

SUHRWARDY UDYAN Fate of trees still in limbo?

Govt yet to inform HC of its decision on felling trees to implement mega project

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The government is yet to inform the High Court about its decision over the old and ecologically important trees at the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan, although the court wanted to know about it more than three weeks back.

It is also uncertain when the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs will provide the information to the HC since its (HC) regular functions are currently suspended due to the pandemic.

During hearing a writ petition filed by six rights bodies and an activist, an HC bench on June 29 sought for the resolution of a meeting organised by the ministry on June 24 with Minister AKM Mozammel Haque in the chair.

The petitioners claimed that the ministry is sponsoring a project titled "Suhrawardy Udyane Swadhinata Stomvo Nirman -- Threitiya Porjay" (Independence Pillar Construction at Suhrawardy Udyan -- Third Phase), which is being implemented by cutting indiscriminately hundreds of old and ecologically important trees of historic Suhrawardy Udyan.

On June 29, the HC bench of Justice Farah Mahbub and Justice SM Maniruzzaman asked Deputy Attorney General (DAG) Samarendranath Biswas to collect the resolution from the ministry and to submit it to this court in two weeks and also fixed July 15 for further hearing on the petition.

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Life might be at a standstill for the people right now, but nature out there seems to be frolicking without a care. Out the windows, glimpses of blooming vibrant flowers attracting butterflies just might welcome those who look outside, wishing to witness some form of beauty. This photo was taken from the capital's AGB Colony yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Sylhet-3 By-poll cannot be postponed

Says CEC

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The by-election to Sylhet-3 constituency, scheduled to be held on July 28, will not be postponed due to constitutional and legal obligations, said Chief Election Commissioner KM Nurul Huda yesterday.

He made the remark during a law enforcement meeting for the by-polls, held at the conference hall of Sylhet district administration office.

The CEC also said all activities regarding the by-polls will be excluded from lockdown restrictions.

He said, "The administration will be strict to enforce health protocols during the by-poll, and all necessary arrangements for polling has been completed already."

The CEC also urged voters to wear masks and maintain social distancing while coming to voting centres.

Brig Gen (retd) Shahadat

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People from all walks of life gathered at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday noon to pay their last respect to Fakir Alamgir, arguably the most popular Gano Sangeet singer the country has seen.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Fakir Alamgir laid to rest

BSS, Dhaka

Noted folk singer Fakir Alamgir was laid to eternal rest with state honours at Khilgaon's Taltola Graveyard yesterday. He was buried following his second namaz-e-ajanaza -- maintaining health guidelines -- after Zuhr prayers.

Earlier in the morning, the first namaz-e-ajanaza of the eminent singer was held at the Pallima Sangsard premises at Khilgaon. Later, his mortal remains were taken to the Central Shaheed Minar for people to pay their last respect.

Paying his tributes there, Information and Broadcasting Minister Dr Hasan Mahmud termed Fakir Alamgir a legend.

After placing wreath on the coffin of Fakir Alamgir, he said the contribution of Fakir Alamgir to the Liberation War and democratic movements will remain written in golden letters. "Artists like Fakir Alamgir are not created in one day. He has become a legend after many years of pursuit," said

The legendary singer and freedom fighter passed away on Friday at 10:56pm at the capital's United Hospital. He was 71.

He had been suffering from Covid-19 infection and was admitted to the hospital on July 15 after his condition rapidly deteriorated. He also suffered a heart attack while under ventilation around 10pm.

Fakir Alamgir was one of the leading exponents of Gono Sangeet -- the songs of

the masses -- in the country. Synonymous with voicing the rights of the voiceless, he was one of the most beloved artistes of his generation.

Born in Faridpur, Fakir Alamgir started his music career in 1966. During his student life, he was active in politics, while also writing Gono Sangeet to instil a sense of justice among the masses. He was a student of Mass Communication and Journalism in Dhaka University.

He played an important role as a member of Kranti Shilpi Gosthi and Gono Shilpi Gosthi during the mass upsurge in 1969. The legendary singer worked with Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra during the Liberation War.

In 1976, he founded "Wrishiv Shilpi Gosthi", an organisation that has served this country's music scene for over four decades. He has also served as the president of Gono Sangeet Shamanya Parishad.

An avid writer, Fakir Alamgir published his first book "Chena Chena" in 1984.

"Muktijuddher Smriti Bijoyer Gaan" and "Gono Sangeeter Oit O Bortoman" are some of his notable books. "Amar Kotha", "Jara Achhen Hridoy Potey" and "Smriti Alaponey Muktijuddho" were also very popular.

The noted singer was also recognised with awards in his lifetime, including Ekushey Padak, Bhashani Padak, and Sequence Award of Honour.

