

PARKING SPACES Rajuk demolishes more commercial structures

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rajuk on the fifth day of its ongoing eviction drive yesterday recovered basement parking spaces knocking down illegal commercial structures at a number of buildings in Dhanmondi, Gulshan and Uttara in the capital.

A Rajuk team demolished five stores and a business centre at the basement of AR Plaza and a mobile court fined the mall and shop owners Tk 4 lakh, said Executive Magistrate Nasir Uddin, who led the drive in Dhanmondi.

The owner of Victoria Convention Centre on Road 14 was fined Tk 1 lakh as the building had no parking lot, said the magistrate, adding that the owner was given a 30-day ultimatum to ensure the facility.

The owner of Cosmos Plaza, another shopping centre, on Road 28 was fined Tk 50,000 for constructing illegal structures at its basement.

Owner of two-storey sari shop Noborupa was fined Tk 1 lakh for running his business at a residential house, said Nasir, adding that two rooms at the basement of Sunrise Plaza were also demolished.

AZM Shafiqul Hannan, a Rajuk authorised officer in Dhanmondi, said they also knocked down two illegal warehouses at the basement of shopping mall Rapa Plaza and another structure at the basement car park of a house on Road 16.

In Uttara, another Rajuk team demolished some basement shops and a staircase at Rajuk Commercial Complex, illegal basement shops at AB Super Market, Ameer Complex, SR Super Market and Hossain Tower, said Rajuk authorised Officer Mizanur Rahman.

Adiluzzaman, another Rajuk authorised officer, said they removed 14 access ramps built illegally occupying footpaths and road width in Gulshan area.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurates 'Business Start UP Licenses: A Regulatory Guide (4th edition)' at the opening session of two-day Bangladesh Investment and Policy Summit 2016 at a city hotel yesterday.

PHOTO: PMO

Grab business opportunities in Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 1

"You will never find another country like this anywhere else..."

Board of Investment (BoI), Business Initiative Leading Development (BUILD) and Prime Minister's Office (PMO) are jointly organising the summit.

Hasina said this is the most opportune moment to show the dynamic role of investors and urged them to be part of Bangladesh's "historic" growth and development.

"This summit will give you the most appropriate platform to know Bangladesh's investment trend, policies and potential more concretely and systematically -- for seeing is believing," she told the investors.

She said Public Private Partnership in infrastructure investment offers a new window of opportunity for investors while the Existing Export Processing Zones and Special Economic Zones are being expanded and developed for competitive manufacturing in local and global markets.

Hasina said her government is going to establish Bangladesh

Development Authority for the simplification of investment procedure.

"We're planning to establish 100 economic zones across the country. More than 30 sites have already been selected for them while foundation stones of 10 zones will be laid next month."

"We achieved a 6.51 percent GDP growth in the last financial year. During the previous five years, our average GDP growth was 6.2 percent. We've been working to achieve 7 percent GDP this year" she added.

The PM noted that the ability to attract private investment, both foreign and local, has increased now.

"We've attained the ability to execute big projects. The initiative to implement the Padma bridge project with our own fund is a testimony of our ability."

She said to identify private sector policy issues and resolve them in a systematic, research-backed and fact-based manner, the PMO has set up the Private Sector Development Policy Coordination Committee (PSDPCC).

The major opportunities for foreign

investors in Bangladesh exist in the physical infrastructure sector, including gas and electricity generation, roads, highways and bridges, tertiary health care and pharmaceuticals, ports development, she pointed out.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Industries Minister Amir Hossain Amu,

Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed, Chief Minister of India's Meghalaya Dr Mukul Sangma, South Asia Region CEO of Axiata Limited Dr Hans Wijayasuriya, Chairman of Adani Group Gautam Adani, Director of the International Finance Corporation of the World Bank Group Sujoy Bose and FBCCI President Abdul Matlub Ahmed spoke at the inaugural session of the summit.

At the programme, India's Adani Group said it would invest \$5 billion and Reliance Group, also an Indian conglomerate, \$3 billion in Bangladesh, adds our staff correspondent.

Muhammed Aziz Khan, chairman of Summit Group, the largest private sector power producer in Bangladesh, also promised an investment of \$3 billion in the energy sector.

