

## Jagannath to have a new lease of life

Move to restore the century-old temple at Tantibazar

DURDANA GHAS

The Jagannath Mandir Committee has finally given one month's time a private organisation working to save heritage site, to restore the century-old temple in Tantibazar.

As soon as the funds are available, the Urban Study Group (USG) will start work and complete the job in six to seven

months. The estimated cost is around Tk 15-20 lakh.

The temple is known for its decorative architectural ceramic tiles. Corinthian capitals, small ornate domes, pilasters, relief work, decorated cornice and parapets are some of the important features of the temple.

The temple committee started knocking down the decorative frontal facade, the only

surviving portion of the 19th century temple on July 27.

They stopped the demolition work after Rajuk's authorised officer of the area sent an inspector to the spot to stop knocking down the structure.

The facade of the temple now stands in a tattered shape with a broken pinnacle and torn down parts of the parapets. However, experts said the pinnacle and the

parapets can be reconstructed.

Babul Das, head of the temple committee, told Star City that they have agreed to give the conservation activists time till August 31 to present their complete proposal and the confirmation of funds needed for the work.

"We have discussed the matter with them. They sought one month's time and we have agreed. After one month they will inform us whether they have the technical and financial supports to save this structure," said Das.

"If they can manage everything, we will also donate Tk 2 lakh for its restoration because this is a precious piece of heritage of our country," he said.

Kajal Debnath, joint secretary, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian Oikya Parishad, said if USG is committed to do the work, then the facade can be saved.

"I hope for the best outcome of the whole thing. Even if the process fails it will create a stir because a public awareness has been built on the issue," he said.

Taimur Islam, architect and conservation activist of USG, said, "For the restoration of architectural ceramics we will bring an expert on ceramics architecture either from India or from the west."

He also said, "We may contact INTACH, an Indian private organisation working for heritage conservation. The materials will have to be authentic and the integrity of the structure will have to be maintained by minimum intervention."

Taimur said they will sit with the temple committee after one month on confirmation of funds. "This is a great move from the temple committee as they have allowed us for the restoration work and we are hopeful about it."

Structural Engineer Sheikh Mohammad Shahidullah, who is to do the work of structural support of the facade, said inside the structure they will use reinforced concrete to fortify the structure.

"We will use reinforced concrete to make the structure stable for the next few hundred years. This will make the structure strong and durable. But in the exterior we will use chun-surki (lime and brick dust mortar) to maintain the texture and the ornamentation," he said.

"If the weight of the whole structure remains the same then no new foundation will be needed," he added.

According to locals, the temple was built by Hariprashanna Day, Kartik Sen and other elite of the trader community of the area.



This road that leads to Shikdar Medical College lies in this condition for the last few months. The picture was taken recently.

## Thousands suffer as roads dug up for canal recovery

HELEMLU ALAM

About 40,000 people residing in two housing estates in Rayerbazar have been facing immense trouble for the last six months as most of the roads in the area have been dug up by the authorities to recover the Hajaribagh canal.

The authorities of Shikdar Real Estate Company and Ali & Noor Real Estate Company dug up the roads in January following the instruction of the government's canal recovery committee. But no further work has been done since then.

The roads were constructed on the Hajaribagh canal, one of 26 canals in the city that were brought under a government plan to recover them for easing waterlogging in the city, said an official of the Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa).

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) constructed the roads in 2006-07 with pipe drains underneath to carry waste of different areas.

Shahidul Alam, tenant of a house in Shikdar Real Estate, said as five out of seven roads of the housing estate have been dug up, only two roads are now left for their movement. The dug-up spots have become very risky as they go under water even after a moderate rain.

Monoara Road, the main road of the Shikdar Real Estate that goes towards Shikdar Medical College and Hospital also came under the digging.

The residents of Ali & Noor Real Estate used the road con-

structed on the canal as their main road, said Raihan Ali, a resident of the housing estate.

"We are not against recovering the canal. But as the canal has no outlet and it carries the tannery wastes, it will be difficult to live in the area if the canal remains open," said Solaiman, a resident of Shikdar Real Estate.

"The canal does not carry clean water. Waste of tannery and sewerage will flow through the canal which will create an unhygienic and unhealthy environment in the area," said Abdul Karim, another resident of Shikdar Real Estate.

Shikdar Real Estate got the approval of the real estate project from the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha in March 3, 1983. There was a canal in the approved plan, said Solaiman.

However, many plot owners of Shikdar Real Estate company complained that they did not see any canal in the BS map of 1998. Roads were shown instead of canal in the map for which they purchased the plots, they said.

Abdul Karim purchased the land from a third party in 1998 and he did not find any canal at the place following the BS map which was shown to him.

"We filled up the canal with sands as the canal had dried up before that time," said engineer Kamrul Huda of Shikdar Real Estate company, adding that it had become a waste dumping ground of the local people. DCC later constructed road on the canal afterwards.

