

Plan to reconstruct Mughal era mosque

Tk 200 crore project will be presented to ministry of housing and public works today

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD
Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) has taken a project of Tk 200 crore to expand and reconstruct Anderkilla Shahi Jame Masjid, a 340-year-old hill-top mosque of Mughal era in the port city.

CDA would complete the work keeping the mosque's original shape unchanged.

The design and plan of the project will be presented to the ministry for housing and public work today (December 18), sources said.

CDA initiated the project as part of its plans to preserve and conserve monuments and structures of historical and archeological significance.

Umed Khan, son of Nawab Shayesta Khan, set up the Anderkilla Shahi Jame Masjid in 1667 as a monument to commemorate the Mughals' victory over Arakani Moghs and

Portuguese pirates in the previous year, they said.

Shayesta Khan and his son Bujurg Umed Khan donated huge properties for maintenance of the mosque and a madrasa on over 2.4276 acres of land at Anderkilla.

The name Anderkilla meaning "Inner fort" and the mosque stands as a symbol of the Muslim triumph over the hostile and the odds.

But, rows of shops of the mosque market now block the panoramic view of the mosque that stands 30-foot above the adjoining ground when a project of Tk 24.88 crore for beautification and renovation by Islamic Foundation remained shelved since 2005, sources said.

CDA also has a plan to construct a two-storey building surrounding the 27-foot high main mosque building keeping its original design and shape

unharmed, sources said.

The pictorial complex would have three laps before the main compound of the mosque.

The first lap would have a parking lot with capacity of some 500 cars, said senior architect Maharina Jafrin.

Shops of the mosque market will be rehabilitated on two other laps to enable one to have a view of the mosque from distance, she said.

There would be two hydraulic lifts at the east and north gates of the mosque to help the elderly and the persons with disability reach the main compound apart from two other lifts in the main mosque building, she added.

The mosque would have sufficient space for over 8,000 devotees to say prayers at a time where some 2,000 sayprayers now.

Apart from two eye-catching minarets (tombs) of modern architectural designs

at the north entry points, green patches would be developed surrounding the mosque complex, they said.

A 20-storey city tower would also be constructed on the southeast of the mosque complex for offices and shops. Spaces in the tower would be sold or rented out that would help self-financing of the project later on.

