

Public pond's fate hangs by a thread

Illegal structures on one of the largest ponds in Habiganj town has left it in its death throes

MINTU DESHWARA, back from Habiganj

Habiganj town's one of the largest government-owned ponds -- on nearly 200 decimals of land -- is right across the office of Water Development Board (WDB).

But not too many of the town's residents would be able to identify the pond anymore.

Various structures including over 60 shops -- made of corrugated iron sheets -- occupying it on three sides and a truck stand on the other would make it difficult for anyone to believe that a huge pond existed there several years back.

Once called a town of ponds, Habiganj has lost its fervour. With most of its ponds and large water bodies destroyed, within just the last decade, the town is headed for an environmental catastrophe.

In the middle of all the establishments, the remainder of the pond across the WDB office is now filled up with garbage and covered in bushes and shrubs.

To make matters worse, instead of taking steps against the encroachers, the Habiganj municipality has decided to destroy any signs of the pond by



Virtually invisible to the naked eye due to surrounding illegal shops and a truck stand, only one-fourth of the 200-decimal public pond, across the PDB office in Habiganj town, is still visible only from multi-storeyed buildings.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

Various structures including over 60 shops -- made of corrugated iron sheets -- occupying it on three sides and a truck stand on the other would make it difficult for anyone to believe that a huge pond existed there several years back

building a shopping mall on its land, said locals.

In the latest municipality budget, announced recently, the authorities even allocated Tk 5 crore for the purpose -- a decision that is being opposed vehemently by environmentalists and concerned citizens alike, they also said.

During a visit to the town, this correspondent had trouble locating the pond due to the surrounding structures and a large number of trucks parked at

the truck stand, all of which were built encroaching on the pond.

Tofazzal Sohel, general secretary of Habiganj unit of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) and also a national council member of the organisation, told this correspondent that there are over 60 shops of different kinds -- including restaurants, barber shops, clothing and shoe stores -- on three sides of the 200-decimal pond and only about 50 decimals of it is still visible in

the middle now.

The filled up pond now cannot hold any water and that is one of the reasons why the surrounding areas are getting waterlogged after even light showers.

Bapa has sent a memorandum to the town mayor, demanding cancellation of the fund that has been allocated for the proposed construction of the mall on the pond and also removal of all types of installations from the pond, he added.

Even two decades ago, locals used to bathe in the pond and use its water for household work, reminisced Ali Ahsan Chowdhury Pintu, a resident in the neighbourhood.

After year 2000, a number of street vendors first started to sit around the pond with their merchandise. Then the pond started to shrink gradually as influential locals started building tin structures on three sides of its banks, he also said.

When asked whether the municipality had any role to play in the gradual disappearance of such a large pond in the town, Golam Kibria, market inspector of the municipality, said the town authorities did not have any hand in the act. Rather, the hawkers set up shops by occupying the pond and transport workers built the truck stand on their own.

Habiganj Mayor Mizanur Rahman said, "I became mayor by winning the by-election only a year ago. But long before that, makeshift shops around the pond and the truck stand were already there."

"Since the pond had already been filled, it was decided that a shopping mall would be built there... Now, if the environmentalists raise objections to the filling up of the pond and construction of the shopping mall there, the municipal authorities will surely reconsider the matter," he added.

Contacted, Habiganj Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Tareq Mohammad Zakaria said destruction of ponds is detrimental to the environment and the district administration has plans to save and revive all public ponds that have been occupied or filled up illegally.

Speaking with this correspondent, National River Conservation Commission Chairman Muzibur Rahman Howlader said according to the Natural Reservoir Conservation Act, no municipality can fill up any pond in any way.

Expat's wife murdered, 1 arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

Police on Sunday arrested a woman in connection with a case for killing a housewife in Barishal city on Friday.

The arrestee, Rahima Begum, is wife of Abdul Khaleq of Bhimpur village in Gournadi upazila of the district.

Earlier, police recovered the body of Sabina Begum, 30, wife of Kuwait expatriate Shahidul Islam Shafiq and daughter of Saheb Ali of Nazirpur village in Muladi upazila, from a the rooftop of a passenger bus on Barishal-Bhurghata route on Friday night.

Officer in Charge (OC) of Gournadi Police Station Afzal Hossain said during primary interrogation they came to know that the murder took place at an under-construction building in Kashipur area of the city on Friday afternoon or in the evening.

They also recovered a hammer and a piece of rope, used in the murder, the OC said.

Shahidul's younger brother Monir Hawlader said Sabina took Tk 4 lakh from Khaleq, assuring him that she would send him to Kuwait with the help of his husband.

Later, Khaleq change his mind and ask Sabina to return the money, Monir said, adding that, but Sabina could only return Tk 1.5 lakh and was delaying to pay the rest amount.

Delay in road works mounts sufferings on commuters

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Residents in Indurkani upazila of the district are facing untold sufferings as the construction works of 19 roads under the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) have remained incomplete due to fund crisis.

