



hello dhaka

Weekly weather forecast for the city	Today	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	Low: 28 °C High: 38 °C Mostly cloudy and summery	Low: 30 °C High: 37 °C Clouds and sun, hot, humid	Low: 30 °C High: 35 °C Afternoon thunderstorms	Low: 29 °C High: 33 °C Mostly cloudy with t-storms	Low: 28 °C High: 35 °C An a.m. t-storm, partly sunny	Low: 29 °C High: 37 °C Mostly sunny, hot and humid	Low: 29 °C High: 37 °C Mostly sunny, hot and humid

e-mail: starcity@thedailystar.net

Three-pronged woes of HSC examinees

Load shedding, unbearable heat and mosquito menace hamper studies

SHAHNAZ PARVEEN

Frequent load shedding amid unbearable heat and mosquito menace are hampering seriously the preparation of this year's HSC examinees.

"I am forced to start my studies after 10:00pm when load shedding begins to ease off," said Shaheen, a student of Dhaka Commerce College who resides in Pallabi area.

The situation has forced most students to continue their studies until early morning. "As I cannot sleep at night properly, I feel extremely tired during the day," he said.

"Candles are source of light these days. But it is really painful to study in candlelight," said SM Ahmedur Rahman, a student of Notre Dame College. "The fumes of mosquito coil and the summer heat turn my room into a furnace."

Ahmedur, like many other students, goes to coaching centre during daytime. "At the coaching

centre power goes on and off at least four to five times during a three-hour mock test. God knows what will happen during the real exam," he said.

Most coaching centres in the city do not have power generators.

While Fouzia Mubassharah, a student of Holy Cross School and College said, "When the power outage starts it becomes unbearable with too many student seating in one room."

"There is a blackout every one hour, which breaks our concentration. We have to arrange everything according to the load shedding schedule," said Badrunnahar Brishu, a student of Siddheshwari Girls School and College.

"If I don't have a shower in time then I might miss the water supply for hours. Sometimes I have to spend the day without having a bath. Amid all the hustle and bustle I forget what I learned. This is no way to prepare for the biggest exam of life," she added.

According to official statistics,

in Dhaka city there is a daily demand for around 2,000 MW of electricity and the supply shortage is around 700 MW. The country is now generating 3,500 MW of power against the demand for over 5,000 MW.

Around 5 lakh students will appear in this year's High Secondary Certificate examinations beginning on May 29 under seven education boards. The number is around 59,000 more than last year's.

In Dhaka Board, around 1.5 lakh students will take the examinations in 259 examination centres. Question papers have already been prepared. The total number of examination centres across the country is 1,048, which will function without any power back-up.

Parents are worried as they think that the unbearable heat and load shedding situation might affect the health of the students.

"The load shedding combined with the extreme heat, erratic

water supply, mosquito menace and studying regularly till late at night might make the students ill," said a parent from Pallabi extension area.

"Mosquitoes invade home specially after the light goes off," he added. "We have to keep mosquito coils burning for several hours which is not good for health. Moreover, the repellents also seem to have become ineffective now."

"Besides, prices of candles have doubled. I bought an IPS (instant power supply) last month for my son but it will not save him from the sufferings at the exam hall when the real battle will begin," he said.

The parents suggest special arrangements of power supply during the HSC examinations. "The authorities must ensure power at examination centres during the exam, otherwise the examinees will suffer seriously," said a father. "The load shedding schedule should be prepared considering the exam timetable."



DCC takes up high-rise project ignoring legal obligations

TAWFIQUE ALI

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has embarked on a massive commercial move with construction of three commercial/residential high-rise buildings in Gulshan and Banani without building approval and land use clearance from the authorities concerned.

The project includes 14-storey Banani Super Market and Housing Complex at the site of Banani Super Market and the car parking space in its front, and 16-storey City Trade Centre at the site of Gulshan-1 market and the car parking space in its front.

Besides, Gulshan Centre Point -- a 26-storey super market and housing complex -- will be built on a 3-bigha plot in Gulshan-2, according to DCC officials concerned.

