



PHOTOS: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Jatishangha Park of Chittagong city is being leased out to a private company by the city corporation for renovation, a move protested by residents, civil society members and political leaders, fearing it will limit free access of the residents. Upon public protest, the Ministry of Housing and Public Works put up a sign recently, inset, which states that the park is their property and requests all to refrain from any sort of construction work. But CCC refutes by claiming that the park was handed over to them 50 years back. Meanwhile, between their tug of war over ownership, the park stays in a dismal condition.

বিশেষ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

জাতিসংঘ পার্কটি পুণর্ায়ন ও পদপূর্ত মন্ত্রণালয় এর নিজস্ব সম্পত্তি। উক্ত পার্কে কোন প্রকার নির্মাণ কাজ না করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হইল।

আদেশক্রমে
পুণর্ায়ন ও পদপূর্ত মন্ত্রণালয়

CCC move to lease out UN Park commercially faces resistance

Currently lies in a dismal condition

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chittagong

People of Chittagong city are deprived of parks and planned recreational places although it is a city to which nature has endowed all its beauties. There are only six parks in the city for around six million people.

Of the parks, people have free access to only three, including the Jatishangha Park, which Chittagong City Corporation is planning to lease out to a private company, a move that has been protested by residents, civil society members and political leaders.

Upon demand from the people, Ministry of Housing and Public Works put up a sign in front of the park on Tuesday that read "Jatishangha Park is the private property of Ministry of Housing and Public Affairs. No construction work inside the park please".

The park, located in Panchlaish area, was named Jatishangha Park in 2002, is the only recreation place for the residents of Panchlaish, Chawk Bazar, Katalganj and Joy Nagar

areas, said residents.

On February 9, CCC flouted a tender to lease out the park for development and management for 25 years, according to sources.

Sources said the company in their proposal intended to build commercial structures including a community centre and rest house.

Knowing CCC's move, locals called on the mayor and officials of the Public Works Department (PWD), who also wrote a letter to the Housing and Public Works minister to take an initiative regarding it, said Md Monirul Islam, executive engineer of PWD, Chittagong division-1.

"I used to go to the park when I was a kid... There used to be a pond where we swam during summer," said Abdul Aziz, a resident of Panchlaish area, adding, "Then they built a membership based swimming pool and a gymnasium there, which already made the park restricted. We fear if the park is leased out, soon we have to pay money to enter or use the spaces there."

AKM Saidul Islam, president of

Panchlaish Residential Area Welfare Association, said the plots of Panchlaish Residential Area were allocated in 1954 and the park area was mentioned as an open space in the layout.

Contacted, former mayor of CCC M Manjur Alam said CCC is a service oriented institution and it should discuss with the local representatives regarding decisions about the park. "During my tenure, I had built a gymnasium and swimming pool for the interest of people," he said.

Former mayor of CCC ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury also reportedly protested CCC's move. On Tuesday, at an interview with a local daily, Mohiuddin said CCC is not the owner of the park, it can just maintain it.

When The Daily Star contacted Mohiuddin the next day, he declined to make any comment.

"CCC can maintain the park but it has no authority to lease it out... common people will be deprived of free access," said PWD executive engineer Md Monirul

Islam, adding, "We are now thinking to renovate the park."

However, CCC on Thursday published an explanation on national daily Amader Shomoy claiming that the park was handed over to them 50 years back and the housing and public works ministry was not the owner of the park. CCC has been working for the betterment of the park and they have the right to do so for public interest.

Contacted, Kazi Md Shafiul Alam, chief executive officer of CCC, said, "We have never thought of leasing out the park for commercial purposes. We have given conditions in the tender that no activities could be done in the park which would hamper the environment."

"Our initiative was only to make the park more attractive by upgrading and installing rides, snack stalls, gymnasium, pool..." he said. "The plan is not final yet, it will be reconsidered as questions were raised from different corners," he added.

PM returns home from Bulgaria

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina returned home yesterday morning after wrapping up her three-day official visit to Bulgaria to attend the "Global Women Leaders' Forum (GWLF)".

A VVIP flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines carrying Hasina and the members of her entourage landed at the capital's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 6:10am.

It was the maiden visit of any head of state and government of Bangladesh to Bulgaria after the independence.

