



Fencing at JS draws flak

Security experts ridicule the idea; architects see it as another blow to Louis I Kahn's design

TAWFIQUE ALI

Authorities are still going ahead with fencing the plazas and sprawling lawns of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban on "security grounds", despite professionals' criticism that it would only undermine the parliament building's architectural grandeur.

Security experts want a concrete wall and iron bars on top of it saying it was necessary to stop any approaching vehicles breaching the security, according to various sources.

The design of the fence, including a 2.5-foot-high reinforced concrete wall and six-foot triangular iron spikes on top, was not approved by the Nagar Unnayan Committee either, said Abu Sayeed M Ahmed, president of Institute of Architects Bangladesh (IAB) and a member of the committee.

The parliament complex is a listed heritage site and any construction around it has to be approved by the Nagar Unnayan Committee, said Sayeed. "As such, the fence is illegal," said Sayeed.

The Nagar Unnayan Committee had initially approved a 10-inch underground concrete base and a vertical eye-level iron fence, said Mubasshar Hussain, former IAB president, who was then a member of the committee.

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Workers building a high fence around the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban complex at the north-eastern end near the Lake Road on October 10. Despite widespread criticism, the authorities are going ahead with the fence, which some experts have termed illegal.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

SUNDARBANS Shut cargo vessel route

Recommends probe body on Shela accident

STAR REPORT

Investigators said the cargo master was responsible for the sinking of the coal-carrying vessel in the Shela river inside the Sundarbans.

They recommended stopping operation of vessels through the Sundarbans waterways to avoid causing further damage to the mangrove forest.

The three-member probe committee, comprising officials of the Department of Forest, submitted its report to Divisional Forest Officer Saidul Islam yesterday.

"If the operation of vessels continues through the Sundarbans, this sort of accident might recur. So the probe committee recommended shutting the route

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TEACHER HIRING TESTS

BCL men make headline for wrong reasons

STAR REPORT

A mobile court in Barisal sentenced a Chhatra League leader to one month's imprisonment for providing BCL activists with answers to yesterday's primary school teacher recruitment exam questions.

Convicted Rizvi Ahmed alias Raza Rari is the joint secretary of Barisal Chhatra League, said Kazi Hosne Ara Begum, additional deputy commissioner (education and development) of the district.

In Chittagong, mobile phone of another BCL leader was seized by the authorities concerned as he along with three of his followers allegedly entered a test centre and tried to take

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DU, JNU ENTRY TESTS 4 jailed, 23 detained over cheating

MAHDI AL MUHTASIM

Four people, including three admission seekers, were jailed for two years each for their involvement in cheating in the undergraduate entry tests of Dhaka University and Jagannath University yesterday.

Besides, 23 others, including some aspirants, were detained by law enforcement agencies before the tests for allegedly trying to adopt unfair means.

Hasibul Hasan Shanto was caught at Mohammadpur Model School and College centre while using a high-tech electronic device to receive answers from outside the exam hall during the DU's "Ka" unit admission test, held between 10:00am and 11:30am.

The device is similar to the ones detectives recovered from three candidates just before the business

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18 Bangladeshi peacekeepers freed

They were captured by South Sudan rebels on Monday

AFP, United Nations

South Sudan rebels on Thursday released 18 Bangladeshi peacekeepers they had taken captive, but were still holding 12 UN contractors captured along with them on the Nile River.

The 18 Bangladeshi soldiers were later flown out of Kaka by UN helicopter to Malakal.

Around 100 heavily-armed rebels backed by two tanks on Monday detained the crew of a barge carrying fuel for the UN mission, along with the peacekeepers escorting the shipment.

The peacekeepers and the crew were captured north of Malakal, and taken to the town of Kaka, in Upper Nile state. "They were threatened directly. Our forces were disarmed and detained," said a UN official, who asked not to be named.

The rebels looted the fuel from the barge and were holding the contractors in Kaka. The United Nations demanded the release of the 12 crew still in captivity, all South Sudanese nationals.

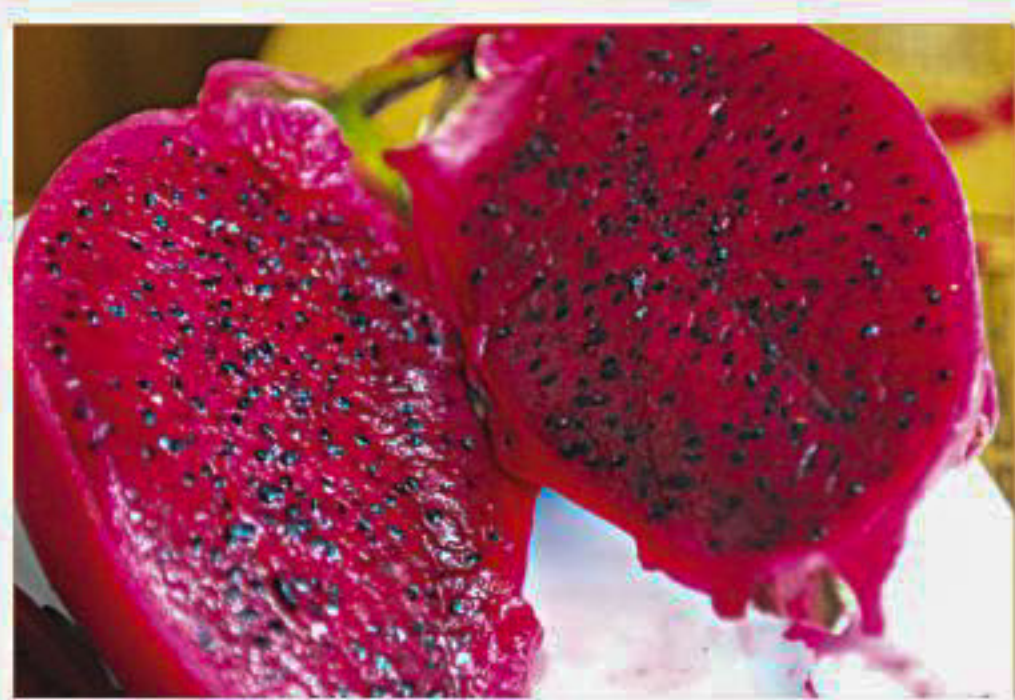
UN Spokesman Stephane Dujarric demanded that the contractors be "released immediately, unharmed and unhurt."

The UN called on rebel leader Riek Machar to "take his responsibilities" and "uphold his commitment to the United Nations that all be returned safely," said Dujarric.

The spokesman warned that attacks against peacekeepers may be punishable as a war crime.

The UN peacekeeping Chief Herve Ladsous called Machar by phone on Thursday to personally appeal for their release.

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Dragon fruits grown locally

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinaipur

Pitaya, also known as dragon fruit, is being cultivated for the first time in the northern part of Bangladesh thanks to favourable growing conditions. It usually grows in Southeast Asian as well as Central and South American countries.

Horticulture Centre of the Department of Agriculture Extension is promoting the fruit for commercial farming among farmers in Dinaipur, Thakurgaon, Panchagarh and Nilphamari.

Officials said 15 farmers planted dragon fruit

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