

Risky giant billboard returns

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A gigantic billboard to the height of a four-storied building was erected, very close to three high voltage lines of Power Development Board (PDB) at city's busy GEC Intersection, posing a threat to lives and properties.

Three advertising firms have jointly installed the 120 feet by 40 feet billboard recently, much to the surprise and awe of the pedestrians, commuters and locals who apprehend that this giant billboard may be a disastrous one in the face of any strong storm.

They said how Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) could give permission to the ad firms to raise such a 'dangerous' and 'life-threatening' billboard.

Of the three PDB lines, one 33,000-KVA line belongs to Feeder No-1 of Stadium Circuit while the other two to Feeder Nos 17 and 18 of Jalalabad Circuit under Khulshi Sub Division, sources said.

But many people express their surprise at the 'mysterious' silence of the PDB, although the sky-high billboard virtually overshadowed the power lines. They fear the billboard on it is equally exposed to a disaster spark any time if it touches the power lines.

Abu Taher Mohammad, a resident of the locality, said the billboard appears as a matter of concern for residents around it.

He said the floating people always stay under the billboard and the busy road in front of it is always found crammed with different kinds of vehicles. It would cause huge casualties if the billboard collapses, he said.

Imam Hossain Chowdhury, a businessman of nearby Nasirabad area who travels on the road everyday, said he goes to the Agrabad Commercial Area through the road to see his business and back home. He said he feels insecure when he crosses the giant billboard.

"I don't understand how the corporation could give permission to build such a risky billboard, let alone the destruction of city's natural beauty," he questioned.

The three firms -- Ad Way, Ad Valley and Ad Frame -- had erected on the same spot a giant billboard on a huge structure, which was made of five poles during the BNP-led four-party alliance government.

But authorities under the caretaker government removed around 670 hoardings, including the giant billboard and a huge structure of GEC Intersection during drives as they narrowed down the skyline, caused serious vision pollution and posed threat to lives and properties.

Mujibur Rahman, managing partner of Ad Way, on April 4 this year applied to the CCC for permission to rebuild the billboard of 120 feet X 40 feet on the same site. Revenue Office of the CCC recommended the application for approval on April 9 and Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury approved it the same day. After getting permission, the firms erected a giant structure on five poles and put on billboard on it last week.

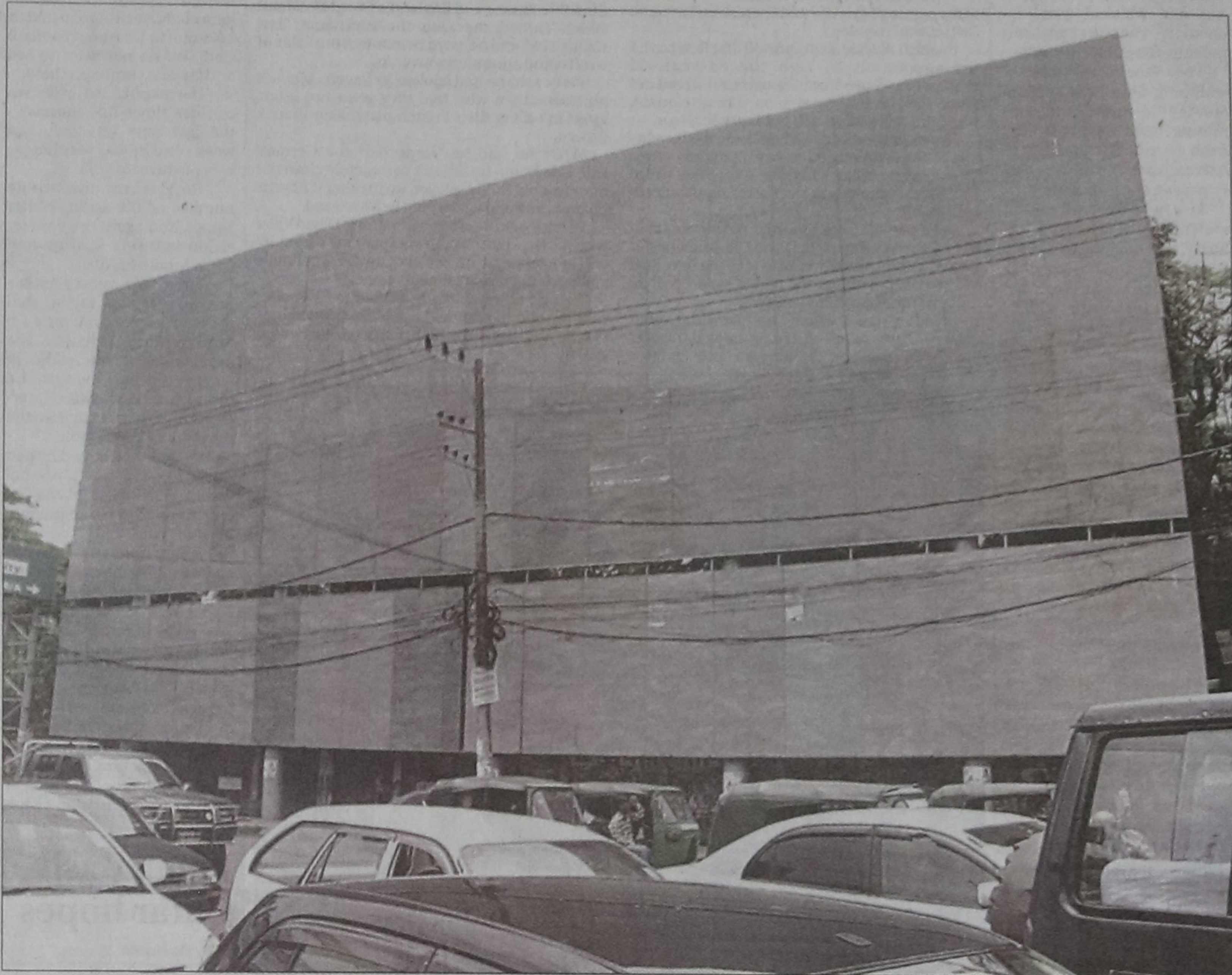
Mujibur, however, has dismissed any risk out of the billboard saying the structure has been built so strongly that there is hardly any chance to its falling down or causing accident.

