

CANALS IN DNCC No encroacher will be spared: Atiqul

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Mayor Atiqul Islam yesterday said no encroachers, even powerful ones, will be spared from the corporation's eviction drive, and multi-storey buildings constructed illegally on canal land will be demolished.

Atiqul made the comment while visiting Ibrahimpur canal to observe the recovery drive.

This is his first step to recover canals of DNCC areas, after officially taking charge of managing the city's drainage system from Wasa on December 31, 2020.

On the first day of the drive, the DNCC team demolished a three-storey building and some tin-shed structures constructed illegally on Ibrahimpur canal's land.

The mayor said they will demolish all illegal buildings, whether it be one-storey or 10-storey, constructed illegally by encroaching the canal's land.

He said they will conduct such drives in other canals gradually.

Atiqul said they will soon set up boundary pillars on the edge of canals based on CS surveys and remove all illegal structures from both sides of canals.

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DNCC Mayor Atiqul Islam firsthand observed yesterday's drive to recover Ibrahimpur canal from encroachers. He said all illegal structures will be demolished to save the waterways, and authorities will conduct such drives for other canals as well.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

CTG CITY OUTER RING ROAD Dragging on for a decade

Project to be placed at Ecneec for 3rd revision

REJAUUL KARIM BYRON and DWAIPAYAN BARUA

A project on the construction of Chattogram City Outer Ring Road -- that was taken around ten years back in 2011 with four-year completion period -- is yet to be completed.

Implementing organisation Chattogram Development Authority (CDA) is going to place a proposal at the meeting of Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec) today for revision of the project for the third time, with extension of project period and raising the cost.

With this, the project period has been extended for five times. The deadline for completion of the project was earlier set at June this year. But the authorities have initiated again for the third revision with proposal of raising expenditure by Tk 249 crore and extending the period six more months to December 2021. In the third revision, CDA proposed to raise the cost of Tk 856.286-crore initial project to Tk 2,675.96 crore.

CDA took the project, titled "Chattogram City Outer Ring Road (Patenga to Sagarika)" to construct a 15.2-kilometre embankment plus four-lane road on the existing coastal embankment stretching from Patenga to Rasmoni Ghat at South Kattoli road in 2011.

Project Director (PD) Kazi Hasan Bin Shams, said construction of the embankment and road under the project has been completed and opened for vehicular movement since August.

The original coastal embankment was 5-feet wide at the bottom and 18-20 feet wide at the top; the bottom width has been enhanced up to

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Modernise, reopen jute mills: workers' platform

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A workers' platform yesterday urged the government to immediately modernise the state-owned jute mills and reopen those, saying that resumption of the mills will ensure employment of about 75,000 workers.

Paat-Shuta O Bostro Kol Sramik Karmachari Sangram Parishad suggested that the government modernise the mills as per a proposal made by the Chinese government.

The parishad made the demand during a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity in the capital.

The government on July 2 last year decided to shut down production at 25 state-run jute mills under Bangladesh Jute Mills Corporation by providing cent percent dues of some 25,000 workers, says a UNB report.

The decision came at a meeting at the Gono Bhaban, with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Briefing reporters at the Prime Minister's Office, the premier's Principal Secretary Ahmad Kaikaus said cent percent dues of workers would be given at the quickest possible time and it would require Tk 5,000 crore.

He also said the 25 mills would be reopened after refurbishing those with modern technologies under different types of ventures -- PPP, G2G, joint venture or lease model.

In 2016, China agreed to fund, among others, a project for "balancing, modernisation, rehabilitation and expansion of public sector jute mills".

At yesterday's press conference, Shahidullah Chowdhury, convener of the parishad, said the government shut down the jute mills when there was a possibility of rise in global jute products demand amid the coronavirus pandemic.

"It has been six months into the closure but there is no buzz at all to reopen the mills," he said.

Only privately-owned jute mills are operational in the country at present, said Kamrul Ahsan, a joint convener of the parishad.