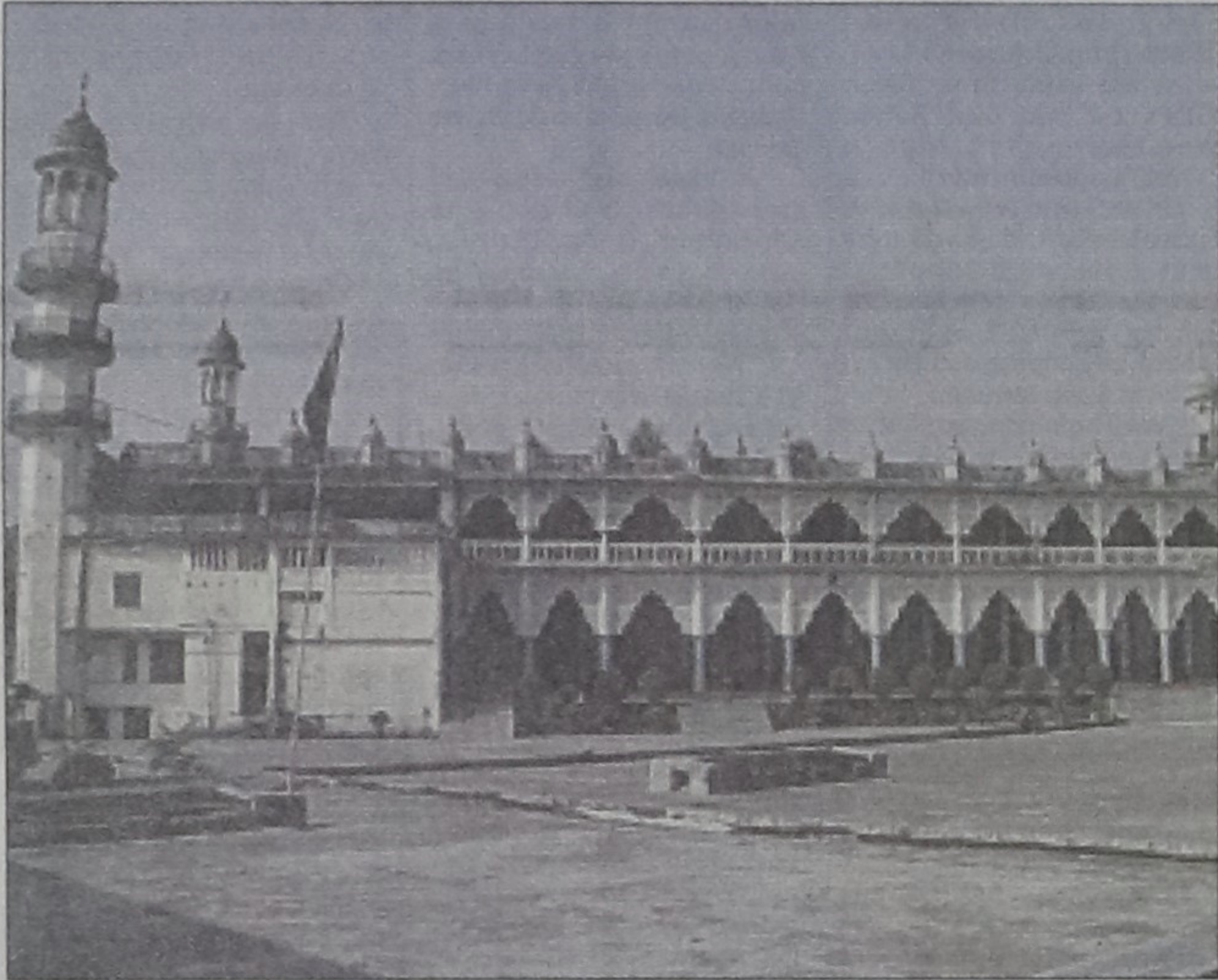
CDA Chairman Shah Muhammad Akhteruddin said they would start implementing the project with its own fund.

He said in the meantime a number of donors from both home and abroad, including Turkish agency TK group and AK Khan group, have already shown interest in financing over Tk 70 crore for the complex.

According to the historians, during the British colonial rule, East India Company turned the mosque into a magazine for arms and ammunitions. They destroyed the domes and some pillars of the mosque and kept all the mosque-based activities suspended forcibly for around 95 years.

However, Khan Bahadur Hamidullah Khan, a revenue officer under the British Raj in the 19th century, launched a movement that succeeded to free the mosque in 1856. But, the properties of the mosque had been registered as the waqf properties for the next 106 years until a committee headed by deputy commissioner of Chittagong was formed in 1962 to look after the mosque.

Anderkilla Shahi Jamey Mosque was handed over to the Islamic Foundation Bangladesh under the ministry for religious affairs on January 7 in 1986 for its maintenance and management.



The front view of Anderkilla Shahi Jame Mosque.

ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKOER

VICTORY DAY CELEBRATED



People from all walks of life celebrate Victory Day in the port city on December 16 amid festivity and enthusiasm and paid homage to the martyrs of War of Liberation. 1. A child places wreaths, 2. Awami League leaders place wreaths and 3. Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leaders place wreaths at Shaheed Minar in the port city, 4. School children take part in a Victory Day programme at MA Aziz Stadium and 5. Victory Day rally organised by Chittagong City Corporation at Laldighi Road.

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theweekthatwas

Community police formed

Speakers stressed the need for establishing community police system in different areas in the port city in order to reduce the gap between police and mass people.

They were addressing a preparatory meeting with a view to forming a committee of community police at the Agrabad T&T Colony on Thursday.

An eleven-member committee of community police for the colony was formed at the meeting.

Assistant Commissioner (AC) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) Double Mooring Zone Md Iltutmish was the chief guest at the meeting with Md Shafiqul Islam in the chair.

