

JS body for satellite city next to Dhaka

BSS, Dhaka

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Housing and Public Works Ministry yesterday recommended planning a satellite city adjacent to the capital.

The recommendation was placed at the 15th meeting of the committee held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban in Dhaka with its chairman Engineer Mosharrif Hossen.

It also recommended re-formulating the masterplan undertaken by Chattogram Development Authority (CDA).

The committee discussed overall progress and future planning of the ongoing projects run by the Public Works Department, National Housing Authority, CDA, Cox's Bazar Development Authority, Rajshahi Development Authority, Khulna Development Authority, Urban Development Directorate, Department of Architecture and Housing and Building Research Institute.

It also emphasised on timely conclusion of ongoing projects undertaken by different development authorities. The parliamentary body also took a decision to conduct field visits of rent-basis projects located at Mirpur.

Committee members M Monwar Hossen Chowdhury, Syeda Johra Alauddin, Begum Farida Khanam, among others, attended the meeting.



A group of Mro community members play their traditional musical instruments in the capital's Shahbagh area yesterday, as a sign of protest over the luxury hotel that is being built on their ancestral land in Chattogram Hill Tracts.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

'Want right to ancestral land, not luxury hotel'

Mro community demonstrates in capital in their mother language; rights groups express solidarity to their demands

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People of the Mro community need the right to live on their ancestral land maintaining their traditional lifestyle, not any five-star hotel, said speakers at a protest rally yesterday.

They demanded the cancellation of a project to establish a five-star hotel and amusement park at Bandarban's Chandrapahar, popularly known as Chimbuk.

"Committee to save Mro land in Chimbuk hill" organised the programme at the capital's Shahbagh, seeking attention of the prime minister.

According to them, a welfare organisation and Sikder Group are trying to grab about 1,000 acres of jhum land from Kapru Para Bazar to Jiban Nagar area, in the name of constructing a luxury hotel and tourist spot there.

The initiative, if implemented, will directly affect six villages of the Mro community and indirectly affect another 70-116 villages.

A group of Mro people, who have been directly affected by the project, came from Bandarban to protest.

Reng Young Mro translated the speech of one of their representatives, Mengchit Mro, who spoke in his mother tongue.

The group also played their traditional flutes and, protesting the project.

Different organisations, including Bangladesh Indigenous Peoples

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ATTACK ON PROF MUHAMMAD ZAFAR IQBAL AT SUST

Wait for justice marks 3yrs

DWOHA CHOWDHURY, SYLHET

On the afternoon of March 3, 2018, renowned educationist and writer Dr Muhammed Zafar Iqbal was attacked by a youth with a knife at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (Sust) in Sylhet.

The attacker, Foyzul Hasan, was caught red-handed. A case was filed later that day, and Foyzul confessed before the court. The charge-sheet was pressed on May 6 that year, and trial of the case started on March 21, 2019.

However, after two years, the case is still under trial at the Anti-Terrorism Special Tribunal in Sylhet, and only a handful witness testimonies were recorded till February 9.

Abdul Majid, assistant public prosecutor of the tribunal, said, "The next date of the case is scheduled on March 9. I can't confirm how many witness testimonies were recorded, but we're satisfied with the progress, after interruption due to the pandemic."

"On February 9, testimony of one witness was recorded, and we're

waiting for Dr Zafar Iqbal to testify before the court soon," he said.

On the day of the attack, during the EEE Festival of SUST's Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Dr Zafar Iqbal was sitting on Muktamancha, near the handball ground of the campus.

He was surrounded by his students, and police officers for personal protection, but the attacker, Foyzul, managed to sneak into the crowd, stood behind the professor and suddenly started stabbing at Dr Iqbal's head, shoulder and back.

Police and other students immediately caught Foyzul and beat him up.

Critically injured Dr Iqbal was rushed to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital, and after primary treatment, he was sent to Combined Military Hospital in Dhaka.

The attacker was also taken to Lalalabad Ragib-Rabeya Medical College, and later Combined Military Hospital in Sylhet for treatment.

That night, Mohd Ishfaquul Hussain, the university's registrar, filed a case with Jalalabad Police Station, accusing Foyzul.