It is essential to take a rigorous policy to increase export-oriented jute industry production, he said, reading out a written statement.

At the event, the parishad also demanded for upgrading seven state-owned textile mills, and due payments of workers of jute and cotton mills.

Tk 2,000CR LAUNDERING CASE Faridpur ex-AL leader denied bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday refused to grant bail to former Faridpur town unit Awami League general secretary Sajjad Hossain alias Barkat and his brother Intiaz Hasan alias Rubel, in a case filed for laundering Tk 2,000 crore abroad.

The HC, however, issued a rule asking the state and Anti-Corruption Commission to explain in two weeks why they should not be granted bail in the case.

The HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Ahmed Sohail came up with the rule after virtually hearing a petition filed by Barkat and Rubel, also former president of Faridpur Press Club, seeking bail in the case.

ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told The Daily Star that Barkat and Rubel cannot get released from jail following the HC rule.

SM Miraj Al Mahmud, a CID inspector, lodged the case against the two brothers under the money laundering act with Kafur Police Station on June 26 last year.

On June 7 last year, police arrested nine people, including Sajjad and Rubel, from different parts of Faridpur town for their alleged involvement in attacking a house of one Subal Chandra in the town's Goalchamat area on May 16.

According to the case statement, the duo amassed a huge amount of wealth after they won contracts from various government departments in the district through manipulation since 2010.

They were also allegedly involved in drug trading and land grabbing. The two became owners of around 23 buses, and several trucks and cars.

42 returnees from UK sent to quarantine

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Forty-two passengers were put under a mandatory 14-day institutional quarantine after they landed at Sylhet Osmani International Airport from London yesterday afternoon.

The flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines (BG-202) reached Sylhet from Heathrow Airport with 48 passengers in total. Among them, 42 landed in Sylhet while others departed for Dhaka.

After primary health check-up, the passengers were taken to a hotel in Sylhet city via several BRTC buses amid tight security, said Shamma Labiba Arnob, assistant commissioner (Covid-19 and media cell) of Sylhet district administration.

"If a passenger does not like the accommodation, we have arranged accommodation at another hotel for them. All the passengers are bound to stay at institutional quarantine at their own cost," the official said.

They are not allowed to meet any of their relatives at the hotels, she said, adding that security has been beefed up so that the passengers cannot go out either.

A double-edged sword Media if not responsible can end up publicising militant propaganda, says study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Militant outfits have often used media in a tactical way to spread their message, and the media at times served the outfits' purpose through exaggerating the details, according to a study.

The study -- The Symbiotic Relationship between Media and Terrorism -- further mentioned that newspapers are committed to publishing the truth but sometimes the principles of journalism get violated due to unhealthy competition.

Moreover, media's attempt to dramatise and use of detailed description of events, unwanted adjectives to stir up readers' emotion, and fabricated or speculative interpretations of premature news can be harmful not only for readers but also for the society as a whole.

This can never be desired from responsible media, read the study paper.

Shabnam Azim, associate professor, department of Mass Communication and Journalism at Dhaka University, presented the study on the first day of a three-day webinar that started on Sunday.

The webinar -- Ensuring life without terror: Responses to terrorism in Bangladesh -- jointly organised by the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime unit and Centre for Genocide Studies, ends today.

The study was conducted analysing more than 100 news items on 24 major militancy-related incidents between 2014 and 2019 in the country. Eight experts from different strata of the society were also interviewed.

The researcher believes that during the time (2014-2019), issues such as rise of militancy, suppression of possible attacks, attempted attacks or destroying militant organisations' capacity, sporadic attempts, and efforts of reorganising and the process of re-emergence came to the forefront.

On the other hand, the media's approach to terrorism, choice of words, attitudes, and editorial policy marked a clear shift.

