

Want to lease a grave? Get ready to pay lakhs!

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and HELEMUL ALAM

Believe it or not, if someone wants to lease a grave – even if it’s just around 28 square feet of land – for 25 years in an area of Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC), they’ll have to pay a hefty Tk 20 lakh!

The areas under Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) are no exception either. Although the rate is a bit lower, they still go for Tk 11 to 15 lakh for the same duration.

But what is the reason behind such astounding rates? Officials of both city corporations said they have fixed high rates to discourage people from reserving graves for their loved ones, as there will be a shortage of burial spots if everyone does the same.

DSCC fixed the rate at Tk 5 lakh, 10 lakh, 15 lakh and 20 lakh for 10, 15, 20 and 25 years, respectively, for its three graveyards in Jurain, Azimpur and Khilgaon.

On the other hand, DNCC has fixed its prices for people who want to bury their loved ones at the reserved section of six graveyards in Banani, Rayerbazar, Mirpur, and three in Uttara.

They charge Tk 6 lakh for 15 years and Tk 11 lakh for 25 years. However, for Banani graveyard, they charge Tk 15 lakh for 25 years and Tk 8 lakh for 15 years.

However, a person has to pay three times higher if they want to lease a grave in the general section of the graveyards, said Md Enayet Hossain, DNCC’s social welfare official.

Meanwhile, there is no scope to reserve a grave before someone’s death. If anyone wants to get a lease, they will have to apply once their loved one is buried, Enayet said.

In the past, graves could be leased in advance, but that provision doesn’t exist anymore according to new guidelines, he said.

DSCC HAS 3 GRAVEYARDS; DNCC HAS 6 GRAVEYARDS		
YEARS	DSCC PRICE (in lakhs)	DNCC PRICE (in lakhs)
10	5	Na
15	10	6
20	15	Na
25	20	11

DSCC has prepared a new guideline for their graveyards, in which they re-fixed the fee for general burial (except logistics of burial and digging fees) at Tk 1,000. This fee did not exist during the previous mayor’s tenure. DNCC is taking Tk 500 as burial fees.

Md Abu Nasher, public relations officer and spokesperson of DSCC, said they have fixed the fee after a decision was reached at a DSCC board meeting.

He said they have decided to take Tk 1,000 to discourage residents from burying loved ones in city graveyards, and instead bury them in their village homes.

Among the graveyards in DNCC areas, Rayerbazar graveyard, set up on around 96 acres of land, does not allow leasing graves at all. “We do not give any reservations. We have cancelled the system recently, as a grave automatically remains for around 15 to 20 years due to the premises’ vast area,” said Abdul Aziz, caretaker of the graveyard.

He said lease applications for around only seven graves have been approved in the last five years.

Mirpur’s Kalshi hosts a big private graveyard. It also does not allow leases, except in special cases.

Md Ripon, caretaker of Kalshi graveyard, said they have stopped leasing out graves due to the scarcity of land, although they sometimes make exceptions for some special requests. “We take Tk 4.5 lakh for a 20-year lease in these cases,” he said.

However, lessees of the graveyard have complained of irregularities while speaking to this correspondent.

Md Lutful Kabir Shipon, a resident of Mirpur 12, said they had leased a pair of graves for Tk 70,000 on April 14, 2008 after his father died, way before the new regulations came to effect.

“We buried our mother in the other one on December 19, 2019. But during her burial, the graveyard authorities started demanding an additional Tk 50,000, citing that the current spike in price of reserved graves,” he said, adding that they were told at the time that they will be able to keep the graves for as long as they want.

PRAYER
TIMING
FEB 3

	Fazr	Zohr	Asr	Maghrib	Esha
Azan	5:30	12:45	4:15	5:52	7:15
Jamaat	6:05	1:15	4:30	5:56	7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

MUNIA’S DEATH PBI takes 7th date as probe yet to end

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday again asked PBI to submit – by February 22 – the probe report in a case filed against Bashundhara Group Managing Director Sayem Sobhan Anvir and seven others over the rape and murder of a college student in Dhaka’s Gulshan.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Begum Yeasmin Ara passed the order after the IO failed to submit the report. With the latest one, PBI took seven dates to submit the report.

Anvir was made prime accused in the case, while the group’s Chairman Ahmed Akbar Sobhan alias Shah Alam and six others



BIRD’S DAY OUT...As opposed to its conventional way of travel, a pet bird decides to take a ride out in the city with its human caregivers to see what the fuss is all about. Perched on the fingers of its owner, the bird bravely takes on an adventure in this city of peculiar events. This photo was taken yesterday at Farmgate.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



The age-old practice of leasing out graves now comes with a hefty price tag. This photo was taken from Azimpur Graveyard yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Fighting for the bare minimum

Students with disabilities at JU struggling from lack of resources

SHEIKH TAJUL ISLAM TAJ

At Jahangirnagar University (JU), there’s no books available in braille, neither is there reserved seats in the dorms for students with disabilities.

