

Ploy to grab playground

Siddheswari school rents out playground to raise funds

TAWFIQUE ALI

Management of a city school in Siddheswari, in an attempt to generate funds, rented out a portion of its playground, causing apprehension among the locals that the entire playground might be slowly occupied.

The governing body of Siddheswari Boys' Higher Secondary School issued a work order on August 22 in favour of RS Communication, the lease holder, to build eight shops on the playground's south end for Tk 16 lakhs.

Abdur Rahim Hawlader Rana, proprietor of RS Communication, around 10 years ago, rented the same space, around ten kathas, for a car park of a nearby Anarkoli Plus Shopping Market, which he owns.

Rana started constructing the shops on Thursday, just a day after Eid-ul-Fitr, in an unusual hurry, said local small vendors close to the playground.

Ramna police, however, halted the construction work the same day following complaints from the locals.

The playground is also occupied with several other structures including an office of RS Communication, an electricity generator which Rana runs commercially and a tin-shed structure.

Rana, on a separate lease, runs 26 shops on a nearby plot owned by the school, for which he paid Tk 3 lakh.

He said he entered into the new contract as the school authorities invited him.

According to documents, the governing body Chairman Md Shoeab Chowdhury and the school's Principal Abul Bashar issued the work order according to the minutes of a meeting they signed on August 16.

"There was no other option to generate money for the school, which is suffering from fund crisis," said Shoeab.

Regarding whether they sought any permission of the capital's development authorities for construction of the structures, he said he was unaware of such requirement.

"But we may give up the move in the face of public criticism," said Shoeab, also vice-president of Dhaka city unit of ruling party-backed Jubo League.



Eight shops being constructed on the playground of Siddheswari Boys' Higher Secondary School in the city after the management committee leased out the space to meet fund shortages. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

CHILDHOOD PNEUMONIA Global study begins

UNB, Dhaka

The International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) has been collaborating in a global study on childhood pneumonia that is expected to provide new data on the causes of the disease and ultimately guide the next generation about pneumonia prevention and treatment.

Pneumonia, the world's biggest killer of young children, now accounts for 20 percent of childhood deaths in developing countries including Bangladesh, said ICDDR,B sources.

The centre has recently embarked on a groundbreaking new multi-country "Pneumonia etiology research for child health (PERCH) study" coordinated by the International Vaccine Access Centre (IVAC) at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

The study is the first of its kind in over two decades with collaboration among five African and two Asian research sites and is

funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

It is being conducted in Bangladesh, Thailand, Gambia, Kenya, Mali, South Africa, and Zambia in collaboration with local and international research stations and universities, including laboratory support from the University of Otago and Canterbury Health Laboratories, New Zealand.

The study aims to enroll more than 12,000 children in the seven study countries. The countries have been selected for representing areas where most of the severe pneumonia cases in children are most likely to occur in 2015 and where key interventions are already in place.

ICDDR,B will play a major role in the study, as its laboratory facilities in Matlab in Chandpur, the acute respiratory infection ward at its Dhaka Hospital, its surveillance site in the city's Kamalapur will be instrumental in collecting samples from malnourished children under five who suffer from pneumonia and are also malnourished.

15,000 law enforcers to ensure Manmohan's security

KAILASH SARKAR

Around 15,000 members of the government forces will fan out to ensure foolproof security during the visit of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his five chief ministers.

Special Security Forces (SSF) will lead the total security system to be coordinated with armed forces, police, and Rapid Action Battalion, said Commander M Sohail, director of legal and media wing of Rab.

The Indian prime minister will be accompanied by West Bengal's Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Meghalaya's Mukul Sangma, Tripura's Manik Sarkar, Assam's Tarun Gogoi, and Mizoram's Lal Thanhawla during his two-day visit to Dhaka on September 6-7.

Commander M Sohail said SSF and President Guard Regiment (PGR) of Bangladesh along with India's Special Protection Group (SPG) will ensure the inner security while police and Rab will ensure the outer security.

