



No let-up in grabbing Gulshan Lake

Influential people filling up the lake as govt sits idle

PINAKI ROY

Influential encroachers still continue filling up parts of the Gulshan-Banani-Baridhara lake at different points as the government sits idle only to watch environmental disasters in near future.

Different developers, industrialists, lawmakers, former bureaucrats and anyone with good ties with the government high-ups are grabbing the lake almost every day. In many circumstances these encroachers even forged papers of the pricey pieces of land in connivance with the authorities concerned.

Some officials of the Rajdhani

Unnayan Karti Pakhha (Rajuk) are helping the grabbers to get clearance for construction on the encroached parts of the lake. This remains an open practice for years, but the government is always indifferent to take action against it.

"We've been protesting this ill practice for years, but it seems no laws work for some people. They have already encroached on land worth a few thousand crores taka," says Zahirul Islam Chowdhury, general secretary of Gulshan Society, an organisation of the residents of the posh area.

The Gulshan-Banani lake works as a flood retention pond in the capital. Besides,

it serves as a major source for recharging groundwater and also relief for dwellers in the densely populated chaotic city.

Moreover, the lake plays a very important role of cooling the city environment.

Earlier in 2001, the government announced the lake as an ecologically critical area (ECA) to save it. But the move did not make any difference due to lack of coordination and corruption by the land and Rajuk officials.

The lake has already turned into an ecologically dead water body despite the government announcement thanks to rampant encroachment.

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BDR MUTINY
Trial not under military law, says Faruk

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan yesterday said the trial of BDR mutiny case will be held under conventional laws, not under the military law.

He however said the government would consider opposition's demand for holding the trial of the massacre under the military law.

The minister made the remarks at the closing ceremony of the 43rd foundation course at Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre in Savar.

He urged the opposition lawmakers, who absented themselves from the just-concluded budget session, to

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PARTY COUNCIL
BNP to seek time extension

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday said they would apply to the Election Commission seeking time extension for holding party council as the party is not prepared for it now.

"We are in the process of reorganising the party. We have done a lot of work but we do not have enough preparation to hold the council now," he said while talking to reporters

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Bangladeshis among 100 workers left without pay

UAE newspaper reports their ordeal in camp

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over 100 workers including Bangladeshis, Indians and Nepalese have been stranded in their camp in Abu Dhabi for the last six months without any pay or work, reports the Abu Dhabi-based newspaper The National.

For the last three months, these stranded workers have had to rely on the generosity of social and cultural organisations for basic provisions as food and water, and legal aid.

The workers, mostly Indian, are stranded in their camp on the outskirts of Mohammed bin Zayed city.

The newspaper reported on July 10 that the

situation has been prevailing since January when the company stopped paying the workers.

Kerala Social Centre and Shakti Theatre have been providing the workers with food and other necessities but officials from the Indian embassy took over recently.

The Bangladeshi Embassy in UAE, however, is unaware of the situation. When contacted by The Daily Star, Mohammad Moniruzzaman, labour councilor of the mission in Abu Dhabi, said he was not aware of such a situation.

"I did not receive complaints of such a nature. I will immediately inquire about it," he said.

The National reported that a lawyer has

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Encroachers have filled up this portion of the Gulshan Lake near Niketan despite widespread protests by local residents and a Supreme Court order to stop it.

PHOTO STAR

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Tamim ton gives Tigers lead

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tamim Iqbal scored his maiden century in the second innings of the first Test against West Indies at Kingstown giving Bangladesh ahead of 131 runs.

The left-handed batsman hit 104 runs off 232 balls and was on the crease with Junaid Siddique. He shared an 82-run opening partnership with Imrul Kayes.

Bangladesh were 200/1 at 1:45am.

House has inherent power to scrap JS membership. Says JS body chief on Sircar issue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Advocate Fazle Rabbi Mia, chief of the parliamentary probe committee that investigated graft allegation of former speaker Jamiruddin Sircar, yesterday reiterated that the House has its inherent power to scrap membership of any lawmaker on grounds of moral turpitude.

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Jackson was murdered, claims sister

AFP, London

Michael Jackson was killed by a band of greedy hangers-on, his sister La Toya alleged in interviews with British Sunday newspapers.

The King of Pop's sister spoke about her younger brother's death and the aftermath with The Mail on Sunday and the News of the World weeklies.

"I believe Michael was murdered, I felt that from the start," the 53-year-old said.

"Not just one person was involved, rather it was a conspiracy of people. He was surrounded by a bad circle. Michael was a very meek, quiet, loving person. People took advantage of that."

"Less than a month ago, I said I thought Michael was going to die before the London shows because he was surrounded by people who didn't have his best interests at heart."

La Toya said she had ordered a private autopsy.

Jackson, one of the world's most popular entertainers, died on June 25 at the age of 50.

"Michael was worth more than a billion dollars. When

Extortionists shoot two scrap traders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of criminals sprayed bullets indiscriminately in front of Hossain Market in the city's Badda area yesterday morning, leaving two scrap traders wounded.

Scrap dealer Askar, 35, and Kamal Hossain, 25, an employee of a scrap shop at North Badda, were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with bullet wounds.

Police said the criminals, numbering 10 to 12, fired about 15 shots and hurled two handmade bombs in front of the market at Bhangari Patti, leaving the two wounded.

