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The World on Time

## Down to Earth Of City's Lakes and Open Spaces

By ASM Nurunnabi

Lately we have been observing an ominous trend set in motion by the authorities concerned for conversion of lakes into building areas. Green areas, parks and lakes are considered essential elements for ensuring a healthy environment in cities all over the world. For the fast growing city of Dhaka, we seem to be forgetting or rather neglecting this basic environmental concept.

Instead of developing new building areas and preserving the natural embellishments of the city lakes, the planners appear to be involving themselves in dubious deals which go against the environmental needs of the city. We were given assurance by the LGRD Minister last year that all the lakes of the city would be cleaned and beautified. But so far we have found little reflection of his words in the shape of concrete measures. On the contrary, we find disquieting evidence of deteriorating situation in this regard.

Take the instance of Dhammudi lake. The lake was intended to add to the scenic beauty of the Dhammudi Residential Area. Such intention has been belied by the present state of the lake. The main problem is large-scale pollution of water of the lake. The pollution is so acute that it has caused a disastrous effect on the fish resources of the lake. There are quite a good number of drains connecting the adjoining houses with the lake. The sewage and waste waters coming through these drains are primarily responsible for water pollution.

In its present state, the lake has almost become a body of stinking water. The paved pathways along the banks of the lake have become dilapi-

dated. The trees which were planted to enhance the beauty of the area are neglected. The banks of the lake are overgrown with wild shrubs and plants with water hyacinths spreading over parts of the lake. Its immediate environment has become so adverse that morning and evening walkers tend to avoid the vicinity of the lake.

Similarly, there is no arrangement at the moment to ensure proper management of the Ramna, Gulshan and Uttara lakes. For absence of public baths and scarcity of readily available water, numerous people of various kinds take baths and wash their clothes in these stagnant bodies of water, which are made progressively dirty allowing scope for environmental hazard.

A recent opinion poll conducted by a non-governmental organisation (NGO) has showed that the overwhelming majority of the respondents are in favour of preservation of the lakes and against leasing them out to private real estate developers. Reportedly, plans are being considered for leasing out some of the lakes for construction of housing complexes on the ground that they are not being maintained properly.

This has given rise to widespread concern among city dwellers, because such lakes not only comprise the 'beauty spots' of the city, but also offer fresh, open air places where people can go for recreation and easing of tension.

Dhaka's population is expanding fast. But the expansion remains unplanned. The necessity of open spaces for a breath of fresh air is being seriously undermined on account of adverse circumstances in several spheres. Open space for the public is dwindling sharply in the

capital city with the aggression of the so-called real estate developers who are now even eyeing the marsh lands and lakes around the city. Thus while city's open spaces are shrinking, multi-storyed housing and shopping complexes keep mushrooming. It is sad to note that all the requisite features of a well-designed growing city of the future is not receiving due attention. As a result, the regions that are the pride of the city like Gulshan lake, Ramna Park and Uttara Park are under serious threats of encroachment.

In the opinion of knowledgeable quarters, development projects in the public sector must be in harmony with the other needs of a capital city. In view of the imperative needs for planning which is required to be thorough and farsighted, the rising trend of construction of high-rise apartments poses a serious cause for concern, because there is absence of any obligatory open space around them. The Rajuk's role in this sector, instead of being custodial, appears to be far from satisfactory.

Spaces of many a small-size park, meant for children of the locality, have been so wrongfully selected that parents don't find it safe to send their children there. As a result, many such parks are being used for cattle rearing or other anti-social activities. Moreover, the majority of schools in the city don't even have playgrounds which are mandatory for some high schools. In this unsatisfactory situation, citizens' initiative is a must if civic bodies like DCG and Rajuk are to preserve immediately the remaining free spaces, besides establishing others as needed.

## Make hartal a success

From Page 1

tors of the country are on the verge of ruin due to failures of the government.

"People have lost their buying capacity and economy has been ruined. Farmers are not getting fair price of their products and hundreds of mills and factories are being closed," she said.

She said the government is also showing reluctance to implement the pay-scale.

Begum Zia said the ruling party has started capturing educational institutions like forcible occupation of char land. "Even mills, factories, mosques, madrassahs and other religious institutions are being captured by the ruling party."

Besides, she said, the government has resorted to the police

### Boat capsized

### 2 feared drowned in Padma

From Our Correspondent

KUSHTIA, Aug 22: Two persons were feared drowned when an engine boat loaded with smuggled goods and passengers capsized in the river Padma at Islampur Kharibona in Daulatpur thana yesterday. The boat was coming from Talpatty of Ramkrishnapur Union.

