front of Wonderland create severe traffic congestion on the main avenue. "Particularly, on any occasion or holiday, the crowd causes a chaotic situation."

The Wonderland authorities have set up restaurants like Western Grill (aircraft restaurant), Park Bistro and a bakery, Mr. Baker, within the amusement park premises placing their fronts outwards along the boundary wall.

Senior vice-president of the Gulshan Central Masjid committee Syed Ahmed said, "Such an amusement park is absolutely irrelevant in a residential area."

The DCC leased out a portion

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Three food outlets at Wonderland: California Fried Chicken, (below from left) Mr Baker and Western Grill.



STAR PHOTO

Rearing the rare plants

DU pharmacy department can boast of its lone herbal garden in city

RIZANUZZAMAN LASKAR

The garden in front of the pharmacy department at Dhaka University may appear as an ordinary garden. But it is more than what a visitor sees.

The sign hanging in the fence gives a hint. It reads: 'Medicinal Plant Garden'. What it does not say is that this piece of land is the lone herbal plant garden in the city.

The garden has an assortment of some rare and useful, yet very overlooked, medicinal plants in the country.

"This garden has a rich collection of most of the medicinal plants found in the country. But the world of botany is like a vast ocean and this is just a small part of that ocean," said Fekulal Saha, an official from the Arboryculture Department of Dhaka University.

The garden was set up two years ago at the recommendation of the Dean, Faculty of Pharmacy. The scheme was implemented by the Arboryculture Department that is responsible for all the flora and fauna on the Dhaka University campus.

A plot lying unutilised in front of the Faculty of Pharmacy was used for this purpose. Currently there are more than 100 medicinal plants and several nutritional plants in the garden. The herbs, most of them fully grown, are used for research and studies.

The garden has several plant blocks where a variety of medicinal plants have been grown after collecting from different regions of the country. The Faculty of Pharmacy has made a comprehensive list of plant species with medicinal values.

Some of the species planted at the medicinal

plant garden include Kumarlita (Smilax zeylanica), Surjamukhi (Helianthus annuus), Castor Oil plant (Ricinus communis), Basak (Andhata vatica), Swetachandan (Santalum album), Muktojhuri (Aclypta indica), Apang (chyranthes aspera), Labanga (Syzygium aromaticum), Sonapata (Cassia angustifolia), Holdey Korobi (Thevetia peruviana) and Olotkomol (Abroma augusta).

Each plant is labelled with a plaque where its regional name, scientific name and its uses are written. Basak, Apang and Labanga are some of the rare plants in the garden.

Basak is good for coughs, body odours and it is also used as an antiseptic. Apang is really good for heart and skin diseases while Labanga is used in perfumes and curing stomachache, teeth pains and headache.

Plants such as Shiuli (Nyctanthes arbortristis), Mohua (Madhuca indica) and Bel (Aegle marmelos), seen almost everywhere, have great herbal values that are unknown to many.

Both Shiuli and Mohua plants are good for increasing obesity, curing worms or any stomach related diseases while Bel and Suryamukhi plants are useful for coughs, stomach problems, bronchitis, malaria and fevers.

Prof. Dr Md. Abdur Rashid, Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy at Dhaka University, said the main objective is to foster protection and conservation of the fast-disappearing species of medicinal value.

"The garden could be turned into a large reserve of vital medicinal plant species. The collection of such medicinal plant species is a continuous process," he said.

Winter birds bring JU lakes to life

SHAHNAZ PARVEEN

Migratory birds have finally graced the Jahangirnagar University lakes with their presence, though more than a month later than the usual time.

This year the birds arrived in the last week of December and the number is less than that of previous year.

Experts said late arrival of winter might be one of the reasons they are late this year. They

expect the number of migratory birds will increase by the end of winter. This has been the recent trend on the campus lakes.

Around 2,000 of these magnificent creatures have been spotted on the campus, their favourite retreat, said JU professor of zoology Mohammad Mostafa Feeroz.

"However, they still have not settled down. Most of them are checking out the lakes," he added.

Every winter thousands of these birds fly in from far away places like the Himalayas, Central Asia, Siberia and many parts of Bangladesh increasing the splendour of the picturesque landscape of the campus.

Last year around 6,000 birds visited the campus, which is considered a safe haven for them.

The birds use the lakes of the campus for roosting during the day and wander around at night

in the swamps, paddy fields and nearby riverbed in search of food. JU authorities this year cleaned the lakes to welcome more guest birds.

