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A healing home for Dhaka's trees

DNCC to open tree support centre next month

DIPAN NANDY

The smoke, dust, and concrete walls of Dhaka seem to be closing in, making it harder to breathe each day. In this bustling city, catching sight of greenery feels like a rare stroke of luck. Yet, the answer to relief lies close -- in trees. A little shade, a breath of oxygen, a moment of peace.

With this vision, a unique initiative is taking shape in the capital -- the Tree Service and Rooftop Garden Support Centre.

Located at the northwest corner of Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmad Memorial Park in Gulshan, the initiative by Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) aims to build a modern and sustainable system for tree care and preservation within urban life.

Located at the northwest corner of Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmad Memorial Park in Gulshan, the initiative by DNCC aims to build a modern and sustainable system for tree care and preservation.



According to DNCC sources, the tree "hospital" will begin operations next month. Environmental organisation Green Savers will operate it jointly with the DNCC.

The centre will provide treatment and care for plants. Citizens can bring their sick or weak plants to the Tree Hospital, where specialists will diagnose diseases, test soil quality, and offer guidance on

proper care.

A Plant Pharmacy and Laboratory will teach organic methods of plant treatment. There will also be a Plant Care Clinic where people can learn about soil composition, watering schedules, and the right balance of light and nutrients.

One of the most innovative features is the Plant Foster Hub. In the rush of city life, many people struggle to care

for their plants regularly, and some must leave them behind when travelling for long periods. This centre will offer a safe space for them.

People can leave their plants here for a few days, and trained staff will look after them.

The centre will also include a Plant Library and Research Zone, housing books, guides, and research papers on plant life, sustainable agriculture, and the relationship between nature and urban living.

Ahsan Rony, chief executive officer of Green Savers, said, "We don't just want to plant trees -- we want to learn how to care for them. Our goal is a Dhaka where every person loves trees, nurtures them, and considers them a part of life."

Contacted, DNCC Administrator Mohammad Azaz said, "The entire facility will be built using eco-friendly architectural design. It will be lightweight, energy-efficient, and low in carbon emissions. The design will include open spaces that allow natural light and air to flow freely, creating an ideal environment for plant care."

Highest budget for edn if BNP returns to power

Pledges Tarique

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Acting Chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday said if his party is voted to power, it will prioritise education by giving the sector the highest budget allocation to enhance its quality and develop skilled, ethical human resources.

"We have a plan, as we did before. During the tenure of Khaleda Zia, education used to get the highest allocation in the national budget. Inshallah, if BNP gets the responsibility of running the country again, we will ensure the highest allocation for education," he said.

Tarique made the remarks while virtually addressing the Khandaker Shamsul Alam Foundation's Merit Scholarship Examination and Results and Prize-Giving Ceremony held at Pakundia Government High School field in Kishoreganj.

Tarique said the party's plans include repairing and improving dilapidated primary schools so that students can study in a better environment.

"We also want to ensure that teachers can focus fully on teaching. At the same time, we will provide social and economic support to teachers so that they do not have

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ST MARTIN'S ISLAND Rizwana warns encroachers of strong action

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Environment Adviser Syeda Rizwana Hasan yesterday said she had delivered a strong message against those allegedly encroaching on St Martin's Island.



She made the remarks during a visit to Dhandhar Char on the Shitalakshya river in Gazipur's Kapasia upazila.

Regarding the enforcement of the ban on single-use plastic products, the adviser said, "Regular campaigns are currently being conducted against polythene. Now you will no longer find polythene in supermarkets."

Commenting on the government's actions against river pollution, Rizwana stressed that measures must be implemented through every possible means.

She said a project involving the four rivers within Dhaka city has been finalised after consultation with the World Bank. "Hopefully, it will secure approval in December. In the project, an amount has been allocated for the Department of Environment. Besides, manpower and equipment will be managed to increase surveillance [to safeguard the rivers]."

Alongside government surveillance, industrial owners must also take responsibility, she said.

'His ideals still relevant for post-uprising Bangladesh'

Speakers tell discussion marking Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Huq's 152nd birth anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Huq's politics of rights, agrarian reform, and electoral legitimacy remain crucial for post-July uprising Bangladesh, as the country struggles to redefine justice and democracy, said speakers at a seminar yesterday.

