

## SHAHEED MOTIUR PARK IN GULISTAN To fence off or not?

Renovated and unfenced last year, DSCC now closing off the park again to keep floating population away

HELEMUL ALAM

It seems like the Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) has plenty of public money to burn.

DSCC renovated the Shaheed Motiur Park in Gulistan spending Tk 9 crore and opened it for public last year. As part of the renovation works, it removed the iron fencing and lowered the boundary walls to give it an open look, and for the easy access of the public.

But now the city corporation is fencing the park boundary with iron structures again, spending around Tk 80 lakh, to "protect it from floating people", according to officials.

"We have decided to set up boundaries so that floating people can't damage the park. They are now entering the park from all sides and destroying its beauty by cooking food and drying their clothes there," said Munshi Md Abul Hasem Abul, DSCC superintendent engineer.

Justifying the decision, DSCC (ward-13) councillor Md Enamul Haque said, "Bangladesh is not like a European country and some decisions have to be taken considering our own realities."

However, city planners said protecting parks with walls and fencing is a wrong concept as it helps drug peddlers and addicts easily occupy the space, which has been the case in the past.

They also said the recent DSCC decision also goes against the concept of keeping the park open from all sides - based on which the city corporation is renovating 19 parks and 12 playgrounds.

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Despite experts saying that erecting fences around Shaheed Motiur Park will not solve the issue of floating people occupying the premises, the city corporation is spending Tk 80 lakh to do just that. Last year, authorities removed the fences during the park's renovation work, which cost Tk 9 crore. The photos were taken last week.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## Bangladesh elected vice president of 76th UNGA session

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has been elected vice president for the upcoming 76th Session of the UN General Assembly from the Asia Pacific Region for a one-year term, beginning from September 2021.

The election was held at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) yesterday where Bangladesh was elected unanimously, according to a statement from Bangladesh Permanent Mission to the UN in New York.

Along with Bangladesh, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Philippines have also been elected as vice presidents from the Asia Pacific Region.

Rabab Fatima, permanent representative of Bangladesh to the UN, said Bangladesh is a flag bearer of multilateralism and believes in the leadership of the UN in addressing the complex challenges facing the current world.

Maldive Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid has been elected president of the 76th Session of the UNGA, which would be of particular significance as the world recovers from the Covid-19 pandemic and its multidimensional impacts.

## Want to install fire hydrants in slums

Says DNCC mayor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) Mayor Atiqul Islam yesterday said they want to install fire hydrants in slums so that its dwellers can respond immediately and minimise losses in case of fire incidents.

"We want to install fire hydrants on the premises of the slums. If we can do it and train slum dwellers how to use them, they will be able to respond immediately," he told reporters while visiting and distributing relief among residents of Sattola slum in Mohakhali that witnessed a devastating fire on Monday, which gutted over 500 shanties.

By using fire hydrants, it will be possible to douse or contain the fire before fire officials arrive, he said.

"You will see a reflection of it in the (DNCC) budget. There will be allocation for it," he said, adding that officials concerned have already been instructed to this end.

Fire fighters will also be able to use those. Replying to a query, the mayor said illegal gas connection in slums is a reality as authorities cannot give legal connection without permanent addresses of residents.

The mayor while distributing relief to the victims at IPH School and College playground at Mohakhali said they have arranged Tk 5,000, three meals, corrugated iron sheet and dry food of around Tk 2,000 for each family.

"No victim of fire will have to suffer as we will take all necessary steps in this regard," he said.

## Ensure permanent accommodation for slum dwellers: BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP yesterday demanded permanent accommodation for slum dwellers.

Party secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir came up with the remark after visiting the Mohakhali's Sattola slum where a fire broke out on Monday.

Over 500 shanties were gutted at the slum. On information, 18 firefighting units rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control after a couple of hours.

"The government's first priority should be to arrange accommodation for them," he said, adding that compensation should have to be given to the victims as well.

The BNP leader said a fair investigation has to be conducted to unearth the reason behind the fire.

Saying that the ultra-poor live in the slum, Fakhrul said the country has failed to ensure basic rights of the people even after 50 years of its independence.

"The government is implementing mega projects but no effective step has been taken for the ultra-poor. It's not a tough task. The government can allot khas land to them," he suggested.

## Freeze 170 bank accounts of 'Golden Monir', three others

Court orders in laundering case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered to freeze 170 bank accounts of Md Monir Hossain, known as Golden Monir, and three others in connection with a money laundering case.

The other accused are Monir's brother-in-law Md Haider Ali, Sirajganj district Awami League convener Riaz Uddin and Dhaka North City Corporation ward councillor Shafiqul Islam.

Judge KM Emrul Kayesh of the Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka passed the order after Md Sadeque Ali, an inspector of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and also the case's investigation officer, submitted an application seeking permission for freezing the accounts.

On May 11, CID Inspector Mohammad Ibrahim filed the case with Badda Police Station under the Money Laundering Prevention Act against 10 people, including Monir.

In the case, Monir's wife, son, daughter and sister were also made accused.

According to the prosecution, Monir owns around 30 plots, over a dozen buildings and two car showrooms -- all bought with his illegal money.

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## School building tilts, cracks emerge after mild tremor in Sylhet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

After a mild tremor of magnitude 3.8 that jolted Sylhet city on Monday evening, cracks developed on a two-storey academic building of the century-old Raja Girish Chandra (GC) High School.

The building tilted and developed cracks in several walls and a few columns, confirmed Md Abdul Mumin, head teacher of the school, adding that the school's century-old buildings are intact.

