

DHAKA AIRPORT'S MIDDLE MARKER Restricted area, unbridled access



Two youths stand beside a marker beacon, hoping to see a plane fly by. This area, known as Middle Marker, is a restricted zone that provides directions to planes for safe landing on runway. Due to damaged walls and lack of monitoring, it has become a recreational spot for locals. They also dry clothes and use a part of the airport land for farming. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

MATHEWS CHIRAN

On one side of a road that goes to Bawnia through Dolipara in Uttara, there's a runway for planes to land at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport. This restricted area is demarcated with a tall-wire fence, from which people often look through to see airplanes come and go.

There is also an open space on the other side of the road, called a "Middle Marker" -- with a setup of lights, transmitters, cables and antennas -- to give pilots a means to determine position along an established route to a destination such as a runway.

This around half square kilometre area is also restricted and walled. There is also a locality beside the Middle Marker.

However, on its north side, not only some parts of the boundary wall are damaged, but the area is also being used as a recreational spot by locals.

There are six Ansar men to maintain security in three shifts, who are unable to restrict such movement of people. They also claimed that many engage in anti-social activities there as the area is mostly secluded.

In addition to the risk of interfering with plane landing or damaging the equipment or a serious accident, some locals have started to cultivate vegetables towards the end of the Middle Marker.

People in the area also throw garbage over the walls [not more than 6-8 feet tall] and dump those beside the damaged parts.

After visiting the area in the middle of October, this correspondent informed the matter to Platoon Commander (Ansar and VDP) Siddiqur Rahman, who at that time was in charge of ensuring security in the area.

He said he joined around a year ago and is aware of the damaged walls. "Since no one complained, we did not take any step in this regard."

Asked about unrestricted movement of people and the danger it poses, he suggested that this newspaper speaks to higher authorities.

Aviation Security Director Commander Obaidur Rahman also did not want to comment on the matter either and made a similar suggestion.

Contacted, Dhaka airport Director AHM Touhid-ul Ahsan said he did not know about the situation and would take necessary steps as the place is a "sensitive area."

"It is a sensitive area because when a plane approaches, antennas signal the pilot whether the airplane is on the right track or on the [runway's] centre line.

That is to aid navigation and necessary for operation," he told this correspondent the same month.

PRESENT SITUATION

More than a month went by since this newspaper informed the authorities of the matter. This correspondent visited the area early this month but nothing seemed to have changed.

However, during a visit yesterday, it was seen that some bushes were cleaned and construction work to build a boundary wall near the "vegetable farm" was ongoing.

The workers said they started the work last week.

But people were still seen entering the area as per whim and dumping household garbage inside the Middle Marker.

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Asian universities aim stronger collaborations

Curtains falls on AUPF 2019

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Curtains fell on the 18th Asian University Presidents Forum (AUPF) 2019 yesterday, with a vision to have stronger collaborations among Asian universities in mutual cooperation and technology transfers.

Some 40 Asian universities signed 64 memorandums of understanding (MoU) on exchange of students, faculties and PhD scholarships, on the concluding ceremony of the event.

The ceremony took place on the Daffodil International University (DIU) permanent campus at Ashulia in Savar. DIU, in collaboration with Association of Private Universities of Bangladesh, organised this year's AUPF for the first time in Bangladesh.

Participants, including presidents, rectors, and vice-chancellors of 15 Asian countries' universities, joined the three-day conference with the theme "Future of Entrepreneurship Education and Experiential Learning: Determinants of Developing Successful Entrepreneurial Eco-System in Asian Economies".

University Grants Commission Chairman Prof Kazi Shahidullah, while speaking as chief guest at yesterday's programme said the theme was a time-befitting one for Bangladesh.

"Studying entrepreneurship benefits students and learners from different social and economic backgrounds, because it teaches people to cultivate unique skills and think outside the box," he said.

The UGC chair said entrepreneurial education and training provides individuals with abilities to recognise commercial opportunities. It also leads to self-employment and creates job openings for others, and has an important role in the economic growth and development of the country.

He said DIU is contributing to create future entrepreneurs, by patronising start-ups through creating a sustainable eco-system. "Other universities can also take note and follow suit," he added.

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Financing still a challenge for startups

Says Baybars Altuntas

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR

If Asian universities collaborate among each other, it would open up opportunities for innovation and connect startups and entrepreneurs with global investment markets, said Baybars Altuntas, chairperson of World Business Angel Investment Forum.

Forty percent of Bangladesh's population are young, who can contribute to the world economy through entrepreneurship, he said.