Wendy Jo Werner, country manager of the International Finance Corporation for Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal, said the World Bank's private sector lending arm's annual investment in the country would reach \$2 billion a year within a couple of years, from \$650 million a year now.

More than 100 investors from home and abroad are taking part in the summit.

The programme has been organised to showcase private sector investment opportunities in Bangladesh and facilitate enabling policies to foster a coordinated, consistent and cohesive private sector development policy regime, said Asif Ibrahim, chairman of BUILD, one of the organisers.

The Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority, the IFC, the Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), the Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the University of Dhaka are also supporting the event.

Facebook to reply within 48hrs of filing complaints

Says Tarana Halim
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Facebook authorities gave assurance that they will respond to every complaint filed by the Bangladesh government and reply within 48 hours what measures they have taken, said State Minister for Telecom Tarana Halim.

"Facebook assured us that they will take special care about crime against women and terrorist activity issues on the social media," Tarana said in a press conference yesterday at her office.

Tarana recently attended a meeting with senior officials of Facebook South-East Asia in Singapore and yesterday she shared findings of her recent visit.

She also held meetings with Microsoft and Google officials of Asia-Pacific region office and discussed cyber security issues of Bangladesh.

Tarana said as Facebook will respond immediately to our notice, there is no need to set up Facebook's admin panel in Bangladesh right now.

She, however, did not reveal any detail about the measures to be taken by Facebook upon receiving specific complaint against a user from the Bangladesh authorities.

"Currently, admin offices only look after Facebook's regular activity, and they are focusing on business issues, not security, so we shouldn't emphasise on that," Tarana said.

Facebook authorities will also take an initiative to train members of law enforcement agencies and the government officials to set up a Special Point of Contact, a designated desk which maintains contact with Facebook, said the state minister.

At the same time, if the Bangladesh government invites Facebook, they will send their experts to attend workshop

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Cold wave to continue for 2-3 days

STAR REPORT

A cold wave will continue to sweep over the country for another couple of days, according to Dhaka Met Office.

The sun has not been visible in the northern region and some parts in the Khulna division, including Chuadanga and Jessore, for a few days as bone-chilling cold set in.

The country's lowest temperature was recorded at 6.1 degree Celsius in Chuadanga yesterday while the lowest temperature of Dhaka was 11.4 degree Celsius.

According to Met office forecast, mild to moderate cold wave will continue to sweep over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Khulna and Barisal divisions and Tangail, Faridpur, Madaripur, Gopalganj and Sitakunda districts. Moderate to thick fog may occur at places over the river basins and light to moderate fog elsewhere in the country after midnight until morning.

Meanwhile, our Kurigram correspondent reports, dense fog and chilling cold have paralysed normal lives in all nine upazilas of the district.

The lowest day temperature fell by 1 degree Celsius to 9 degree yesterday from the day before, said Nazrul Islam, weather observer of the Rajarhat meteorology department in Kurigram.

Poor people and those belonging to the lowest ladder of society are the worst sufferers.

JP MPs throw weight behind Ershad

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In her statement on Saturday, Raushan, also a presidium member of the JP, termed "undemocratic" Ershad's decision to make GM Quader the party's co-chairman.

On January 17, Ershad suddenly made the announcement, though there is no such post in the party charter.

However, the development means that GM Quader, Ershad's brother, is the second-in-command in the party.

Aggrieved by the announcement, a group of leaders led by JP Secretary General Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu the next day named Raushan as the party's acting chairperson and described Quader's appointment as undemocratic.

In a counter move, Ershad on Tuesday removed Bablu from the post of general secretary and appointed JP Presidium Member Ruhul Amin Hawlater to the post.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, GM Quader said he requested Ershad to talk with the PM to discuss the resignation plan.

"The chairman has accepted my proposal and has already taken an initiative to talk with the prime minister," Quader said, adding, "Leader of the opposition Begum Ershad will also accompany the party chief as they both expressed the same view on quitting the cabinet."

However, three JP leaders, who

opposed Ershad's decision, disagreed.

Opposition Chief Whip Tajul Islam Chowdhury said Quader's comment on the "understanding" on resigning from the council of ministers was his personal. "We don't support this."

JP MP Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu echoed Tajul's comment while State Minister for LGRD Moshirur Rahman Ranga said it was "totally false" that Raushan agreed about party minister's resignation.

