

Ponds, water bodies being filled at will in Rajshahi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

The number of surface-water reservoirs is rapidly decreasing because of their indiscriminate filling in the city.

The trend gives rise to the threat of water-logging and ecological imbalance.

There is a legal provision of imprisonment for five years and fine up to Tk 50,000 for filling up any water body in the city area without the approvals of Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) and Rajshahi Development Authority (RDA).

But the RCC or RDA authorities did not take action against anyone so far.

There existed more than 4,000 ponds in the municipal areas in the '60s and 3,000 ponds in early '70s, a RCC census said, adding the number went down to as low as 600 till 2000.

Over the last five years, more than a half of them were filled up, said RCC sources.

During the current dry season, ponds are being filled up in many places including the posh areas of Baliapukur, Ambagan, Ghospara, Chandipur, Mohishbathan, Sagarpura, Talaimari, Laxmipur and court area.

With the increase of population in the metropolis, lowlands and water bodies were filled up for residential and commercial use.

In many cases, the influential

persons filled them up to build markets on it.

The RDA authorities, admitting the allegations, said the rules to stop filling of water bodies had many loopholes and could not be applied against the violators of law.

However, the RCC officials said

RDA is responsible for checking the practice. If they (RDA) seek any help from us, we are ready to help them', said RCC Chief Executive Officer.

Prof Sarwar Jahan of the Environmental Science Institute of Rajshahi University said the water reservoirs are essential for mainte-

nance of ecological balance. 'We should stop people from filling up water bodies,' he said further.

Fish production has declined to a great extent over the last decade while ecology in the area degraded because of filling up of ponds, he added.



PHOTO: STAR

A pond in Baliapukur, a posh area of Rajshahi city, being filled up violating rules.

Diarrhoea situation alarming in three districts

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Diarrhoea situation has taken a serious turn in different upazilas of Madaripur, Narail and Barisal districts.

The number of diarrhoea-affected patients is increasing in different upazilas of Madaripur which include Rajoir, Shibchar and Sadar.

BDNEWS quoting hospital sources said, at least 35 diarrhoea-affected persons were admitted to different health centres and hospitals and more than 100 others attacked in last two days.

BSS from Narail adds: Diarrhoea has broken out in Sadar, Lohagara and Kalia upazilas in the district.

The Resident Medical Officer (RMO) of Narail Sadar General Hospital said on Friday, about 25 to 35 patients were being admitted to the hospital a day.

Hospital sources said two babies died last week. They are Sohagh, son of Subodh Biswas, of village Nayanpur under Sadar upazila and Mariam, daughter of Ruhul Sikder of village Makrail under Lohagara upazila.

Our Barisal Correspondent adds: More than 80 patients have been admitted to the Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMCH) and other hospitals in the city and the district in a week.

On average 11 patients are being admitted to SBMCH daily.

Dr M A Malek, Civil Surgeon of Barisal told this correspondent that 107 medical teams are working in the affected areas with sufficient oral saline and other medical equipment.

Moulvibazar NAP leader dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

The General Secretary of the district committee of Bangladesh National Awami Party (NAP-Muzaffar), Abdul Bari Chowdhury died here on Wednesday. He was 57.

He left behind his wife, a daughter, two sons and a number of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

The veteran NAP leader was suffering from cancer and liver diseases. His Namaz-e-Janaja was held at Moulvibazar town where people from all walks of life participated.

Moulvibazar Press Club, NAP, BNP, Awami League, JSD (Inu), Workers' Party, Gonotantri Party, Gono Forum, CPB and other political organisations have condoled the death of the politician.

Fresh hunt for 22 top outlaws of SW region

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Law enforcers have launched a fresh drive to trace whereabouts of 22 top extremists in the southwestern (S-W) region.

The extremists, belonging to a list of 36, include Abdur Rashid Malitha alias Tapan, founder of Janajuddho faction of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP).

Tapan arrested from Jessore in 2001, escaped on January 26, 2001 from police custody at Khulna Judges Court with the help of a group of armed cadres of his underground party.

Twenty-one other notorious extremists being hunted by police and Rab are Sumon, Shoib, Sabuj, Tapash, Rob, Saidul, Noor Islam, Madhu and Kartik of PBCP Janajuddho faction. Biddut of PBCP

M-L faction and Shoilen, Bipul, 'Golden' Shihab, Bashir, Ekdil, Alimuddin, Selim Reza, Ittehad, Budo, Osman and Swapan of New Biplobi Communist Party.

They went into hiding after a massive hunt for them was launched by joint forces and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab).

Sources informed police that many of these 22 fugitive extremists have returned to their respective localities recently with criminal motive.

Four of the 36 listed outlaws are now in Khulna district jail. They are Rafiqul Islam Hittar, Mahmud Hasan Shimul, Bitu and Mashikur Rahman alias Joy of PBCP Janajuddho faction.

Seven other extremists were killed in 'crossfire' during the last one year.