During the visit, Sheikh Hasina attended the GWLF's opening ceremony held at the National Art Gallery in Sofia on May 18 and delivered the keynote speech as the chief guest.

She held official talks and a tete-a-tete with her Bulgarian counterpart Boyko Borissov during the visit.

She also called on Bulgarian President Rosen Plevneliev at the Presidential Palace.

After the official talks, Dhaka and Sofia signed four instruments -- one framework agreement and three MoUs -- in the fields of economy, trade and diplomacy.

Hasina visited the Bulgarian National History Museum while expatriates Bangladeshis living in Sofia called on her at the hotel. A 15-member delegation of Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry also called on Hasina.

On her way to Sofia, the premier made a two-day stopover in London.

Mango

FROM PAGE 3 naturally within the stipulated time.

Fazlur Rahman, additional director of the Department of Agriculture Extension, said some indigenous varieties had started ripening but the two most delicious and famous varieties -- Gopalbhog and Khirshapat -- needed some more days to ripen.

Mango growers and traders are under close observation, he added.

If anyone is found guilty of harvesting immature mangoes and marketing those through mixing harmful chemicals, they will face punitive action, he added.

He said formalin-mixed mangoes were harmful for public health. So, in addition to the field-level strict surveillance, mango harvesting and marketing has been banned, he added.

Fazlur said simultaneously the truck-bus owners' associations were asked to refrain from transporting mangoes during the ban.

Md Muniruzzaman, president of the Rajshahi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said the administrative direction should be followed strictly so that none could commit the malpractice.

Quoting health experts, he said only 100 grammes of calcium carbide could ripen nearly 100kg of mangoes, while the chemicals could cause deadly diseases and cancer, kidney and liver complications.

NEWS IN brief

SKSOP rally for 9th Wage Board for journo Monday

BSS, Dhaka

Sangbadik-Karmochari-Sramik Oikya Parishad (SKSOP) will arrange a rally on Monday in the capital demanding an immediate announcement of formation of the ninth wage board for the journalists, employees and workers of the newspapers, electronic and online media, said a press release.

The rally will be held on the Jatiya Press Club premises at 11:00am, it added.

Sylhet students protest Narayanganj teacher's humiliation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Amidst heavy rain, students of Murari Chand College formed a human chain yesterday morning in front of the college gate at Tilagarh in Sylhet, protesting the public humiliation of Shyamal Kanti Bhakta, headmaster of Piyar Sattar Latif High School in Narayanganj's Bandar on May 13 by local Jatiya Party lawmaker AKM Salim Osman.

Two held with counterfeit notes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Detective branch of Gazipur district police arrested two people with counterfeit notes worth Tk 5 lakh from Masjid Market area of the city on Friday.

The arrestees are Dulal Hossen of Bhola, and Alamgir Hossain of Chandpur.

On a tip-off, detectives raided the area and arrested the duo, said Amir Hossain, officer-in-charge of Gazipur DB police, adding, a case was filed.

29,400 Yaba pills seized in port city, two arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cg

Police arrested two persons and seized around 29,400 pieces of Yaba tablets after intercepting a covered van at Oxygen intersection in the port city yesterday.

The arrestees are Md Shiplu, 32, and Md Julhas, 30, both hailing from Mymensingh.

Tipped off, police intercepted the Dhaka-bound vehicle at the intersection around 6:00am, said Md Mohsin, officer-in-charge (OC) of Bayezid police, adding, police seized some 29,400 pieces of Yaba after searching the vehicle.

The arrestees were being quizzed in the police station, said the OC.

Conference on global economics held at IUB

CITY DESK

The Centre for Business Policy Research of the School of Business at Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), held a daylong international conference on contemporary global economic issues on the IUB's Bashundhara campus in Dhaka yesterday, says a press release.

Dr Toufic Ahmad Choudhury, director general, Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management; Prof M Omar Rahman, vice chancellor of IUB; Prof Milan Pagon, pro-VC (designate); Prof Sarwar Uddin Ahmed, dean, the School of Business, IUB; and Dr Samiul Parvez Ahmed, conference coordinator, among others, addressed the conference themed "Policy Implications for Sustainable Growth of Emerging Economies".

Paragon Charity starts free lunch for pry school students in Gazipur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A feeding programme for the students of six primary schools in Gazipur has been launched by Paragon Charity, where the organisation will provide lunch, clean water and health services to around 2,500 students.

