



A truck dumps garbage into the Lawkathi river at Majhgram in Patuakhali town. Right, waste materials including plastic items are burnt on the riverbank at the same site.

PHOTO: SOHRABHOSSAIN

Open garbage dumping a nuisance for Patuakhali townspeople

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

The huge quantities of garbage collected from the district town is left in the open space on the Lawkathi river, causing serious environment pollution and posing health hazard for the locals.

The municipality authority's proposal to the ministry concerned, seeking allocation of a 7.50-acre land for making a dumping site in Bashak Bazar area, about 10 km to the south of the municipality town, is yet to get approval, said officials.

Patuakhali municipality, set up in 1892, now covers around 30 square kilometres of area with around 1.15 lakh people.

It was upgraded to a first class category in 1989.

There are 23.75-km drains, including 5.5-

km brick drain, 7.25-km RCC and 11-km earthen drain in the municipality area.

Canals totalling a 47-km length runs through the district town.

In the municipality, 214 cleaners collect waste from different spots including roads and bazaar areas and keep it at specific points.

Four dump trucks of the municipality carry the garbage from the spots and leave it at Majhgram on the Kawkhali river, near BSCIC industrial area of the town.

Another dumping site in Swanirvor Road area is also on the bank of the same river.

The huge waste materials pollute the river water and spreads bad odour around, causing serious trouble for locals.

"We are badly suffering due to serious pollution including bad odour as the municipality authorities dump garbage in

the open place. Movement through the road becomes a nuisance due to the situation," said Mosharef Hossain Mridha, a resident of Majhgram area.

"We have to face bad odour round the clock. Children often suffer from different types of diseases due to the pollution," said Khadija Begum of the same area.

Nuisance of mosquitoes and flies increased in the area due to the awfully dirty environment, said Farida Begum, another local.

Arifur Rahman, owner of Satota furniture factory, said he often fails to get sufficient employees as people do not want to work amid the stink coming from the garbage dumping site.

Sheikh Kamal Mahadi, assistant director of the Department of Environment in

Patuakhali, said, "We sent a letter to the Patuakhali municipality mayor on December 12 last year, asking them to arrange a dumping site for safe disposal of the town's garbage to save the river water and the local environment from pollution."

SM Akramul Nahid, medical officer of Patuakhali municipality, also head of its garbage section, said at least 50 tonnes of waste is gathered daily in the municipality areas.

"Half of the waste materials, left in the drains by locals, find ways into the river. Municipality trucks collect the rest from different points and it is also left into the river due to lack of a suitable dumping site," he said.

"We are providing free health services to children in the areas affected by environment

pollution and bad odour," he said, adding, "We badly need an environment-friendly dumping site where bio-gas and organic fertilizer would be produced from the waste materials."

Md Jasim Uddin Arzu, executive engineer of the municipality, said, "Considering the importance of keeping the town clean, we sent a letter to the local government ministry through the Patuakhali deputy commissioner on May 16 in 2016 for acquisition of 7.50 acres of land in Bashak Bazar area, about 10 km to the south of the town, for setting up a dumping site but we are yet to get approval for it."

"If we get the site, we will be able to arrange a better management of waste. Meanwhile, we are looking for land to set up a temporary dumping site to prevent pollution," he added.



Farm workers plant Boro saplings at a field of Dariapur in Gaibandha Sadar upazila.

PHOTO: KM REZAUL HOQUE

Boro cultivation on in full swing as growers ignore biting cold

Gaibandha farmers busy transplanting seedlings to complete the work in time

KM REZAUL HOQUE, Gaibandha

Farmers in the northern district are passing busy time for planting Boro seedlings, ignoring the biting cold during the peak cultivation season.

Frequent cold spells this season affected Boro seedbeds, and cold injuries caused drying of tender seedlings in some areas.

The growers, however, started transplanting the seedlings earlier to avert possible nor'wester and hailstorm prior to harvest.

But they have to count higher production cost due to various factors this season.

"Farm labourers demand high wages for transplanting seedlings as they have to work in cold weather. They cannot stay in the icy cold water in fields for long hours, and so, more

labourers are needed for the work," said Afzal Hossain, a farmer of Kabilor Bazar in Sadar upazila.

Solvent farmers set irrigation pumps at their own cost, but the small farmers and sharecroppers have to purchase irrigation water from pump owners on condition of paying one fourth of the crop after its harvest, said locals.

Abdus Sattar, a farmer of Chapadaha village in Sadar upazila, said Tk 9,000 to 10,000 has to be spent for Boro farming on one bigha of land and the yield usually ranges from 25 to 28 maunds (a maund = 40 kg) per bigha.

"Last year's Boro price was Tk 500 to 550 per maund while the price is below Tk 500 now.

And so, growers get very little benefit from Boro cultivation," he said.

If the government arranges purchase of food grains directly from farmers, they would get fair price of crops including Boro, he added.

"Farmers are eager to start Boro farming earlier to get high yield, as late farming of the crop often leads to lesser yield. Besides, there is chance of natural disasters like nor'wester and hailstorm in summer," said Saidur Rahman, another grower of the same village.

In Gaibandha Sadar upazila, 18 thousand hectares of land have been brought under Boro cultivation this season, which is 500 hectares more than last year's, said Al-Emran, upazila agriculture officer.

Intellectually challenged girl raped

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Noakhali

An intellectually challenged girl was raped allegedly by one of her cousins in Noakhali's Subornachar upazila yesterday.

Police sent the 11-year-old victim to Noakhali General Hospital for medical test the same afternoon.

Meanwhile, the alleged rapist Rakib, 18, of the same area, went into hiding soon after the incident.

Inspector (investigation) of Char Jabbar Police Station Ibrahim Khalil said Rakib, who used to live nearby the victim's house, lured the minor girl with chocolate, took her to his house and raped her.

Following a complaint from the victim's mother police were raiding different areas to arrest the culprit, the officer said.

One held over stone workers, police clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Police arrested a man from Panchagarh's Tentulia upazila yesterday in connection with the cases filed for Sunday's clash between stone extraction workers and law enforcers.

Officer in Charge (OC) of Tentulia Police Station Jahurul Islam said they arrested Rafiqul Islam, 48, son of Safiz Uddin, from Bhajanpur area during an overnight drive.

Earlier, two separate cases were filed with Tentulia Police Station, the OC said. He, however, did not disclose the names of the accused for the sake of fair investigation.

Of the two cases, one was filed over the murder of a stone quarry worker and the other for attacking the law enforcers, vandalising a police vehicle, obstructing police and destroying public properties.

Following the filing of the cases, many workers have fled their homes in fear of arrest, villagers said.

Earlier, a stone extraction worker was killed and at least 20 others were injured in clashes between workers and police in Bhajanpur area.

The deceased, Jumar Uddin, 60, suffered excessive bleeding and there were multiple holes in his body, doctors said.

The clashes erupted when the workers, demanding permission for extracting stones from underground, blocked Panchagarh-Banglabandha highway on Sunday morning.

About six months ago, local administration banned stone extraction from the area to prevent potential landslides.

The agitated workers vandalised three police vehicles and also hurled brickbats at policemen during the clash.



Using traditional methods, locals catch fish in shallow water of Chalanbeel at Ninguin in Singra upazila of Natore. The photo taken on Sunday gives a typical picture of many rural areas during winter as fall in water level makes fishing easy.

PHOTO: STAR