

**SAYEDABAD PARK**

**Now only a history**

Used by construction workers of Gulistan-Jatrabari flyover

Residents of Sayedabad area are living without a proper children's park, as Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) did not pay any heed to maintain the present one over the years.

The condition of the park, built in the area in the 80s, began to deteriorate since the 90s and worsened during the last 10 years, said local people.

The 0.7-acre park was used as a spot for waste disposal and as a parking lot and now has two public toilets, constructed in the 90s.

Bus owners of Sayedabad bus terminal used a third of the park to keep their vehicles while waste was dumped on the rest, led by negligence on the part of DCC, they said.

Some shops and another toilet were also erected on the park adjacent to Jatrabari-Tikatuli Road but were demolished during the last interim government.

*The condition of the park, built in the area in the 80s, began to deteriorate since the 90s and worsened during the last 10 years*

The park, for the last three months, is being used to house labourers constructing Gulistan-Jatrabari flyover.

Salman Karim, managing director of Orion Group, the firm constructing the flyover, said they have been using the place as per contract with DCC.

"We will restore the place as a full-fledged park by setting different playground equipment just after the flyover is complete and hand it over to DCC," he said.

Md Dulal, residing at Sayedabad area for the last 30 years, said the park was constructed during the regime of HM Ershad.

Over 50,000 residents of Uttar Sayedabad, Dakkhin Sayedabad used to benefit from the park, having benches and playground equipment for children, he said.

"My daughter is growing up like a mentally challenged person due to lack of recreation facilities. My younger brother always went to play at the park, which now seems impossible," he said.

Mirazul Islam, a class six student residing in Janapath Square, said they now play football and cricket on the yard in front of their house as there is no scope to play anywhere in the area.

Mohammad Kabir Miyan, a resident of Koratitola, said he came to the area in 1986 when he was 17 and used to play at the park during that time. But his eight-year-old daughter Lamia Kabir has no scope to enjoy the amenities he used to get, he added.

He said an influential quarter tried to occupy the land several times but failed.

Kabir said there was another park at Swamibagh where now Wonderland Shishumela is running. As tickets need to be bought to enter the place, it is difficult to regularly use the park, he said.

DCC Chief Estate Officer Mohammad Moshir Rahman said they allowed the construction firm to place their sheds and would renovate it back to a park after completion of the flyover.



**IS IT SAYEDABAD PARK?**

PHOTO: STAR

**Delwar's house ransacked**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Miscreants ransacked the house of BNP Secretary General Khondaker Delwar Hossain at Pachuria village under Ghior upazila in Manikganj on Sunday midnight.

The criminals entered a room of ground floor of the two storied building by breaking the lock and also ransacked furniture, bedding, the papers and other things, Nobinoor, nephew of Delwar said.

There was nobody in the house at the time of the incident, he said adding Delwar used to live in the house when at Pachuria but it is left empty otherwise.

Contacted, Officer-in-Charge of Ghior Police Station Azizur Rahman said he visited the under construction building yesterday noon. However, he could not confirm the theft or what things were missing.

**Draft Saarc Charter of Democracy approved**

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The Saarc Standing Committee yesterday approved the draft of the Saarc Charter of Democracy and recommended its adoption by the Council of Ministers of the eight-nation regional association.

The main theme of the charter is to encourage flourishing of democratic practice and development and cooperation among the member states to continue democracy, and discourage takeover of power undemocratic elements.

The approval was given on the concluding day of the two-day meeting by the 38th session of the Saarc Standing Committee, comprised of foreign secretaries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

Foreign Secretary Mijarul Quayes led the Bangladesh delegation at the meeting.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina mooted the idea to formulate a Charter of Democracy in the 16th Saarc Summit.

The draft of the charter was prepared at an inter-governmental meeting in Dhaka in September 2010, while the foreign secretaries of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka approved it.

Diplomatic sources said the Council of Ministers comprised of the Saarc foreign ministers will examine the charter and approve, and it will then be placed in the

17th Saarc Summit scheduled for November in the Maldives for final approval.

"South Asia today is witnessing vibrant democracies at work. The formulation of the Saarc Democracy Charter was an important achievement," said Pakistan Foreign Secretary Salman Bashir at the standing committee meeting. The charter is an initiative of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and is being piloted at a time when all Saarc members happen to be democracies, he added. The standing committee meeting recommended full operationalisation of the South Asian University and establishment of the South Asia Forum. It also agreed that the Saarc Development Fund would focus more on implementation of demand-driven activities.

Mijarul Quayes in his statement emphasized increasing intra-regional trade and called for early finalisation of the remaining work under SAFTA and the Saarc Agreement on Trade in Services. Both these ideas were mooted by Bangladesh.

He placed stress on operationalisation of the food bank, finalisation of agreement on Seed Bank, enhanced connectivity and people-to-people contact and reviewing of the Saarc Visa Exemption Scheme for making it meaningful.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni left here for Thimphu yesterday to attend the two-day meeting of the Saarc Council of Ministers, which will examine and adopt the charter.

**WC CRICKET BB releases silver coin today**

UNB, Dhaka

A commemorative silver coin will formally be released today to mark the ICC Cricket World Cup, 2011 being co-hosted by Bangladesh, India, and Sri Lanka.

Bangladesh Bank (BB) is going to release the coin imprinted from Germany valued at Tk 10 to mark the sports extravaganza. However, one can buy this coin at Tk 3,000.

Finance Minister AMA Muhiith, chairman of the organising committee, will release the coin at a function at the conference room of Jatiya Krira Parishad in the morning.

State Minister for Sports M Ahad Ali Sarkar and Bangladesh Cricket Board Chairman AHM Mostafa Kamal will attend the event to be chaired by BB Governor Dr Atiur Rahman. There will be the logo of the ICC Cricket World Cup one side of the coin and a picture of the trophy on the other.

**Prospective DCs being sorted out**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The establishment ministry is preparing a fit-list of deputy commissioners (DCs), as the government plans to rearrange the field-level administration in a couple of months.

About 300 deputy secretaries are being interviewed to single out qualified ones for the list, according to the ministry sources.

The interviewees are mostly drawn from the 10th and 11th batches of the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS). Of them, the establishment ministry interviewed 176 officers on February 2, 3, and 6.

Of them already interviewed, 50 are from the 9th batch, 105 from 10th batch, 14 from 1985 batch, and 17 from 1986 batch.

Ten more officers of 10th batch will face the interview board today (Tuesday) while 107 officers of 11th batch will appear at the interview board on Wednesday.

Cabinet Secretary M Abdul Aziz heads the interview board comprised of home, land, and establishment secretaries. The interview is taking place at the Cabinet Division of the Secretariat.

"The fresh fit-list is being prepared as most officers of the old list have been posted to different districts over the last three months," an establishment ministry officer told The Daily Star yesterday.

"The rest of the officers in the list can't be made DCs as they have crossed 50 years of age, a barrier to becoming DC," he said. He added that the new list will be of more than 100 officers from which the government officers would post them as DCs in future.

Usually good officers are made DCs as they, apart from their routine works, play crucial role in implementing various development programmes, and deal with land disputes and law and order issues.



PHOTO: STAR

A hindu devotee buys an idol of Goddess Swaraswati from Shyambazar on the eve of Swaraswati Puja being celebrated across the country today.

**Swaraswati Puja today**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hindu devotees will celebrate Swaraswati Puja, the worship ritual of Goddess Swaraswati, at country's different temples and educational institutions today.

Hindu mythology represents Swaraswati as the divine consort of Lord Brahma, creator of the universe, and as a symbol of knowledge, consciousness, wisdom and arts.

The ritual is celebrated every year on the fifth day of the bright fortnight of the Magh month called 'Vasant Panchami', when Swaraswati was born. All educational institutions will remain closed today and the Supreme Court authorities yesterday declared holiday for its employees.

Dhaka University (DU) Jagannath Hall Students are setting up 35 to 40 temporary temples at its playground.

Dormitories of DU female students, Bangladesh University of Engineering Technology, Jagannath University, Dhaka College and Eden Girls College will celebrate the festival alongside Dhakeshwari National Temple, Siddeshwari Temple and Ramkrishna Mission.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in a message yesterday, greeted all members of the Hindu community and said devotees could acquire knowledge and find source of divine knowledge, pure tune of the world and traditional messages by offering tributes to Swaraswati.



PHOTO: STAR

Brac University Vice Chancellor Prof Ainun Nishat gives away a certificate to a graduate at the university's sixth convocation at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 2)

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