



## Outer Stadium set for a facelift

SIFAYET ULLAH

The Outer Stadium in Kazir Dewri area of Chattogram city is abuzz with activities these days.

The ground, which made headlines in recent years as it remained occupied for fairs and programmes but no sports activities, is being turned to a multi-sports zone to provide amenities for playing four different sports – cricket, football, volleyball and handball.

Chattogram Jila Krira Sangstha (CJKS), concerned authority of the field, has taken up a renovation project of around Tk 1 crore to give the ground a new look.

Located adjacent to MA Aziz Stadium, the ground had previously helped launch the careers of several prodigies of the country's cricket including Akram Khan, Minhajul Abedin, Tamim Iqbal, and Aftab Ahmed.

"A playing field of around 8,000 square feet area will be made in the stadium. It will also have separate courts for playing volleyball and handball, as well as four nets for cricket practice," said Ashiq Imran, an architect of the project.

"The existing pole of MA Aziz Stadium's floodlights in the field will be relocated to increase space. A gallery with 200 seats will be set up on both sides of the field, and a washroom with modern facilities will be constructed," Ashiq Imran added.

"Players won't have to pay any fee to play at the stadium after renovation. However, CJKS will follow a schedule for the field's use to avoid disruption," said Abdul Bashar Mohammed Fakhruzzaman, deputy commissioner of Chattogram and also president of CJKS.

A walkway with trees planted on both sides will be constructed surrounding the ground for people to walk freely, the DC added.

Mohammad Hasan, a resident of neighbouring Dampara area, said, "It's good news that the outer stadium is being renovated to be able to hold games, training and tournaments often."

According to project officials, the renovation work will be completed in two phases by May this year. Work for the first phase is ongoing, being implemented by a contractor appointed through tender.



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PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

### ICU BED CRISIS AT CMCH

## New 32-bed unit still not enough

ARUN BIKASH DEY

The Chattogram Medical College Hospital inaugurated its second intensive care unit with 32 beds on Saturday, bringing hope for patients requiring ICU facilities.

Although the CMCH, which started its journey in 1957, became a 1,010-bed hospital by 2001, it could not introduce ICU facilities until 2005, that too with only six beds.

The number of general beds were increased to 2,200 by 2022, but the ICU beds were increased to only 20 during this time, a meagre number compared to the huge number of patients coming for treatment every day.

According to hospital sources, while the number of general beds have increased significantly over the years to cope with the number of patients, for ICU it has been a different scenario.

As such, the ICU could hardly cope with the increasing number of patients requiring intensive care.

According to CMCH officials, at



The new ICU unit at CMCH.

least 15 patients die at the hospital every day without getting a bed at ICU.

"At least 15 patients come to the ICU to get admitted every day, but we could only provide one or two beds due to constraints," said Dr Harun-ur-Rashid, head of the Department of Anesthesia and Intensive Care at CMCH.

"Sadly, that too when a bed becomes vacant with the admitted patient having either discharged or

died," he said.

"As a result, many patients who could not be admitted to ICU die without availing proper treatment," Dr Harun said. The new 32-bed ICU will improve the situation as more beds will be available for patients, he added.

Visiting the new unit on Sunday, it was seen that patients were yet to be admitted as the whole unit would have to be disinfected first, which will take a couple of days, said on-duty nurses.

While inaugurating the new intensive care unit on Saturday as chief guest, Health Minister Dr Samanta Lal Sen said steps will be taken to upgrade the ICU facilities at CMCH to 150 beds.

With the new 32-bed unit, the hospital now has 52 ICU beds, although it requires at least 100 ICU beds to serve its patients properly, said CMCH director Brig Gen Shamim Ahsan.

"We will gradually increase the number of ICU beds in future," he added.

