

DHAKA THURSDAY JUNE 26, 2008

USTC encroaches on Pahartali Baddhyabumi

Authorities say allegation is to tarnish image of the university and its vice chancellor

DWAIPAYAN BARUA

A private university is constructing an academic building on the land of Pahartali Baddhyabumi, the largest mass killing ground of the War of Liberation in the port city.

University of Science and Technology Chittagong (USTC) has already set up iron framed structures to construct the building ignoring resentment among the people.

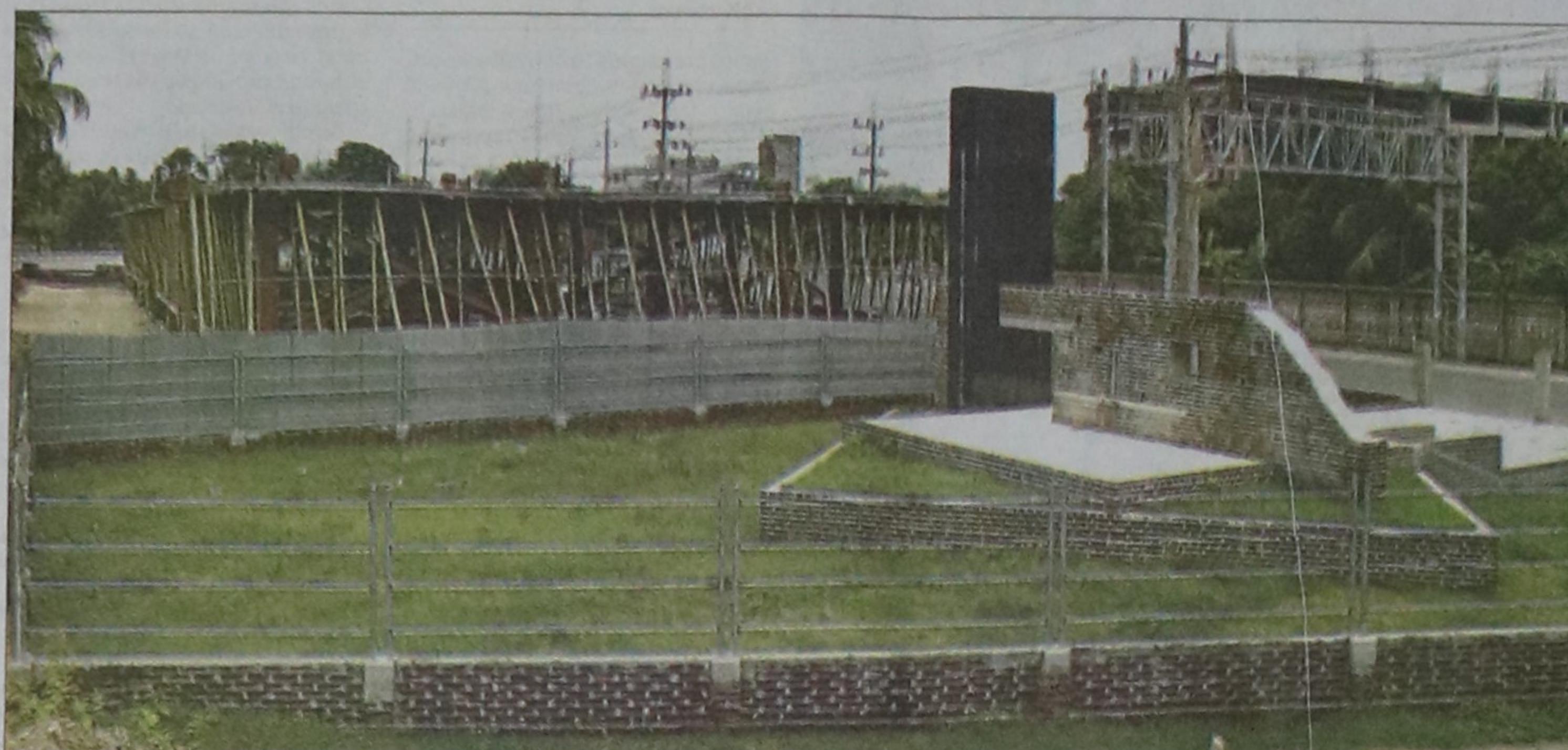
Different political and cultural organisations and professional organisations continued agitation against construction of the building.

