

STS Group to set up world-class hospital, school in Ctg

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD

STS Group is keen to set up a hospital and a school in the port city with a view to providing world-class healthcare services and education of international standard.

The group that runs Apollo Hospitals and Delhi Public School (DPS) made a proposal to Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) last month to provide 2.5 acres of land in this regard.

As per the proposal it would preliminarily set up a 300-bed hospital with a modern laboratory on 1.5 acres of land under a project of Tk250 crore, CDA sources said.

The proposed Apollo Hospitals would be providing medical treatment and other healthcare facilities to the patients like in Dhaka and India.

STS group sought one acre of land to set up a school of international standard under a project of Tk 50 crore. The school would initially enrol students from Play Group to Class VIII in 2011. It would gradually introduce classes up to O Level, said the sources.

CDA is considering the proposal for providing the land for the hospital and the school at its housing project Ananya Residential Area in the port city, the sources added.

CDA formed a three-member committee headed by its board member Yunus Gani Chowdhury after an elaborate discussion on the proposal at board meeting on November 25. Other members of the committee are Mofizur Rahman and Bahauddin Saji.

The meeting also decided to include more members from CDA and other organisations concerned to examine the proposal, said the sources.

After examining the proposal, the committee would ask STS Group to provide a brief description and technical specification of the project and want to know about economic, financial and environmental sustainability and other aspects.

The committee, however, would come up with findings and recommendations soon and help take decision in this regard, they said.

"We are responding positively to the proposal and thinking of providing land for the proposed hospital and school at Ananya Residential Area," said CDA Chairman Abdus Salam while talking to this correspondent on Thursday.

"In Chittagong we don't have any world-class hospital or school which are badly needed to ensure proper healthcare and produce worthy citizens," he said.

"CDA is committed to bringing in overall development of the city and providing infrastructure required for developing urban facilities. So, we attach top most priority to entertaining the proposal for setting up hospital and school that would provide healthcare and education -- two basic needs of the city dwellers," Salam said.

He said they would take decision on allocation of land for the project following the recommendations of the committee and expect to sign a contract in this regard shortly.



ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

Though common in the rural greenery, colourful birds are hardly seen in bustling cities where their safe abode are being replaced by concrete jungles gradually. Yet, some old trees are there to attract birds of rare species in the port city. This photo of a colourful woodpecker perching on a dried branch of an age-old rain tree was taken from Jamal Khan area on Sunday.

Syndicate reins in hide price



STAR PHOTO

Workers spray salt on rawhides of sacrificial animals at a hide wholesale centre at Aturar Depot in the port city.

NUR-UDDIN ALAMGIR

The price of rawhides of sacrificial animals marked a drastic fall in Chittagong this year due to a 'syndicate' of seasonal traders, said the wholesalers and tannery owners.

A huge quantity of unsold stock, decrease in demand of rawhides in the international markets, worldwide recession and non-payment of outstanding bills were behind the downtrend of the price of rawhides.

The field level hide collectors collected cowhides mostly between Tk 300 to Tk 700 almost half of the previous year.

Sexagenarian Mohammad Alauddin of Dewanhat in the port city said he has witnessed the lowest price of rawhides this year.

"We have sold a piece of rawhide at Tk 700 of a cow of Tk 45,000 this year while it was Tk 1,000 of a Tk 30,000 cow last year," Alauddin said, adding that the price offered last year was also around half of that of 2007.

Abdul Mannan of city's Khulshi area said he has sold rawhide at Tk 400 of an ox of Tk 38,000.

He said the poor, the main claimants of the money, were deprived of their rights due to fall in hide prices this year.

Sources said a total of three lakh rawhides, including 2.5 lakh of cows and 50,000 of goats, from Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and three hill districts of Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban have been preserved at 150 Arats (Warehouses) in the port city.

Abu Toyub, proprietor of Shah Amanat Kancha Chamra Arat at Aturar Depot, said field level traders bought

most of the rawhides between Tk 300 and Tk 700 and they sold those between Tk 700 and Tk 900 to the middlemen who later sold them between Tk 1,000 and Tk 1,200 to the wholesalers.

The field level traders and the middlemen did a good business making 'syndicate' this year, Toyub alleged.

Islami Agency Proprietor Anisur Rahman said they had to buy per 74kg sack of salt at Tk 470 which was Tk 350 before Eid. They are also to spend additional money for the staffs who are working for preserving rawhides, he said.

When asked, Chittagong City Corporation Kancha Chamra Aratdar Samity President Mohammad Muslim Uddin said tannery owners have told them to buy rawhides between Tk 25 and Tk 30 per square foot. But they had to buy hides between Tk 30 and Tk 35 per square foot while it will cost Tk 40 to Tk 45 after processing.

He blamed a "syndicate" of the field level traders for drastic fall in rawhide prices this year.

He said six of eight tanneries in the port city faced closure due to decreasing demand of hides and they yet to get around Tk 15 crore arrear bills of 2007 from tannery owners in Dhaka.

The selling price can be ascertained after arrival of buyers from the capital next week, Muslim said.

Madina Tannery Proprietor Abu Mohammad echoed Muslim saying that the field level traders and middlemen are responsible for the drastic fall in hide price this year.

