

## Where have all the 'nutrition gardens' gone?

RASHIDUL HASAN

Lawmakers at a meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on agriculture ministry yesterday expressed their indignation and doubt over the ministry's claim that 4,390 "family nutrition gardens" have been set up at different unions across the country.

Mesbahul Islam, secretary to the ministry, placed the information through a video projection while presenting the ministry's various ongoing projects before the parliamentary watchdog.

Expressing doubt over the ministry's claim, two ruling Awami League lawmakers -- Md Moslem Uddin and Anwarul Abedin Khan -- told the meeting that they did not see a single nutrition garden in any of the ward of their constituencies, meeting sources said.

"Where have all the family nutrition gardens gone? I stay at my village home most of the time. I didn't see presence of any such garden in my union or other unions under my constituency," a lawmaker who was present at the meeting told this correspondent.

Wishing anonymity, he said if such gardens were indeed set up at his constituency, he could have seen at least one.

Nutrition gardens are a micro-solution and an affordable way of ensuring healthy food and balanced nutrition. The project was a brainchild of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina during the primary stage of the ongoing Covid-19.

The aim of the project was to ensure food security during pandemic, flood and other emergency situation.

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Wasa personnel test the quality of water being distributed throughout Dhaka city at Palashi area, after collecting samples from the supply line. However, one cannot help but wonder whether conducting such a test out on the streetside is really the best approach. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## Govt planning population density zoning for Dhaka

Says LGRD minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is planning population density zoning in the capital based on the size of an area and civic facilities, said LGRD Minister Md Tajul Islam yesterday.

Density zoning places limitations on property development by controlling the number of structures in a given area to control population density. It is used in town planning as a tool to either increase density or maintain a low density in an area of the city.

The minister made the comment at a views-exchange meeting with journalists at his official residence in the capital, marking his two years as the LGRD minister.

"We have to think whether we will allow too many high-rises as it is important to ensure civic facilities like playground, roads, greeneries, waterbodies, schools and utility services for residents of a particular area," said the minister, who is the convener of 20-year Detailed Area Plan preparing cabinet committee.

"We have to be calculative and determine the density of an area based on civic and utility facilities of the areas. We are holding meetings with the stakeholders in this regard to prepare the DAP," he said.

He sought help from journalists and people from all walks of people to implement the plan.

Responding to a question about the recent handover of the drainage system to the two city corporations from Wasa, he said it is not easy to recover canals from encroachers and

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## A decade later, justice eludes Felani's family

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A decade since Felani Khatun was shot dead by Indian Border Security Force (BSF), but her family's wait for justice is not over yet.

BSF gunned down fifteen-year-old Felani when she along with her father was returning home from India through Anantapur border along Phulbari upazila of Kurigram on January 7, 2011.

The ghastly photo of Felani's body hanging from barbed wire upside down sparked protest throughout the country.

Her father Nurul Islam managed to enter Bangladesh, scaling the barbed-wire fence.

The BSF trooper, Amiya Ghosh, who killed her, faced two phases of trial in an internal court, and was acquitted in both.

A special court constituted by BSF acquitted Amiya Ghosh of the charge on August 19, 2013, says a UNB report.

Later, in wake of criticism of the acquittal, BSF decided to revise the murder trial. However, another judicial court upheld the previous verdict and acquitted Amiya again on July 2, 2015, it says.

Nurul, with the help of Indian human rights organisation "Manabadhikar Suraksha Mancha" filed a writ petition with the Supreme Court of India, it adds.

Nurul said he went from door to door

to seek justice in the last nine years but is yet to see it. The trial proceeding dates have been deferred several times.

"How would I get justice?" he asked. Jahanara Begum, Felani's mother, demanded justice, calling upon governments of the two countries.

SM Abraham Lincoln, public prosecutor in Kurigram, said, "I hope Felani's family will get justice."

Meanwhile in a press release, Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers Association (BNWLA) yesterday called upon the Indian government to take immediate steps for ensuring justice for the killing and provide due compensation to the victim's family.

Besides, it urged both Bangladesh and India to play effective roles to stop border killings.

BNWLA had filed a case with the Indian Supreme Court in 2013 for "transparent and impartial" trial of the killing incident, said the release.

The case was still pending, it said.

Commemorating Felani's death and demanding en to border killings, a photography exhibition featuring works of Parvez Ahmed was held yesterday at the yard of the girl's ancestral home in Kurigram, said another press release.

## 'Take legal action against the EC'

10 SC lawyers appeal to ACC over 'loss of Tk 7.47cr state money'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ten Supreme Court lawyers yesterday submitted an application to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) for taking appropriate legal action over the allegations against the Election Commission including the chief election commissioner (CEC) of causing a loss of Tk 7.47 crore of the state in the name of training allowance.

The lawyers led by Mohammad Shishir Manir handed over the application to the ACC office requesting it to conduct investigation and lodge a case against the CEC, election commissioners, EC secretary, just retired EC secretary and other government officials responsible for the loss of the state money.