They sought interference of the chief adviser as well as the army chief in the matter to pre-serve the historic site.

The protesters urged the government to take immediate measures to stop encroachment on the land to protect the memory of the War of Liberation.

They also demanded proper investigation into the corruption during the BNP-led alliance government in cancellation of a project in this regard.

Refuting the allegation of encroachment on the land of Pahartali Baddhyabumi, USTC Director (Academy) Dr Jalal Uddin said they have bought the land legally. He said the agitation



STAR PHOTO

University of Science and Technology Chittagong (USTC) constructing an academic building on the site of historic Pahartali mass killing ground.

is a part of an intentional move to tarnish image of the institute and its Vice Chancellor National Professor Dr Nurul Islam.

Pakistani occupation army and their collaborators use to take the freedom loving people to the spot near Foy's Lake at Pahartali in the port city and

killed them during the War of Liberation.

The most tragic incident occurred when Pakistani army killed several thousand unarmed people of the adjoining railway colonies and others on November 10 in 1971.

Prof Dr Gazi Salehuddin,

coordinator of Ekatorer Baddhyabumi Smriti Sangrakhan O Bastobayan Parishad and also a resident of the area, said non-Bengali, people popularly known as Biharis, of Pahartali was angry on the Bangalees as they played active role in different political and

cultural movements during the pre-liberation period.

A riot ensued between the Bangalees and the Biharis on March 3 over removal of a sign-board written in Urdu of a shop by the local students, headed.

Witnesses said Pakistani forces became mad when they

were facing strong resistance by the freedom fighters across the country.

They said four unidentified dead bodies were found at a hilly spot near the present Pahartali Eye Hospital on the night of November 9.

On the following day Pakistani army, members of AL Badr, AL Shams and Shanti Committee called hundreds of local residents of Wireless Colony, Master Lane, Shaheed Lane, Goanese Quarter, Punjabi Lane, Firoj Shah Colony and Saraipara out of their houses and took them to Pahartali Baddhyabumi to recognise the bodies.

The occupation forces asked them to line up at gunpoint and slaughtered and shot them as they failed to recognise the bodies.

Gazi Kamaluddin, brother of Dr Salehuddin, said he was also taken with his uncle Ali Hossain and others to the place.

Kamaluddin, a five-year-old boy in 1971, said he managed to escape while his father Ali Karim, a railway staff, and uncle did not return.

While narrating the incident, he said before slaughtering them the killers tied the eyes and hands of many victims from back. The miscreants stabbed the victims indiscriminately and dumped

some bodies underground while some were burnt spraying gunpowder and petrol, the witness said.

The murderers also forced many passengers of Chittagong-Nazirhat and Chittagong-Dohazari trains to get down for killing at the nearby rail track, they witness said.

No step was taken to preserve the site by the governments before the Awami League government in 1999 took initiative in this regard.

Earlier in 1998

A team led by Prof Salehuddin met the then prime minister Sheikh Hasina and urged her to preserve it.

Cultural ministry allocated Tk 94 lakh to acquire 1.754 acres of land the following year after Hasina's order in this regard.

But the USTC authorities said they have procured the land from its owner in 2002 and filed a case for preserving the killing ground. Expressing her resentment over the negligence of the government in this regard, Begum Mushtari Shafi, wife of a martyr and coordinator of Ghatak Dal Nirmul Committee Chittagong, demanded preservation of all the liberation war mass killing fields throughout the country and an end to encroachment on these sites.

2006, sources at the district administration said.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (Land/Acquisition) Tajul Islam confirmed about the allocation and refund of the money.

He said the ministry ordered to refund the money in 2006 as the USTC authorities donated some 11 kathas of land to it after a negotiation.

A memorial was set up in a casual manner on the donated land beside the actual spot without any background history, said Kamrul Islam Badal, secretary of Sangrakhan Parishad.

Dr Jalal said the university has donated the land showing respect to the martyrs and the ministry received it as the legal owner.