The party, which has 40 MPs, is divided on the issue. JP MPs who were elected unopposed as well as the three ministers do not want to quit so soon.

But the GM Quader-led group has managed to convince Ershad and Raushan that the party will gain politically if JP lawmakers resign now. They also pointed out that the party managed to secure only one of the 234 mayor posts in the December 30 municipal polls, a sign of the party's waning popularity, according to sources.

Meanwhile, Quader yesterday requested Ershad to hold a presidium meeting for party leaders' opinion about his new party post. "I won't remain in the post if majority of the leaders don't want me."

JPPP MEETING

All the party lawmakers except Ershad and Hawlater were present at the Jatiya Party Parliamentary Party

meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

Of the 38 present, 33 MPs spoke in favour of quitting the cabinet, meeting sources said.

The three JP ministers and Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu opposed it while Raushan did not express any view, added the sources.

Some 25 MPs spoke on the party's latest developments. Several of them asked Water Resources Minister Anisul Islam Mahmud and two state ministers -- Mujibur Haque Chunnu and Ranga -- how the party was benefitting from their holding the posts.

"You [three ministers] are saying that you should continue as ministers because the government might harass the party leaders if you quit. But if the party chief discusses the issue with the prime minister beforehand, there will be no problem for the party," a JP MP was quoted by a source as telling the meeting.

"No party leaders and activists got any benefit from you in the last two years of the present government. You always give the excuse that you have no power. Why we will remain in the cabinet and earn a bad name for our dual role in parliament?" another MP said.

Raushan Ershad, who presided over the meeting, concluded that Ershad should hold a presidium meeting and decide on the matters, said Fakhurul Islam, a JP lawmaker who attended at the meeting.

Ctg docs call off strike on mayor's assurance

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Doctors in Chittagong city called off their work stoppage yesterday after Mayor AJM Nasir Uddin assured them of "clearing up misunderstandings between physicians and patients".

They stopped working at private clinics, chambers and diagnostic centres in the port city on Wednesday in protest at the filing of two cases against three physicians over negligence in treatment. The protesters at the time pledged to continue the strike until the cases were withdrawn.

Five days into the movement, Md Mozibul Hoque Khan, president of Chittagong district unit of Bangladesh Medical Association (BMA), announced the withdrawal of the strike at a meeting at Chittagong Medical College.

Meeting sources said the city mayor said he would work towards an understanding between the doctors and those who have filed the cases.

The diagnostic centres in the city were seen collecting samples for tests yesterday afternoon. Doctors at private clinics and chambers were also seeing patients.

Talking to The Daily Star, BMA's General Secretary Mohammad Sharif said doctors were not above the law but before the filing of a case,

Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council should find out if negligence was at all there on the doctor's side, and then submit a report.

The mayor and Chittagong Press Club leaders assured doctors that the issue would be addressed, Mozibul said after the meeting.

"Considering public interest, we have suspended our programme and we think we will be able to come up with a solution," he added.

At the meeting attended by several hundred doctors, Mayor Nasir said, "People sometimes vandalise valuables of clinics, taking the law in hand, which is not acceptable. They should consider that doctors face many hurdles while giving treatment."

He also urged doctors to provide quality service to patients.

On January 10, Meherun Nessa 22, niece of the expatriate welfare minister, died at a private clinic in Katalganj following a caesarean operation.

Her family filed a case against Shamima Siddiqua Rosy and Mahbulul Alam of the gynaecology department at Chittagong Medical College Hospital, saying their negligence in treatment caused the death.

According to the other case, Assistant Registrar Rana Chowdhury of CMCH mistakenly left a bandage inside the body of Nur Absar during a recent surgery.

NCTB moves to fix mistake in Bangla book

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) has decided to fix a mistake made in a rhyme of the class-VII Bangla textbook.

A committee formed by the board discovered that the book editors made the mistake in the rhyme "Ananda" by Sukumar Ray, said Ratan Siddique, acting chairman of NCTB yesterday. The second line of the rhyme was mistakenly made the ninth.

He said the NCTB has already taken an initiative to correct the rhyme "but it will not be possible to correct it this year as several lakh books have been dispatched".

He said they would ask district and upazila education offices to notify schools about a correction.

