

Concept lost on revisions

FROM PAGE 1

future higher population density was ignored,” said an urban planner requesting anonymity.

As an instance, it could be seen that instead of institutes having their own playgrounds, as needed, they would now have to share common neighbourhood playgrounds.

Rajuk also intends to create 75 more residential plots reducing 49 acres, kept aside for nursery schools, down to 22 acres.

The commercial and residential plots are being created to accommodate wealthy, influential, and politically connected people, said sources in Rajuk who wished to be unnamed.

Rajuk wants to reduce the space for community centres by five acres and take extra 22 acres from land earmarked as administrative areas.

Rajuk is doing this so that it could have an additional 65 acres for commercial plots and 19 acres more for shops, markets, and kitchen markets.

As per the proposed fifth revised layout, they have already allotted 110 acres for a 142-storey iconic commercial tower, for which no land was earmarked in the fourth revision.

After Rajuk sought endorsement of the fifth revision, the HC, in an order issued in January, observed that the proposed conversion of a huge quantity of land was “by way of a smart trick” by “rearranging” and “compromising” playgrounds of educational institutions.

Apart from the iconic tower, the HC declined to approve other alterations.

Meanwhile, the project cost increased by 135 percent.

NOT PLAYING BY THE RULES?

Following a public interest litigation in 2013, the HC in March the following year endorsed Rajuk's fourth revision of the plan. It directed Rajuk not to “efface, subtract, vary or modify the forest, lakes, canals, urban green, parks, playgrounds”, as shown in the fourth revised layout plan, without the court's permission.

But there has been widespread allegation that Rajuk in mid-September last year secretly allotted 84 institutional plots taking land from areas earmarked for schools and their playgrounds, violating the 2014 HC judgment.

Even though Rajuk usually publishes the list of such plot allotments

on its official website, in this case it did not make the list public even after six months.

When asked, Project Director Ujwal Mallick said he did not know anything about altering the project layout plans or creation of new plots.

He directed the correspondent towards Sheikh Shahinul Islam, Rajuk director for estate and land.

Asked over the phone about the allotment of 84 plots, Shahinul on March 4 asked this correspondent to meet him face-to-face.

When the correspondent met him that very day, he said, “I cannot talk about this issue, the Rajuk chairman can. I just wanted to be acquainted to you.”

When The Daily Star correspondent spoke to Rajuk Chairman Md Abdur Rahman on March 10, he said, “I can't say why the layout had to be revised five times.

“According to the government's education curriculum, we have to reduce the number of nursery schools.”

About the rationale for reducing educational plots and playgrounds and increasing commercial land, the chairman said, “I need to know in details to respond.”

He said the fourth revised layout plan had 263 institutional plots, of which they had allotted 197, including the latest 84, with the remaining yet to be allotted.

Asked why they did not make public the list of allotment of 84 institutional plots, he said he had just heard from this correspondent that it was not published.

When asked for the list, he said, “I have to think about it.”

Later in the day, the chairman said the list had been uploaded on Rajuk's official website. This correspondent, however, could not find it even yesterday and he informed the chairman of the matter.

Abdur Rahman had earlier told The Daily Star that Rajuk would not implement the fifth revision of the layout but yesterday he said Rajuk would appeal to the HC in a day or two to have the revision endorsed.

The Rajuk chairman said the Rajuk chief architect, who went into retirement around a year ago, had agreed to all the revisions and creation of new plots.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela), said Rajuk had argued before the court that they had allotted all available plots and the court should endorse the fourth revised layout plan.

She said if they had adhered to the fourth revised plan in allotting the 84 controversial plots, then why do they want a fifth amendment?

Rizwana also wondered why the list of allotment was not made public.

To understand the extent of environmental damage caused in the process of executing the scheme, one must note that Rajuk had to pay more compensation for trees and forests than what it had to pay for land acquisition, said Rizwana.

Bela in 2015 filed an appeal opposing the 2014 HC judgment, which endorsed the fourth revision of the layout. Bela argued that implementation of the fourth revision would imply felling of 11 lakh trees.

The Appellate Division in a February 2017 order observed that “Rajuk had been implementing Purbachal scheme by felling trees and filling up canals and this sort of work should not be allowed to continue”.

The court directed Rajuk to obtain environmental clearance to implement the scheme.

The court also observed that rampant felling of trees and indiscriminate filling up of various water bodies would certainly threaten the ecosystem and biodiversity of the project areas.

