

SHAHEED TAJUDDIN AHMAD PARK

Another park getting encroached?

Much to people’s dismay, local club constructing structures there

**MD ABBAS**

Amid the scarcity of parks and open spaces in the capital, Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmad Park in Gulshan 2 provided some respite to people from all walks of life, earning appreciation due to its aesthetic beauty.

Residents of the area, alongside others, have been using the park for recreation and exercise.

However, their recreational activities are now getting disrupted as Gulshan Youth Club is now constructing football turf and other structures, alleged locals and other park-goers.

Forming a human chain inside the park under the Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmad Smriti Parishad yesterday, they said the club first grabbed the park’s open space, divided the park with nets, and then turned it into a sports ground.

When the club got permission from the city corporation to operate inside the park, it tried to encroach on the entire park area and intended to conduct business, as the ground was seen being rented out on different occasions, they claimed.

Speaking at the event, locals said they were forced to take to the streets to free the park from encroachment and make it open to all.

They said the club authorities are building infrastructure inside the park, violating the Detailed Area Plan, existing laws, and directives of the prime minister.

Iqbal Habib, vice-president of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa), said the park was built with the money of the masses and was designed by a team of esteemed architects from Buet.

“If any entity builds concrete structures in the park violating its design, destroys its beauty, keeps the gates locked to restrict people, uses it for different commercial purposes, and operates it on their own, it is loathsome and cannot be acceptable,” he said.

No discussion was made with locals in this regard, Iqbal said, adding that the club is trying to encroach on public property, similar to how many entities are grabbing public properties, including parks and grounds, across the country.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina purchases a Tk 10 ticket from the outdoor service at the National Institute of Ophthalmology and Hospital for an eye check-up yesterday. The photo was taken in the city’s Sher-e-Bangla Nagar area.

PHOTO: PIR

Urgent steps needed to save Kharia language

Chief justice says while meeting two last speakers

**STAR REPORT**

Chief Justice Obaidul Hassan yesterday urged the government to take urgent steps to save Kharia language from oblivion.

He recommended setting up an academic institution to preserve this language among the community who speak it alongside fostering communication with regions of India where it is prevalent.

The CJ said this in response to questions from reporters after a meeting with the last two Bangladeshi speakers of the almost extinct language -- Christina Kerketta and Veronica Kerketta of Rajghat Tea Garden in Srimangal -- at Bangladesh Tea Research Center in Moulvibazar, said a Supreme Court press release.

Siblings Christina and Veronica’s parents came to Bangladesh from Ranchi of India. The Kharia language is spoken in India’s Jharkhand and Orissa states, it also said.

Talking to reporters, Obaidul Hassan

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Water woes worsen in the hills

Bandarban residents facing severe crisis amid hot spell



**MONG SING HAI MARMA, Bandarban**

Residents of the hilly areas on both sides of Chimbuk-Neelgiri road in Bandarban have been facing a severe water crisis amid the ongoing hot spell.

The waterfalls and small streams in the hills, known as jhiri, have almost dried up. People are being forced to walk considerable distances, taking more than an hour to collect even a bucket of water from the jhiris.

Some families are even compelled to buy water collected from jhiris at Tk 2-5 per litre for their families.

There are more than 500 families from different communities living in 35 villages on both sides of the road, including Korang Para, Krapung Para, Sita Para, Bagan Para, Mrolong Para, and Getsimoni Para, among others.

Bangladesh Red Crescent Society in Bandarban distributed safe water on Wednesday among the residents of Korang Para area, about 42 kilometres from the district headquarters. Men and women formed a long queue there while elaborating on the ordeals they have been going through amid the water crisis.

Visiting Getsimoni Para near Chimbuk-Neelgiri Thanchi road recently, this correspondent saw a ninth grader entering a 5-6 feet deep hole dug at the end of a jhiri to collect water. At least 75 families collected water from that jhiri in the same way in turns.

Around 210 families live in Korang Para, with most of them belonging to the Mro community.

Since the villages are located near the peak of the hills, the residents have to come down around 1,000 feet to the jhiris and small waterfalls to collect water for household use, said Liyang Kim Bawm of Korang Para.

“Every summer, we go through a severe water crisis. We hardly get enough water for drinking. We are taking baths after 2-3 days with only a litre of water or two,” he added.

Locals are resorting to collecting whatever quantity they can manage as there is hardly any water in the jhiris, said Chinghlau Kheyang, another resident of the village.

As there are not many big trees left in the hills, the jhiris

and waterfalls are all drying up, they said.

