

WHEN THE ELEPHANT IS THE ROOM!

|| AMIR HASAN SHAHRIAR ||



PORT CITY CHRONICLES

The Hati Bungalow in port city's Lalkhan Bazar area.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

The houses in fairy tales often came in weird shapes and sizes -- one was shaped like a shoe, some were high up in the trees, and another was made out of chocolate. It's almost impossible to find such structures in the real world, but there is one house in Chattogram that comes close to the whimsical architecture of fairy tales: Hati Bungalow.

The duplex house is shaped like a giant elephant, located at the side of a cliff at CRB hill beside Lalkhan Bazar in the port city. Surrounded by green cliffs, and a range of Gurjan trees at the backyard, this bungalow does not interrupt nature, rather blends in beautifully.

Looking at Hati Bungalow from the front, it seems as though the entrance is the mouth of an elephant, while the front porch is under the shade of its trunk. The

opening of the trunk itself is the balcony of the top floor, while the roof is somewhat oval-shaped like the back of an Asian elephant.

The main entrance leads to the hall room while there are two other doors for master bedrooms. A dining space is situated at the back of the house with a platform for a stove.

Ascending the stairs on the left of the dining space, there is a huge conference room at the top floor with the attached "elephant trunk balcony" at the front and a pantry at the back.

There are seven windows with sunshades -- three at the front and two on each side of the building.

The bungalow was established in 1981. "The idea of this structure came from the intention to create something interesting

and making the most out of a limited space," said Tarun Kanti Bala, divisional manager of railway (east zone).

Hati Bungalow was originally meant to serve as a lodge for gazetted officers of railway, but nowadays many of them prefer to stay in places with air conditioning and other modern facilities, added Tarun.

"If such modern facilities are added, the bungalow may lose its original look and feel," he said.

It is currently being used as a rest house for the officers, informed Jakir Hossain, caretaker of the bungalow since 1996.

"Many people come here to visit the bungalow. Some also come to shoot films or dramas. It's become a popular place to visit among young people as the place is safe, with the residence of the railway police superintendent beside it," he said.

4 killed, 15 hurt as bus hits parked truck in Gopalganj

Two die another sustains injuries in other accidents

STAR REPORT

Six people were killed and 15 injured in road accidents in three districts yesterday, according to reports from our correspondents.

In Gopalganj, four people including a police officer were killed and 15 persons were injured as a bus hit a truck on Dhaka-Khulna highway in Shonashuri area of Sadar upazila.

The deceased were identified as Abdur Rashid, 45, a sub-inspector at Gopalganj Police Lines; Bijan Hawlader, 23, from Rajluxmi village; Md Rasel, 22, from Potnitola village; and Komol Mondal, 24, from Sotoamtoli in Nazirpur, Pirojpur.

"The truck loaded with iron rods was parked beside the road around 2am when the Pirojpur-bound bus of Imad Paribahan from Dhaka knocked it," Bhanga Highway Police Station Officer-in-Charge Ataur Rahman quoted locals as saying.

As a result, two bus passengers -- Bijan and Komol -- died on the spot. Rasel was declared dead at Gopalganj General Hospital while SI Abdur Rashid succumbed to his injuries on the way to Khulna Medical College Hospital, said the OC.

The injured who were in the bus were undergoing treatment at Gopalganj General Hospital, said the police officer.

The OC added that they seized the bus but the driver fled the scene.

In Kishoreganj, a Jubo Dal leader was killed and his wife injured as a covered van ran them over while they were on a

motorbike on Kishoreganj-Bhairab road in Aamchita Madhyapara area of Katiadi upazila in the morning.

After hitting the motorcycle the covered van skidded off the road.

The deceased -- identified as Habibur Rahman Rusel, 38, son of Md Abdul Gafur from Boghpara area in Katiadi municipality -- was president of the upazila unit of Jubo Dal, the youth front of BNP.

Rusel died on the way to Katiadi Upazila Health Complex, said police.

His wife Surovi Akter, 35, an assistant teacher of Ghagoir Government Primary School in Katidai, was admitted to Jahurul Islam Medical College Hospital, they said.

Quoting locals, Md Nasir Uddin Majumder, in-charge of Kadiadi Highway Police Outpost, said Surovi along with her husband Rusel was going to the school from Kishoreganj town.

The accident occurred around 8:30am after the covered van driver lost his control over the steering, said the police officer.

Police seized the covered van but its driver managed to flee. A case was lodged.

In Chattogram, a truck hit a man at Gachhua in Rangunai upazila, leaving him dead.

Mafizur Rahman, 50, from Obaidul Para in the upazila, was declared dead at Chattogram Medical College Hospital, said Assistant Sub-Inspector Alauddin Talukdar at CMCH police outpost.