Khondaker M Ansar Hossain, an urban planner who worked as a technical expert on Dhaka city's Detailed Area Plan, said the entire area where Purbachal was being developed was originally comprised of extensive flood flow zones, rural homesteads, arable land, and forests.

Dhaka's master plan forbids execution of this scheme because only rural homesteads could be there, he said.

Still, the Purbachal scheme went ahead showing it as “overlay”, meaning an entity already existing, but actually execution of the scheme took place after the Detailed Area Plan was made.

Rajuk launched the scheme branding it as a model, self-contained, smart and largest planned township in the country.

Two contradictory

FROM PAGE 16

The results were published on arXiv, a site for research that has yet to undergo full peer review, by a British team based at Heriot-Watt University.

They set out to explore “Wigner's friend”, named after Nobel prize-winning physicist Eugene Wigner who came up with it in 1961, which is based on the idea that a photon, or a particle of light, can exist in two possible states.

According to the laws of quantum mechanics, this “superposition” means the photon's polarisation – or the axis upon which it spins – is both vertical and horizontal at the same time.

However, once one scientist in an isolated laboratory measures the photon, they find the photon's polarisation is fixed at either vertical or horizontal.

At the same time, for someone who is outside the laboratory and who is not aware of the result, the unmeasured photon is still in a state of superposition.

Despite these apparently conflicting realities, both are correct.

In their new study, the physicists were able to bring this experiment into reality, using real photons and measuring equipment that stood in for Wigner and his “friend”.

With their results, they were able to confirm the two realities described by Wigner held true.

“You can verify both of them,” study co-author Dr Martin Ringbauer told Live Science, explaining how this bewildering concept could make the leap from theory to reality.

“Theoretical advances were needed to formulate the problem in a way that is testable,” he said.

“Then, the experimental side needed developments on the control of quantum systems to implement something like that.”

While the experiment and its results may seem a world – or even a universe – away from everyday life, it raises profound and unsettling questions for physicists about the nature of reality.

“The scientific method relies on facts, established through repeated measurements and agreed upon universally, independently of who observed them,” the team wrote in their paper.

The role of quantum mechanics is to describe the world at such a small scale that the conventional rules of physics do not apply. If measurements from this field cannot be considered absolute, it could change how the discipline operates.

“It seems that, in contrast to classical physics, measurement results cannot be considered absolute truth but must be understood relative to the observer who performed the measurement,” said Dr Ringbauer.

“The stories we tell about quantum mechanics have to adapt to that.”

Bangabandhu

FROM PAGE 16

Tajuddin Ahmad, general secretary of East Pakistan Awami League, urged the people to be vigilant and ready to make any sacrifice to defeat the conspiracies of anti-people forces.

From March 23 to March 24 morning, the Pakistan army surrounded the Saidpur cantonment and neighbouring Botlagari, Golahaat and Kundul villages. It used excessive force, killing about 100 people and leaving around 1,000 others injured.

Curfew was imposed in Dhaka. The army along with non-Bangalees carry out arson and carnage in the houses of Bangladeshis.

Some civilians and the military got involved in a battle in front of Rangpur Medical College. Centring it, the army launched a massacre in the surrounding areas where shots were fired, killing 50 unarmed civilians.

In Dhaka, a meeting between the AL and the regime was held at the president's house in the evening. Syed Nazrul Islam, Tajuddin and Kamal Hossain were present.

Briefing reporters after the meeting, Tajuddin said the AL was not willing to continue the dialogue for an indefinite period.

Sources: Liberation War Museum and Bangladesh Genocide Archive

Police arrest

FROM PAGE 16

The 30-year-old worker of a Dhaka garment factory went to Patgram after one of the suspects promised the woman of finding her a job in India and told her to go there.

When she was held captive, the suspects said they would kill her unless she kept quiet, the woman told police.

Govt 'sold out'

FROM PAGE 2

government was imprisoning its opponents as per its whim snatching their rights.

He alleged that the current government could not tolerate alternative opinions as it did not have any respect for democracy. “They [government] should directly say like North Korean leader Kim Jong that they believe in one-party rule and what they say will be the law. But they are deceiving people by resorting one-party rule undercover of democracy.”

Enter Raushan

FROM PAGE 1

leader of the opposition.

