

GULSHAN CENTRAL PARK

Mayor's order to free playground from occupants goes unheeded

TAWFIQUE ALI

Estate Department of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has been mysteriously silent on the mayor's directive to remove unauthorised structures from Gulshan Central Park.

Official sources said DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka on March 31 asked the corporation's chief estate officer to free the playground from illegal occupancy.

But the estate department has not taken any move in the past eight

months.

Gulshan Youth Club has long been running its activities occupying the playground.

"The transitional period of administration, as it is now, is one of the reasons why my instructions are taken with slackness," said the mayor.

But DCC Chief Estate Officer Md Khalilur Rahman said it is not correct that the mayor's order has not been carried out for that reason. "It is very easy on part of the mayor to make an order but it is

difficult to carry it out," he said.

According to club documents, it has been occupying the playground with consent of the local ward commissioner but without approval from the mayor.

But DCC officials said a ward commissioner or a zone executive officer does not have the authority to hand over a property or assign anyone to use it exclusively.

As per the city corporation ordinance, it is only the mayor who holds the authority to allow and

designate anyone to maintain a public playground.

The mayor said, "Even mayor's approval alone is not enough. It also requires approvals from the DCC board and the ministry concerned for leasing out or allotment of any property of DCC in favour of anybody."

The chief estate officer claimed that the mayoral consent is not required for hiring somebody to look after a property.

"It is not correct that nothing can be done without mayor's permission,"

Rahman said.

The DCC, following the mayoral directive, was supposed to remove existing structures and occupancy from the park and take over direct control of it.

The mayor said the social welfare officer of DCC would run a small office at the ground if required for its better maintenance. He also instructed for development proposals for the playground and sports facilities as per need of the locals.

The playground is situated by the roads no-103, 108 and 109 in central Gulshan.

Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk), original owner of the playground, served a final notice on the club on April 1, 2008.

The Rajuk notice pointed out that a one-storey building, two sheds for security personnel, one toilet and one tennis court at the playground have been erected without building approval in violation of the Building Construction Act of 1952.

But in the face of intervention by top-level policymaker, Rajuk had to retract from eviction of illegal structures and unauthorised possession from the playground.

As per official records, Rajuk handed over the 7.69-acre Gulshan Central Park to the city corporation (the then Gulshan Pourashava) in 1973 for maintenance as an open park.



Unauthorised structures at the Gulshan Central Park. The DCC Mayor ordered in March to free the playground from illegal occupancy but the structures are yet to be removed or dismantled.

THEN WHY THIS NO-PARKING SIGN?



SYED ZAKIR HOSSAIN

Cars parked at Gulshan ignoring no-parking sign. Unauthorised car parking at the two intersections at Gulshan Circle 1 and 2 these days has become a major obstacle to normal traffic movement. Although the city fathers promised to free the streets in the area from illegal parking, the DCC itself recently leased out a number of lanes of the posh neighbourhood for commercial car parking.

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.

"Corruption should not be compared with cancer. It is like diabetes."

-- Barrister Rafiqul Haque

Eminent jurist

Said at an award giving ceremony of Ahsania Mission, on Saturday. Source: Prothom Alo

"We want Pintu as our candidate -- we believe it's all a conspiracy to implicate him in the case. The voters also know this and he would get their sympathy."

-- Moniruzzaman Bulbul

Tangail district BNP General Secretary

Told a reporter advocating nomination for charge-sheeted accused in the August 21 bombing case and former lawmaker Abdus Salam Pintu, on Saturday. Source: The Daily Star

"I don't know how they made the estimate. However, I do not agree with them anyway."

-- Mirza Azizul Islam

Finance Adviser

Said on the World Bank projection that says that GDP growth in Bangladesh may come down to 4.8 percent in the current fiscal year, on Wednesday. Source: The Daily Star

"God sees through every human being and if I had committed a crime I would have accepted the punishment."

-- Islam Mohammad Himu

A Bangladeshi businessman in Japan

Told AFP after Japan's top court cleared him of links to the Al-Qaeda terrorist network rejecting an appeal by top-selling Yomiuri Shimbun network and upheld lower court rulings that the publisher should pay a total of 2.2 million yen to him for damaging his reputation, on Wednesday. Source: The Daily Star

WOES OF DIESEL-RUN BUS PASSENGERS IN CITY

Fuel price cut but fare remains the same

CITY CORRESPONDENT

When the government decided to cut diesel price earlier last month, city's bus riders heaved a sigh of relief thinking bus fares would follow suit and decrease accordingly.

Indeed, transport fare for diesel-run vehicles was decreased by Tk 0.05 to Tk 0.07 for each kilometre. And it made thousands of commuters happy.

"I was happy to know that at last price of something is going down when everything is getting dearer," said Nurul Islam, a service provider from Mugda. "I would have been personally benefited as I am a regular passenger of the city's local buses," he added.

Schoolboy Sohel gets Tk 20 a day from his parents to pay for bus fare and lunch.

"I heard some people talking about a fare cut," said Sohel. "Then I thought I would have to spend less on bus fare. That means I could spend more on lunch. And I was delighted."

But the hurrah did not last long. Commuters found no change in bus fare.

Apparently commuters like Islam and Sohel missed one tiny detail -- the reduced fare applies only for inter-district and long-route buses, not the ones operating in the city. "It came as a shock," said Mushfiqul Hossain, an

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There are a large number of diesel-run buses in the city that enjoy fuel price cut but decline to decrease the fare.

undergraduate student from Nikunja.

"I know most of the buses in the city now runs on CNG. But there are still plenty of diesel-run buses fare of which should have

been cut," he said.

However, officials at the Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) seem to think otherwise.

"Almost all the buses

and minibuses in the city runs on CNG now. The few buses that have not been converted into CNG-run will be converted soon," said an official adding that the official transport fare

structure in the city is now based on CNG-run buses.

"So we think there is no need to rearrange the transport fare of diesel-run buses," he said.

Conversely, the fact is

most of the old, rusty local buses that carry a large portion of city passengers still run on diesel. According to unofficial sources, out of the 5,000 buses that operate in the capital, over 20 percent are running on diesel.

"They [authorities] cannot just overlook all these buses and their passengers," said a commuter on a city local bus as he argued with a fellow passenger about the decision not to rearrange the transport fare of diesel-run buses.

According to sources at the BRTA, all the minibuses in the city were instructed to convert into CNG in May this year. They were given three months' time to comply with the instruction.

Later in July this year, a new transport fare structure was announced for CNG-run buses based on an assumption that all the buses in the city have been converted into CNG.

The announcement was made without any study or survey to back it up, sources said.

Earlier on October 26, the government slashed petroleum prices by 10 to 13 percent following the recent drastic price fall in the global market.

Prices of per litre diesel and kerosene came down to Tk 48 from Tk 55, petrol to Tk 78 from Tk 87 and octane to Tk 80 from Tk 90.