Though required to obtain building approval and land use clearance from Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk) as per the Building Act of 1952, Town Improvement Act of 1953, Building Rules of 2007 and Bangladesh National Building Code, the DCC has undertaken the project ignoring the legal obligations.

As per these laws, any builders and developers have to comply with certain planning and technical prerequisites before starting the construction work.

DCC has signed contracts with four private commercial builders to develop the three high-rises on shared basis with the deal of transferring proportionate land ownership.

Under the contracts, the builders will get more than 70 percent ownership of the total saleable floor areas.

Architect Mubasshar Hussain, president of the Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB), said that in the way of developing the plots with high-rises, the DCC is virtually turning the public properties into private.

"DCC's move to construct these high-rise buildings is not understandable when its performance in providing the basic civic amenities to the city dwellers is poor," he said.

Mubasshar said there are designated government agencies to take initiatives for residential apartments for the people.

"It is a must to obtain the land use clearance for such massive construction work in the city's planned neighbourhoods as per Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan (DMDP) and town planning, from Rajuk," he said.

Architect Khadem Ali, vice-president of the Centre for Urban Studies, said DCC should have consulted with Rajuk at least for land use pattern.

"An open space cannot be turned into a built-up area in such an arbitrary manner. DCC



Construction of a high-rise goes on at Banani Super Market, top, and site for another building at Gulshan 1.

wants to benefit commercially out of this project at the cost of public interest," he said.

Rajuk handed over the lands in Banani and Gulshan to DCC in 1984-85 only for maintenance as car parking, community centre and open spaces, said sources at Rajuk.

Two strips of land, 44A and 44B, of the plot-44 (Banani Market), are earmarked as car parking spaces in the revised layout plan of Banani Model Town approved in 1993. Plot-64 by the Kemal Ataturk Avenue is earmarked for car parking and a

community centre. The existing market at Gulshan-1 and the vast car parking space in its front are earmarked in the layout of Gulshan Model Town.

But the DCC project is to turn the entire open spaces into covered areas.

Borak Real Estate will build the 14-storey Banani project and Amin Associate Overseas Ltd will implement the Gulshan-1 project.

Bashundhara City Development Ltd and United City Twin Tower Development Ltd will jointly build the 26-storey

Gulshan-2 project, according to contract documents.

The 20-storey City Trade Centre will be built on a 7-bigha plot demolishing the present two-storey DCC Super Market in Gulshan-1 and existing car parking lot in front of it. There will be a 3-layer underground car park at the site.

Amin Associate Overseas will get 73 percent ownership of the total saleable area.

The 14-storey Banani Super Market and Housing Complex will have a total floor area of 3,60,085 square feet of which

saleable area will be 2,53,265 square feet. The builder Borak Real Estate will get 70 percent ownership of the saleable area.

The high-rise will occupy the existing 16-katha open space used as a car park.

The builder will turn the surrounding footpaths into a car parking lot in addition to a one-layer underground parking, said a DCC official.

The 26-storey building in Gulshan-2 will have a total of 8,66,691 square feet of floor areas out of which 5,07,333 square feet will be saleable area. The two builders will get 75 percent ownership of the saleable area.

The DCC move to alter type and character of land use is tantamount to violation of the Town Improvement Act 1953, said a Rajuk official.

DCC Chief Engineer Colonel Md Ashfaqul Islam said they are not required to obtain building approval and land use clearance from Rajuk as per city corporation ordinance.

"Rajuk is not the coordinator of everything," he said. "It has no authority over DCC."

He said DCC at a meeting on April 7 decided to obtain height-related clearance from the civil aviation authorities for the proposed 20-storey building in Gulshan-1.

Khairul Baker, executive engineer (market) of DCC, said DCC has undertaken the project in the light of the SRO of LGRD ministry that allows it to undertake such project.

Regarding approval, he said that it is a normal practice of DCC not to seek permission from Rajuk. "It will create various complications if we apply to Rajuk for approval."

He noted that the DCC has already formed a committee to get delegation of power from the government to approve its own buildings. DCC would construct the buildings in compliance with the building rules and codes, he said.

Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, a noted environmentalist, said that nowhere in the law DCC is exempted from the obligation of obtaining building approval and land use clearance.