He claimed that the billboard in the area in fact has increased the beauty of the area.

Kajal Kanti Chowdhury, executive engineer of Khulshi Sub-Division, said the matter has been drawn to his attention and he has already assigned an engineer to examine whether the structure is erected dangerously close to PDB lines or poses any other threat.

He said they normally give objection if billboard is built close to our lines and they would do the same if their investigation finds it dangerous.

CCC Chief Revenue Officer (CRO) Mohammad Mainuddin couldn't be available for comment despite repeated attempts.



A giant billboard erected close to high voltage electric lines at GEC intersection blocks the view and poses a threat of accident.

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Bumper production of vegetables

At least 15,000 farmers are involved in vegetable cultivation and around 30,000 people are benefited

JASIM MAJUMDER, Khagrachhari

The farmers of Manikchhari upazila achieved a bumper production of vegetables this season.

Manikchhari Upazila Agriculture Extension Office sources said farmers are getting expected vegetables and good price due to fertile lands and favourable weather. The vegetables produced in the upazila are also supplied to other districts, they said.

"The vegetables specially kakrol, bean, pumpkin, oram, garlic, ginger, snake gourd known as jhinga and lady's finger grown in bumper this year bringing smile on the faces of farm-



An agricultural researcher briefs a farmer at a vegetable garden on a hill slope at Adarsha Gram under Manikchhari upazila in Khagrachhari.

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ers," they said, adding that farmers are quite happy as they are getting good prices of their products.

Farmers said they are selling per maund of kakrol at Tk 800 compared to Tk 300 last year, oram Tk 600 compared to Tk 250, bean (Barbati) Tk 1,500 compared to Tk 1200, jhinga Tk 1,700 compared to Tk 1,200 while per maund lady's finger is being sold at Tk 2,000 which was Tk 1,000 last year.

Prices of other kinds of vegetables are also high, sources said.

Officials said at least 15,000 farmers are involved in vegetable cultivation and around 30,000 people are benefited directly or indirectly in this field.

Manikchhari farmers cultivated 3,000 hectares of land for various types of vegetables in the upazila.

At least 3,000 farmers are involved in oram (kachu) cultivation on 500 hectares of land while 515 farmers cultivated 200 hectares for kakrol, 6,000 farmers cultivated different summer vegetables on 1500 hectares of land. Besides, 1151 farmers cultivated bean (barbate) on 500 hectares land while over 3000 farmers produce various types of vegetables on around 500 hectares of land.

Ahsan Ullah, a farmer from Adarshagram in the upazila, said they are getting good prices this year compared to last year. They

incurred huge loss that year, he added.

Rahmat Ali, a farmer from remote village Mohamuni, told this correspondent that farmers of his areas were involved in vegetables farming but they are not getting expected price due to poor communications and for lack of preservation facilities.

Mongchinu Marma, a farmer from Lakpainang, said this year their profit will be little as they had to buy fertiliser at a higher price.

Sub-Assistant Agriculture Officer (SAAO) Pranab Barua said because of unplanned cultivation on hill or hill slopes, soil erosion has been rising that fill up the rivers and causes

flood each year. He said it might have a negative impact on the cultivation of vegetables in future.

Mohammad Zahedul Islam, the upazila agriculture officer, said they have achieved bumper production of vegetables as agricultural officer helped them in all stages.

TM Monjurul Islam, deputy director of district agriculture extension office, said due to soil fertility and favourable weather people get the bumper crops. But continuous use of pesticide may dampen their dreams, he said.

The farmers should follow scientific method during cultivation to reap maximum benefit, he said.

the week that was

'Continue ban on trucks in daytime'

Chittagong Metropolitan unit of the Nirapad Sarak Chai formed a human chain in front of Chittagong Press Club on Sunday demanding continuation of the ban on truck movement in the port city in the daytime.