Other passengers swam ashore but Hazrat Ali, 28, and Parul Akhtar, 30, are still missing.

### 2 more bodies

From Page 1

ing in the sea near Mosheshkhali island in the afternoon.

The four along with a group of students belonging to the mechanical engineering department of BUET came here on a study tour. They got themselves separated from the group and went to the sea beach for swimming.

One of the four victims was yet to be traced.

Witnesses said the clash occurred over the payment of bus fares.

Students, bus workers

itics of vengeance and filing of false cases against political opponents while murder, attacks, arrest and all sorts of harassment have become regular phenomena.

To get rid of this 'suffocating situation', it is the duty of all patriotic citizens of the country to join the anti-government agitation.

Begum Zia called upon the students, workers, employees, farmers, businessmen, teachers, cultural activists, journalists, youths, women, physicians and all other professional groups to make Sunday's hartal a success.

She also called for unity of the people of all walks of life to resist government activities to jeopardise the country's independence and sovereignty.

### Sec 144 imposed on Khatkhutiya in Rangpur

RANGPUR, Aug 22: The district administration imposed Section 144 in and around Khatkhutiya High School in Kotwali thana today to avoid a possible clash between two rival groups, reports UNB.

The restriction was imposed as sitting chairman of Posherum Union Ekramul Haq and some of his opponent villagers convened rally at the same venue at 3 pm today.

Police were deployed at the school ground in the morning to avoid clash, and no untoward incident occurred till late this evening.

Water Resources Minister

Committee at Shahbagh in

the city yesterday.

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Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzak addressing a rally of the Jatiya Samannay

— Star photo

## Khaleda out to bring Razakars under one banner

by their agents in this country.

Major Mohammad Hanif said the on-going trial of the killers of Bangabandhu is the manifestation of the existence of rule of law in the country.

"Inshallah, the trial of Golam Azam and his fellow colleagues will be held in Bangladesh," he said and demanded removal of khatib Obaidul Huq from Baitul Mukarram Mosque.

The Mayor said the khatib of Baitul Mukarram Mosque committed a serious crime on the holy day of Miladunnaib instigating the anti-liberation forces to insult the country's President. He must be punished for his crime, the Mayor maintained.

Hanif said the nation also wanted to see the trial of the killers of four great leaders, Col (retd) Taher and even the killers of Ziaur Rahman.

## JU officers, employees continue strike

By JU Correspondent  
Stalemate continues at the Jahangirnagar University (JU) as the 9-day strike called by the officers and employees enters seventh day today.

Attendance of the students in the classes was thin on Thursday though the transport was exempted from the strike following a request by the JU Syndicate on Wednesday.

All the JU officers and employees have been agitating since August 7 demanding implementation of four-point demand, including change in office timing and raising retirement age from 60 to 65.

The Syndicate also sought till August 26 to settle the issues with the officers and employees by this period. The VC Prof Amirul Islam Chowdhury is scheduled to hold a meeting with the striking officers and employees on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, officers and employees yesterday threatened an all-out strike from September 7 to 23 if their demands were not met by August 26.

## 1 killed, 19 hurt in Barisal road accident

By Staff Correspondent  
Barisal, Aug 22: One person was killed and 19 others were injured in a road accident at Batajore under Gourabandha thana late last night.

Witnesses said, a Barisal bound passenger night coach from Khulna met with the accident when it fell into a roadside ditch after hitting a tree at about 1 am at Batajore.

One Delwar Hossain, 60, was killed on the spot while 19 others, including four women passengers were injured. The seriously injured passenger Abdul Motaleb, 55, was admitted to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

## Ctg clash

From Page 1  
were deployed to bring the situation under control. Some Ansar members were later closed on charge of firing, port sources said.

To protest firing, the truck drivers stopped delivery of cargo from Chittagong port immediately after the incident and put up barricades on the port road, they said.

The truckers also organised a protest rally on the port road and demanded trial of those responsible for opening fire.

## New KU VC

From Page 1  
Prof Islam also served in different universities abroad. He was dean of the faculty of Engineering in the University of Maiduguri of Nigeria and Professor of Al-Fateh University of Libya.

Prof Islam is a former director of Centre for Energy Studies of BUET.

Moulana Azizul Haq speaking at a rally of Islami Oikya Jote at The Manik Mia Avenue in the city yesterday.