“At least 15 patients come to the ICU to get admitted every day, but we could only provide one or two beds due to constraints,” said Dr Harun-ur-Rashid

### Bottle gourd plantation on top of trawler becomes talk of Kaptai lake

LALANLIAN PANGKHUA

A lake dotted with hundreds of fishing trawlers. But there's one that stands out. Its rooftop isn't just a platform for nets and tools; it's a vibrant green oasis.

Bottle gourd vines snake across the rooftop, their tendrils cascading over the edges, while delicate white flowers herald the imminent arrival of fruits.

This is Noornabi's trawler, a floating kitchen garden on Kaptai Lake.

What makes it unique? In a sea of boats focused on catching fish, Noornabi's vessel is dedicated to growing life. It adds a splash of colour against the vast blue canvas of the lake.

"The roof of our trawlers mostly remain unutilised. So, I decided to plant some seeds in a drum and placed it near the edges. It soon grew, crawling all over the roof and also started bearing gourds," said Noornabi, a resident of Bagachar union in Rangamati's Langadu upazila.

Transporting fish from the upazila to Kaptai BFDC Fishery Ghat daily, Noornabi spends most of his time on the trawler.

"I started this as a hobby and never hoped it to be so refreshing and rewarding," he said.

Having harvested around 20 gourds so far, his small plantation currently has 10 more in store while many others are in bloom.

"The vegetables prove to be a good food stalk for me and I also share them with other boatmen. I don't use any fertiliser so the taste is good," said Noornabi, adding that the garden also helps keep the interior cool as the plants absorb sunrays.

Many visitors now wait on the ghat of the lake to take pictures of Noornabi's trawler.

"I have never seen such a plantation. It's a very creative and inspiring idea," said Shyamal Chakma, a local visiting the lake.

Md Moniruzzaman, deputy director of Department of Agricultural Extension in Rangamati, said, "Others should also take up this small-scale boat-farming. It will ensure that seafarers will always have something to eat while proving to be beneficial for the ecosystem."

"We ensure maximum cooperation to anyone who wishes to take this up," he added.



## A ray of hope for Mru children

MONG SING HAI MARMA

Nestled in the forest land on Bangladesh-Myanmar border in Bandarban's Thanchi upazila lies Likri Para.

Reaching there can be quite taxing as it requires one to travel around 300 kilometres on foot for around four days when the Sangu river turns dry, or take a day-long boat ride after a day on foot.

This quaint little village is home to 37 Mru families.

Tucked away from the bustling district town, the place offers simplicity and contentment found in life's modest offerings. It's a haven with unhurried afternoons, with the pace of life matching the surrounding tranquility.

However, the early mornings offer a different scene. Children wake up to get ready and meet Shukrasen Chakma, a teacher who has single-handedly been



running the neighbourhood's lone primary school.

Visiting the area recently, this correspondent saw children, with handwoven backpacks on their shoulders or books in their hands, running towards a small hut as the clock struck 8:00am.

They queued in front of the hut, singing the national anthem and was soon joined by a young man, hiding his difficulty to walk behind his warm and welcoming smile.

Panjhiri Para for the next two, before finally arriving at the Mru community in Likri Para.

Shukrasen's school, set up by Humanitarian Foundation, currently has 26 students enrolled from playgroup to grade four, while grade five will be operational soon.

With no school to educate, no road to connect, and no modern facilities to live better, the hill dwellers were living in the dark for last 53 years until Shukrasen came into their lives as a ray of hope, said locals.

"Overcoming his physical disabilities, Shukrasen took up the responsibility of running this school and has been doing it sincerely since the very beginning. We hope all hill children will have access to education some day through his efforts," said Maitong Mro Karbari, president of Likri Para Primary School Management Committee.

"I had to give up studying after completing 8th grade as my family could no longer afford my education. Children living in the hills are very talented and sharp and I want them to make the best out of their potentials," said Shukrasen, who left his home in Alisa Moni Para of Alikadam's Kuruk Pata union in 2017 and never returned.

Shukrasen used to teach children in his village. After leaving his village, he shifted to Bolupara for five years and then