Ershad, also leader of the opposition, in another statement around 5:00pm yesterday said he removed Quader from the parliamentary post as per section 20/1/Ka of the party charter.

The section stipulates that the JP chairman can make any party decision on his own.

Talking to The Daily Star last night, Quader, who was made JP co-chairman in January 2016, said he was not aware of the party chief's latest decision.

“On Thursday night, HM Ershad praised me for my leadership. He also blessed me for being successful.”

The JP leader said he never asked his brother to make him the deputy leader of the opposition as he was not interested in the post.

Sources said Quader was deeply disappointed and felt humiliated by the allegations brought against him that he has failed to discharge his duties.

JP sources said such flip-flops by the party chairman were creating divisions and confusion among the party leadership and ultimately weakening the party.

Ershad, who turned 90 last week, is almost inactive in the party as he has been suffering from multiple old age complications for the last six months.

He joined only one Jatiya Sangsad sitting out of 26 of the recently concluded maiden session of the 11th parliament.

Sources close to Quader, presidium member of the JP, said a section of top party leaders, including Anisul Islam Mahmud, Ruhul Amin Hawlader and Mujib-ul-Haque Chunnun, have convinced Ershad to make the latest decisions.

JP insiders said the government also backed Ershad's latest move.

Anisul and Chunnun, former ministers in Sheikh Hasina's immediate past government, are considered close to the incumbent government.

Raushan, repeatedly praised by the government for her “responsible role” as the opposition leader in last parliament, is also considered close to the ruling Awami League.

Differences developed between Quader and the three JP presidium members (Anisul, Hawlader and Chunnun) after Quader was made deputy leader of the opposition and given the charge of the JP acting chairman.

A JP presidium member said, “The government prefers Raushan Ershad [opposition leader in the last parliament] to Quader Bhai. A section of top party leaders can use madam [Raushan] to run the organisation as they wanted to as she can be easily convinced.”

“If Quader bhai remained in his post, it would not have been possible for them to run the party as they wanted to,” he told this correspondent on condition of anonymity.

Another top JP leader said Quader wanted to turn the party into a “real opposition party” in and outside parliament. “But the leaders loyal to the government did not want this and the government supported their move to remove him [Quader].”

Contacted, Hawlader refuted the allegation of convincing Ershad of making the latest decisions.

“I met the chairman yesterday [Friday] for 10 minutes. It appeared to me that he is still active in party politics and takes every decision correctly for its interests. We all have to accept his decisions,” he told The Daily Star.

Despite repeated attempts, this newspaper could not reach Anisul and Chunnun over the phone for comments.

CHANGES IN TOP LEADERSHIP

On December 3 last year, the JP chief had removed Hawlader as party secretary general. Much to the surprise of many in the party, then state minister for LGRD Moshir Rahman Ranga was picked for the post.

Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu was made JP secretary general in mid-2014. Ershad removed him from the post on January 19, 2016. He was replaced by Hawlader.

The JP took part in the December 30 parliamentary polls as a key partner of the AL-led Grand Alliance and won 22 seats.

IS 'caliphate' falls

FROM PAGE 1

The nearly five years of fighting against the most brutal jihadist group in modern history left thousand-year-old cities in ruins and populations homeless.

Early US estimates put the numbers of IS fighters at around 40,000, many of them foreigners.

The territory administered by the remnants of IS continued to shrink month after month and in September 2018 the SDF launched a final offensive on the last dregs of the “caliphate” in its Euphrates Valley strongholds.

SDF fighters last week expelled the last IS fighters who refused to surrender from an encampment on the edge of Baghouz and have since been hunting down a few survivors hiding on the reedy banks of the Euphrates.

“Those who lasted the longest were mostly foreigners... Tunisians, Moroccans, Egyptians,” Hisham Harun, a 21-year-old Kurdish fighter, told AFP.

Around him, the former jihadist encampment was littered with bullet-riddled truck carcasses, discarded suicide belts and the torn tents where the caliphate's last families sheltered for weeks.

Some bodies of suspected IS fighters could also be seen.

According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, the Euphrates offensive has left 630 civilians, 730 SDF fighters and around 1,600 jihadists dead.

Kurdish officers and aid groups

were flummoxed by the number of people who had remained holed up in the last IS redoubt of Baghouz, a small village even few Syrians had ever heard of until this year.

As SDF forces pummelled IS positions and US warplanes dropped huge payloads on the riverside village, tens of thousands of people fled over a rocky hill.