The accident occurred around 11am while he was bringing a goat to a veterinary hospital, said the ASI.



PHOTO: STAR

A mangled bus after it hit a truck parked beside a road in Gopalganj yesterday.



After failing to catch enough Ilish, two defeated fishermen take a nap on their boat in the middle of the Kirtankhola river. The photo was taken on Friday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

BNP institutionalised corruption: info minister

Bss, Ctg

Information Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud yesterday said BNP leaders should thank Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her stance against corruption and apologise to people for their misdeeds during BNP regimes.

Expressing the government's firm resolve to take stern action against corruption, the minister said BNP gave an institutional shape to corruption through "Hawa Bhaban".

They [BNP] made Bangladesh champion in corruption for five consecutive times during their regimes, he added.

"BNP chief Khaleda Zia and her former finance minister Saifur Rahman whitened black money... her son Tarique Rahman started 10 percent commission system for every business," the minister told journalists after addressing a reception of Senior Citizen Society (SCS) as chief guest.

The event was held at Bangabandhu Auditorium in Chattogram Press Club in the afternoon.

Dr Mahmud, also the publicity and publication secretary of the ruling party, said Awami League started the "zero tolerance

policy" soon after it came to power in 2009. As part of that, drives against corruption are going on across the country.

"No one involved [in corruption] will be spared," he added. BNP leaders, who brought shame to the country, have no ethical right to speak on this issue.

Replying to a query on Khaleda Zia's health, Dr Mahmud said hers is a prolonged physical problem.

"With these problems, she was the prime minister, leader of the opposition and led a party like BNP for a long time," the minister added.

He said BNP is trying to make it an issue even though she is being provided with utmost medical facilities as the government is aware of her health condition.

"Khaleda is being treated in a specialised hospital like Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University with competent physicians and medical staff," he said.

A physiotherapist and nurse were looking after her round the clock when she was in jail and at present, she has her house help with her -- an unprecedented example in the history of the sub-continent, the minister claimed.

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Man arrested with 13,000 yaba pills in port city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-7) during a drive intercepted a Dhaka bound private car and arrested its driver in possession of 13,920 yaba pills yesterday morning.

The arrestee is Mosharraf Hossain, 35, from Bauphal upazila of Patuakhali, said a Rab-7 press release.

The drive was conducted at Chattogram city's Akbar Shah area, where the officials intercepted the vehicle around 11am.

Sensing Rab's presence, the driver tried to flee but the law enforcers managed to detain him, the press release added.

Rab officials were interrogating the arrestee at their headquarter in the city for further information, it added.

Traffic awareness event held in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

With an aim to create awareness on traffic rules and passenger rights among transport workers, an awareness programme was held in port city's Bakalia area yesterday morning.

Bakalia traffic circle of Chattogram Metropolitan Police organised the event in collaboration with transport workers in Bashiruzzaman Chatter area.

Additional Police Commissioner (traffic) Mostak Ahmed Khan and Deputy Commissioner (traffic north) Amir Zafar were present as chief and special guests respectively.

Addressing the programme, the additional commissioner said police alone cannot bring discipline in transport sector, the responsibility lies with all. Transport workers will have to play a major role in this regard, he added.

He urged them to drive carefully, refrain from reckless driving or overtaking and follow traffic rules.

Other than police and administration officials, transport leaders, owners, workers and students attended the event, presided over by Bakalia circle Traffic Inspector Md Shamsuddin.

Wheels of economy are turning: Mannan

Bss, Ctg

Planning Minister MA Mannan yesterday said the wheels of the country's economy are turning towards prosperity, and the per capita income of the country is also increasing fast.

He was addressing a regional conference on the role of the microfinance institutions towards attaining the SDGs, held at the Chattogram Officers Club.

Mentioning that multilateral and bilateral lending agencies like the World Bank, ADB, IMF, JICA and China want to lend billions of dollars in credit to Bangladesh, he said the government would take loans if there is any necessity.

"But, using the word 'donor' is disrespectful for us and we don't like this," he added.

Noting that thousands of people are now roaming around the capital with their briefcases to lend credit to Bangladesh, Mannan said only one percent capital of the microcredit institutions come from the donor fund.

"So, why there is so much talk about this? Even if the fund becomes insufficient, there is nothing to worry," he added.

The minister said Bangladesh used to get a lot of donations from abroad in the early 1970s. "We gracefully accepted those ... but time has now changed. If anyone extends their hands of cooperation, then we will reciprocate the same gesture".

Chaired by Brac senior adviser and former Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister M Abdul Karim, the event was addressed, among others, by former Bangladesh Bank governor Dr Atiur Rahman; Microcredit

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As part of "Citizen Information Collection Week", officials of Barishal Metropolitan Police brought out a procession on the city's Sadar Road yesterday to generate awareness among residents.

PHOTO: STAR