As a result, these students are slipping through the cracks, as authorities do not provide them any special facilities that they desperately need.

Every year, many students get admitted to JU under the “disability quota”. But with no official penmen available, the students have to go through a lot of hassle when sitting for tests and in classes. Moreover, the university is yet to have special funds to introduce a scholarship for their educational expenses.

“I have no opportunity to tutor or get any kind of part-time job. The visually impaired, like me, have to deal with an ocean of suffering,” said Saiful Islam, a student of JU’s history department. “My family could barely support me. I don’t have an income source nor does the university give me a scholarship. How do I continue my studies?”

Since there are no reserved seats for them, the students said they have to stay at “mini gono room” at the dorms.

Abul Kalam, a visually impaired student who is struggling to live in such a room, said, “I had tried to manage a single seat upstairs, but failed after repeated attempts. This room can at best accommodate two students, but eight of us are staying here.” Neither house tutors nor the hall’s provost ever came to see them, he claimed.

“The day before my exam, I had to spend at least an hour to find a penman who would sit with me for the test... An organisation called PDF (Physically-challenged Development Foundation) tries to help us, but it’s not enough. I have to depend on the mercy of others,” he added.

“They don’t provide books in braille for us. We have to face problems in the library too; we can’t find the books we want to read there. Our central library doesn’t have any special corner for braille books,” said Sharmin Akhter, a student of government and politics.

Those who have other forms of physical disability face a host of other problems too. For example, there are no ramps in buildings for those who use wheelchairs. This simple issue can have major implications. In many cases, some students had to get admitted into departments situated at the ground floor just for this, despite being qualified to enrol in their preferred subjects.

Contacted, Dr Syeda Fahliza Begum, director of students’ welfare and consultation centre of JU, said, “No special fund or scholarship has been introduced for them. We will discuss with the university authority in this regard. A special fund can be very helpful.”

Some students had to get admitted into departments situated at the ground floor, just because there’s no ramps for wheelchairs at the buildings.

ISSUES

>> No books available in braille

>> No special scholarship

>> No person assigned as penman

>> No reserved seats in dorms

>> No library facilities for people with visual impairment

>> No residential ramps for those with physical disabilities

Asked about arranging reserved seats, Dr Mohammad Mujibur Rahman, president of the hall provost committee, said, “That will be a good initiative, and we’ll discuss the matter. We will try to manage a floor for them in our new halls. I will discuss this with our vice-chancellor.”

Rahima Kaneez, acting registrar of JU, said, “We are thinking of introducing braille books and ensuring extra facilities in the library.”

BNP a fragile, dependent party Says Quader

BSS, Dhaka

General Secretary of Awami League Obaidul Quader yesterday said BNP as a political party is fragile and dependent on others.

He came up with the remark while speaking at a press conference at his secretariat office in the capital.

Quader, also the road transport and bridges minister, said BNP went to foreigners and foreign missions, not to the country’s people, to assume power.

“Foreigners will not bring them (BNP) to power. Only the people of this country can do that,” he said.

Quader also said BNP has admitted that it hired lobbyists abroad against the country and now the party is saying that a Bangladeshi expatriate has been working for it in this regard. “Who is this expatriate? Why aren’t you (BNP leaders) revealing his or her identity?” he questioned.



TORTURING, BULLYING STUDENT Three BCL members suspended from hall

DU CORRESPONDENT

Three members of Chhatra League’s Bijoy Ekattor hall unit of Dhaka University (DU) were suspended from the hall for six months over torturing and bullying a student at the hall seven days ago.

The decision was confirmed by Prof Abdul Bashir, provost of Bijoy Ekattor Hall, yesterday.

The decision came after a probe body, formed by hall authorities found their involvement in the incident.

The suspended students are Kamruzzaman Raju of sociology department, Hridoy Ahmed Kajal of history department and Yamin Islam of social welfare and research department.

After victim Aktarul Islam, a first-year student of mass communications department, submitted a complaint letter to the hall authorities, they took the decision to suspend the three yesterday.

In the complaint, Aktarul mentioned six of his seniors who summoned him to the hall’s guest room around 10:00pm last Wednesday. He was later made to stare at a bright light for over 10 minutes.

BCL announces DU hall committee

DU CORRESPONDENT

After a gap of over five years, Chhatra League (BCL) yesterday announced the list of its presidents and secretaries for the 18 Dhaka University (DU) halls.

With approval of the central committee, DU BCL president Sanjit Chandra Das and general secretary Saddam Hussein announced the committee list.

The current DU committee was formed for one-year tenure in July 2018. After more than three and a half years, the committee is still operational, and it announced the hall committees.

“The new hall leaders have been asked to form the full committees at the earliest,” Saddam Hussein told The Daily Star.

Before this, hall committees were formed in 2016 under the previous DU unit committee, led by Abid Al Hasan and Motahar Hossain Prince.