

## DHAKA

## Osmani Udyan stays closed

Renovation drags on as DSCC misses five deadlines over seven years

HELEMUL ALAM

Dhaka residents have been deprived of using a vital park at the heart of the capital, as Dhaka South City Corporation has missed five deadlines to complete the renovation of Osmani Udyan.

Although around 92 percent of the work has been finished, construction has remained stalled since June 30 last year, when the latest deadline expired, according to DSCC sources.

The project was extended until June 2024 after new contractors were appointed in September 2023, and the park was supposed to reopen in July 2024. Yet the finishing work remains incomplete.

"About 92 percent of the work is already done. Only the finishing touches remain, which would take just two months to complete once the deadline is extended -- without any additional costs," a DSCC official said.

Contacted on September 2, DSCC Administrator Md

Shahjahan Miah said the corporation is trying to extend the deadline again and aims to finish the work within this fiscal year.

The renovation was originally supposed to be completed in 2018 but was halted for nearly two years after the first contractor, Builders Limited, had its work order cancelled in 2022 for an alleged breach of contract.

DSCC began renovating the 29-acre park in January 2017, with an initial deadline of June 2018. The deadline was later extended multiple times -- to June 2019, June 2020, June 2021, and then June 2022.

The initial project cost of Tk 58 crore was later revised to Tk 86 crore. Following the new work order, an additional Tk 61 crore was allocated to complete the remaining work.

The renovation -- part of the Tk 200-crore "Jol Sobujey Dhaka Project" to modernise 19 parks and 12 playgrounds -- includes

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Renovation work at Osmani Udyan in Dhaka has remained stalled since June last year, with Dhaka South City Corporation missing five deadlines. Although 92 percent of the work is reportedly complete, the park at the heart of the capital remains closed to residents. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

We need to shift toward affordable, sustainable energy  
Says Professor Yunus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Chief Adviser Professor Muhamed Yunus has underscored the urgent need for Bangladesh to transition towards cleaner, safer, and more affordable energy solutions as the country navigates a new path toward sustainable economic development.

Speaking during a virtual conference on Thursday evening with Carl Page, chairman of the Anthropocene Institute, and his colleagues, Yunus said Bangladesh -- one of the world's most densely populated and climate-vulnerable nations -- cannot afford prolonged reliance on fossil fuels.

"It is time for Bangladesh to seriously consider clean energy alternatives, including large scale solar deployment," Yunus said.

Carl Page, brother of Google co-founder Larry Page, highlighted recent advancements in next-generation nuclear technologies and hybrid systems that offer reliable, zero-carbon power.

He emphasised that barge-mounted nuclear reactors are cost-effective, low-maintenance, and capable of powering Bangladesh's growing industrial sector for decades.

Nuclear power is no longer a taboo topic among major development financiers like the World Bank, Page said, adding that countries such as Indonesia are already adopting these technologies to meet their rising energy demands.

He noted that Bangladesh, with its

## Tree smuggling rampant in Chunarughat forests

Forest officials accused of complicity; case filed against four in Satchari

MINTU DESHWARA, Moulvibazar

Tree smuggling has become rampant in the Kalenga, Rema and Satchari forest ranges of Chunarughat upazila in Habiganj, with locals alleging that forest officials have either turned a blind eye or are complicit in the illicit trade.

On August 22, Forest Department officials recovered 55.45 cubic feet of illegally felled Gorjon, Chapalish and Banak logs from Babur Bazar area, worth an estimated Tk 80,000.

The seized timber is now in the custody of a Community Patrol Group member at Bholiarum Bazar, said Kalenga Range Officer Md Masudur Rahman.

On June 17, miscreants felled and stole teak trees from Satchari National Park at night. Locals say such crimes occur openly and routinely, yet authorities fail to take effective action.

"Day after day, trees are being felled and stolen, but forest officials act as if they don't see anything," said Malek Mia, a resident of Aitan village.

"Satchari attracts visitors from all over the country," said Mashur Rahman Khan Jumel, founder of the local social initiative Beautiful Chunarughat. "A permanent police presence is crucial to prevent crimes and ensure tourists' safety."

Meanwhile, Mujahid Mosi, convener of voluntary wildlife protection group Pakhi Premi Society, filed a case on September 11 with Habiganj Senior Judicial Magistrate's



Court against four over their alleged direct involvement in tree smuggling and other environmental crimes.

