

Land allotted for head office cancelled

Pathakali Trust hangs in balance

Fazlul Bari

The Government has decided to cancel the allotment of land to Pathakali Trust in front of Dhaka Sheraton Hotel and instead planned to set up world trade centre.

Authoritative sources told The Morning Sun yesterday (Thursday) the decision was taken in view of the fact that the registration of the land was not done properly. The valuation of the land, according to market price, is about Taka six crore. The registration of the land for the construction of Pathakali Trust head office was done on December 30, 1990, about three weeks after the fall of Jatiya Party

Government.

The Pathakali Trust, a brainchild of deposed President Ershad, was set up in mid-'80s to help the destitute children by giving them education and vocational training.

Authorities are learnt to have directed the Education Ministry to probe into the registration deal and submit a report immediately. They wondered how the registration could be done during the time of the caretaker government.

The Zia Government soon after coming to power decided to build world trade centre in line with other countries. Finally, 2.19 acres of land opposite the

Sheraton Hotel was selected as the site for the proposed centre.

But the Government of Ershad scrapped that decision and instead ordered the relevant agencies to construct the trade centre and a permanent exhibition centre on five acres of land in the southern side of Bijoy Sarani. The task was given to Industries Ministry which subsequently took necessary steps.

Later, the Ershad Government allotted 32 decimal of land from 2.19 acres to Pathakali Trust for the construction of its head office. Former First Lady Begum Raushan Ershad formally laid the foundation stone of the Trust's main office. But the registration of the land was not done during Ershad regime.

Decision makers in the Government feel the registration done during the time of the interim government was not proper. It done with an ulterior motive. The Education Ministry has asked to find out what that motive could be.

The current Chairman of the Pathakali Trust is Education Minister Jamiruddin Sircar. His predecessor Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury was also the Pathakali Trust Chairman in his

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capacity as the Education Minister.

Informed sources say, Dr Chowdhury was in favour of keeping the trust alive. He also wanted that the activities of the Trust should continue. Now the fate of the Trust hangs in the balance.

Out of 65 schools run by the Trust, six are now functioning. The rest have either been closed down or on the verge of closure.

Two clinics of the Trust are in operation only in name. Neither the service nor the medicine are available. Only one doctor is manning the clinics. Shortage of fund is the causative factor behind this dismal scene.