Police and Rab personnel will also guard the travel routs of the Indian PM and five CMs. During their movements, transport movement on specific roads will remain suspended, said a high official of police.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Hassan Mahmood Khandker told The Daily Star, "We are prepared to welcome the Indian PM and CMs".

Asked if there is any security threat to the Indian PM or CMs, the IGP said, "The entire security net

has been designed considering all kinds of possibilities".

The IGP said apart from uniformed forces, plain clothes personnel from Rab, police, Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), and National Security Intelligence (NSI) will remain vigilant at every spot of the guests' stay and visits.

"We have planned international standard security measures with support of the latest security technologies and equipment", said the police chief. "We have drawn the highest attention to ensure security to the delegates".

Several meetings among the senior security officials of the two countries were held in Dhaka. They discussed security and protocol issues during Manmohan's

visit.

On August 9, an advanced team of India's SPG assigned to PM's security arrived in the city and assessed various security aspects taken by Bangladeshi intelligence and law enforcement agencies.

Intelligence sources said the security team already inspected all the possible venues of the Indian prime minister's tour. They also recced Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, National Memorial at Savar, Bangabandhu Memorial Museum at Dhanmondi, Pan-Pacific Sonargaon Hotel, and the possible routes of Manmohan's motorcade.

During his stay, the India PM will visit the scheduled venues by a special car to be taken from New Delhi.



A policeman having a puff of cigarette at Kamlapur Railway Station in the city while the very duty to enforce prohibition on smoking at public place falls on him. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Khaleda's remarks about ex-CJ ill-motivated: Matia

UNB, Dhaka

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury yesterday termed the recent remarks of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia about immediate-past chief justice ABM Khairul Haque highly "unfair and ill-motivated".

"This is just highly unfair and ill-motivated," she told a briefing at her residence.

Matia, also the presidium member of the ruling Awami League, said the opposition leader should look at herself first before making any derogatory remarks about judges.

During the caretaker regime, Matia said, Khaleda legalised her undisclosed money by paying fines.

Khaleda, talking to reporters at an Eid reception at Eskaton Ladies Club on Eid day (Wednesday), accused Khairul of annulling the caretaker government system "in exchange for money".

"Khairul Haque destroyed the judiciary and it's now crystal clear that he gave the verdict in exchange for money," alleged Khaleda.

The 15th amendment has been adopted only to make sure the present government stays in power forever, she mentioned adding, no election would be allowed without reinstating the caretaker government system to the constitution.

Matia said the opposition leader is a "self-confessed corrupt person" and her sons were already declared as corrupts abroad. "Such comments (about Khairul) by her are unbecoming," she said.

On the Supreme Court verdict, she said the verdict on 5th amendment to the constitution came after a long hearing from a full bench, not from a one-man bench.

In this regard, Matia said the main verdict on the 5th amendment was pronounced

during the BNP-Jamaat regime on August 29, 2005. "Why didn't you go for appeal at that time?" she asked.

Based on the verdict on the 5th amendment, the government later brought the 15th amendment to the constitution where proclamation of martial law has been declared illegal, Matia said.

"That's her pain, she (Khaleda) was dreaming of martial law. I'm sorry to say, her dream is just a daydream," Matia said.

Asked whether there is any government move to file any case against Khaleda for her comments on the judiciary, Matia said, "It's the matter of the judiciary, not ours."

Replying to a query, she said people will judge why the opposition leader suddenly came up with such remarks on the judiciary after her return from Saudi Arabia.

"These days, people are too much conscious, they'll judge. But this type of remark at this time when the nation is preparing for the trial of war criminals will create a confusion in public minds," she said.

About Khaleda's declaration not to go for election without caretaker government system, she said, "The future will answer the question."

Matia also urged the opposition leader to come out from the "psychic mentality" and practice fair politics for the welfare of the people and the country.

When her attention was drawn to other issues like rundown roads and highways, Matia admitted that the government might not have given enough attention to the repair works due to some other big issues.

"But there's no lack in our sincerity and sensitivity. That's why when our attention was drawn, we just started to act," she said.