Mother, daughter found dead in Kamrangirchar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman and her 11-year-old daughter were found dead at their house in Dhaka's Kamrangirchar area yesterday morning.

The deceased are Fulbashi Rani (35), wife of day-labourer Mukhendu, and their daughter Sumi Rani.

Informed by locals, police recovered the bodies from their tin-shed house at Noya Gaon in the area around 6am. Mostafa Anwar, officer-in-charge (investigation) of Kamrangirchar Police Station, told The Daily Star.

After primary scrutiny, police found dark marks on their necks -- raising suspicion of strangulation, the OC said.

The law enforcers detained Mukhendu and the couple's 15-year-old daughter Jhuma Rani for interrogation, the police official added.

Neighbours said the two might have been killed following a domestic dispute.

The bodies will be sent to Sir Salimullah Medical College Hospital morgue for autopsy.



Ex-state minister Jahanara Begum passes away

UNB, Dhaka

Prof Jahanara Begum, a former state minister for cultural affairs and BNP vice chairman, died of cardiac arrest in the city yesterday. She was 79.

Jahanara suffered a cardiac arrest around 7am at her house in the city's Bashundhara residential area. Doctors pronounced

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Must prioritise merit to bring back DU's glory

... Former DU Vice-Chancellor Prof SMA Faiz

RASHIDUL HASAN

On the occasion of DU's birth centenary, noted academic Prof SMA Faiz, who served as the 26th vice-chancellor (VC) of Dhaka University (DU) from September 2002 till January 2009, recently talked with The Daily Star, discussing different issues including decline of the university's position in various international rankings, teacher and student politics, teachers' appointment, and role of the administration.

The Daily Star (DS): DU was considered to be the "Oxford of the East". Where does it stand after 100 years of its journey?

Prof Faiz: DU not only contributed to the country's education but also played a significant role in trying times like the Language Movement and Liberation War. There's no other university in the world that has done so.



Here, I'd say there is a misinterpretation regarding the "Oxford of the East" term. From day one, DU was considered the Oxford of the East, because we had followed the Oxford model, which was residential in nature. Every student would have to reside at the institute and no college would be affiliated with it. Students would have to interact

with teachers in university halls, which Oxford University follows.

But later, we lost characteristics of the Oxford model.

When Pakistan was created, 14 colleges under Kolkata University got affiliated to DU, and the university lost its residential nature. That's why, DU cannot be called Oxford of the East anymore, in that sense.

Of course, there is a quality aspect to it. People think we move forward with DU, keeping the

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RANGPUR DIVISION

Rawhide selling at dirt cheap prices

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Biplob Mia of Nilphamari's New Babupara area on Eid day went to Boro Bazar, the rawhide market in the district town, to sell the skin of the goat he sacrificed. But the offered price stunned him.

"I was offered only Tk 5 for the skin," he said. "I'm supposed to get Tk 240, according to the government's fixed rate," Biplob said, who later left the market, leaving the skin there. "Ultimately, I will not suffer due to the low rate; it'll be the social welfare organisations, madrasas and orphanages that would be deprived of their rights."

As is custom, the amount raised by selling the rawhide of sacrificial cattle during Eid-ul-Azha is distributed among the poor.

Similar stories are abundant amid this year's festivities. Rawhide traders at the district markets are offering Tk 5 to 15 for goatskin. In contrast, cow and buffalo skin are being offered Tk 100 to 600 apiece, depending on quality.

The situation is also grim in rural areas. In rural areas, cow skin is being offered Tk 100 to 200. Most traders in villages are refusing to buy goat skin.

Motiar Rahman of Dinajpur town took two cowhides to Dinajpur's

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STRICT LOCKDOWN TILL AUG 5

CJ forms three HC benches for virtual hearing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain yesterday constituted three High Court benches for virtual hearing and disposal of urgent cases during the ongoing lockdown.

The three judges who will conduct the HC benches are Justice M Enayetur Rahim, Justice JBM Hassan, and Justice KM Kamrul Kader.

The HC benches will run judicial functions every working day from July 25 to August 5 using information technology, according to a notification issued by the chief justice.

Besides, the chief justice also assigned Justice Obaidul Hassan, a judge of the Appellate Division, to virtually hold hearings and dispose of urgent cases as the apex court vacation judge till July 31.

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Fishers across the country have ventured out with their net after the 65-day long ban on catching Hilsa at sea ended on Friday. Although the first two days saw a depression at the Bay of Bengal, anglers are hoping their fortunes will recover soon. These photos were taken yesterday from Chattogram city's Fishery Ghat area.

PHOTO: RAJIB RATHAN