Citing a report published in the daily Jugantor on January 3, they said in the application that Tk 7.47 crore has been spent for the "special speakers", "course directors" and "course advisers" for the training programmes without approval from the finance ministry and the rules of the Election Commission.

Other nine lawyers, who signed the application, are Md Asad Uddin, Mohammad Mujahidul Islam, Md Zobaidur Rahman, Md Abdus Sabur Dewan, Al Reza Md Amin, Abdullah Hil Maruf Fahim, Md Mujahidur Rahman, M Mustafizur Rahman and Md Zahirul Islam.

Earlier on December 14 last year, 42 distinguished citizens urged the president to constitute Supreme Judicial Council to investigate allegations of corruption and other

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## MINI BYTES



## The year of Zoom calls and Google meets

SHAHRIAR RAHMAN

Zoom- probably this word this year is equivalent to what Facebook was back in 2012. Thanks to the pandemic, zoom call has become a household staple. Some lexicographers have even gone out of their way to put in the word in a few dictionaries in some languages to denote attending task from home.

With lockdown in effect from globally from around March this year, most of the desk jobholders had to pack-up and go indoors. Despite the initial temporary disruption, work resumed for these workforces with the assistance of technological solutions that were most commonly used: Messenger, Viber, WhatsApp etc. But Zoom, a relatively lesser popular tool in Bangladesh, saw a sharp rise in popularity. This popularity was due to the fact that it was one of the readily available free tools that could accommodate a high number of audiences without any interruption. From ministries to schools, organisations of different magnitude adopted Zoom as their primary driver for work from home (WFH). Zoom, seeing the demand, capitalised the situation by offering unlimited duration on calls for a good period of time. But this service provider wasn't above issues- security concern was one of the biggest issues that plagued the platform. There were numerous instances where hackers hijacked the feed of important calls and displayed obscene images or videos. Due to all these, Zoom has been even banned by some government and private organisations across the world.

Yet still, no. of Zoom call in Bangladesh kept on increasing in Bangladesh. Although Zoom did not

respond to the request of statistics and number regarding Bangladesh, several third-party sites offered a vague indicator of how popular the service is in Bangladesh. According to website traffic analysis service Alexa, Zoom is the 18th most popular site in Bangladesh. Another web traffic analysis tool SimilarWeb offers even deeper insights: a total of 354.7 Million visits to the site alone in the month of November with the average spent amount of time of 20:08 minutes.

Zoom wasn't the only player in the market in Bangladesh. Google Meet, an offering now part of Google's business suite, has also gained popularity in the country. Some other similar services that saw a surge in usage are Microsoft Teams, Cisco Webex, BlueJeans, DingTalk, WeChat etc. In local and particularly in Multinational organisations, Microsoft Teams and Cisco Webex are quite popular.

Undoubtedly, these video-conferencing tools have been pivotal in driving business in most organisations. But most users have attested that video calls are tiring and create a toll on the mind. Zoom fatigue, a term coined by many psychologists, is real. During the peak of lockdown, many users started to report stress and anxiety which many experts have deduced are due to these rampant video calls. A species that thrived on the face to face interaction, had suddenly been caged due to a pandemic. But with COVID vaccines rolling out slowly across the globe, the 'Zoom Blues' are expected to go down steadily. Maybe people will stop resorting to video-calls for work. Or will they? We will have to wait and see.

## A fallen 'king of the hill' in Ctg

Grabbing govt land, youth sets up drug, arms smuggling network in Akbar Shah; 12 accomplices held in raid; court sent him to 17yrs in jail in 2017, but cops unaware

FM MIZANUR RAHMAN

There were rumours that something shady was going on in the area but no one was sure about it.

After all, the entire premises -- a hilly area at port city's Akbar Shah -- was not only fenced but also heavily guarded with two iron gates at the entrance.

There was also a signboard saying the locality was named "Gousiya City".

Inside were multiple buildings, tin-shed houses, saw mills, cattle and chicken farms, a mosque, madrasa, and graveyard while construction of several buildings were underway.

Besides, roads were made flattening hills and there were stairs leading to the hilltop. No one was allowed to go in or out without permission.

All these were built by one Nur Alam, locally known as Nuru, who lived on a hilltop inside the

premises -- from where he oversaw his "operations".

So, what did this 30-year-old do for a living?

Nuru is allegedly involved in drugs and firearms smuggling. He also smuggles logs. Not only has he been involved in these illegal activities for a long time, but also right under the nose of the administration by grabbing the hill -- that too a government land.

The hill is known as Nachia Ghona Pahar of Purba Firoj Shah Colony.

**HOW IT CAME TO LIGHT**

On December 26 last year, being informed that drug trafficking was going on in the area, Akbar Shah police conducted a drive there.

However, when they reached the iron gates, they were attacked by over 100 accomplices of Nuru, forcing law enforcers to leave the area, according to police sources.