"DCC must comply with the suggestions and decisions being incorporated in the upcoming Detailed Area Plan of Dhaka city," he said. "Also, it must hold neighbourhood consultation to ascertain impact of the project."

DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka previously said that the practice of not obtaining approval from Rajuk has been for long and that Rajuk has never stopped them.

Contacted, Rajuk Chairman KAM Haroon said they will check the legal status of DCC's high-rise construction project and then take steps.

A DAWN AT DHANMONDI

When road sweepers and strollers draw near

RIZANUZZAMAN LASKAR

It was 8:00 o'clock in the morning. A band of joggers was returning home amid a cloud of dust. Using hands to shield their eyes from the dust blowing in the wind, they strode forward in their sneakers and tracksuits.

All of a sudden, one of them burst into a coughing fit. As tears came streaming down his cheeks, his companions helped him to a nearby bench and tried to soothe him. Refusing to leave a member behind, they patiently wait up for him to regain his calm while expecting the cloud of dust to go away.

It happened last Wednesday when the group of joggers was having their morning stroll in the Dhanmondi lakeside park. A number of others were also walking on the walkway.

It was not before a good few minutes when the dust and litter finally disappeared after the road sweeper put down her broom and the strollers resumed their jog.

Dhanmondi residents allege that Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) cleaners spoil their morning walks by doing their jobs at an untimely hour. They say that the cleaners sweep the Dhanmondi lakeside walkway often between 7:30am and 8:30am--a time when scores of people go to the lakeside for morning walk.

"We leave the warm comfort of our bed every morning and come here to jog. The idea is to keep fit and stay healthy but these sweepers and cleaners turn out to be the spoilsports," said Jamshed Chowdhury, 54, who looked

red and sweaty due to the coughing fit.

"He [Jamshed] is allergic to dust, and also has asthma problems," said Iqbal Karim, a fellow jogger and doctor standing next to Jamshed. "A lot of people come here to keep fit or regain fitness. With the cleaners sweeping at these hours, the dust and litter flying in the air can do anything but good to their health," he said.

The private practitioner went on to explain that dust particles overpower human body's defences and build up in the respiratory systems. This can harm sensitive lung tissue.

"Dust may irritate the lung and trigger allergic reactions as well as asthma attacks. People who already have respiratory troubles may also have serious breathing problems from these attacks," he said adding that dust can also cause wheezing, runny noses, chronic breathing and lung problems.

"It is not only the morning walkers are affected. As this is the school opening hours, a lot of schoolchildren are also inhaling dust and other toxic particles because of this untimely sweeping," said Abdur Rahim, a resident of Dhanmondi/8/A.

According to the guiding principles of the DCC, sweeping of streets and public areas should be over and done within 6:00am while collection of the trash should be finished by 7:00am. However, DCC officials admitted that the schedules apply only to the VIP areas.

"We aim to take care of the cleaning jobs and collect trash from the VIP areas by 7:00am in the morning. However, taking

care of other city areas usually takes longer and may stretch up to 10:00am depending on the location," said an official at the Conservancy Department of DCC requesting anonymity.

DCC officials blamed the cleaners for doing their jobs at their will and sweeping streets after sunrise.

"We have received complaints regarding this specific issue in the Dhanmondi lakeside area. However, it is difficult to supervise these workers especially with their sheer number and the number of areas needed to be covered," said an official concerned from the DCC zone-5.

"Once in a while we do take measures to raise their [sweepers'] work standards, but it dwindles afterwards because of the absence of proper monitoring," he said.

The cleaners blamed each other for not doing their jobs properly.

"I, for myself like to get over with the job as early as possible. But most others tend to waste time dillydallying their jobs," said Karim Ali, a cleaner who was seen taking rest beside the Dhanmondi lake.

"In other countries, it is mandatory for the cleaning officials to sweep streets before sunrise. However, in our country, they do not seem to give a damn about the convenience of people," said Abdur Rahim, a Dhanmondi resident.

"The authorities should do something to enforce an appropriate timetable for these cleaners, especially in a public place like the Dhanmondi lakeside park," he said.



Krishnachura and Jarul in full bloom. The red and purple of the two trees still remain the season's most eye-catching roadside colours in the concrete jungle.