Leaders of the Parishad questioned legality of cancelling the project taken by the AL government for preserving the killing ground. Expressing her resentment over the negligence of the government in this regard, Begum Mushtari Shafi, wife of a martyr and coordinator of Ghatak Dal Nirmul Committee Chittagong, demanded preservation of all the liberation war mass killing fields throughout the country and an end to encroachment on these sites.

Potholes add to woes of commuters

SHAHIDUL ISLAM

With the onset of monsoon, potholes and cracks have been developing further in addition to the already dilapidated condition of roads in the port city, increasing the sufferings to the commuters as well as the residents.

Lack of proper maintenance and coordination among the Chittagong City Corporation (CCC), Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) and other authorities concerned are aggravating the situation.

The city roads that now are lying in a most miserable condition are Nawab Sirajuddowla Road (Anderkilla to Chawk Bazar and Kapasgola), Badurhat Road (Kapasgola to Bohadharhat), KB Abdus Sattar Road (Rahmatganj to Gani Bakery adjacent to Chandanpura), Momin Road (Cheragi Pahar to Enayet Bazar

Intersection), Bohadharhat Intersection, Muradpur Road, Bibirhat Road (Muradpur to Aturer Depot), Dewanhat DT Road (Dewanhat Overbridge to Pahartali and Malishahar Blocks), Paltan Road, KB Fazlur Quader Road (Chawk Bazar to Chittagong Medical College and Prabartok Intersection), Pathantuli Road, Dhanialapara Road, Kadamali Road (Kadamali to East Madarbari), Strand Road (Sadarghat to West Madarbari and Barik Building Intersection), Ice Factory Road (West Madarbari to City College), Chittagong College Road (Gani Bakery to Chawk Bazar), DC Road (West Bakalia), KB Aman Ali Road, Ali Ashraf Road (Kotwali Thana Intersection to Patharghat) and Firingi Bazar Road.

Heavy monsoon shower last week caused developing of many more potholes and cracks in most of these roads. As a result, commutes especially the rickshaw, autorickshaw and tempo passengers are to bear the brunt of heavy jerking alongside unwanted damage to the vehicles, alleged the commuters and the drivers.

Of the roads, the one-and-a-half-kilometre Nawab Sirajuddowla Road (Anderkilla to Chawk Bazar and Kapasgola), one of the oldest thoroughfares in the port city, is now in most pitiable state. The road remained uncared for months since a massive eviction drive by the CDA began in February in 2006. The road appears as a nightmare to both the commuters and pedestrians with multiple cracks and frightening holes.

Although a Tk 24 crore post-eviction development work began early last year, the people of this area are deprived of any benefit since the work was pro-

gressing at snail's pace. Worst more, a large portion of the road stretching from Anderkilla to Dewan Bazar Sub Area has gradually turned into a kitchen market of vegetables, fishes, meats and other essentials.

"We have on many occasions urged the authorities to intensify the work so that our woes would come down as early as possible. But all our appeals so far went in vain," said ward commissioner Chowdhury Hasan Mahmud Hasni.

He said they were told that CDA work would be completed in two years ending February, 2009 but are now sceptical about this.

"I used to drive my autorickshaw on this road (Sirajuddowla Road) to save time and fuel. But nowadays I do use this road very rarely because of potholes and cracks," said Kajal Das, a driver.

