

# Tanguar Haor finally escapes the clutches of plunderers'

10-year maintenance programme begins this winter after successful implementation of interim steps

IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet

After successful implementation of some interim steps, a 10-year programme has been taken up involving Tk 63 crore for long term management of Tanguar Haor, a Ramsar Site in Sunamganj district.

The programme includes, restoring ecological and environmental uniformity of the 50 beels (waterbodies) and 46 villages on the banks of the vast lake, stopping indiscriminate netting of fish and extraction of natural resources, creation of employment opportunity for people living in the area and ensuring its sustainable management with participation of all stakeholders.

The programme will be implemented with government funds and assistance from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The programme has been final-

ised at a high profile meeting held in the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF) with the minister in the chair.

"We hope to start the programme soon", Sunamganj Deputy Commissioner Jafar Siddique told the Daily Star on Monday.

The programme has been prepared considering the experiences gathered from the one-year interim programme, which concludes in November-December this year, he said.

He said, in addition to the IUCN, some NGOs would be entrusted with the task of looking after the environmental side.

Under the interim programme, the local administration ensured protection of the lake's resources and diversity by deploying joint forces comprising BDR, police and Ansars under supervision of magistrates.

This saved its resources including mother fishes of different varieties.

The 3868 acre Tanguar Haor is the second biggest mother fishery in the country.

The protection of mother fishes produced a tremendous result. Freshwater fishes multiplied in the waterbody in only one year, the local people and officials said.

Tanguar Haor was freed from illegal occupants in November last year following an order by the Prime Minister.

The district administration took full control of the lake comprising 46 big jalmohals (waterbodies) spread over two remote upazilas in Sunamganj.

The law enforces were provided with speedboats and four temporary camps were set up.

Random use of banned current nets were stopped and encroachers

and plunderers having political links were driven out.

About 3000 pieces of current nets worth over Tk 15 lakh were seized.

Ruling BNP Whip in Jatiya Sangsad Fazlul Haque Aspia, also the minister-in-charge for Sunamganj district, told this correspondent that the interim programme produced a tremendous result.

Plunder of fish and plantation resources in and around the haor by vested groups, which continued for over four years earlier, is stopped since November last year. Resources worth over Tk 5 crore were looted in the four years, he said.

The government is sincere to keep the present situation going.

"People irrespective of political opinions are also cooperating in preserving the resources and development of the lake", he said.

Tanguar Haor is home to 60,000 birds of different species and 140 varieties of sweetwater fishes and is congenial for growth of a host of watery plants including hijal karach (barringtonia acutangula) and cane clusters.

Besides, over one lakh guest birds fly to the lake during winter.

In the wet season, the entire area looks like a sea dotted with greens covering small villages on high lands.

In the dry season, when water recedes into rivers, all that remain are 50 odd beels.

It was declared an Ecologically Critical Area (ECA) in 2000 and was taken up as a Ramsar Site.

But implementation of the Ramsar project is still uncertain due to indecision by policymakers and failure in selecting financial investors. This had created the opportunity for plunder.



PHOTO: STAR  
School students at an essay competition on 'children at risky jobs' held at Patuakhali Latif Municipal Hall, organised by a local NGO recently.

## 'Failed govt should resign'

Satkhira AL rally told

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Satkhira district Awami League (AL) yesterday held a rally and brought out a big procession in the town demanding resignation of the "failed" government.

This was part of a countrywide opposition programme. Former lawmaker Monsur Ahmed president over the rally, addressed by, among others, Nazrul Islam, Abu Ahmed, Sheikh Anu, Nasrin Moina, Sheikh Shahid Uddin, Sheikh Nurul Haq, Syed Firoz Kamal, SM Shawkat Hossain, Abdul Mannan, Shahadat Hossain, Mahmud Ali Suman an dMonjur Hossain.

The speakers said the BNP led Four Party Alliance government has failed to ensure security of people's life and property.

They demanded resignation of the government as it failed to unearth clues to the August 21 grenade attack on the AL rally in Dhaka and curb crimes.

## Tension mounts at BSBMCH

Stand-off between BNP supporters, employees union over appointments

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Tension centring appointment of 126 employees mounted at the Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital (BSBMCH) as employees aligned with ruling BNP and the Sarkari Karmachari Sammanya Parishad brought out separate processions on the campus on Monday to press their divergent demands.

The ruling party supporters backed by city Mayor and district BNP President Majibur Rahman Sarwar MP and JCD are demanding appointment of 71 employees from among ruling party supporters. The 71 were recommended by the Mayor.

The Sarkari Karmachari Sammanya Parishad at BSBMCH is opposing this and has threatened of strike.

Added to this, JCD (Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal), ruling BNP's student front at the college, has declared

BMA and DAB leaders unwanted on the campus.

The tension was created on Thursday after lists of 126 people filinated for appointment by the BSBMCH authorities were snatched allegedly by JCD activists.

Meanwhile, the health ministry committee led by its Joint Secretary Dr Hellauzzaman, which was scheduled to reach Barisal on Monday to probe the matter did not arrive here.

The appointment procedure was postponed on Saturday for seven days by Mayor Majibur Rahman Sarwar MP, alleging irregularities and nepotism by the selection committee. But it later came to light that he himself recommended appointment of 71 people from among ruling party supporters.

Majibur Rahman Sarwar later said as local MP and BCC Mayor he has the right to recommend "competent" people for appointment. But he

did not press for it, he said.