He said little demand for quality hides and huge stock of unsold hides are the main reason behind the falling trend of demand.

the week that was

Call to stop hill cutting

A human chain was formed in the port city on Wednesday demanding immediate stop to hill cutting and punishment to those involved in the evil practice.

Environmental organisations of Citizen Alliance for Promoting Transparency and Accountability (CAPTA), Srishty, Jono Udyog and People's Voice jointly organised the programme in front of Chittagong Press Club.

The speakers at the programme said hill cutting went on unabated at Khulshi, Nasirabad and different areas of the city at night.

They alleged that unscrupulous elements in connivance with a section of dishonest police and district officials carried out the illegal hill cutting, posing a threat to environment.

The speakers demanded formation of a committee with members from Chittagong Development Authority (CDA), district and police administration and the authorities concerned to check hill cutting and bring the culprits to justice.

Former lawmaker Mazharul Haq Shah Chowdhury, Chittagong Union of Journalists President Mostaq Ahmed and General Secretary Nazim Uddin Shyamol, Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Councillor Advocate

Rehana Begum Ranu, Prof Mohammad Idris Ali and Sharif Chouhan spoke at the programme with Citizen Alliance Convener Prof AQM Sirajul Islam in the chair.

Shippers' Council executives

The new executive committee of Shippers' Council of Bangladesh was formed in the port city on Tuesday with Mahabub Ali, managing director of Valiant Garments Ltd, Chittagong as the chairman.

Kamran Uddin, managing director of Global Jute Trading Ltd, Dhaka and Nanda Kishore Agarwala, managing partner of Progoti Traders, Khulna were elected senior vice-chairman and vice-chairman respectively.

Jasim U Ahmed, Md Humayun Kabir, Barkat-e-Khoda, Syed Golam Mowla, Sanjit Kumar Das, Syed Md Anisuzzaman, Md Firoz Alam and Zahid Hossain have been elected directors.

Preparation for victory fair discussed

Muktijuddher Bijoy Mela Parishad held a meeting on Wednesday for

smooth holding of 21-day victory fair in the city.

Speakers at the meeting at Parishad Office at MA Stadium discussed different aspects of organising the fair at its traditional venue of Chittagong Stadium.

Parishad Secretary General Abul Hashem presided over the meeting where Cultural Sub-Committee leader Sucharit Das Khokon put up plans and preparation for the fair.

Bijoy Mela Cultural Secretary Tapan Barua, Saifuddin Mahmud Khan, Alauddin Taher, Md Ali Titu and Shah ana Begum spoke at the meeting.

Ensure rights of speech, hearing-impaired people

Speakers at a seminar in the port city on Wednesday called for ensuring rights of the speech and hearing-impaired people.

Chittagong Society for the Disabled (CSD) in association with ActionAid Bangladesh organised the seminar at Chittagong Shilpakala Academy Seminal Hall.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (LA) Anisur Rahman Mia was the chief guest at the seminar where Bandana Das, deputy supervisor of Chhotomoni Nibash, and UCEP

Chittagong divisional coordinator Noor Jahan Shamim were special guests with CSD executive member Advocate Khademul Islam Chowdhury in the chair.

CSD General Secretary Mostafa Kamal Jatra moderated the seminar where CSD Coordinator Muhammad Shah Alam presented the concept paper.

Training workshop held

A daylong training workshop marking the 18th National Immunisation Day and Measles Campaign was held in the port city on Thursday.

World Health Organisation (WHO) and Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) Headquarters organised the workshop at Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) auditorium.

CCC Panel Mayor Monwara Begum Moni was the chief guest at the workshop with Health Officer Dr Mohammad Ali in the chair.

CCC Chief Executive Officer Mohammad Imtiaz Hossain Chowdhury and Chief Education Officer Prof Ittekkar Ahmed Khan were present as the special guests at the workshop.

Speakers vowed to continue

observing the immunisation day. CCC zonal medical officers, medical officers, health assistants and EPI workers participated in the workshop.

375th branch of Pubali Bank opens

The 375th branch of Pubali Bank Limited opened at Keranihat under Satkania upazila in the district on Thursday.

On the occasion, a customers' conference and milad mahfil were also held.

The bank management committee member Ahmed Shafi Chowdhury inaugurated the branch with Managing Director Helal Ahmed Chowdhury in the chair.

The Bank Director Fahim Ahmed Faruk Chowdhury, Chittagong Region General Manager Mohammad Fazlul Haque, General Service and Development Division General Manager Shafiu Alam Khan Chowdhury, Imam Group of Industries Chairman Mohammad Ali, South and Hill Tracts Region Deputy General Manager Rawshan Akter, local lawmaker ANM Shamsul Islam and upazila chairman Abdul Monaf were present as the special guests at the inaugural ceremony.



STAR PHOTO

Minister for Primary and Mass Education Dr Afsarul Ameen inaugurates a month-long International Women's SME Exposition Bangladesh organised by Chittagong Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CWCCI) at Polo ground on Tuesday. Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) Chairman Abdus Salam and leaders of CWCCI were present on the occasion.