Marking the 152nd birth anniversary of Sher-e-Bangla, The Daily Star organised a discussion titled "The Daily Star Ithas Adda: Sher-e-Bangla's Relevance in Today's Bangladesh" at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

Writer and researcher Altaf Parvez said the present time demands a critical and impartial reading of Sher-e-Bangla's life.

Describing Fazlul Huq as a multidimensional and experimental leader, Parvez noted that despite his elite background and early association with the Nawabs and the Muslim League, Huq went on to form the Krishak Proja Party to represent peasants and tenants.

"In the 1930s, the main contradiction was between cultivators and zamindars.

Through land reform and debt relief, Huq awakened Bengal with a new consciousness," he said.

Parvez described 1937 as a "disastrous turning point", when

July charter's core agenda of ending discrimination overlooked those who suffered the most -- workers, peasants, Dalits, minorities, women, and students.

Altaf Parvez
Writer and researcher

Sher-e-Bangla's life shows that compromise is not weakness but a necessity in leadership. No society can move forward without some level of give and take.

Perween Hasan
Academic and historian

Congress's refusal to back Huq forced him into an alliance with the Muslim League. Despite setbacks, he said Huq's 1937-39 ministry implemented major reforms such

as free primary education, the Debtors' Relief Act, and job quotas for Muslims.

Referring to the July charter, Parvez said its core agenda of ending discrimination overlooked those who suffered the most -- workers, peasants, Dalits, minorities, women, and students.

"Did we pay the debt of blood, or did we betray it?" he asked.

Constitution expert Arif Khan described Fazlul Huq as an "organic intellectual" devoted to education, land rights, and debt relief.

Calling him "a founder of the state of Bangladesh", he said Huq's vision of regional distinctiveness and self-determination predated later nationalist movements.

"The state that was supposed to deliver justice did not do so," Arif said. "We were turned into subjects, like in a kingdom. Sher-e-Bangla gave the subjects back their rights as citizens."

He added that Huq never tolerated authoritarianism. "He believed in elections and not in coming to power by any other means," he said.

Writer and academic Prof

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Police probing child being slapped during father's arrest

Viral video sparks outrage

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police have launched an inquiry into an incident in which a girl was slapped as she clung to her father during his arrest at Geneva Camp in Mohammadpur, a video of which has sparked widespread outrage on social media.

In the footage, the child is seen crying and holding onto her father while someone in the crowd slaps him, hitting the girl in the process as several uniformed police officers stand nearby.

Police said yesterday that the man, identified as Rustam, was arrested on Thursday during a raid in connection with a clash between two drug-trading groups in the area.

Earlier that day, 20-year-old Md Zahid was killed in a crude bomb explosion during the clash. After the video went viral, many criticised the police, saying that while they have the right to arrest suspects, such actions in front of a child were unacceptable.

Jewel Rana, additional deputy commissioner of DMP's Tejgaon division, told The Daily Star, "We have seen the video. Someone from the crowd slapped him; only the hand was visible. We will investigate further." He said it has not yet been confirmed whether the person who struck the man and the child was a police officer or a civilian.

Institutional reforms key to ending enforced disappearances

Says law adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Adviser Dr Asif Nazrul yesterday said institutional reforms



were required alongside legal ones to prevent enforced disappearance, calling the crime worse than murder.

He was addressing the inaugural session of a day-long workshop on the issue at a city hotel.

The Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances organised the workshop with assistance from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the United Nations.

Nazrul said a courageous and justified role of judges is essential for ensuring justice as "the impartial and bold stand of the judiciary will uproot the culture of enforced disappearance from Bangladesh".



We are inviting experts from four countries -- the UK, Australia, China, and Turkey -- to conduct an investigation. They will determine the cause of the Dhaka airport fire and find out if anyone was responsible.

JAHANGIR ALAM CHOWDHURY
Home Adviser



Amid heavy traffic, pedestrians in Dhaka's Tejgaon area struggled to use the footpath as several motorcyclists drove onto it to avoid the gridlock. The walkway, already in poor condition, is being damaged further, leaving pedestrians with little space to walk safely. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

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