In the case statement, the registrar mentioned that the accused said he attacked the professor as Foyzul considered him to be an atheist and enemy of Islam. The accused also believed in ideologies of banned militant outfit Ansar-al-Islam.

WAS FOYZUL ANSAR-AL-ISLAM OR SELF RADICALISED?

Even though the case statement mentioned that Foyzul was a believer of Ansar-al-Islam's ideology, the case's investigation officer later stated that he was self-radicalised and not an active member of any militant outfit.

However, he was greatly influenced by ideologies of Ansar-al-Islam and another banned militant outfit Ansarullah Bangla Team, especially of the outfit's founder and radical Islamic cleric Muhammad Jasimuddin Rahmani.

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'His vision shaped our country's foreign policy'

Speakers tell webinar on Bangabandhu

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangabandhu's dynamism and farsightedness shaped the foreign policy visions of Bangladesh, said speakers at a webinar as part of the celebrations of Mujib Year.

The webinar titled "Foreign Policy Visions of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman" was organised by Bangladesh Permanent Mission to the United Nations, New York in collaboration with the Subir and Malini Chowdhury Center for Bangladesh Studies, University of California, Berkeley on Monday, said a press release.

"Bangabandhu was ideologically very upright, yet essentially pragmatic to uphold the best interest of his country. He, therefore, decided to pursue a neutral foreign policy based on universal values and principles," said Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen.

Noted author and journalist Salil Tripathi; senior diplomat and friends of Bangladesh Liberation War honoree Tom A Dine; and Bangabandhu Chair, Bangladesh University of Professionals Prof Dr Syed Anwar Husain, were panelists.

Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to UN Rabab Fatima delivered welcome remarks.

The foreign minister reiterated the historic dictum of Bangabandhu, "Friendship towards all, and malice towards none" as the bedrock of Bangladesh's foreign policy.

Salil Tripathi lauded Bangabandhu for advocating "inclusive nationalism", rooted in the 1952 Language Movement.

Tom Dine shed light on the political climate in the US during the 1971 war and lauded Bangladesh for proving the then US leadership wrong through development and progress in 50 years' time.

Lily Chowdhury laid to rest

A CORRESPONDENT

Theatre activist Lily Chowdhury, wife of martyred intellectual Munier Chowdhury, was laid to rest at Dhaka's Banani graveyard yesterday afternoon.

She was buried at 3pm after her namaz-e-janaza, said Lily Chowdhury's son Asif Munier Tonmoy.

Earlier in the day, tributes poured in from all quarters for the cultural personality.

Her body was taken to Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka around 11:45am where hundreds of people, including teachers, writers, actors and cultural personalities paid homage to her.

After paying tribute, Shahriar Kabir, president of Ekattorer Chatak Dal Nirmul Committee, demanded Swadhinata Padak for Lily Chowdhury in recognition of her contribution to the cultural field.

He said, "Martyred intellectual Munier Chowdhury and Lily Chowdhury have enriched our culture in many ways. She was awarded by many organisations. But it is a matter of regret that our government did not give any award to Lily Chowdhury. She did not get Ekushey Padak and Swadhinata

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

15 shops gutted in Rangpur fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A fire ravaged a warehouse market in Rangpur city yesterday, gutting valuables of 15 shops. Traders said mostly clothes were burnt.

Faruk Hossain, organising secretary of New Jamal Market at the city's Grand Hotel intersection, said clothes worth Tk 1 crore were stored there.

Fire service said no casualty was reported as the incident occurred around 6am when the market was closed. Faruk Hossain said the market is basically used for storing clothes.

On information, 10 firefighting units from different stations in Rangpur rushed to the spot and doused the blaze around 7am.

Ohidul Islam, assistant director of Fire Service and Civil Defence in Rangpur, said they could not ascertain the cause behind the fire immediately.

'Stop depending on development projects'

DSCC mayor Taposh tells officials to boost revenue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday directed its officials concerned to increase revenue income and reduce dependency on projects.

The mayor gave the direction while delivering his speech at the Revenue Conference, attended by all officials and employees of DSCC's revenue department at Nagar Bhaban.

