

# Osmani Udyan stays closed as renovation drags on

## DSCC misses five deadlines over seven years to reopen Dhaka’s key park

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

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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 Muhammad 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

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# 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 Gorjan, 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 Bholarjurm 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 Mashiur 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 forest officials over their alleged direct involvement in tree smuggling and other environmental crimes.

The accused are Mamunur 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, Mamunur 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

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## RUCSU POLLS Voting to take place in 17 centres, 990 booths

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 Rucsu treasurer's office, while results will be announced at the Kazi Nazrul Islam Auditorium.

The entire counting process will remain under CCTV surveillance.

The nine academic buildings where the polling centres will be set up are -- Momtaz Uddin Academic Building, Dr Muhammad Shahidullah Arts Building, Ismail Hossain Siraji Academic Building, Rabindra Arts Building, Jabir Ibn Hayyan Science Building, Jamal Nazrul Islam Science Building, Satyendranath Bose Academic Building, Jagadish Chandra Academic Building, and Zuberi Building.

With 24,892 registered voters, the Rucsu election is scheduled for September 25, following a long pause of 35 years.

A total of 248 contenders will vie for 23 Rucsu posts, while 58 students will run for seats in the university Senate.

In the hall unions, 597 candidates will compete for 15 positions across 17 residential halls -- 459 from 11 male halls and 138 from six female halls.

Campaigning for the Rucsu polls began on Monday and will continue until 10:00pm on September 23.



Hundreds of waterlilies in full bloom cover the wetlands of Satla 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

## 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 cannot be claimed that there are no agents or associates of the fallen government within the administration and law enforcement agencies.”

He added, “By infrastructure, we mean good governance, accountability, transparency, honesty and institutional integrity. These have been shaped over a long process, not just over the past 16 years, but throughout nearly 54 years. Every institution has been politicised and brought under double layers of partisan influence, creating professional conflicts. Some of these institutions have been made functional at times, but in many cases, they have been rendered dysfunctional.”

Referring to those long deprived of opportunities,

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## BSF pushes 12 Rohingyas through Moulvibazar border

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

India's Border Security Force (BSF) allegedly pushed 12 Rohingyas through the Batamoral Pan Punjee border in Barlekha upazila of Moulvibazar on Thursday.

Members of the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) detained them, interrogated them and took them into custody.

The detainees include three men, four women, and five children.

The detainees initially identified themselves as Rohingyas during questioning, said Lt Col Mohammad Ariful Haque Chawdhury, commanding officer of BGB Battalion-52 in Beanibazar.

“They were forcibly pushed into Bangladesh from India around 6:30am. The Myanmar citizens were

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