According to the upazila engineer's office, in January last year, the LGED issued a Tk 19 crore work order to contractors for construction of the roads under the Barishal-Jhalakathi-Pirojpur project.

It was scheduled to complete the construction work by September this year but only 50 percent of the work has been completed till now, causing immense sufferings to commuters. The authority has recently extended the duration of the work to June next year.

The construction works remained suspended for the last six months due to lack of fund, said sources at the office.

Md Al Amin, a resident of Chandipur village in the upazila, said the construction work of a road was going on at their village for over a year but it has now remained suspended for the last six months, causing immense sufferings to locals.

As the road work remained incomplete, they have to face great trouble in carrying goods, said another resident of the village Abdus Salam Mridha.



People suffer a lot as construction work of the road at Hoglabuniya village in Pirojpur's Indurkani upazila remains suspended for the last few months due to fund crisis.

PHOTO: STAR

Mohammad Anwar, a battery-run auto-rickshaw driver from Dakkhin Indurkani village, said because of suspension of the road work, they cannot use it properly.

Most parts of the vehicle often broke while crossing the area, he said.

Mohsin Hawlader, a member of Parehat union parishad, said two roads were being constructed at Umedpur village.

As the construction works of the roads have remained incomplete, local people are facing immense problem, he said.

Locals said the under-construction

works of the roads were also affected by the recent floods.

Apart from this, they have questioned about the quality of works of some of the roads.

Contacted, upazila engineer Laila Mithun said the contractors cannot complete the construction works of the roads due to lack of fund.

Pirojpur LGED Executive Engineer Sushanta Ranjan Roy said they have already informed the higher authorities about the matter.

The construction works of the roads will be completed soon after getting the fund, said the LGED official.



This 10-foot-long python, caught by locals in Sohagpur area along the Jamuna river in Sirajganj's Belkuchi upazila yesterday, was rescued by the members of The Birds Safety House, an environment friendly organisation, and later handed over to forest department.

PHOTO: STAR

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার		বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ	
কমান্ডিং অফিসারের কার্যালয়		২ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন	
মুক্তাগাছা, ময়মনসিংহ		উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র আহবান বিজ্ঞপ্তি	
তারিখঃ ২২/১১/২০২০খ্রিঃ	২০২০-২০২১ অর্থ বৎসরে ২ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন, মুক্তাগাছা, ময়মনসিংহ ফোর্সের ৩য় কোয়ার্টারের (জানুয়ারি ২০২১খ্রিঃ হতে মার্চ ২০২১খ্রিঃ পর্যন্ত) উন্মুক্তমানের ভোজ্যতেল (সয়াবিন) এবং উন্মুক্তমানের ছোটদানা দেশী মত্তর ডাল সরবরাহ কার্যের জন্য 'দি পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮, ২০০৯' এবং তদীয় সংশোধনী অনুসারে নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্ত সাপেক্ষে ঠিকাদার নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশী ঠিকাদারগণের নিকট হতে সীলমোহরকৃত উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে।	০১। মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ	১। যরঞ্জি মন্ত্রণালয়/জননিরাপত্তা বিভাগ।
০২। সংস্থা	২। বাংলাদেশ পুলিশ।	০৩। দরপত্র সম্পাদনকারী প্রধান	৩। কমান্ডিং অফিসার (এসপি), ২ আর্মড পুলিশ ব্যাটালিয়ন, মুক্তাগাছা, ময়মনসিংহ।
০৪। কি কারণে দরপত্র আহবান	৪। ২০২০-২০২১ অর্থ বৎসরে লট নং-০১ ও ০২-এ বর্ণিত কাজের জন্য ঠিকাদার নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে।	০৫। সংগ্রাহক সত্তার জেলা	৫। ময়মনসিংহ।
০৬। দরপত্র আহবানের সূত্র নং	৬। দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি স্মারক নং-কিউএম-২৭৩/৩০৫৩	০৭। তারিখ	৭। ২২ নভেম্বর ২০২০খ্রিঃ।
০৮। দরপত্রের পদ্ধতি	৮। উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি (OTM)।	০৯। বাজেট ও অর্থনৈতিক খাত	৯। পুলিশ হেডকোয়ার্টার্স, ঢাকা হতে সংশ্লিষ্ট খাতে অর্থ বরাদ্দ প্রাপ্তি সাপেক্ষে।
১০। দরপত্র প্যাকেজ নং	১০। ০৩/২০২০-২০২১।	১১। দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের তারিখ	১১। ২২ নভেম্বর ২০২০খ্রিঃ।
১২। দরপত্র তফসিল বিক্রয়ের শেষ তারিখ	১২। ০৬ ডিসেম্বর ২০২০খ্রিঃ (বেলা ১৪:৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত)।	১৩। দরপত্র জমা প্রদানের তারিখ ও সময়	১৩। ০৭ ডিসেম্বর ২০২০খ্রিঃ বেলা ১২:৩০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত।
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