Officer-in-Charge of Double Mooring Police Station Ziaul Hoque and Engineer AKM Shariful Alam were special guest at the meeting. Speakers at the meeting spoke about the formation and activities of community police.

Call to establish human rights

Speakers at a discussion underscored the need for more awareness campaign by the

rights organisations to establish human rights in the country in accordance with the United Nations Convention formulated on December 10 in 1948.

They were addressing the discussion marking the World Human Rights Day organised by the Bangladesh Human Rights Parishad Bandar unit at its office on Thursday.

Parishad General Secretary Advocate Shahidul Islam Shamim was the chief guest at the discussion with Parishad leader Muhammad Selim in the chair.

They said different sections of government administration should work with the human rights organisations to help ensure the rights.

Parishad Treasurer Ahmad Kabir, Mohammad Enam, Engineer Md Shahadat, Zahedul Islam, Mohammad Maniuddin, Tanveerul Hoque and Md Shah Alam took part in the discussion.

Environmentalists form human chain

Environmentalists formed a human chain in front of Chittagong Press Club (CPC) demanding an end to generation of greenhouse gas and protection for the people living in the coastal areas.

Bangladesh Environment

Movement and People's Rivers Defender jointly organised the programme on Saturday.

Speakers at the programme urged all to raise their voice against generation of greenhouse gas in order to save the earth.

They called for checking misuse of foreign money and corruption in this regard.

They also demanded confiscating the loan money of such country that generate the gas. Activists of different environmental, cultural and professional organisations participated in the human chain.

Call to work for grand alliance candidates

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) Chittagong city leaders urged its leaders and activists to work to ensure win of the candidates nominated by grand alliance.

They were speaking at the extended meeting of the organisation on Monday.

City unit President MR Azim presided over the meeting where former minister and Awami League leader MA Mannan, chairman of election conducting committee for Chittagong-8 (Kotwali) constituency Mahtab Uddin

Ahmad, Member Secretary Advocate Ibrahim Hossain Chowdhury Babul were special guests.

Speakers said voters would reply to the despotic four-party alliance government through casting their votes for the symbol of boat in the upcoming parliamentary election.

They urged the BCL leaders and activists to participate in the campaigns and to guard the votes cast by the voters at each polling centre so that none can dare to snatch those.

Unit General Secretary Md Salah Uddin, Vice Presidents Ali Neaz

Khan, Mainul Hoque Limon, Tarek Haider Babul, Javedul Azam Masum, leaders Shibu Prashad Chowdhury and Mobarak Ali spoke among others.

Red Crescent Society AGM held

The annual general meeting of Red Crescent Society Chittagong City unit was held on Friday, says a press release.

Speakers at the meeting

urged the members of the organisation to extend their helping hands for welfare of the distressed people of the society.

Unit Vice Chairman M Abdus Salam chaired the meeting while Secretary Ahmed Newaj presented his annual report for the year 2008.

He also placed the proposed budget for the year 2009 at the meeting.

Both the reports were approved unanimously at the meeting, the release said.

Sajeda Begum, HM Salah Uddin, Safkat Jahan, Iqbal Ali,

Fakhrul Islam Chowdhury, Shahriar Morshed and Shubhashis Das spoke among others.

'Help establish rule of law'

Chittagong District and Session Judge Majnul Ahsan Khan urged the lawyers to help establish rule of law and ensure justice in the society.

He said lawyers should be careful so that no pressure or greed can deviate them from their pledge.

He was addressing a view exchange meeting organised by Chittagong District Bar Association at its auditorium on Thursday.

Metropolitan Session Judge Bhabani Prasad Sing was the special guest at the meeting with association Vice President Abdul Hannan in the chair.

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Md Helal Chowdhury, association General Secretary Md Mujibur Rahman Chowdhury, former president Mahub Uddin Ahmad and former general secretary Chandan Das spoke among others.



Journalists and students pose for photograph with the guests at a reception organised by Chittagong Press Club on Tuesday.

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