Reng Yok Mro, another trader at Korang Para Bazar, said, “It is getting more and more difficult for the hill residents to live amid the hot spell. The water crisis made the situation worse for us.”

Rengwai Mro, a member of local Gyalenga Union Parishad and resident of Korang Para, said, “Women have to go through a lot of trouble to come down around 1,000 feet and collect water from jhiris, often taking around one and a half hours.”

Locals said though it rained for a while on Thursday night, it did not change the situation much.

Banting Marma, a journalist who took initiative to distribute water among locals, said he came to know about the sufferings of the villagers while reporting on the water crisis in Chimbuk-Neelgiri area about two years ago.

“Since then, we have been distributing water among villagers for the past two years,” he said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Since the villages are located near the peak of the hills, the residents have to come down around 1,000 feet to the jhiris and small waterfalls to collect water for household use.



PHOTO: STAR

Jahanara Imam Museum now a part of national museum

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The Shaheed Janani Jahanara Imam Memorial Museum will officially become a branch of the Bangladesh National Museum from today onwards.

Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque will inaugurate the ceremony, Md Kamruzzaman, director general of the Bangladesh National Museum, said at a press conference at national museum.

Jahanara Imam, a symbol of resilience and unwavering pursuit of justice, lost her son Shafi Imam Rumi during the Liberation War. Channeling her grief into unwavering determination, she became a vocal advocate for the trial of war criminals, inspiring generations.

Saif Imam Jami, Jahanara Imam's younger son, established the museum in 2007 at the family's residence, Kanika, on Elephant Road in the capital.

Filled with personal memorabilia, photographs, and documents, it offers a window into the struggles and triumphs of a remarkable family during a pivotal moment in Bangladesh history.

Speaking at the event, Jami said, “Four years ago, I wrote a letter to the Bangladesh National Museum asking for our mother’s museum to be brought under the national museum to ensure its long-term preservation and wider accessibility. Finally, it will be officially handed over on Saturday [today].”

Jami said he handed over the museum as a gift to the national museum.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



ABDUCTION OF MAN

Rab rescues victim, arrests 7 of a gang

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) has rescued a man, who was abducted by a gang, from Chunkuti area in Keraniganj, and arrested seven abductors.

The gang of eight to nine people -- led by Haji Wajjullah Khokon, 65 -- abducted Anwar Hossain Khan, 44, at gunpoint from Narayanganj’s Fatullah area on Wednesday night, Rab said.

Apart from Khokon, the other arrestees are Arif Hossain, Saif Uddin Ahmed Milon, Siratul Mustakim, Ruhul Amin, Zakir Hossain, and Md Swadhin.

They forcibly took Anwar to Keraniganj in a microbus and confined him to the office room of “Chunkutia Real Estate Limited,” owned by Khokon, said Rab-3 commanding officer Lt Col Md Firoj Kabir at a press briefing yesterday.

Later, the abductors beat the victim with rods and sticks and demanded Tk 95 lakh as ransom from his family.

To save Anwar’s life, his younger brother collected Tk 17.5 lakh and sent it to a bank account number provided by abductors.

However, they continued to torture the victim for the remaining amount while threatening to kill him and dump his body in the river, said the Rab official.

On information, a team of Rab-3 raided the real estate office, rescued the victim, and arrested the gang members on Thursday, while seizing a revolver and a shotgun.

During interrogation, the arrestees revealed that Khokon Haji, a contactor by profession, had been smuggling touchstone statues and rare brass coins into India since 2015, claimed the Rab CO.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Dengue claims 3 more lives

**UNB, Dhaka**

Three more deaths were reported from dengue in 24 hours till yesterday morning, raising the number of fatalities from the mosquito-borne disease in the country to 27 this year.

During the period, nine more patients were hospitalised with the viral fever, according to Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

Of them, three patients were hospitalised in the capital. A total of 116 patients are now receiving treatment at hospitals across the country.

A total of 2,248 dengue cases have been reported since January 1, 2024.

Last year, 1,705 people lost their lives due to dengue, making it the deadliest year on record. DGHS recorded 3,21,179 cases and 3,18,749 recoveries last year.



Carrying a child on her back and holding two empty pitchers, a woman walks towards a water source in Bandarban’s Chimbuk-Nilgiri-Thanchi road area. Top, a woman collects as much groundwater as she can from a 5-6ft deep hole dug up in soft soil on the Chimbuk hill in Getsimoni Para in Bandarban. Amid the ongoing heatwave, villagers have been suffering immensely for an acute water crisis.