For weeks, the ghostly figures of the caliphate's last denizens hobbled out of the besieged village, famished, often wounded but sometimes still defiantly proclaiming their support for IS.

The Kurdish-led force and foreign intelligence have screened more than 60,000 people since January, around 10 percent of them jihadists turning themselves in.

Most of the people evacuated from the smouldering ruins of Baghouz in recent days were relatives of IS members who now fill overcrowded camps further north in Syria's Kurdish-controlled region.

The biggest of them, Al-Hol, is struggling to host 74,000 people, including at least 25,000 school-aged children.

Among them are thousands of foreigners from France, Russia, Belgium and 40-plus countries that are in most cases unwilling to take them back.

“The needs are huge and the camp is overwhelmed,” Peter Maurer, president of the International Committee of the Red Cross said Friday upon returning from a five-day visit to Syria.

STILLA THREAT

Speaking at the ceremony in Al Omar, top SDF commander Mazloum Kobane warned that a new phase had begun in anti-IS operations.

The US has vowed to draw down its forces in Syria, but Kobane appealed for sustained coalition assistance to help smash sleeper cells “which are a great threat to our region and the whole world.”

US coalition envoy William Roebuck spoke after him at the ceremony and agreed “we still have much more to do to achieve an enduring defeat” of IS.

French President Emmanuel Macron hailed the fall of Baghouz saying “a significant threat to our country” has been “eliminated” and British Prime Minister Theresa May chimed in, calling yesterday's victory “a historic milestone”.

The jihadists retain a presence in eastern Syria's vast Badia desert and various other hideouts from which they could wage the kind of deadly guerrilla insurgency that accompanied the rise of the Islamic State group.

John Spencer, a scholar at the Modern War Institute at West Point, warned that while the geographic caliphate had been dismantled, IS was far from defeated.

IS “is a terrorist organisation, all they have to do is put down their weapons and try to blend in with the population and just escape,” he told AFP. “They're not gone, and they're not going to be gone.”

Student pushed

FROM PAGE 1

Police, later said they have arrested driver Jewel Ahmed, 26, from Kadamtoli Bus Stand around 10:45pm yesterday.

The helper, whose name could not be known, reportedly remained at large as of 1:00am today.

As the news of Wasim's death spread, students of the university staged demonstrations on Dhaka-Sylhet highway at Kadamtoli of Sylhet and vadalised several buses.

They called off their protest for the day around 9:30pm at the request of university proctor, Mrityunjay Kundo.

The university will observe a day of mourning today and no class and exam will be held, said the proctor.

Many students crowded Osmani Medical College Hospital, where Wasim's body was kept for autopsy.

In July last year, North South University student Saidur Rahman Payel was thrown into a canal from a bus by its driver and helper in Gazaria upazila of Munshiganj.

117 UZs go to polls today

FROM PAGE 16

are expected to cast their vote at 9,298 centres in the third phase.

The fourth phase would be held in 122 upazilas on March 31.

The Election Commission is yet to officially announce the schedule for the fifth phase. Officials say they are planning to hold the final phase on June 18, after the HSC exams and Eid-ul-Fitr.

Election to 78 upazilas were held in the first phase on March 10 and 116 upazilas in the second phase on March 18.

For the first time, political parties are nominating aspirants for upazila parishes.

The BNP, Left Democratic Alliance, a combine of eight left-leaning parties Islami Andolan Bangladesh, Bangladesh Khelafat Andolan and Bangladesh Muslim League have boycotted the polls.

At a press briefing at his office yesterday, EC Secretary Helal Uddin

Ahmed said preparations for a free and fair election had been taken.

Election would not be held in Lohagara of Chattogram and Kutubdia of Cox's Bazar today as the High Court stayed the polls there.

Besides, no election will take place in Gournadi and Agailjhara of Barishal, Shibchar of Madaripur, Bhedarganj of Shariatpur, Palash of Gazipur and Anwara of Chattogram as candidates have been elected unopposed.

EC sources said in the third phase, 340 candidates are vying for the post of chairmen, 584 for vice-chairmen and 399 for female vice-chairmen.

During the first two phases, voters showed little interest in polls. The EC data shows turnout was less than 30 percent during the second phase.

Voter turnout in the 2009 upazila polls was 70.57 percent. It dropped to 61.23 percent in 2014.