In a nutshell, newspapers started publishing news

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INT'L ROBOT OLYMPIAD

Bangladesh bags two gold medals

MAHMUDUL HASAN

The Bangladeshi contingent at the 22nd International Robot Olympiad (IRO) has won two gold, two silver and five bronze medals, along with six more technical awards.

Robo Sparkers team's Misbah Uddin Inan, student of Chattogram Cantonment Public College, and Zaima Jahin Wara of William Carey Academy won a gold medal in the creative category.

RoboTigers team's Nasheetat Zainah Rahman, student of Sunbeams, and Quazi Mostahid Labib of Chittagong Grammar School-Dhaka secured the other gold medal, in the "Robot in Movie" category.

For the pandemic, the IRO competition was held online this year and controlled from Daegu, South Korea.

A 19-member Bangladeshi team participated in the IRO from BCS Innovation Centre in Dhaka on December 12 and 13, according to Bangladesh Robot Olympiad (BDRO).

"Bangladesh has been participating in the IRO for three years. Each year, our performance has surpassed the previous year's" Lafifa Jamal, president of

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WORKERS' DEATH

Probe report blames shipyard owners

MOSTAFA YOUSUF, Cg

After 2020 saw several worker's death in multiple shipbreaking yards in Sitakunda upazila, a Ministry of Industry letter has put the blame on yard owners' apathy in ensuring a safe workplace for their employees.

Issued on December 30, the letter came up with the observation following a probe body investigation of the death of three workers in Khawaja Shipbreaking Yard on 25 December.

In 2020 alone, the three workers died in the yard owned by KSRM in 2020 alone.

The two member probe-body, led by deputy secretary of Ministry of Industry Kazi Faruk Ahmed, inspected the yard at Sitakunda upazila on January 2.

The letter says the accidents continue to take place at a time when the ministry is trying hard to ensure the safety of workers in the yard.

"Accidents like this give a negative impression about the yards in the international arena," the letter read. It blamed the yard owners for their apathy in ensuring workers safety, despite repeated requests.

Contacted, Kazi Faruk Ahmed, member of probe body, told The Daily Star that after the accident, the yard authority sent an explanation to Ministry of Industry. "We will verify their description of the accident," he said.

"Action will be taken against them as per the law. We can't let this happen anymore," he added.

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Five victims drank adulterated liquor

Says police; 4 arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rajshahi Metropolitan Police (RMP) yesterday said that the five people who died from alcohol poisoning during New Year celebrations in Rajshahi was due to them consuming liquor adulterated with chemicals.

In a press release, Additional Deputy Commissioner Golam Ruhul Quddus, RMP's spokesperson, said an investigation revealed that the poisoning occurred because illegal liquor sellers mixed chemicals with foreign liquor to increase quantity, and therefore, profits.

However, he said a detailed investigation into the matter was ongoing.

Police arrested four illegal liquor dealers last night from two places, Sagarpara and Sipaipara, in Rajshahi city, the statement said. They told police that they sold the alcohol to sick people on New Year's Eve, and did not have proper knowledge or experience of mixing chemicals with liquor.

The arrestees are Parimal Singh (60), Md Saju (30), Bappa Singh (28) and Md Iftekar Hossain alias Sumon (50).

Police seized three bottles of rectified spirit, a plastic bottle filled with liquid for making wine, a bottle filled with tamarind

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Rabeya Khatun's body was brought to Bangla Academy premises around 11 in the morning, where people of all walks of life paid their last tributes to the celebrated novelist.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Rabeya Khatun laid to final rest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent novelist Rabeya Khatun was laid to eternal rest at Banani graveyard yesterday afternoon.

An Independence Day awardee and Ekushey Padak winner, she was buried following her namaz-e-janaza at Channel I premises.

Rabeya Khatun died at her Banani residence around 5pm on Sunday after suffering a cardiac arrest.

She was 86 at the time. Her body was taken to Bangla Academy at about 11am, where people from all walks and ages paid their last tribute.

Bangladesh Awami League, Information Minister Mohammad

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