The Turkish entrepreneur visited Dhaka on November 21-24. He delivered the keynote speech at 18th Asian University Presidents Forum (AUPF) 2019, organised by Daffodil International University (DIU), in collaboration with Association of Private Universities of Bangladesh (APUB).

He presented his keynote on the theme for this year's AUPF, "Future of Entrepreneurship Education and Experiential Learning: Determinants of Developing Successful Entrepreneurial Eco-System in Asian Economies."

Altuntas, also the developer of the world-renowned entrepreneurship theory called "Altuntas Startup Compass Theory", said that entrepreneurship is



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PHOTO: STAR

DIU board of trustees chairman Sabur Khan hands over the AUPF flag to next year's host, Vellore Institute of Technology.

'Many more will have to face ACC'

Warns chief of graft watchdog

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

There is lack of accountability in recruitment and promotion in primary and secondary education system, Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Chairman Iqbal Mahmood said yesterday.

"Many [people] are facing the ACC [for corruption] right now and many more will have to face it," he said at a meeting with the representatives of the UK's Department of International Development (DFID) at ACC's headquarters in Segunbagicha.

Replying to a question, the ACC chairman said if transparency and accountability in recruitment of teachers and officers could not be ensured, it would become difficult to maintain quality of education.

Iqbal said, "We've requested the government to introduce digital attendance system to ensure presence of teachers in the classroom."

At one stage, a DFID representative asked about transparency in recruitment of officials in law enforcement agencies.

"The recruitment process that took place in 2018 was transparent enough," Mahmood opined.

He, however, said the ACC is investigating into allegations of corruption against police members.

Mahmood said, "Not only police, ACC is also looking into the corruption allegations against politicians, businessmen and officials of the administration."

ACC has so far submitted 13 reports identifying several sources of

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TORTURE OF MIGRANT WORKERS

Govt delegation to meet Saudi authorities

JAMIL MAHMUD

Against the backdrop of recent protests over alleged abuse and torture of female migrant workers in Saudi Arabia, a government delegation is going to hold meeting with Saudi authorities in Riyadh on Wednesday.

The joint technical committee (JTC) meeting is likely to shed light on "streamlining" the processes regarding migrant workers-- both male and female -- visa, stay and iqama (work permit) in the Gulf country, said Golam Moshfi, Bangladeshi ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

"The existing challenges will be addressed and a way to resolve those will be found out," he told The Daily Star over phone.

"Saudi employers demand skilled labourers but we are unable to prepare our workers as skilled. It is a challenge," he added.

Asked, the ambassador said he is not ready to say that abuse or torture against female migrant workers does not take place in the Gulf country.

However, female workers had seldom complained over such issues before the embassy prior to their departure from Saudi Arabia, but raised those only when they were back home, he said.

The embassy can fight for them on legal grounds upon receiving complaints, he further said.

A Saudi deputy minister is likely to head the Saudi delegation in the JTC meeting, Moshfi said.

Meanwhile, a five-member delegation of the Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry, headed by its secretary Salim Reza, will travel to Riyadh for the meeting, said a government order.

The ambassador, labour counsellor and other relevant officials from the embassy will join the delegation, it added.

Bangladesh has been sending female migrant workers to Saudi Arabia under a domestic workers' agreement signed between the two countries in 2015. Since

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HC concerned over use of chemical in fruits

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday observed that only god knows what type of chemicals are being mixed with fruits, as people's kidneys and livers are getting damaged and they are being affected with complicated diseases including cancer after eating such fruits.

Fines imposed by mobile courts to dishonest traders for using harmful chemicals in fruits are not sufficient, the bench of Justice FRM Nazmul Ahasan and Justice KM Kamrul Kader observed while hearing a writ petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh, seeking necessary orders on this issue.

The HC bench yesterday wanted an explanation from the chairperson of National Board of Revenue (NBR) as to why it has not set up chemical detection machines at all land and sea ports to monitor whether chemical-laced fruits are imported.

The NBR chairman has been asked to submit the explanation by December 5, petitioner's lawyer Advocate Manzill Murshid told The Daily Star.

On June 23, the HC ordered the NBR chairman to submit a report in three months on the progress for setting up such machines.

Yesterday, Deputy Attorney General Abdullah-Al-Mahmud Bashar told the HC that NBR is collecting funds in this regard.

The HC set December 5 for passing further order on the petition.

The court in a verdict in 2012 had directed the NBR chairman and the customs department to set up the machines.

The HC on May 20 this year directed the government to form teams to monitor fruit markets and warehouses across the country to prevent use of harmful chemicals.

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