The accused are Mamanur Rashid, range officer of Satchari National Park; Nur Mohammad, junior wildlife scout; Mehedi Hasan, beat officer of Telmachhara; and Sumon Biswas, forest guard.

According to the complaint, large quantities of valuable timber, including teak, were illegally felled and smuggled on March 2, March 20 and August 9 from Satchari and Telmachhara areas.

"Such destruction to the forests has been going on for years," said Mosi. "To protect the forests' biodiversity and hold the culprits accountable, we filed the

case in the public interest."

Complainant's counsel Advocate Shah Fakhruzzaman said the court has accepted the case and directed the Police Bureau of Investigation in Habiganj to probe and submit a report by December 12.

Contacted, Mamanur Rashid denied the allegations. "I've been here for three years. Only five trees have been stolen during my tenure, and I filed a case regarding that," he said.

Abul Kalam, Sylhet divisional forest officer, said they are also conducting an internal investigation and that anyone found guilty would face legal action.

He said the Forest Department has suspended Mamanur Rashid and ordered departmental action over allegations of professional misconduct.

Recently, the forest ministry, in

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Fair polls impossible if govt shows bias  
Says TIB chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fair election will not be possible if the government acts with bias during the election period, said Iftekharuzzaman, member of the National Consensus Commission and executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh.

"If political parties themselves do not want a fair election, it will be difficult to ensure neutrality. That is why it is essential to guarantee impartiality among election observers and journalists," he said at the inauguration of a training programme on election reporting.

Reporters Forum for Election and Democracy and TIB jointly organised the event in Dhanmondi.

Pointing out that many individuals close to the ousted Awami League government still remain in the administration, Iftekharuzzaman said, "It

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## RUCSU POLLS Voting to take place in 17 centres

RU CORRESPONDENT

The Rajshahi University Election Commission has published a list of polling centres for the upcoming Rajshahi University Central Students' Union, hall union, and senate representative elections.

According to the announcement, the voting will take place in 17 centres across nine academic buildings with 990 booths.

Each of the 17 residential halls has been assigned a separate polling centre.

Chief Election Commissioner F Nazrul Islam said ballot counting will take place at the Rucusu treasurer's office, while results will be announced at the Kazi Nazrul Islam Auditorium.

The entire counting process will remain under CCTV surveillance.

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## 'He was fearless in face of state repression'

Say speakers on Badruddin Umar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To uphold progressive ideology, intellectual practices, and critical thoughts, it is essential to preserve the legacy of prominent thinker and writer Badruddin Umar, said speakers at a memorial discussion yesterday.

They noted that his writings will remain relevant for understanding political and social history and for shaping future generations.

The programme, titled "Memorial of Comrade Badruddin Umar", was held at Bangla Academy. It was organised by the Marxist-Leninist Communist Revolutionary National Memorial Committee.

Badruddin Umar, one of the country's most prominent leftist thinkers, writers, and politicians, passed away on September 7 at the age of 91.

Dhaka University Professor Emeritus Serajul Islam Choudhury described Umar as a unique figure, unmatched in many ways.

"He was fearless, never swayed by state repression or the lure of recognition. He was a revolutionary and wrote for revolution, and his legacy will remain an inspiration for future generations," he said.

Highlighting Umar's ability to fuse knowledge with politics, Prof Serajul added, "He will remain for future generations as

heritage, inspiration and guide."

Eminent economist Anu Muhammad said Umar's writings remain indispensable for understanding history, imperialism, revolutionary politics, and the role of culture.

"His presence was powerful in life, and in death, his influence has only grown. Society needs individuals like him, who can stand tall, ignoring personal gain, for the greater good," he added.

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir described Umar as uncompromising in his ideals. Umar would always be remembered with deep respect in both intellectual and political spheres, he said.

"He sought a revolutionary transformation of society, but such organisations are absent today. Umar not only pursued intellectual practice but also dedicated himself to building organisations for that cause. The new generation has much to learn from his life and work," he said.

Dipa Dutta, a leader of the 1969 mass uprising, paid tribute to Umar, calling him a courageous and defiant voice of his time.

Khalequzzaman Bhuiyan, chief adviser of the Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (Basad), said Umar never walked the path of opportunism. "He upheld the ideals of

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Hundreds of waterlilies in full bloom cover the wetlands of Satia village in Ujirpur upazila of Barishal, locally known as Shapla Beel. From August to November, the beel transforms into a sea of flowers, drawing tourists who rent boats at sunrise to enjoy its natural beauty. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS