

CU playground now a grazing field

SHAHADAT HOSSAIN

Forty-four years into its journey, Chittagong University (CU) could neither establish a sports complex nor a full-fledged gymnasium while its playground has turned into a grazing field for local livestock.

If initiatives are taken the huge playground on the northern part of the campus could be easily made a stadium along with a sports complex and gymnasium. Due to lack of such facilities, students are lagging behind in the inter-university competitions, sources said.

Consequently Department of Physical Education has been running with lack of infrastructural facilities.

The government granted Tk 1.25 crore for establishing a sports complex, including a swimming pool in 1976, during the tenure of the then vice-chancellor Prof Abdul Karim. Of the fund, only Tk 30 lakh was spent to construct the gymnasium and a boundary wall under the proposed sports complex. The wall collapsed within few months of its construction as it was built without any support, physical education department sources said.

The under-construction gymnasium is now lying in ramshackle condition.

But with the same allocation from the government, Dhaka University (DU) authority set up a sports complex, including a swimming pool and Rajshahi University (RU) a full-fledged stadium.

Prof Abdul Karim and former chief engineer Afiz Uddin of the university were arrested on charge of corruption during the H M Ershad period in this regard, sources said.

Department of Physical Education is conducting its activities without any sports complex as well as gymnasium.

Thirty students get admitted to the university under sports quota every year. Around 600 students regularly practise under various disciplines of sports like football, cricket, hockey, handball, volleyball, basketball, water polo, tennis, badminton, swimming and gymnastics, sources said.

For want of a sports complex as well as a gymnasium, students of the university are being deprived of the facilities of extra-curricular activities.

The students are also facing serious problems in practising indoor games due to lack of



Cattle graze on the playground of Chittagong University, top, and under construction gymnasium building, bottom.

a gymnasium mainly in the rainy season, said A M M Raquib Quoraishi, director of Physical Education Department.

We have around 45 swimmers who fully depend on the pond for practising, said Quoraishi, adding that they need a swimming pool to remove the difficulties.

He said they cannot accommodate the players as well as the spectators from other universities during the inter-university sports competition as there is no pavilion in the central field.

A sports complex with swimming pool and gymnasium is a must to encourage the students to participate in sports side by side with their academic studies, Quoraishi said.

Md Alamgir Chowdhury, chief engineer of the university, said it is sad that there is no sports complex or a full-fledged gymnasium on the campus. He hopes to start construction work of a gymnasium in September-October this year.

The construction cost of the gymnasium will be Tk 6 crore, he added.



PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

the week that was



STAR PHOTO

Guests unveil the covers of two books of Samsul Haque, a journalist of The Daily Prothom Alo, at Chittagong Press Club auditorium in the port city recently.

Publication ceremony of two books held

Speakers at a publication ceremony said the history of struggle for the independence is being distorted but Samsul Haque's book on the case titled 'State versus Sheikh Mujib and others', popularly known as Agartala Conspiracy case, revealed the true history of the long struggle for freedom. They said through the book the new generation will know the facts that it was the beginning of the armed struggle for the War of Liberation. They were speaking at a publication ceremony of two books titled 'Khayyatimander Nana Ranger Dinguli' and 'Swadhinater Sasasra Prostuti Agartala Mamlar Aprakasa Jabanbandhi' of Samsul Haque at Engineer Abdul Khalek auditorium of Chittagong Press Club (CPC) in the port city recently. Bangla Academy Director General Samsuddin Khan was the chief guest in the ceremony with Abu Sufian, President of Chittagong Press Club in the chair. Samsuddin in his speech said the two books will take our generation to history, our traditions and testimony to our golden past. Prothom Alo Resident Editor Abul Momen, novelist Dr Hari Sankar Jaladas, Principal Anwara Alam of Agrabad Mahila College, Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) General Secretary Najim Uddin Shyamal also spoke at the programme.

Action against housing company demanded

Forum for Planned Chittagong, a private organisation working for planned and development for the port city, sought interference of authorities to stop the housing project titled 'Elite City' on Madarsa Sri Bil and adjoining arable lands in Chittagong.

The Forum in a statement signed by architect Zerina Hossain, convener of City Planning and Development Committee, said

the developer company Elite City violating the law and the directives of the Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) was filling the farming land and continuing construction illegally.

They said the step of the housing society is not only violation of law but also threat to environment. It is a matter of surprise that despite objection from the CDA, they are constructing illegal structures on the agricultural land, they said. The Forum demanded immediate action against the developer company to stop the illegal activities.

Demand for gas connection reiterated

The subscribers in the port city on Sunday demanded immediate withdrawal of the energy ministry directive so that the house owners can get gas connection easily.

Chittagong Gas Distributors' Council and Karnaphuli Gas Distribution Company Limited (KGDC) placed the demand at a press conference held at Chittagong Press Club (CPC) auditorium.

The organisers said 12,000 domestic customers already deposited money in 2008 for gas connection which they are yet to get.

They said the subscribers deposited minimum Tk 4,250 each to get gas connection.

Chittagong Gas Subscriber Council President Nurul Alam Chowdhury, Secretary Jafar Alam, Contractor Welfare Association President and Secretary Ikram Chowdhury and Shah Liakur Rahman Azad were also present at the press conference.

They said the gas distribution contractors have also been suffering along with their families due to suspension of giving gas connection.

Call for proper construction of Kutubdia embankment

The inhabitants of Kutubdia, living in Chittagong city, on Monday urged the government to take necessary steps to save the island and stop corruption in constructing

the Kutubdia coastal embankment.

They also called upon the government to construct a durable embankment to save the people of the island.

They made the demand at a rally followed by a human chain held on the Chittagong Press Club (CPC) premises in the city. Council for Preservation of Coastal Area, Island and Environment (CPCAI) and Kutubdia Citizens Committee jointly organised the programme. Speakers at the rally said government approved Tk 39 crore in first phase and Tk 14 crore in second phase for the embankment to protect the agricultural land, houses in the island from the high tide of the sea.

CPCAI President Advocate Sheikh Morshed Ahmed, Prof Fayejul Ahmed and CPCAI member Masud Shafi spoke at the rally.

Contribution of Khan Bahadur Badi recalled

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain on Saturday urged the people to be united against the exploitation and corruption.

He was addressing as the chief guest a memorial meeting of Amirulhaz Khan Bahadur

Badi Ahmed Chowdhury, former Member of Legislative Council (MLC) and Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) of undivided India at Chittagong Press Club.

Dr Kamal said Badi never compromised with any sort of greed and establishment.

He said Badi strongly raised his voice in the parliament on June 7 in 1944 about the famine in Chittagong for want of rice.

For his strong stand the government was compelled to send 70 lakh metric tonnes of rice by two special trains and by two launches for Chittagong.

He called for taking lessons from the lifestyle of Khan Bahadur Badi.

Justice Amirul Kabir Chowdhury presided over the mourn meeting.

Gono Forum leader Kafil Uddin, PHP Group Chairman Sufi Mizanur Rahman, Prof Dr Jamal Nazrul Islam and Chittagong Press Club President Abu Sufian also spoke among others.

Film-goers on the decline

ARUN BIKASH DEY

Chittagong city now falls short of amusement for the city's people.

A significant number of cinema halls sprung up in the city from 1980 to 1995. But number of halls, once 35, buzzing with hundreds of enthusiastic movie-goers, is lessening day by day.

Multistoried apartments and markets are taking their place, with only six remaining -- Almas, Dinar, Jhumur, Cinema Palace, Sanai and Purabi cinema halls.

Sources said middle-income families lost the attraction of watching films at the halls since 1996 with the availability of cable television, which they could watch sitting in their living rooms.

The rich had abandoned cinema halls much earlier with the coming of videocassette recorder (VCR) and video compact disc (VCD) players, they added.

People from lower income groups found their destination in tea stalls where films are shown through VCD or cable television in exchange of Tk 5 to Tk 10. Some stall owners provide this opportunity if customers drink a cup of tea with some other food, some said.

Cinema hall owners found no profit in running business and influence from real estate companies

caused them to opt for other establishments, said sources.

Some cinema halls like Sagarika in Double Mooring area turned into warehouses while others like Gulzar, Jalsa, Khurshid Mahal, Nupur, Melody, Ujala and Rangam turned to markets. Multistoried buildings are replacing Banani Complex, the most luxurious cinema hall in the port city, and Lion Cinema, they added.

"The existing cinema halls are now running amid losses," said Alfaz Ahmed, an official of Sanai cinema hall. He added that the owner did not agree to dismantle this and another hall he possesses, Cinema Palace, as those carried memories of his departed father.

Ripa Chowdhury, a banker, said she recently went to cinema halls to watch two movies "Monpura" and "Third Person Singular Number" but expressed her dissatisfaction over their poor condition.

"Tickets are pricey but they do not provide facilities. There is no air-conditioning system, seats are worn out, toilets are dirty and there is lack of food in the refreshment stalls," Ripa said.

She added that she had to stand and wait in the lobby at one of the halls for half an hour before she could enter to watch a movie.

Imtiaz Ahmed, a teacher at a pri-

vate university, said he had enjoyed films like "Chandni" and "Keyamat Theke Keyamat" at cinema halls many times in the past. But the condition of existing halls is not suitable for middle class families to go and enjoy films there, he added.

Abul Kashem, manager of Almas Cinema Hall, yesterday said the remaining halls would also be shut down within a short time. "No new movie has been released since the beginning of Cricket World Cup 2011 till now. How will we pay the staff?" He added that they have some audience on Friday but the halls remain almost vacant the remaining week.

Abul Hossain, chairman of Cinema Palace and Jhumur Cinema, said once middle class people had a custom to pay a visit to cinema halls with family at least once a week.

"But situation has quite changed in the last two decades. We are now incurring losses for lack of audience. Among the remaining six halls, as far as I know, two have already signed contracts with real estate companies," he said.

Very soon no cinema hall will remain in Chittagong city, he added, urging the government to allow them to show Indian movies at least for a week every month and reduce taxes to save the industry.



An old cinema hall.

STAR PHOTO