

AUW to start building main campus soon

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD

Asian University for Women (AUW), an Asian citadel for women's education, is likely to start construction of its main campus on 131.37 acres of land, including 104.40 acres donated by the government, soon.

Having the hill re-profiling permission the AUW is now cleared to begin construction of structures for its main campus on a hill beset with panoramic sight in the port city.

The newly formed hill cutting committee gave the permission for hill re-profiling (hill cutting) for developing the campus on the hilly terrain of North Pahartali at its first meeting on November 17. CDA Chairman Shah Muhammad Akhteruddin is head of the committee.

As such, with the approval from the Department of Environment the university authorities now can start the construction work.

The committee discussed thoroughly every aspects of building construction, planning and hill re-profiling plans at the meeting at the Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) building.

Members of the civil society and representatives from Institution of

Engineers Bangladesh (IEB), Institution of Architects Bangladesh (IAB), Institution of Planners Bangladesh (IPB), Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (Cuet), Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), Chittagong City Corporation (CCC), Department of Environment (DoE) and Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) were present at the meeting as members of the committee.

Akhteruddin said the AUW campus is designed as a pedestrian-dominant area where water reservoir will be developed on the valleys of the hills to construct structures beside them (water reservoirs).

"The AUW would have solar power panel on the roofs of the buildings," he said.

"Arrangements for recreation facilities will be made on the roofs of the buildings under the shade of rooftop power panel," he said, adding that the AUW has a plan to construct two iconic towers at the entrance.

The AUW campus site lies some six kilometres to the north of main commercial centre and 15km off the international airport of the port city. It offers a less chaotic urban experience, a unique and still largely unspoiled landscape of rolling hills immediately adjacent to the Foy's Lake recreation centre, all within the city limit.

One of the goals of the campus design is to re-vegetate the surrounding hills as a strategy for preventing erosion and a means to re-establish a

native ecology, sources said.

The Asian University for Women would be developed under a 400million US dollar project supported by different individuals and donor agencies.

With a promised "matching grant" of 15million US dollar Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation leads the list of major donors that includes Goldman Sachs Foundation, Packard Foundation, Hewlett Foundation and George Soros among others.

The AUW charter was approved and ratified through an act of the parliament of Bangladesh on September 25 in 2006.

At present 129 students from Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are enrolling at the Access Academy campus.

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