



A cow grazes while employees cultivate water hyacinth in a pond in front of Maulana Bhasani Hall at Jahangirnagar University.

PHOTO: STAR

Drying up of wetlands at JU threatens biodiversity

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Due to sedimentation over the years and lack of proper maintenance, wetlands at Jahangirnagar University (JU) have been drying up, jeopardising the biodiversity and panoramic beauty on the campus.

The university swamps now require immediate excavation as most of them have been silted up while others become dry in winter season.

The JU has a total of 27 wetlands excluding two ponds near Maulana Bhasani Hall and Al Beruni Hall.

Though the university authorities stopped leasing out lakes near academic establishments for fish cultivation a year ago, no initiative has been taken yet to renovate those already destroyed by fish cultivation.

Unplanned cultivation of exotic fishes has caused sedimentation through erosion of bank.

On the other hand, the erosion had compelled university authorities to get some wetlands dry as those threatened nearby roads and establishments.

The pond in front of MBH remained almost barren for over a year since the hall authorities had dried it for renovation.

The pond has now become a grazing field for cattle while some university employees cultivate water hyacinth in it during monsoon for cattle food.

The pond in front of Old Arts Faculty has also been dried up for renovation, but no work has begun yet.

Meanwhile, linkage of different dormitories' sewers to nearby swamps is contaminating water while dumping of wastage from university transports have caused the lake in front of administrative building almost fish-free.

The contamination is affecting the life cycle of amphibians, aquatic birds and plants.

Natural growth of almost 40 species of fish has been threatened while some endangered species of local birds including Bronzen Wing Jaccana (Jolpipi), Moorhen (Kali Pakhi) and White Breasted Water Hen (Dahuk), who were once frequented, are now hardly seen.

"A co-ordinated sustainable programme should be taken up

immediately to address the problems," said Kamruzzaman Monir, assistant professor of Zoology.

He said immediate sanction of fund must be made for excavating as well as erecting embankment to prevent erosion of bank and pollution of water.

"Sedimentation is a natural process and excavation must be conducted regularly," said Prof A B M Enayet Hossain, former treasurer of the university.

"We have formed a committee to make the ponds reusable through immediate renovation," said Mafruhi Sattar Titu, provost of MBH.

The committee, formed by the

university syndicate about one and a half years ago with Prof Shamsul Alam of Geography as its head, proposed expending Tk 26 lakh for renovation of the swamps, but no effective steps were taken to execute the proposal, said sources at university engineer's office.

Confirming that no steps regarding the issue has been taken Treasurer Prof Abdul Hai, chief of internal resource management committee, said, "I will instruct estate office to prepare a list of wetlands at risk."

"Later, the findings will be forwarded to syndicate for next course of action," he added.

5 JMB men to appear before court April 30

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday directed the authorities concerned to produce five Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) members before it on April 30 in connection with three cases.

After taking the cases into cognisance for trial, Judge Mohammad Momin Ullah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court set the date for the next hearing.

The cases -- one under the Arms Act and the two others under the Explosive Substances Act -- were filed with Uttara Police Station on January 5.

The accused in the cases are Wahidul Islam, 20, Shafiqul Islam, 30, Hafez Ibrahim, 30, Abdullah Al Faruq, 21, and Hanif, 22.

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on March 30 pressed charges against the five JMB members, showing 36 people as prosecution witnesses.

The investigation officer dropped the name of Shakil alias Mollah Omar from the charge sheet as he was killed in a fight with the law enforcers in Comilla on March 12.

Raiding the house of Ruhul Amin Bhuiyan at Courtbari in Uttara in the capital on January 5, a Rab team seized 19 items of arms, explosives, books on jihad and bomb making materials and arrested Wahidul Islam, Shafiqul Islam and Hafez Ibrahim.

Following information dragged out of them, Rab arrested Abdullah Al Faruq and Hanif.

AL to observe Mujibnagar Day on Apr 17

BDNEWS, Dhaka

A meeting of Mujibnagar Day Observance Committee was held to observe the historic Mujibnagar Day on April 17.

The main opposition Awami League formed the committee to observe the day with befitting manner.

The meeting was held at the office of the AL president with party presidium member Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury to chalk out programmes to mark the day.

The meeting expressed anguish as the government does not have any programme marking the Day.

AL acting General Secretary Obaidul Quader, Syed Ashrafur Islam MP, Prof Abu Sayeed and Harun or Rashid were present at the meeting.