A huge number of school and college students and members of professional groups participated in the hour-long programme.

The unit president and local Ward Councillor MA Naser, General Secretary Shafiq Ahmed Sajib, Journalist Chowdhury Farid, Academician AKM Shamsul Alam, cultural activist Shahria Khaled, Sharif Chauhan, Pratik Kumar Dev, Shibu Prashad Chowdhury and Prabir Chakrabarty spoke during the human chain.

Speakers urged the authorities concerned not to lift ban on movement of truck in the city in the daytime considering safety of

the pedestrians and the students.

"A section is eager to force for lifting the ban. But, the police department and other authorities concerned should not do this since the road accident declined sharply in the city areas over last few month due to the ban," they said.

UZ chairmen, MPs promise to work unitedly

Awami League (AL) nominated upazila chairmen, vice chairmen and female vice chairmen elected in six upazilas under Chittagong north district here promised to work unitedly with the lawmakers.

They were addressing a reception organised by AL Chittagong north district unit at Muslim Hall Institute on Saturday.

AL lawmakers State Minister for Foreign Affairs Hasan Mahmud, Mosharraf Hossain, ABM Abul Kashem and ABM Fazle Karim Chowdhury, five chairmen and five

vice chairmen were accorded reception chaired by the unit acting president Nurul Alam Chowdhury.

Hasan in his speech urged the party activists to keep a careful watch so that no section could make plot to spoil the historic victory of the party in the parliamentary election.

He hoped that the government could continue to materialise its promises to the voters through removing obstacles and conspiracy if the party lawmakers, upazila representatives, leaders and activists maintain a friendly relation among them.

Fatikchhari Upazila Chairman Aftab Uddin Chowdhury said there is no scope for clash if the lawmakers and upazila representatives play their respective roles.

AL North District unit General Secretary MA Salam, Mirsarai Upazila Chairman Glas Uddin, Raozan Upazila Chairman Ehsanul Haider, Sitakunda Upazila Chairman Abdullah Al Baker Bhuiyan and Mirsarai Upazila Vice Chairman Rehena Akhter also spoke.

BPMPA biennial conference

Dr OM Ohidul Alam and Dr Sheikh Shafiqul Azam were made president and general secretary of Bangladesh Private Medical Practitioners' Association (BPMPA) for 2009-2011.

The 21-member committee was announced at its biennial conference at a restaurant in the port city on Tuesday.

Other officer bearers are: Vice President: Dr MA Mannan and Dr Jafrul Haque Chowdhury, Joint Secretary: Dr Hasina Begum, Treasurer: Dr SM Mohammad Ali, Organising Secretary: Dr Parvez Iqbal Sharif, Education Secretary: Dr Mezbah Uddin and Social Welfare Secretary: Dr Nandita Barua.

Election Commissioner Dr Mahfuzur Rahman announced the names of the office-bearers at the conference.

The association President Dr A Salam, General Secretary Dr Nasir Uddin, former vice president Dr

Jalal Uddin Ahmed, Dr Mohammad Ali, Dr Mahmudul Haque, Dr MA Jafor and Dr Mezbah Uddin Ahmed spoke at the conference.

Speakers suggested different development programmes after accelerating activities of the association.

Nepal tour package

GMG Airlines and Mountain Club Tours Limited launched a joint promotional campaign to attract Bangladeshi passengers to travel to Nepal.

The package styled "Magic of Nepal" will be available at Tk 16,666 that include Dhaka-Kathmandu-Dhaka return air ticket (excluding Tk 5,770 travel tax) and other attractive offers to the visitors from Bangladesh, said the top executives of the two companies at a briefing in the port city on Thursday.

"The package also includes two night-and-three-day stay in a



Barger Paints Managing Director Rupali Chowdhury inaugurates the newly constructed building of Barger Paints dealers at Chawk Bazar on Thursday.

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five star hotel (The Everest) at Kathmandu, buffet breakfast, lunch and dinner and half day sight seeing," said Quazi N Shahriar, general manager (sales and marketing) of GMG Airlines.

He said the package offer will be valid up to June 30. Besides there are options for tourists to visit other tourist spots of Nepal including Nagarkote, Dhulikhel, Pokhara and Chitwan, he said.

Sharfar said they would consider to introduce their popular Bangkok package styled "Buy 1

ticket and get another free" for Nepal in future.

Mid Rezaul Karim, director (sales and marketing) of Mountain Club Tours Ltd and Mohammed Mostofa Kamal, manager (holidays) of GMG, were present at the briefing.

New outlet opens

Rajib Hardware Stores opened a new outlet in city's busy Chawk

Bazar area on Thursday. Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited Managing Director Rupali Chowdhury formally inaugurated the outlet cutting ribbons.

The company General Manager (sales and marketing) Mohsin Habib Chowdhury, General Sales Manager (decorative) Abu Abed Shaher, Branch Manager Nazrul Islam and other officials of Chittagong sales office attended the inaugural ceremony.