They are 'BDR' Altaf, Amit Hasan and Tushar of PBCP Janajuddho faction, Mofakkhar Hossain Chowdhury and Abdur Rashid alias Tapu of PBCP M-L faction, former ward commissioner of Khulna City Corporation Asaduzzaman Litu and Mafizur Rahman of PBCP (Maoist).

Monoranjon Goshai alias Mrinal, Khan Alamgir Hossain alias Alam and Barun of New Biplobi Communist Party (NBCP) were killed by their rivals in different places of West Bengal.

Sources in the police department said that the on-going combing operations are not only aimed at arresting the 22 fugitive extremists but also to nab their associates and recovering illegal arms.

Rangpur Koilashranjon High School celebrates centenary

RAFIQUE SARKER, from Rangpur

It was a different day at Rangpur Koilashranjon High School.

Hundreds of former and present students of the school thronged the school compound to observe its 100th founding anniversary yesterday.

A number of colourful programmes were chalked out to observe the day. The programmes included discussion, sports, rally and cultural events.

The day began with a colourful procession of former and present students of the school. The processionists paraded the main streets of the town. A band party preceded the procession. This was

followed by a discussion meeting which was held at 10:00 am on the school premises.

Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Barrister Zamiruddin Sircar was the chief guest while State Minister for Housing and Public Works Alamgir Kabir was present as special guest at the discussion.

Story goes that two cousins Mahimaranjon Roy and Koilashranjon Roy were very intimate to each other in their early childhood. Following death of Kolashranjon, Mahimaranjon founded the school after the name for his cousin in 1873. Initially, it was a primary school. It was upgraded to a secondary school in 1904.

A good number of students of the

school have become well-established in life and are now serving at home and abroad.

In their addresses, the speakers remembered the old values during their time. They remembered the glorious contribution of the school students during the Liberation War in 1971.

They paid rich tributes to Shanku Mojumder, a former student of the school who became the first martyr in Rangpur during the Liberation War. Recalling his memory, they said the golden boy of the school inspired a large number of students to fight for freedom of their motherland.



PHOTO: STAR

Jatiya Sangsad Speaker Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar addressing a function at Rangpur Koilashranjon High School marking the school's 100th founding anniversary yesterday.

Bumper IRRI-boro in greater Mymensingh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Farmers in six districts of greater Mymensingh expect bumper production of IRRI-boro paddy this season due to favourable weather and availability of adequate seeds during the cultivation period.

The six districts are Netrakona, Kishoreganj, Sherpur, Mymensingh, Tangail and Jamalpur.

Boro paddy harvesting already started over a week ago in many places of the districts. In other parts of the districts it is likely to start in the first week of May.

According to the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE), 8,07,550 hectares were brought under IRRI-boro cultivation in the aforesaid districts with a target to produce 27,47,166 tons of paddy. Of those, 7,90,990 hectares were

brought under High Yielding Variety (HYV) and 21,250 hectares under local variety.

DAE Deputy Director (DD) Abdul Jabbar told the correspondent, farmers have already reaped 60 per cent of IRRI-boro crop this season. The production is expected to exceed the target, he said.

He told this correspondent, the farmers lost 80 per cent of IRRI-boro paddy due to flash flood last year. They are likely to recoup the losses this year due to bumper output of paddy, he added.

The DD of DAE, Kishoreganj Abul Khair told that most of the areas in the district are haor areas. Ninety per cent of IRRI-boro crops were damaged in the district during the last flood. This year the farmers harvested bumper paddy by

exceeding the official target, he said.

Yunush Ali, Chairman of Billpar union parishad (UP) in Nalithabari upazila, Sherpur, this season the farmers will yield bumper boro paddy.

Abdur Rahman, a farmer at village Jagannathpur in Khaliajuri upazila, Netrakona told last year he cultivated paddy on 20 hectares of land but flash flood damaged all his crop.

He is expected to harvest 60 to 70 maunds of paddy from one acre of land which is 'unprecedented in last 10 years', he said.

The DD of DAE, Tangail, Fazlul Karim told farmers expect 70 to 80 maunds of paddy from one acre of land this season.

SNAPS

Trawler capsizes in Bhairab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

An engine trawler laden with 450 bags of paddy capsized in Bhairab river at noon yesterday. Each of the bags was containing 70 kilograms of paddy. Clamimed owner of the trawler Rahan Das of Kalia upazila of Narail district. The trawler was hit by a ship in the mid-river. It was bound for Shahin Rice Mill of Senar bazar under Rupsha upazilla from Kalia upazila of Narail.

14-year RI for keeping arms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

The District and Sessions Judge, A K M Ishtiaque Hossain, yesterday sentenced Abdul Jabbar, 32, to 14 years of rigorous imprisonment for keeping an unauthorised firearm in his possession. Jabbar was arrested by Khalishpur thana police on January 29, 2003 at Noormagar in the city. A firearm was recovered from his possession.

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