He also brought allegation of irregularity by Barisal BMA (Bangladesh Medical Association) President Dr Aziz Rahim in the appointment process.

Sources meanwhile claimed that names of 12 persons from the list of 71 given by the Mayor have been finalised for appointment.

Dr. Aziz Rahim left his city residence due to lack of security, the sources said.

Golam Mustafa and Majibur Rahman, president and secretary of pro-government Fourth Class Employees Union, gave a memorandum to the BSBMCH director on Monday demanding transfer of Dr Aziz Rahim and filling up of 60 per cent posts from their list. They also threatened of strike if their demands are not met.

## Operation Durbar launched in B'baria

9 drug peddlers held on first day

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Brahmanbaria police yesterday launched an anti-drug operation named 'Operation Durbar'.

Drug peddlers will be caught as a prepared list, Sadar thana Officer-in-Charge Md Ismail told this correspondent.

Nine drug peddlers were arrested and 20 kilograms of hemp recovered on the first day, he said.

Before launching of the operation on orders from Police Superintendent ATM Tarek, several meetings were held in different areas of the town and the district, the OC said.

The programme has been launched as the district, because of its location, is a route for drug ped-

## 40,000 marooned in Bhola

Breaches in town protection dam

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bhola

At least 40,000 people are marooned in ten villages in Bhola Sadar upazila following several days' downpour and onrush of water from the central areas of the country.

About six lakh people have been affected in seven upazilas of the district.

Floodwater is entering the town as the town protection embankment breached in Kalikirti and Nasir Majhi in Shibpur union.

Water Development Board (WDB) engineer Shahidul Islam in Bhola, when contacted, admitted that about ten meters of the embankment have been washed away by water from the mighty Meghna.

Several lakh acres of cropland with newly transplanted Aman seedlings inside the embankment have reeled under water. An unspecified number of houses along with some schools and madrassahs have been damaged, local people said.

Many people have taken shelter on high lands and embankments, they said.

They alleged that they urged the WDB officials and the administration to take precautionary steps to protect the embankment but they did not do anything.

Kalikirti, Kalagwa and Nabipur villages are the worst affected.

Betel leaf cultivators in the villages are the worst sufferers as the



PHOTO: STAR

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## 4th bomb hoax in a week

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Another bomb hoax at a school and a wholesale market created panic among city dwellers on Sunday.

This was the fourth such incident in the city in two weeks.

Local people say this was part of planned sabotage to create chaos and instability in the country.

In the latest incident, a bomb-like packet was found at the bathroom of Udayan School in the city center.

A student saw the packet wrapped with tape, wire and battery. As he cried out, a teacher came and threw it on the school field but it did not explode. When opened, sand and mud was found inside, police and school authorities later said.

Earlier on September 16, a bomb-like packet was recovered from the computer room of the same school, run by Catholic missionaries.

On Sunday, another bomb-like packet was found at a wholesale shop in Hatkhola area in the city. Police removed it and found sand and mud inside.

## Hefty bonus for ultrapoor women

Each get Tk 30,000 and become self-reliant under CARE's LCS project

SHAMIM ASHRAF back from Bogra

Destitute women like Maloti, Shukuni and Angur of Bogra's Sabgram village never heard of Labour Contracting Society (LCS) even a year ago when they were struggling to manage square meals for their families.

But seven of them, who lived in the periphery of the society, scorned and never before addressed, are now working as successful entrepreneurs and breadwinners for their families. Each of them got a profit of about Tk 30,000 by working as a contractor of the LCS.

The LCS is a 12-member group of substitutes of 'third class contractors', registered with the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED). A LCS comprising Maloti, Kohinoor, Angur, Shukuni, Mafia, Piara and Anita and five men completed construction of Sabgram market in July.

The pro-poor idea of LCS was conceived in 2002. CARE Bangladesh and the LGED announced a programme to develop 146 markets across the country, where hardcore poor women would be rehabilitated with funds.

As per the plan, destitute women would be given six permanent shops and 20 percent of the rest space in a market for five years. The planners also gave them the construction work.

"We could not believe that women like us would get a place in a market in our society. They (officials of NGO and LGED) told us that we would be able to earn large amounts by doing the construction work," said Maloti.

She now runs a grocery in the market.

"In fact, membership of the LCS helped us get a shop in the market. "We earned money in two ways -- wages as labourers and profit as

contractors," once destitute Kohinoor, now a tailor in the market, said.

A contractor usually makes five per cent profit from a construction work. But the LGED fixed 10 per cent profit for LCS groups.

The total budget for constructing Sabgram market was Tk 35.71 lakh. The LCS contractors got a profit of Tk 3.57 and each member earned Tk 29,760 profit after paying VAT and income tax.

The LCS has a bank account from which money can be drawn with joint signature of the president and the treasurer. Individual members also have accounts in their names.

"The new idea of LCS has proved very successful in poverty alleviation and gave the members honour and dignity," Sabgram Union Parishad Chairman Israfil Hossain Dewan told The Daily Star.

## Cuta protests attack on Duta office

CU CORRESPONDENT

The Chittagong University Teachers' Association (Cuta) brought out a silent procession on the campus on Monday protesting the office of Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta) President Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique allegedly by activists Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), ruling BNP's student wing, Cuta president Prof Dr Nurul Anwar and general secretary Prof Dr Gazi Saleh Uddin led the procession. They demanded punishment of the culprits.