

# Hills razed for 30 real estate projects in Ctg

Survey finds port city already lost 120 of 200 hills

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

Chattogram city is losing its hills. The 80 or so hills that remain are increasingly under threat from real estate projects of influential businesses.

Department of Environment (DoE) data shows that at least 30 real estate projects flattened hills in the port city over the last five decades.

Documents from the DoE and a study titled "Locational Analysis of Hill Cutting Areas in Chittagong City" reveal that housing projects destroyed the hills over 100 years. The study was conducted by Prof Edris Alam of Chittagong University's geography and environment department in 2017.

According to a 2012 study titled "Hill Cutting in and around Chittagong City", hills had covered 32.37 square kilometres across five zones of the city in 1976. However, by 2008, this area had shrunk to 14.02 square kilometres, found a research by SM Sirajul Hoque, a former professor at Chittagong University's Institute of Forestry and Environmental Sciences.

This ongoing destruction poses a serious threat to the city's environmental health. It is also triggering landslide and deforestation.

The green cover of Chattogram city dropped to 36.51 percent in 2020 from 68.34 percent in 1990, found a study by the Department of Geography and Environment at Dhaka University.

The study titled "Green space dynamics in response to rapid urbanisation: Patterns, transformations and topographic influence in Chattogram city" was authored by Sumaiya Siddique and Md Mahin Uddin -- two then master's students at the department.

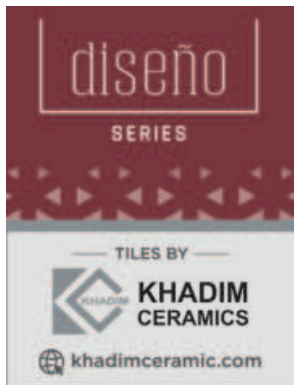
Real estate projects have been implemented in Chandranagar, Green Valley-1 and -2, Rupnagar, Lake City, North Khulshi, CCC VIP Housing, South Khulshi, West Khulshi, Sandwip Colony, and Thandachari Colony areas.

Also, at least 23 housing colonies have been built after razing hills in Khulshi, North Pahartali, Akbar Shah and Bayezid Bostami areas.

Visiting Khulshi, Akbar Shah and Bayezid Bostami areas recently, this correspondent found that hills were levelled to construct buildings and walls.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

The green cover of Chattogram city dropped to 36.51 percent in 2020 from 68.34 percent in 1990.



Family members of some of the July martyrs, along with some of the injured victims of the uprising, at the inauguration of The Daily Star's photo exhibition "36 days of July: Saluting the Bravehearts" yesterday at The Daily Star Centre in the capital. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

## 'Don't ever let an autocrat rule us again'

Families of martyrs, injured, student leaders, eminent citizens ask for an equitable nation devoid of oppression at Star exhibition on July uprising

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Harmony, reform, remembrance, and justice were the key demands of those who took to the streets and the families of those who laid down their lives during the July uprising.

The injured, families of the martyrs, and protesters yesterday came together at The Daily Star Centre for the inaugural ceremony of a week-long exhibition titled "36 Days of July -- Saluting the Bravehearts".

"I want to tell all the authorities, the police, the military and everyone: You will never again become slaves [to power]. You eat because of us, the general people ... so you cannot become slaves ever again," said Fatema Khatun, mother of Mamun Hossain, a chauffeur who was fatally shot on July 19 on the Mohakhali flyover.

"Do not ever let an autocrat at the helm of the country again. It fills me

**"We are common people. We do not understand power ... We only want some empathy."**

Shamsi Ara Zaman, mother of martyred journalist Priyo

with disgust to call the former rulers a government," she said. The words of the woman hailing from Jalial village in Noakhali's Binodpur thundered through the hall.

When she heard that her son was shot, she sank into deep prayer. "I prayed outside in the courtyard until 3:00am without speaking to anyone. I got the news of his death at 3:45am. At that moment, it began raining, and I truly believe it was a sign of Allah's blessing ... cleansing the country of an autocrat."

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

## Star pays tribute to July heroes

7-day exhibition and storytelling sessions begin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Daily Star yesterday launched a seven-day photo exhibition and storytelling week titled "36 Days of July: Saluting the Bravehearts" to honour the indomitable courage and sacrifices of the students and the masses during the historic July mass uprising.

The exhibition was inaugurated around 3:15pm at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

The event began with a one-minute silence paying tribute to those who lost their lives and who were injured during the uprising that led to the fall of the Awami League regime.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

## REGIONAL RESISTANCE

During the 1971 Liberation War, dozens of regional forces emerged across Bangladesh. Just as the freedom fighters trained under the sub-sectors and the Bengal Regiment fought valiantly, these regional forces also put up a tough resistance against the Pakistan forces. In the month of victory, we bring you the stories of some of these heroic forces.

### PART 1 Ohidur Bahini of Atrai

AHMAD ISTIAK

In the early days of the 1971 Liberation War, a formidable resistance movement emerged in the Rajshahi region, led by Ohidur Rahman, a prominent figure in the Purba Banglar Communist Party. This force, which later came to be known as the "Ohidur Bahini", played a crucial role in the struggle for independence.

As per the surviving members, the Ohidur Bahini orchestrated over 50 successful battles against

SEE PAGE 7 COL 2



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