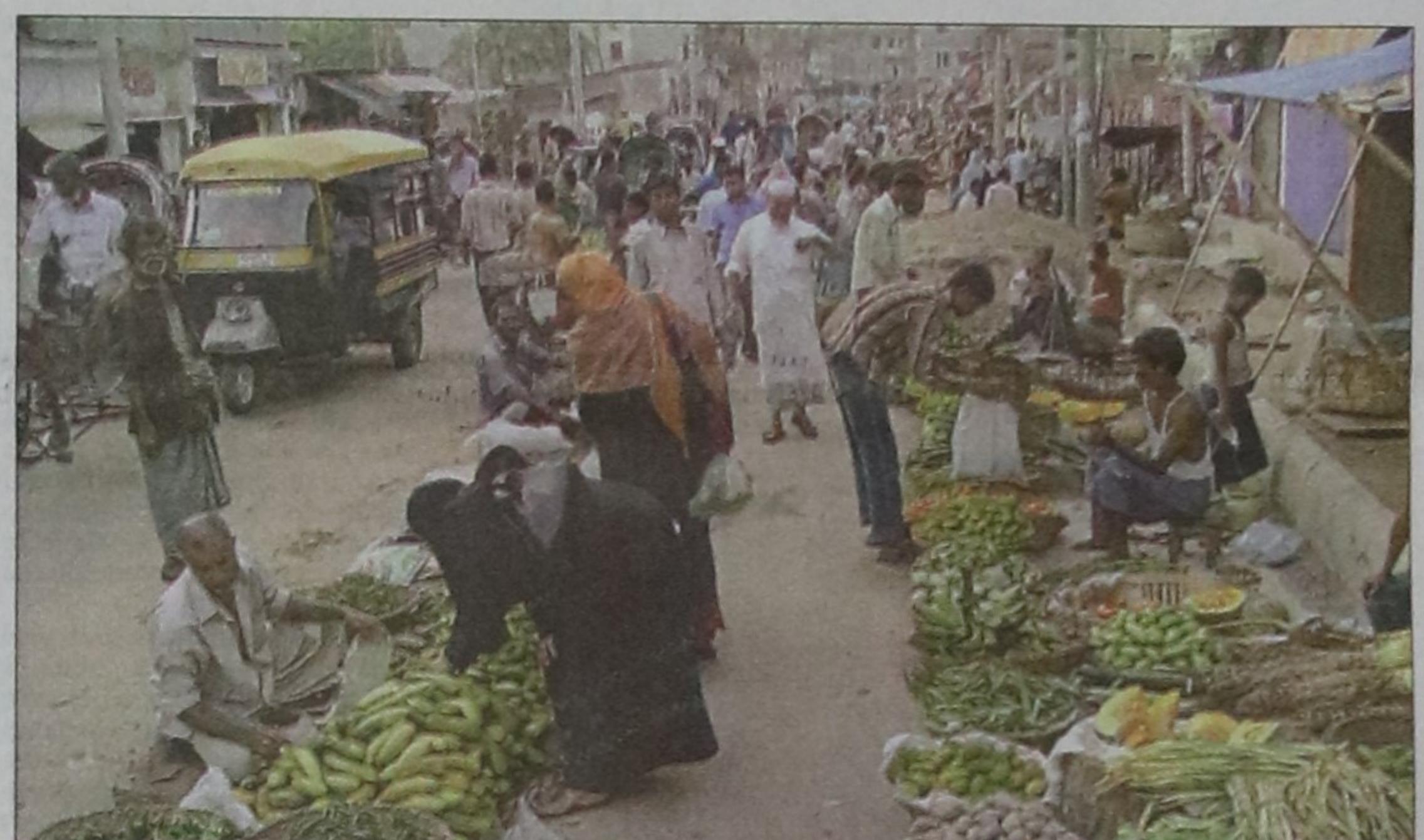
On the other hand, passengers very often receive severe injuries in waist, back and shoulder while commuting through aforesaid worn out roads.

Gafur Mia, a retired railway official at West Madarbari, said the Kadamtali and Strand roads have been lying uncared for over a decade, making these roads one of the most vulnerable to commuters.

The dilapidated roads are causing minor road accidents frequently, raising the risk of major accidents at any time as well, said Mohammad Ali Mia, deputy commissioner (traffic) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP).

He said unplanned digging by the CCC, CDA, BTTB and other bodies is another main reason to make worse the condition of the city roads.

CCC Chief Engineer Nizamuddin Chowdhury said



Vegetable vendors occupy a portion of Nawab Sirajuddowla Road, causing suffering to pedestrians.

the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has recently assured them of a grant of over Tk 100 crore for developing new roads and renovating the existing ones.

He said they will be able to start work with the fund soon.

On the other hand, CDA offi-

cials said the development or repair work of the roads couldn't be started fully due to fund constraints.

the week that was

BGMEA support for families of workers

Speakers at a function on Thursday sought cooperation from all sectors, including administration and media, for development of the readymade garment sector.

They said the garment workers have been playing a major role in earning foreign currency for the country every year.

They were addressing a function on the occasion of handing over cheques to the families of dead readymade garment workers by the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers' and Exporters' Association (BGMEA) at its regional office.

Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) Commissioner M Akbar Ali was the chief guest in the ceremony chaired by the BGMEA First Vice President MA Salam.

Akbar assured the BGMEA leaders of all cooperation for development of the sector.

Salam said the BGMEA made the group insurance mandatory for the employees for welfare of the workers.

He also briefed about facilities BGMEA provides to the workers.

CMP Deputy Commissioner (Port) Mohammad Habibur Rahman, BGMEA Director Ershad Ullah, Mohammad Ferdous, M Mohiuddin Chowdhury, SM Abu Toyab, Moinuddin Ahmed Mintu, AKM Saleh Uddin, SM Sajedul Islam and ANM Saif Uddin also spoke at the function.

Later, the chief guest handed over cheques for Tk 1 lakh to each family of 17 dead workers.



Singer Shaheen Samad sings Nazrul song at a function at the Institute of Engineers' auditorium in the port city on Saturday, marking the International Music Day organised by Alliance Francaise.

'Build students as ideal citizen'

Prize giving ceremony of literary and cultural competition of Chittagong Residential School and College was held on its Chandaon campus on Thursday.

Prof Ali Hossain, Inspector of schools of Chittagong Education Board, was present as the chief guest at the function with the institution Principal Prof Golam Mustafa in the chair.

Prof Ali urged the teachers to be dedicated enough in teaching to build the student as ideal citizens of the country.

Urban Garden Show ends

A three-day "Urban Garden Show"

He also emphasised the need for taking care of children by the guardians at home.

Former Secretary AFM Salolaim Chowdhury, Zainul Abedin Jamshed, Jahedul Islam Bhuiyan, SM Ariful Haque Tipu, Rawshan Ara Yasin, KM Abdur Razzak and Dr Kazi Shafiqul Alam also attended the function.

The function was followed by a cultural programme participated by the students of the institution.

He said such a show will inspire the next generation.

The Club Vice President Dr Omar Faruk Yusuf, former chairman Engineer Ali Ahmed, members Jamal Uddin Ahmed, Aftab Rahim Chowdhury Ferdous, Asgar Ali, Moinuddin Ahmed Mintu and Dr Masud Ahmed were present at the inaugural ceremony.

Huge varieties of plants, medicinal orchid, sapling of flower and fruit, related books and equipments were displayed at the show.

Call to end discrimination in promotion

Speakers at a meeting on Friday emphasised the need for addressing discrimination in promotion and transfer and fulfilling the vacant posts of teachers at the colleges for quality education.

They were addressing the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and reception of Chittagong District BCS General Education Association at Chittagong Government College auditorium.

The association President Prof Itekhbar Ahmed Khan was the chief guest at the function with Chittagong Chapter President Prof Farid Ahmed in the chair.

Speakers also urged the government to appoint the education cadre officers at all institutional posts, including education ministry, for bringing positive changes in the education sector.

Central Vice President Prof Fahima Khatun, former president Prof Mohammad Kafil Uddin, Secretary General Prof Masume Rabbani Khan, Joint Secretary General Prof Nasrin Begum, Dhaka College Principal Prof Bashirul Haque and Chittagong Chapter General Secretary Prof Mohammad Amirul Anwar spoke at the function.

Later, the associate and assistant professors, who received promotion recently were accorded reception.

Reception to bankers

The new and outgoing general managers of Sonali Bank Chittagong division were accorded a reception on the Agrabad Office premises on Sunday.

The new General Manager Mushtaq Ahmed replaced Pradip Kumar Dutta.

Pradip in his speech urged the employees to be more active to accelerate the ongoing activities of the bank for development of Chittagong division.

Mushtaq sought cooperation from new colleagues and assured them of all help.

Deputy general managers, assistant general managers and managers of

different branches of the bank participated in the reception.

'Creative question system a timely step'

Chittagong Education Board Chairman Prof Dr Muhammad Yusuf said the new 'creative question system' is a timely step and it would help the student to be efficient and qualified citizen.

He said education brings behavioural changes among the students and the new system will make the students creative.

He was addressing a seminar on



Visitors admire Bonsai plants at an exhibition titled "Urban garden Show" organised by Chittagong Club on Thursday.