"We have sent a report to the ministry for taking steps against the people responsible," he told The Daily Star.

The man behind dubious lending

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Alamgir, chairman of the Farmers Bank's board of directors on May 17 last year, asking him to remove Chisty from the executive committee within 10 days.

A few days later, Chisty filed a writ petition with the High Court challenging the BB move. And the HC stayed the central bank order.

A bank's executive committee is a smaller body compared to its board of directors. The committee comprising two to seven board members is given authority on some business matters, including loan approval. But it is not a mandatory entity like audit or risk management committees, according to the central bank.

Chisty, known as Babul Chisty, has business dealings with Military Engineer Services, Border Guard Bangladesh, Gazipur Ordnance Factory and Chittagong Port, says the Farmers Bank's website.

He has set up a Jute Spinning Mill at Bakshiganj. He also owns Bonophul Tourist Complex at Bakshiganj in Jamalpur and Rashed Remi Filling Station, it adds.

BB FINDINGS

The BB investigation found that

Chisty, in violation of banking rules, granted an overdraft loan facility of Tk 5 crore to Prime Islamic Securities, a client at the bank's Motijheel branch, without placing the loan proposal at any meeting of the executive committee.

Chisty also unilaterally approved a loan of Tk 2.50 crore to Saif Powertec without any recommendations from the bank's Gulshan branch where the company applied for a loan of Tk 3 crore on July 3, 2014.

The executive body headed by Chisty granted a Tk 8-crore loan to United Bricks and Fultola Filling Station on March 5, 2014 without taking any credit proposal from the branch.

On the same day, it also approved a credit limit of Tk 15 crore to Urban Design and Development against an under-construction flat valued at Tk 5.91 crore.

According to the BB, the committee gave its approval to a term-loan of Tk 16 crore and a working capital of Tk 2 crore in favour of Chittagong Fisheries, a client at the bank's Gulshan branch, for purchase of a fishing trawler.

The loan was granted before the bank's branch prepared the credit proposal, said the BB.

Chisty approved a loan of Tk 20 crore to MS International though the bank's Gulshan branch recommended approval of a Tk 16-crore loan.

He also granted a Tk 12-crore loan to Emerald Foods, ignoring the observations of the bank's managing director and deputy managing director that the firm's collateral for the loan was insufficient.

Asked, Chisty said the central bank conducted "a half-hearted investigation" against the Farmers Bank. He also claimed he has enemies within the bank, who are conspiring against him.

He wants the BB to launch a fresh probe into the alleged irregularities at the Farmers Bank.

"I don't want any trouble with the central bank. I sought appointments with the governor and a deputy governor, but I didn't get it," he told The Daily Star over the phone on Saturday.

Chisty said he would withdraw his case from the High Court if the BB agrees to reach an understanding with them.

Who'll be BNP secy gen?

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The BNP now will have to form committees in all the organisational districts before the council. Around 60 of them already have committees, according to the party's central office.

BIG NAMES IN RACE

BNP chairperson's adviser Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury can be a potential rival of Fakhrul as the business leader has blessings of Khaleda's elder son Tarique Rahman, senior vice-chairman of the party, who has been in London since 2008.

Standing Committee Member Tariqul Islam's name has also come up for the secretary general post, mainly for his experience, dedication, and loyalty to the party, according to BNP insiders.

But his health might pull him out of the race, they say.

Tariqul, who has long been suffering from different ailments, on different occasions turned down Khaleda's proposal to take the charge, citing

health grounds, claimed BNP sources close to Tariqul.

BNP standing committee members Mirza Abbas, Khandker Mosharrar Hossain, Goyeshwar Chandra Roy, and Nazrul Islam Khan, and vice-chairman Abdullah Al Noman are also being discussed as potential candidates.

A group of BNP leaders and activists has already started campaigning for Mosharrar and Goyeshwar.

However, Fakhrul remains ahead of others in the race for his clean political image, dedication, and loyalty, BNP sources say.

Besides, he has been taking care of the post's responsibilities since Khandaker Delwar, the last secretary general of the BNP, died in 2011.

Fakhrul was not made the secretary general in all these years mainly due to opposition from Tarique Rahman, according to BNP insiders.

The last national council of the BNP was held on December 8, 2009.