Most of the birds that have migrated to JU this year are lesser whistling teal (chhota sarali) and greater whistling teal (bara sarali).

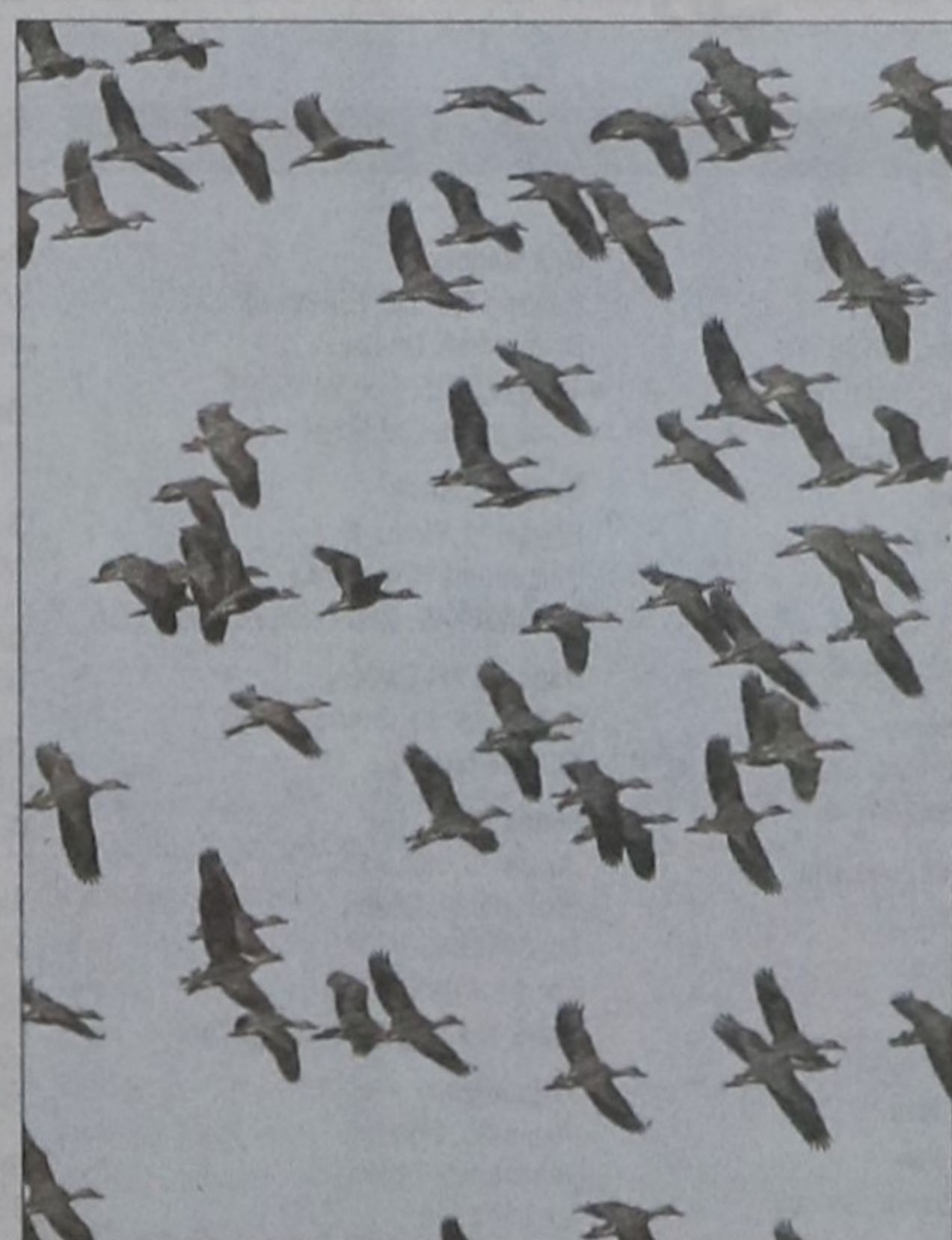
Three species of waterfowl -- pintail duck, gargany, pochard -- usually come to the campus from Siberia. Their number is still

limited this year. Shovler has almost stopped coming.

Other than duck species a large number of birds come from the Himalayas. These include sandpiper, plover, wagtail and snipe. These birds can be spotted in the shallow water around the lakes.

There are some other migratory species who dwell in the bushes. These include brown shrike, flycatcher, stonechat and

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Hundreds of winter birds chirping and fluttering their wings at the JU lakes.

ANISUR RAHMAN