— Star photo

## 10 injured in clash

From Page 1  
Manik Mia Avenue while the MSP supporters were holding their rally at the Panthapath.

Later, the IOJ supporters held a demonstration after Magrib prayers protesting what they said attack on their supporters. They set out from their office at Purana Paltan and went up to Dainik Bangla crossing. But police dispersed them near National Sports Council. One person was detained but was later released.

Earlier, at the rally, IOJ leaders alleged that police prevented their supporters travelling to Dhaka from outside from attending the gathering by stopping a number of vehicles.

Several trucks carrying IOJ supporters were stopped at Madhabdi in Narisingdi district by a Magistrate, ordering the truck drivers to off-load them saying it was forbidden for trucks to carry the people. Police used batons to clear the trucks, an IOJ leader alleged.

During the protest, IOJ leaders and supporters offered their Juma prayers at the Manik Mia Avenue before the rally.

Cyclone hits WB coast: 200 fishermen missing in Bay

CALCUTTA, Aug 22: Two hundred fishermen who went deep sea fishing in the Bay of Bengal were reported missing after a cyclone hit the coast in the eastern Indian state of West Bengal, domestic news agencies said Friday, reports AP.

Tidal waves 20 feet high washed away six kilometres of sea beach in Digha town and caused fissures in the dike, the Press Trust of India reported.

The waves destroyed 2,500 homes and submerged miles of land in the area.

Authorities rescued 2,000 people from the swirling waters but 25,000 people were still marooned in and around the coastal town, the report said.

### IOJ action plan

From Page 1

came under attack at the Maghbazar crossing in the afternoon. At least five of their supporters were wounded when Nirmul Committee supporters attacked it, Moulana Yusufi claimed.

Extra police and BDR were deployed in different parts of the city, including the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque and the meeting places of the IOJ, MSP and Ghatak Dalal Nirmul Committee which held its rally near National Museum. BDR guarded the 'Shikha Chirantan' at Suhrawardy Udyan.

Police blocked normal traffic on the entrances of the Manik Mia Avenue as a precautionary measure. The IOJ leaders and supporters offered their Juma prayers at the Manik Mia Avenue before the rally.

IOJ chief Moulana Azizul Haq, who chaired the rally, said that the government was encouraging forces opposed to Islam and its policies were aimed at turning the country into a satellite state of India. He alleged that people trying to reach the rally were resisted by the government machinery.

Criticising the ruling party for the Ganges Water Treaty, he alleged that the government was now planning to allow transit to India and purchase power from that country. "The government move will not go unchallenged," he said.

The five-point action programme also included demonstration across the country on August 29, meetings at thana and district levels from September 15 to 30, submitting memoranda to the DCs on September 25. Ulama convention and conference of intellectuals in the city on December 3 and 26 respectively.

Speakers at the rally criticised the government for the price hike of essentials and the policies it pursued as regard India. They also demanded resignation of the state minister for religious affairs and withdrawal of Section 144 from Baitul Mukarram areas.

The rally was also addressed by, among others, Moulana Faizul Karim, Pir of Charmoni, Moulana Mufti Faizul Huq Amin, Moulana Muhibuddin Amin, Moulana A R N A Matin, Moulana A Latif Nizami and Moulana Nurul Haq Faizi.

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## Emergency treatment

From Page 1

relative in Dhaka from Mymensingh.

A police official from Cantonment thana arrived at the clinic soon after he received a wireless message about the accident. The driver of the minibus was sitting in the police truck.

The Sub-Inspector, Moklesur Rahman, enquired about Joyal. Attendants at the clinic took him to the small room where Joyal was kept. "The patient should be immediately removed to DMCH," the doctor told the police official.

The patient's mother requested the four youths to help them reach DMCH. "Please help me," she appealed. "I do not know where is DMCH."

A clinic transport was there but no driver. The clinic management seemed to take no interest in Joyal's case. No one even looked for the driver.

Later, Joyal was taken to the DMCH by an autorickshaw, but his fate could not be known despite repeated search for his name in the record book of the DMCH emergency section.

The doctor at the clinic had

said Joyal's injury was very serious, even might fatal. There are many such clinics where emergency cases like Joyal's are simply refused indirectly or directly because the poor patients, in most cases, are unable to pay for the treatment.

When Joyal's story was brought to the notice of Dr Moniruzzaman Bhuiyan, secretary general of Bangladesh Private Clinic Association, he said, "