



More than just walls

Students are at the core of this initiative. From coming up with versatile ideas to implementing them into murals, they did almost all of it.

NAIMUR RAHMAN

The Chattogram University campus is already blessed with natural aesthetics. From its greenery to its water bodies, CU is known to bring serenity to those who visit it.

To add to this, a host of wall paintings has brought a new dimension of eye-catching beauty and new look to CU's vicinity. Not only have they enhanced the gracefulness of the campus, they have also started to eradicate the deflating political signs and slogans that marked the walls previously.

Students are at the core of this initiative. From coming up with versatile ideas to implementing them into murals, they did almost all of it.

Graffiti artist Fatema Kaniz Nafisa, a student of the public administration department, said, "We were tired of seeing all the political slogans and names of political leaders on our walls. But from now on, we get to see colourful art works instead. We owe our



gratitude to those teachers who encouraged us to paint the walls in front of our classrooms."

The variety of styles employed to paint the walls is another marvel. Stencil art, murals, graffiti, scribbled quotes and more, all can be found etched in these walls.

Some of the pieces carry insightful messages, some of them welcome occasions like Pahela Baishakh, New Year, or International Mother Language Day, while others are more of the abstract type.

Some of the pieces are political too,

although not in the way that the previous wall paintings used to be. Rather than being a vehicle to popularise some leader or declare support for another, these pieces act as a voice for the voiceless. From expressing rage to reworking a popular inspirational quote, they are painted to generate hope and awareness.

There's also a few graffiti that depict the campus' landmarks as well as its history.

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One of the most popular pieces features a shuttle train at the station near CU.

The artworks have made their way onto social media too. Almost every day, social media platforms are being flooded with pictures posted by CU students and visitors. The artists said what led the walls to go viral is the fusion of local aesthetics with a touch of literature that the graffiti are made of.

Among others, the library building, museum walls, CU station walls, central field and gymnasium walls have become the most noticeable.

Seized vehicles left to rot

Lack of central dumping station puts CMP in peril

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN

Vehicles seized by Chattogram Metropolitan Police (CMP) are now left under the open sky in Mansurabad police line and Sadarghat.

CMP is in a fix regarding the piles of the vehicles seized for breaking traffic rules, accident remains or evidence of criminal cases, mainly due to lack of a dumping station.

Parts of the unprotected automobiles often get dysfunctional or stolen from different police station premises, which are crammed with these vehicles. Police are often compelled to leave the vehicles on the road in front of the police stations, causing traffic congestion.

CMP officials said they primarily fixed a 5.20-acre land as the central dumping station in Chattogram's Jalalabad area in 2019.

According to CMP headquarters sources, CMP deputy commissioner (state and development) SM Mostain Hossain forwarded a letter to the assistant inspector general (land and state) of the PHQ on November 11, 2019, regarding this.

Another letter was sent to the senior secretary of the home ministry's public security division by Dr Md Saifullah Bin Anwar, AIG (land and estate) of the PHQ, on November 26, 2020.



This correspondent has been able to obtain copies of both the letters.

However, the ministry has not approved the proposal yet, despite correspondences from CMP's state department.

Contacted, CMP Deputy Commissioner SM Mostain said, "We sent a letter mentioning the necessity of a central dumping place, as traffic police are facing hurdles to take action against illegal vehicles. As per our knowledge, the proposal was evaluated."

"However, it was later rejected after scrutiny due to some issues regarding land ownership. We are currently looking for another piece of land for the dumping station," he added.

Mushroom miracle

Story of how a jobless expatriate became an entrepreneur

SIFAYET ULLAH

When he was younger, Mohammad Hossain of Lohagara in Chattogram went to Saudi Arabia to change his fate. Despite working hard in a grocery shop for years, he ultimately failed to do this, and barely survived on a meagre income.

When he came back to Bangladesh in 2020, on a six months leave, he got stuck due to the lockdown. Soon after, his visa expired and he was forced to stay back without a job.

As uncertainty gripped the expatriate from Chunati union, he desperately looked for a job.

But then the 45-year-old remembered his ancestral profession of farming. With a leap of faith and a lot of resolve, he made a pact with himself to turn things around. He took counselling from local agriculture officer Sarwar Alam, and decided to cultivate mushrooms.

In March, 2021, Hossain finished training from Magura's Dream Mushroom Centre. "I contacted them after seeing an advertisement on Facebook," he said. He then started cultivating mushrooms with the small deposit he had.

He built a 30-feet structure next to his house for around Tk 1.5 lakh in June last year and started farming with 200 seeds.



Shortly after, Hossain started selling mushrooms to local markets. He sells raw mushrooms at Tk 200-250 per kg, dry ones at Tk 1,500 and powder at Tk 2,000. He sells a special type of brown-mushroom to pharmaceutical companies for Tk 5,000-10,000 per kg.

"I never thought mushrooms would be my redemption," he added. "After excluding all costs, I'm making around Tk 1,200 per day."

Instead of going abroad, Hossain now wants to start cultivation at a bigger scale in Chattogram.

Sarwar Alam, deputy assistant agriculture officer of Lohagara, said, "Hossain is a role model for unemployed local youths."

A psychiatric centre from the 1800

Ayurvedic treatment facility in Chandanaish still going strong, but fund shortage stifles service

ARUN BIKASH DEY AND MD RAJIB RAIHAN

Defying all odds, a century-old ayurvedic psychiatric treatment centre in Chattogram is proudly operational, serving patients, especially insolvent ones, with love and care.

Located in a remote village in Chandanaish upazila, Damodar Aushadhalaya, once the lone treatment centre for patients of southern Chattogram, was established in Joara village around 142 years ago in 1880.

Nishi Chandra Das, a famous ayurvedic doctor of the port city, founded Damodar Aushadhalaya on 10 acres of land in the village.



However, despite its authorities' best attempts, the shabby state of the centre is increasingly becoming an obstacle, with renovation put on hold due to lack of funds.

Visiting the centre recently, this correspondent found eight patients undergoing treatment there. The cabins and beds were like the structure itself – ragged and worn-down.

Pijus Sen, the on-duty doctor, said, "The centre is operating with the nominal sum we earn from patients'. Fees range from Tk 5,000-7,000 per month; although payments are monthly, many patients



As words of its quality service reached them, patients from nearby districts started coming to the centre for treatment, said locals.

don't have the ability to pay even Tk 500 a month. We treat them free of cost."

"In many cases, family members don't visit the patients for months," he said, adding, "We treat a patient for three months at best; if their condition improves, they're released. Otherwise they are referred to Pabna Mental Hospital or the mental ward at Chittagong Medical College Hospital."

Pijus said currently, the centre can accommodate 20 patients. If they can get government support, many more could be served there, he said.

Contacted, Sumani Akter, additional district magistrate of Chattogram, said she will look into the matter.



Soon after its inception, the centre's fame started spreading far and wide. As words of its quality service reached them, patients from nearby districts started coming to the centre for treatment, said locals.

A fraction of this reputation is still intact today, even when advanced medical technology has swept through the market.

