

JATISANGHA PARK IN DISMAL CONDITION

Ownership tug-of-war between CCC, PWD goes on

|| ARUN BIKASH DEY ||



PORT CITY CHRONICLES

Port city residents 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 Jatisangha Park. However, this park, operated by Chattogram City Corporation (CCC), has been in a sorry state for more than three years due to an ownership dispute.

Located in Panchlaish area, Jatisangha Park is the only recreational place for residents of Panchlaish, Chawk Bazar, Katalganj and Joy Nagar areas, said locals.

PARK OR LANDFILL?

During a recent visit, this correspondent saw that most of the place was filled with dense bushes. There was piled up earth at one corner, which has turned into slippery mud. Also, water remained stagnant over the muddy walkway.

The benches, where people used to sit and relax, have been displaced while the

Full of mud and garbage, Jatisangha Park in port city's Panchlaish area has virtually turned into a landfill now, due to a lack of maintenance by the authorities concerned. The boundary walls of the park have collapsed while dirty stagnant water can be seen at places. Only a handful of people visit the once-prominent place.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN



boundary wall was knocked down. An eerie silence hovers over the place, which once used to be filled with chirping of birds and children's laughter.

Only a handful of visitors were seen at the park.

"My son wanted to play outside so I brought him here," said Samir Barua. Saurabh, his six-year-old son, was visibly disappointed seeing its condition.

Samir said he moved to the capital around 10 years ago and while visiting his

home town recently, he decided to bring his son here.

"I haven't visited the place in a while. It looks more like a landfill now," said Samir, adding, "This park used to be a must-visit place for us all."

"There used to be a pond surrounded by a walkway. Children used to run around freely by the garden," he reminisced.

Residents of the area also shared his sentiments. Abdul Aziz, a local, said the authorities must take initiatives to save the park.

According to sources, 12 people are appointed to look after the park. It remains open from 4pm to 8pm daily, said security guard Bipul Barua. He said around 20-25 people visit the park every wday.

CCC constructed a swimming pool in place of the pond in 2013. Almost half the area of the two-acre park was taken up to build the pool, which according to locals, remained mostly unused.

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Rab arrests 6 'Ansar Al Islam' men

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) have arrested six suspected operatives of banned militant outfit Ansar al Islam in Dhaka and Satkhira, who were allegedly operating the group online and through encrypted messaging apps.

The six were arrested in separate raids in the capital's Uttara, Gazipur and Satkhira's Shyamnagar upazila on Friday, said Mozammel Haque, commanding officer of Rab-4 at a press conference at Rab media centre yesterday.

The arrestees are: Shafiqul Islam alias Salman Muktedir (21), Elias Hawlader alias Khattab (32), Ekramul Islam alias Amir Hamza (21), Amir Hossain (26), Shipon Mir alias Abdur Rob (33), and Waliullah alias Abdur Rahman (25), the elite force said.

"They were planning to gather at a place in the capital's Uttara to plan an attack," the Rab official claimed, adding that they have seized a laptop, mobile phones and books, leaflets and digital content containing extremist ideologies.

They arrestees have been involved with the banned militant outfit for two to four years, according to the elite force.

Among them, Amir Hossain used to operate six Facebook pages to propagate the ideology of Ansar al Islam and is the chief coordinator of the outfit's Satkhira district, Rab said.

He was influenced by sermons and

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4 held with stolen motorbikes, heroin

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Police in separate drives in Dhamrai, Manikganj and Faridpur on Friday night and early yesterday arrested four alleged members of a gang of inter-district motorcycle thieves, including the ringleader.

Police also recovered five stolen motorcycles, 1,300 packets of heroin, and other stolen valuables from their possession.

Saidur Rahman, additional superintendent of Police (Dhaka-North) in a press briefing at Dhamrai Police Station said the arrestees were involved in various criminal activities including motorcycle theft in different districts. A few motorcycles were stolen from Dhamrai in the last couple of days, prompting the law enforcers to investigate.

The arrestees were identified as Nazmul Hassan Munna (25), Selim Hossen (35), Badsha Farazi (28) and Badsha's brother Robiul Farazi.

Munna is the ring leader of the group, Saidur said.

The arrestees were sent to a Dhaka court, seeking a seven-day remand prayer, he added.

Road crash kills HSC examinee

OUR CORRESPONDENT, M'singh

An HSC examinee was killed in a road crash on Mymensingh-Kishoreganj road in Kishoreganj town's Charpara area yesterday.