Kamrul said they started selling plots in 1983 and completed the process by 1986-87. He

claimed that they had sold all the plots showing the canal in the map.

Maruf Hossain, an engineer of Ali & Noor Real Estate company said there was a canal in the area but its two sides were already filled up. He said they did not take approval from Rajuk for their plots as it was not a housing project. The plots were sold as individual plots.

Maruf said they sold 50 to 60 plots by 1990.

Solaiman of Shikdar real estate said they have submitted applications to the taskforce and managing director of Wasa to solve their problem immediately.

According to Wasa officials, a meeting held on July 6 chaired by LGRD and Cooperatives Adviser Anywarul Iqbal decided to create open channel in the area. Land acquisition will start soon to connect the canal with the sluice gate at Rayer Bazar.

## 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.

*"It's, however, sad that a fact which is as clear as daylight had to be ruled upon by the court due to the actions of a political party bent on distorting history."*

-- Saber Hossain Chowdhury  
Awami League Leader

Said after a high court verdict declared illegal the immediate past BNP-led 4-party alliance government's order for cancelling observance of national mourning day and a public holiday on August 15, on Sunday. Source: The Daily Star

*"If money is what actually matters to the forest department, then rice cultivation should have been the most preferred option."*

-- Dr Reza Khan

A member of the World Commission of the Protected Areas  
Told a reporter as forest department cleared reserved mountainous forests in Rangamati and Khagrachhari to cultivate alien species fit for massive logging to meet its annual revenue target, on Friday. Source: The Daily Star

*"I hope there'll be no adverse impact on the investment."*

-- Mirza Azizul Islam  
Finance Adviser

Told reporters after a function at the National Museum commenting on Tata Group's decision not to go ahead with its \$3 billion investment plan in Bangladesh, on Friday. Source: The Daily Star

*"I always spoke for unity in the past and am still speaking for it."*

-- Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan

A top leader of the BNP's reformist faction  
Told reporters at his residence after the High Court granted him two months' ad-interim bail in the Gatco graft case, on Wednesday. Source: The Daily Star

*"There can be no decision that will benefit all. But unfortunately we are under constant attack. We, however, are undaunted."*

-- ATM Shamsul Huda

Chief Election Commissioner  
Told reporters referring to the opposition on redrawing the electoral constituencies and amending the Representation of the People's Order, on Tuesday. Source: The Daily Star

Compiled by Durdana Ghias

## Vegetables dearer due to scant supply

Rains, increased transport cost blamed

RAIHAN SABUKTAGIN

Vegetable prices have increased significantly in the city kitchen markets in the last one month due to a fall in supply from the districts, wholesalers and traders said.

The wholesale price of most summer vegetables has increased by Tk 8 to 10 per kg.

Traders attributed the scant supply to rain and increased transport cost following the latest fuel price hike.

A month ago around 350 trucks carrying vegetables from different parts of the countries used to come to Karwan Bazar wholesale market every day. Now the number of trucks has come down to around 275, the wholesalers and traders said.

Lufur, a vegetable trader at Duaripara in Pallabi said, "Today I bought ridge gourd at Tk 22 a kg and I'm selling it at Tk 24. A month ago the price was Tk 12 per kg."

The sale of vegetable also fell

due to high price, he said.

Israfil Hussain while returning home from Rupnagar kitchen market after buying vegetables and fish on Thursday said he could not buy required quantity of vegetables for his family for the last few weeks due to high price.

"My budget is limited. But every kind of vegetables has become dearer," he said. "Traders have increased the price on the excuse of scant supply."

At Karwan Bazar and Mirpur Section-1 kitchen market, the wholesale price of bitter gourd is now Tk 24 per kg, snake gourd Tk 22, arum Tk 14, Indian zucchini Tk 22, eggplant Tk 20, okra Tk 20, string bean Tk 24 and pointed gourd Tk 22.

Ashikullah, a vegetable wholesaler at Karwan Bazar said a month ago bitter gourd was sold at Tk 12, snake gourd Tk 8, arum Tk 14, Indian zucchini Tk 13, eggplant Tk 5, okra Tk 7, string bean Tk 8 and

pointed gourd Tk 14.

He said the price of green chilli has increased most in the last one month. "It was only Tk 6 per kg a month ago but now it is selling at Tk 55 a kg."

Ashikullah blamed reduction in vegetable supply due to rain and increased transport cost.

"Within a month, the supply has declined by more than one-fourth as vast tracts of vegetable fields have been damaged by rain. Moreover, transport cost has increased after the latest fuel price hike," he added.

At present, a truck from Chapainawabganj or Rangpur are charging between Tk 13,500 and Tk 14,000 for a trip to Dhaka carrying vegetables, said Aminur, who supplies vegetables to Mohammadpur Krishi Market and Karwan Bazar.

Before the fuel price hike, the lorries usually charged Tk 9,000 for the same distance.



Prices of vegetables marked sharp rise in the last one month.