Moshiur Rahman, managing director of the charity, made the announcement at Baniarchala Government Primary School under Gazipur Sadar upazila yesterday.

French Ambassador to Bangladesh Sophie Aubert, the chief guest at the event, inaugurated the programme.

Non-govt teachers will get

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To ensure the benefits, Tk 500 crore has been allocated as seed money and additional Tk 100 crore as block allocation, he said. Nahid also said the teachers would financially benefit from Teachers' Welfare Trust without complexity, since the government allocated Tk 50 crore more for the trust.

Man dies falling from tree in capital

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man died after he fell from a blackberry tree in the capital's Dhanmondi yesterday.

Nilu Miah, 36, who hailed from Sarail in Brahmanbaria and was collecting blackberries, was a caretaker of a house in the area.

Raihan, another staff of the house said Nilu climbed the tree while it was raining.

Nilu Miah was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where the on-duty doctors pronounced him dead.

Police said an unnatural death (UD) case was filed.



President Abdul Hamid exchanges greetings with Buddhists in the capital's Bangabhaban yesterday on the occasion of Buddha Purnima, a religious festival of the community.

PHOTO: PID

Rab sends 3 medicine shop owners to jail

Fines another 3 Tk 6 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Rab mobile court yesterday gave imprisonment of different terms to three medical shop owners and fined another three Tk 6 lakh for selling banned medicines and other free medicines to be distributed at government hospitals.

The mobile court carried out a drive at a medicine market in the capital's Babubazar, and seized medicines worth around Tk 2 crore, said a Rab press release. Owners of Sheba Medical Hall, Shimon Drug House and Onni Medical Hall were sentenced to nine months to one and half years of imprisonment. Ripon Medicine House was fined Tk 3 lakh; Raihan Medicine Corner and Islamia Medical Pharma Tk 1.5 lakh each.

50,000 homeless to be rehabilitated by 2018

Land Minister Shamsur Rahman tells seminar

BSS, Dhaka

Land Minister Shamsur Rahman Sherif yesterday said the government would rehabilitate 50,000 homeless people by 2018.

"The government would provide houses along with khas land to homeless people across the country," he told a seminar at Land Administration Training Centre in the capital.

The land ministry organised the daylong seminar on rehabilitation of the homeless under the cluster village project phase-II, with the national project director of Cluster Village (Guchhogram) Project M Mahbul-Alam in the chair.

The seminar was also addressed, among others, by Land Secretary Mejbah-ul-Alam as the special guest.

The minister said the prime minister gave a directive to find khas land across the country to construct houses for homeless people.

A total of 45 trainers including additional deputy commissioners (ADCs),

upazila nirbahi officers (UNOs), and assistant commissioners (land) took part in the seminar.

The minister said some 800 homeless people would be rehabilitated by this year.

He said each cluster village would be brought under electricity coverage, and the government would ensure social security, education, safe drinking water, and sanitation facility as fundamental rights.

Earlier, the prime minister announced the government's housing programme, and the land ministry adopted a master plan to rehabilitate 50,000 homeless people.

Meanwhile, the government rehabilitated 254 homeless families under the cluster village programme in 61 districts.

Among others, Land Administration Training Centre director Mohammad Shahed Sabur, cluster villages deputy project director AKM Nurul Amin Sarker, and deputy director of the training centre ARM Khalekuzzaman, were present.

Terrorists

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militancy. As part of its efforts, the government enacted the Anti-Terrorist Act after coming to power in 2009," he said.

Asaduzzaman said militancy was patronised by various quarters in the past. "Journalists, political leaders and activists, and cultural personalities were killed," he said.

He alleged that militants were helped to flee the country. "But the present government has been able to bring the perpetrators to justice."

Chaired by DMP Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia, the session was addressed, among others, by Director General of Rapid Action Battalion Benazir Ahmed, head of ICPVTR, Singapore Prof Rohan Ganaratra, and head of CITC unit Additional Commissioner Monirul Islam.



Rafiqur Rahman, a videographer of Reuters Television, receiving a lifetime achievement award from Dr Rajindar Singh, conferred by the Rotary International Club District 3281 in the capital on Friday.

PHOTO: ROTARY INTERNATIONAL