The victim was identified as Hafizur Rahman Payel, 18, son of sub-inspector Md Bazlur Rahman of Kishoreganj town's Police Lines area. He was an HSC examinee from Govt Gurudayal College.

Quoting locals, Md Abu Bakar Siddiq, officer-in-charge of Kishoreganj Sadar Police Station, said Payel sustained critical injuries when his motorbike was hit by a battery-run

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Jatiya Nabannotsab Udjapan Parishad yesterday organised a vibrant cultural programme at Bakultala of Faculty of Fine Arts, Dhaka University yesterday. Nabanna, or the festival of new harvest, has been celebrated since time immemorial in this region on the first day of the Bangla month of Agrahayan.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



PHOTO: TITU DAS

Two boys help their mother select an idol of Kartik at Sri Sri Hari Thakur temple in Barishal city yesterday. Hindus across the country will observe Kartik Puja today.

'Onion price rising by Tk 2 every hour'

Amir Khasru says in Chattogram

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cg

BNP central standing committee member Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury yesterday claimed that price of onion has been increasing by Tk 2 per kg every hour.

He was addressing the council of Chattogram north district unit Jatiyatabadi Krishak Dal on Nasiman Bhaban premises in Kazir Dewri of Chattogram.

Buying power of common people has decreased by half compared to the tenure of BNP government, due to price hike of essential commodities coupled with hike in gas, electricity and house rent, he said.

Mentioning the price onion reaching Tk 250 per kg, Khasru, chief guest in the programme, said a seminar should be arranged in Chattogram to find the mystery behind it.

Criticising the prime minister's advice to avoid onions in cooking, Khasru said this advice is like "to cut down the head to solve headache".

"Only those who do not have any accountability to the people, who do not have to go to the people for votes, can give such suggestions," he said, adding, "They [Awami League] occupied the power without people's mandate and so they can give such advice to people."

"They [AL men] looted the share market and banks and built casinos in the country," Khasru said, adding, "They are now completely detached from people."

BNP Chattogram city unit president Shahadat Hossain said the prime minister has to interfere in every affair of the state, which "proves" that ministers of the government "cannot perform" their duty properly.

BNP Chattogram south district unit convener

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43rd death anniversary of Maulana Bhasani today



Bss, Dhaka

Today marks the 43rd death anniversary of visionary politician Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Bhasani, a key figure in Bangladesh's independence.

Popularly known as the "Majlum Jananeta", meaning leader of the downtrodden, Bhasani took his last breath on this day in 1976. He was born in 1880.

To mark the day, various political parties and organisations have planned commemorative programmes.

The day will begin

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Sultana Kamal new Bapa chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The new executive committee of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), a platform of green activists, was formed yesterday with rights activist and environmentalist Sultana Kamal as its president.

Abdul Matin, outgoing general secretary; and Sharif Jamil, outgoing joint secretary, were made new executive vice-president and general secretary, in the committee, which will be effective for two years.

The 52-member body was formed in a meeting at its office in the capital's Lalmatia, presided over by outgoing president Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, said a press release.

Noted columnist Syed Abul Maksud, educationist Rasheda K Chowdhury and architect Mobasher Hossain are new vice-presidents.

The committee also has nine others as joint secretaries and 30 as general members.

Sylhet residents want bigger city

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Locals at a meeting with officials yesterday demanded that Sylhet city be expanded and a development authority be formed immediately.

The meeting was organised by Sylhet District Administration at its seminar hall where Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen was present.

Over a century-old Sylhet municipality was upgraded to a city corporation in 2002, consisting 26.50 sq km area.

According to Sylhet City Corporation, they submitted a plan to expand the city to the local government ministry in 2014, with a proposal to include another 160.62 sq km area.

In 2015, the ministry ordered the district administration to evaluate it, but a report is yet to be finalised in this regard.

At yesterday's meeting, Dr Momen, the lawmaker from Sylhet-1 constituency, said, "If the SCC area is expanded, we will be able to provide services to more people that will eventually increase revenue."

He also said, "When the area is expanded, we can also demand formation of a city development authority like other large cities like Chattogram, Rajshahi and Khulna."

Momen told the district administration and SCC to prepare two separate proposals to finalise the expansion process. "Considering both proposals, we will take a decision," he said.

Sylhet Deputy Commissioner M Kazi Emdadul Islam presided over the meeting, where parliamentarian (Sylhet-3) Mahmudus Samad Chowdhury and SCC Mayor Ariful Haque Chowdhury were present, among others.



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