The ground floor of the academic building, named after late Sylhet city mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran, was constructed in the early 90s and was vertically extended in 2017 by the Education Engineering Department in Sylhet.

After inspecting the building yesterday, Md Nazrul Hakim, executive engineer of Education Engineering Department in Sylhet declared the building abandoned.

He said, "In the 90s, it was common to construct academic buildings not taller than two-storeys, and they would not consider the threat posed by earthquakes. Construction these days has developed, and we follow building code accordingly now."

He also said the department will now prepare a plan for an alternative academic building on the premises by demolishing the current one.

After the building developed cracks, a team of Sylhet City Corporation, led by Mayor Ariful Haque Chowdhury, visited the institute on Monday.

During the visit, the mayor said, "There was a large pond behind the building, which might have made the building risk-prone. Now, the cracks

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## No shortage of food, but safety an issue

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at an event yesterday called for ensuring safe and healthy foods for the consumers.

They also expressed grave concerns over the excessive use of pesticide in agro products, antibiotic in poultry birds and harmful elements in food.

Though there is no scarcity of food, there is a dearth of safe and healthy foods, they added.

To mark World Food Safety Day 2021, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), a Switzerland-based institution, with the support of Dhaka South City Corporation, organised the discussion at Shitalakhya Hall Room of DSCC.

According to the speakers, although the country's food production is at a satisfactory level, farmers have been deprived of fair prices of their products.

Currently, it is a big challenge to ensure safe foods for the consumers and also fair prices of crops, they added.

They also called on farmers and others concerned not to use the excessive number of harmful elements in poultry birds and crops for ensuring the food safety.

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## DSCC ANTI-MOSQUITO DRIVES

## Fines four times higher for govt colonies: Taposh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday said authorities will fine owners of government housing colonies four times the usual amount, if they find mosquito larvae in any structure.

The DSCC mayor made the comment during a views-exchange meeting with the department of Communicable Disease Control (CDC) of Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) at Nagar Bhaban.

"We are conducting mobile court drives at under-construction buildings, especially government housing areas and under-construction structures of different government agencies. I have directed our mobile courts to fine four times higher than usual, if they find any larvae there," he said.

Mayor Taposh said if they want to solve the problem, they will have to identify the source of it first. Till now, their insecticide sprayers could not enter under-construction structures of different government agencies and their housing colonies.

The councillors also could not enter there, and as a result, mosquito control activities are very weak at the places, he said.

Terming government housing colonies and under-construction structures sanctuaries for Aedes mosquitoes, the mayor said if Aedes mosquitoes start breeding there, the population proliferates rapidly, and that is why they are conducting drives at the places.

The mayor asked women councillors to raise awareness among house owners who have rooftop gardens, so that they are informed and take necessary steps to destroy breeding sources.

The meeting was chaired by DSCC Chief Health Officer Brig Gen Dr Md Sharif Ahmed. Among others, DSCC Chief Executive Officer Farid Ahmed and CDC Director Dr Mohammad Nazmul Islam were present as special guests.



Cracks developed on a two-storey academic building of the century-old Raja Girish Chandra High School after a mild tremor of magnitude 3.8 jolted Sylhet city on Monday evening. After inspecting the building yesterday, authorities declared it risky and are planning to demolish it.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR



Many residents of Sat tola slum in the capital's Mohakhali, where a devastating fire burned down hundreds of shanties on Sunday morning, returned to the site with nowhere to go. Many were seen picking up pieces of furniture and utensils that survived the fire, while some made makeshift sheds to spend the night there. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## US delivers medical supplies worth \$2m to Bangladesh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US has delivered emergency medical supplies, including 100 US-manufactured ventilators and gas analysers worth \$2 million, to Bangladesh.

The other supplies include tens of thousands of pieces of locally-produced personal protective equipment, KN95 surgical masks, face shields, hazmat suits, full body gowns, medical-grade hand sanitiser, surgical gloves and medical goggles.

This latest delivery of supplies to save lives, stop the spread of Covid-19, and meet urgent health needs of Bangladeshis brings the total financial amount of US pandemic assistance to more than \$84 million.

US Ambassador to Bangladesh Earl R Miller presented the supplies to Bangladesh officials from the foreign and health ministries at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital on Monday night.

"For 50 years, the United States has stood shoulder to shoulder with the

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## BEGUM ROKEYA UNIVERSITY, RANGPUR

## Tenure over, but Prof Kalimullah still 'VC'

Legal notice served on him, treasurer

OUR CORRESPONDENT, DINAJPUR

Although tenure of the vice-chancellor (VC) of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur (BRUR) is over, he is reportedly continuing to do official work of the post. Hence, a section of the university's teachers has served a legal notice to stop his activities as VC.

His tenure ended on May 31. The teachers said neither Prof Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah's tenure was extended nor was anyone new appointed to the post.

Meanwhile, teachers and officials put an attendance board, which shows for how many days Prof Kalimullah was present or absent since his joining on June 1, 2017.

He was present on campus for only 240 days out of 1,447.

Prof Matiuur Rahman, convener of Adhikar Suraksha Parishad, a body comprising a section of BRUR's teachers and officials, claimed that Prof Kalimullah is still processing all official documents, despite the end of his term.

He is still working in the university's liaison office in Dhaka. Recently, the government ordered all universities to shut down their liaison office, but he ignored the order, he said.

Legal notices have been served on Prof Kalimullah and BRUR Treasurer Prof Hasibur Rashid.

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