Mueller submits

FROM PAGE 16

The 235 members of the Democratic caucus in the US House of Representatives scheduled a 3:00pm (1900 GMT) conference call later yesterday, a senior Democratic aide said.

Mueller did not recommend any further indictments, a senior Justice Department official said, signaling there might be no more criminal charges against Trump associates arising from the investigation. Mueller brought charges against 34 people and three companies over the course of his investigation, with prison sentences for some of Trump's former aides.

On Friday evening, civil liberties privacy group the Electronic Privacy Information Center filed a Freedom of Information Request lawsuit against the US Department of Justice to obtain the report.

Lawmakers in both parties urged its quick release, and Democrats in particular demanded that nothing be held back, saying they would issue subpoenas if necessary. Barr, who took office in February, was appointed by Trump after the president fired his predecessor Jeff Sessions in November.

“I remain committed to as much transparency as possible, and I will keep you informed as to the status of my review,” Barr told lawmakers in a letter.

By handing over the long-awaited report to Barr, Mueller marked the end of his work, with his spokesman saying

Modi, Imran

FROM PAGE 16

outstanding issues, including Kashmir, and forging a new relationship based on peace and prosperity “for all our people”.

The goodwill messages came against the backdrop of recent escalation of tensions between the two countries following an attack by Pakistan-based militants on Indian security forces in India-held Kashmir's Pulwama district. The events in the last week of February took the two arch-rival neighbours closer to war than any of the standoffs between them over the past decade.

The Indian Air Force carried out raids inside Pakistan on Feb 26 and Pakistan demonstrated its will and capacity to respond by hitting an open space in held Kashmir a day later.

Both sides later took a number of de-escalatory steps, including the return of high commissioners to their respective missions and initiation of negotiations on a bilateral agreement which would govern the operations of the planned Kartarpur corridor. The corridor would provide Indian Sikh pilgrims visa-free access to Kartarpur temple in Pakistan's Narowal district.

Despite the two countries gradually moving ahead on a de-escalatory path, Modi's message still came as a surprise because the Indian government boycotted the Pakistan High Commission's reception. Usually, a cabinet minister represented the Indian government at the event in the past.

the 74-year-old special counsel would conclude his service in the coming days.

Trump has denied collusion and obstruction. Russia has denied election interference. Trump has sought to discredit the investigation, calling it a “witch hunt” and accusing Mueller of conflicts of interest. But he said on Wednesday he does not mind if the public is allowed to see the report.

Key Trump aides, including his former campaign chairman Paul Manafort, national security adviser Michael Flynn and personal lawyer Michael Cohen, have already either been convicted or pleaded guilty to charges brought by Mueller.

None of those charges, however, directly related to the question of collusion between the campaign and Moscow. The Justice Department has a policy that sitting presidents cannot face criminal charges.

House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer, the two top Democrats in Congress, said it was “imperative” the full report be made public, that Barr not give Trump and his team a “sneak preview” of the findings, and that the White House not be allowed to interfere in decisions about what parts are made public.

Shahnaz

FROM PAGE 1

grooming, she was taught singing as a child, and gained public recognition from a young age.

Her professional experience began at the age of 11, as a playback singer of *Notun Shur* (1963), and appeared on television from 1964.

All her life, she was revered also for ghazals. In recognition of her timeless songs, she was awarded Ekushey Padak, National Film Awards, Bangladesh Shilpakala Award and many more.

After the Liberation War, she sang *Ek Nodi Rokto Periy*, considered to be one of the finest patriotic songs ever written in Bangla, for Khan Ataur Rahman's *Abar Tora Manush Ho* (1973).

After a BBC survey of 20 greatest Bangla songs of all times, listeners selected *Ek Nodi Rokto Periy* as the 9th best.

The song, written and composed by Khan Ataur Rahman, recalls the contribution of the freedom fighters during the 1971 war.

Her other evergreen songs include *Ekbar Jete De Na Amar Chotto Sonar Gayer, Je Chhilo Dristhir Shimanay, Ek Tara Tui Desher Kotha, Amar Desher Matir Gondhe, Sagorer Teer Theke, and Phuler Kane Bhramar Ese*.

Shahnaz had wrapped up her career as a singer on personal grounds seven to eight years ago. The announcement came as a shock to many of her fans. She recorded three songs for an album, *Badal Diner Pakhi*, and that marked the end of the memorable career.