Taposh said they failed to collect revenue earlier, as the city corporation was under different kinds of limitations, and they had to seek help from the government.

He said DSCC had to depend on projects. They prepared projects to get funds from the government and got money after approval.

"We have to reduce dependency on projects and increase revenue income capacity," Taposh said.

Giving importance to encouraging businesspeople to get trade licence, the mayor said the number of trade licences issued by DSCC is 2.18 lakh, which is not

sufficient.

There are many people in Dhaka city who are not taxed, although they are doing business. So, they will have to be brought under taxation, he said.

The mayor said the number of holding tax is only Tk 1.83 lakh. The fixed amount is old and would be increased.

The revenue target set up in the current fiscal, Tk 300 crore for holding tax and Tk 200 crore for trade license, is achievable, he said.

It is possible to achieve revenue collection through existing workforce, and this will also solve problems of workforce shortage and infrastructure weaknesses, he said.

"Officials or employees who will do their duty properly will get rewarded, but those who don't, and those who harass people -- will face punishment," the mayor warned.

Taposh said the more revenue they collect, the more services they will be able to provide.

He directed officials concerned to update revenue related information.



Onion is being sold at only Tk 15 at a truck of Trading Corporation of Bangladesh, but the usual long queue is not seen at Khulna city's Shibbari intersection as those are selling at Tk 15-20 per kg at kitchen market. The produce are rotting and germinating as those could not be sold at due time. The photo of TCB sellers passing idle time was taken last week.

PHOTO: DIPANKAR ROY



Protesting the attacks on, cases against, and killing of journalists all over the country, Dhaka Mofosshol Shangbadik Forum abstained from all kind of work yesterday from 8am to 2pm nationwide, and staged a sit-in in front of the capital's Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

KALABAGAN RAPE CASE

Investigator fails to submit probe report

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday asked police to submit -- by March 21 -- the probe report in a case filed against Fardin Iftekhhar Dihan over the rape and murder of an English medium school student in the city's Kalabagan area.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Begum Yeasmin Ara passed the order after Investigation Officer AFM Asaduzzaman, inspector of Kalabagan Police Station, failed to submit any probe report.

With this, police have taken three dates for completing the probe. On February 16, the same court asked the IO to submit the probe report by yesterday.

The same court had earlier allowed police to conduct DNA and drug tests of Fardin and DNA test of victim's clothes following the pleas filed by the IO.

The victim's father on January 7 filed the case against Dihan (18) under the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act after his 17-year-old daughter, an O-level student, was raped and murdered.

On January 8, Dihan gave his confessional statement before a Dhaka court. He is now behind bars.

'Nat'l Flag Day should be observed by the state'

Speakers say on the 50th anniversary of hoisting of Bangladesh flag on DU campus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

March 2 should be observed by the state as "National Flag Day", as students hoisted the Bangladesh flag at Dhaka University (DU) on the day in 1971, speakers said while observing the 50th anniversary of the event yesterday.

On March 2, 1971, Bangladesh announced its imminent arrival to the world by waving its flag for the very first time.

Many organisations and institutions, including DU authority, Jatiya Somajtantrik Dal (JSD), Jatiya Somajtantrik Dal (Jasod), Jasod Chhatra League, Bangladesh Sadharon Chhatra Odhikar Parishad, held meetings and rallies in the capital yesterday.

DU authority holds a programme on this occasion at "Bot Tola" in front of the arts faculty -- the historical place where the first flag was raised.

The historic event signalled a sovereign and independent nation for the first time, said DU VC Prof Md Akhtaruzzaman, speaking as chief guest.

Teachers and students of DU's music department performed the national anthem. Teachers and officials were present at the event.

Then vice president of Dhaka University Students' Union, ASM Abdur Rob, who led the historic event, is now president of JSD, which organised a meeting yesterday at Supreme Court Bar Association Auditorium.

Qader Siddiqi, president of Bangladesh Krishok Sromik Jonota League, spoke for observing this special day all across the country.

Mahmudur Rahman Manna, convener of Nagorik Oikya, Dr Zufrullah Chowdhury, trustee of Gonoshasthaya Kendra and former Ducusu Vice President Nurul Haq also spoke at the programme among others.