Sub-Inspector Abdur Razzak of Badda Police Station said an extortionist identifying himself as Miabhai has been demanding Tk 5 lakh as toll from scrap trader Kalam over cell phone for the last few days.

He also asked Kalam to convey the same message to

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DMP moves to curb extortion in transport sector

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) authorities have formed a 19-member committee to identify the criminals involved in extortion in the city's transport sector.

DMP Commissioner AKM Shahidul Hoque told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said the people who are engaged in this sector in different ways are mainly involved in toll collection in the name of various organisations.

"The committee, headed by joint commissioner (traffic), has been formed with the representatives from police, transport owners and transport workers", said the DMP commissioner adding that the committee will identify those who are involved in collecting tolls in transport sector and how they collect it.

While asking, Shahidul said extortion in transport sector is an old issue but it is a matter of concern to police.

Replying to a query, the DMP commissioner admitted that some police personnel aid the criminals in collecting toll from the transport sector and warned that stern action will be taken against those who would be found guilty.

While addressing the monthly 'crime conference' held at Rajarbagh Police Lines yesterday, DMP Commissioner Shahidul Hoque said according to the statistics, the present crime situation is better than the immediate past caretaker government's time.

Analysing the crime statistics, he said robbery incidents have been increased in recent times but the overall crime and order situation remain under control of police.

Construction of deep-sea port starts next year

BSS, Chittagong

The construction of a deep-sea port near Sonadia island in Cox's Bazar will start next year and the port is expected to come into operation by 2020.

Shipping Minister Afasur Amin told BSS that after selecting the site in Sonadia, the techno-economic study has been completed and the review of the report would be held at the ministry on July 15.

The process is underway to place the project at the cabinet, pre-Ecne and Ecne soon, he said.

This is a project of huge economic potentials for Bangladesh. It will be implemented with public-private joint investment and if required, shares will be floated in the capital market, the minister added.

Shipping ministry sources said an eight-member inter-ministerial committee led by the shipping minister will finalise the report after necessary modifications to send it to the cabinet and the Ecne.

Other members of the committee are the cabinet secretary, the finance secretary, the planning secretary, the economic relations division secretary, the Securities and Exchange Commission chairman and the chairmen of Chittagong and Mongla port authorities.

According to the sources the much-awaited deep-sea port

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Abdul Malek lost the use of his legs to polio years ago but little did it deter him from living with dignity. He earns a livelihood by selling cigarettes from his wheelchair in the streets of the capital and lives with his family at Hazaribagh.

PHOTO STAR

Maoists kill 24 cops in eastern India

AFP, Raipur

Indian Maoists killed at least 24 policemen, including a senior officer, in an ambush yesterday in the eastern state of Chhattisgarh, officials said.

The attack took place in Rajnandangaon district, 90 kilometres (56 miles) from the state capital Raipur, the deputy inspector general of police in charge of operations against the left-wing rebels told AFP.

The guerrillas shot dead two policemen on patrol in the area and then ambushed the security team that was sent to investigate the incident, Pawan Devsai.

"We have information now of 24 policemen being killed in the attack," he added. "The dead include superintendent of police V.K. Choubey."

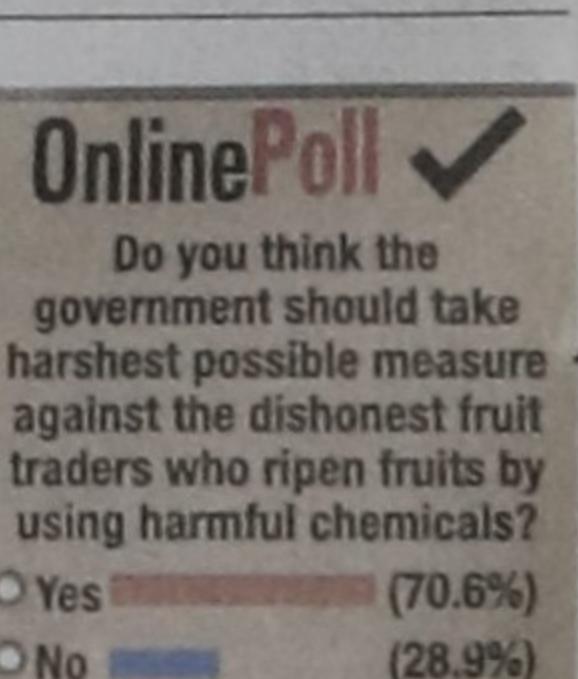
Meanwhile, a Press Trust of India report said New Delhi was sending 600 paramilitary personnel to Chhattisgarh to start combat operations for the rebels responsible.

Sunday's attack comes a month after 11 special police personnel were killed in a landmine blast triggered by Maoists in Chhattisgarh, where the left-wing rebels are based.

In April the rebels took more than 300 passengers hostage in an audacious attack in the neighbouring state of Jharkhand.

The authorities have been criticised for the apparent ease and confidence with which the rebels are allowed to operate.

India's Maoists say they are fighting for the rights of neglected tribal people and landless farmers. They are now active in more than half of the country's 29 states -- particularly



TODAY'S POLL

Do you think it'll be a good idea to have a separate specialised and technology-based police unit to combat militancy and terrorism?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net

Prayer Timing		
Jul 13	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-10	5-45
Zohr	1-45	2-15
Asr	6-00	6-15
Magrib	7-55	8-00
Esha	9-17	9-45

Source: Islamic Foundation