"During the attack, we had to open fire to save ourselves. They were also throwing rocks at us from the hills. We were able to arrest one of Nuru's cohorts from the spot," said Jahir Hossain, officer-in-charge of Akbar Shah Police Station.

Law enforcers reinforced and returned a few days later. "We raided the area on Wednesday and arrested 12 persons in an overnight drive. We also arrested the wife of Nuru's second-in-command with lethal weapons and yaba," the OC added.

"Weapons, machetes and 1,150 yaba tablets were seized from the arrestees' possession. The prime accused Nuru is on the run. We are conducting drives to arrest him," he added.

**'A YOUTH WITH CONNECTIONS'**

Interestingly, locals seemed to be quite oblivious of Nuru's illegal activities and thought of him as a person who was well-connected.

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## 'We are not land grabbers'

Says family that claims to have 'court order' on historic building in port city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, CTG

Family of M Farid Chowdhury, who went to take possession of anti-British revolutionary Jatindra Mohan Sengupta's house after obtaining a "court order", yesterday said they did not grab the house, rather they went to take possession of the property following legal procedures.

They made this comment at a press conference at Chattogram Press Club.

"Those who termed us as land grabbers and are spreading propaganda against us are doing it intentionally for their self-interest," said Farid's son Farhad Chowdhury.

Farhad said that they bought the property from an heir of Jatindra, Milan Sen, who was the property's "owner".

About allegation of using fake documents, Farhad said, "We've got ownership of the property after a long legal battle, and everybody knows that a legal battle cannot be won on basis of fake documents."

Replying to a question about the High Court issuing an order on Wednesday, he

said, "We have been staying at the property since Monday. The HC issued status quo on the property, which means we will not move out, and no one else will enter, but the house will not be demolished. We are following the order, as we are staying there without making any changes [demolition] to the house. In the order, the court has not directed us to leave the property."

Farhad said if the government wants to take over the house, it should do so through legal process, after negotiating with them.

Contacted, Rana Dasgupta, a prosecutor of International Crimes Tribunal, said Milan Sen, although a relative of Jatindra, cannot be the property's owner, as it was made vested property in the 1970s. Milan did not file any case with court, claiming ownership, as per vested property repeal act, Rana said.

"Keeping the district administration, custodian of the land, in the dark and not making them a party, Farid file the case," he said. "So, I reiterate that they formulated fake documents."

## CASES AGAINST BABUNAGARI, MAMUN Court again asks PBI to submit reports

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday asked Police Bureau of Investigation (PBI) again to submit by February 3 probe reports of two sedition cases filed against Hefajat-e-Islam chief Junayed Babunagari and two other leaders.

The two other accused are: Hefajat-e-Islam joint secretary general Mamunul Haque and Islami Andolan Bangladesh senior nayeb-e-amir Syed Muhammad Faizul Karim.

Metropolitan Magistrate Md Baki Billah passed the orders after PBI failed to submit any report.

On December 7 last year, Aminul Islam Bulbul, president of Muktiyuddho Moncho's central committee, filed a case against the three with the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Satyabrata Sikder for their "disparaging" comments on sculptures.

Advocate Moshir Malek, founder of Bangabandhu Foundation, also filed a case against Mamunul Haque with the same court over the same allegation.

Upon hearing, the magistrate took cognisance of charges against the accused and directed deputy inspector general of police of PBI to probe the matter and submit reports to it on January 7.

**স্কলার্স স্কুল অ্যান্ড কলেজ**

(ইংরেজি মাধ্যম দেশীয় শিক্ষা)

[গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশের প্রথম শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান]

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**২০২১ শিক্ষাবর্ষে PG - IX শ্রেণিতে ভর্তি চলাছে**

**English Medium এর ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদেরও ভর্তির সুবর্ণ সুযোগ**

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**ছাত্রীদের জন্য আলাদা ক্যাম্পাস**

**সফলতার ২০ বছর!**

যোগাযোগ:  
বাড়ি নং-৭১, সড়ক নং ৭/এ, ধানমন্ডি, ঢাকা-১২০৯  
০২-৫৫০০০৩৪৫, ০১৭৮৭৩৩৩৯৯, ০১৭১৪০৫৭৫৬৬  
০১৭১৪৪৪৬৬৩৩, ০১৭১৮৪১৬৬৩৪, ০১৮৭৪০০০৬৬৬  
অফিস সময়: সপ্তাহের বারিত প্রতিদিন সকাল ৮টা থেকে বিকাল ৫টা পর্যন্ত

রিজিষ্টার্ড জেনারেল মো: আব্দুল হান্নান (অবঃ)  
অধ্যক্ষ, স্কলার্স স্কুল অ্যান্ড কলেজ  
সাবেক অধ্যক্ষ, ঢাকা প্রেসিডেন্সিয়াল মেডিকেল কলেজ