

# Waterlogging fear haunts Khulna city dwellers

*Another rains sets in but no move yet to resume the drive to evict canal, river grabbers*

QUAZI AMANULLAH, Khulna

Amid continuous encroachment on canals in Khulna city and adjacent Mayur River in absence of authorities' strong eviction drive against the influential offenders, menacing waterlogging has become a matter of serious concern for city dwellers, especially in the rainy season.

A staggering 29 out of 50 canals in the city are badly affected by illegal occupiers, making the areas vulnerable to waterlogging due to hin-

drance in the way of free flow of water during the rains.

Over one-third of 15 lakh city dwellers are directly exposed to the waterlogging problem, in addition to serious effect on the normal life and economic activities in the divisional headquarters.

About 80 percent roads of the city go under knee to waist-deep water when there is moderate to heavy rainfall.

Khan Jahan Ali Road, KD Ghosh Road, Moulvibazar, Kashipur New Road,

Khalishpur BIDC Road, Sheikhpura, Sher-e-Bangla Road, Tootpara Central Road, Iqbal Nagar are some of the worst affected areas where waterlogging often continues for days.

During a drive from July 1

to July 10 in 2009, Khulna City Corporation (KCC) authorities freed 21 canals from encroachers.

But the drive faced a sudden suspension and encroachers continued erection of unauthorised structures on 29 other canals as well as Mayur

River since then.

Contacted on June 15, KCC Mayor Talukder Abdul Khaleque said that KCC will shortly resume the drive to evict encroachers from the remaining canals and Moyur River.

So far as encroachment of canals, dykes and water bodies is concerned, nobody will be spared on any grounds, he said.

KCC Estate Officer Md Nuruzzaman Talukder said the district administration is the sole 'owner' of the canals while the city corporation

only takes care of them.

Following a probe conducted by the KCC, a report submitted on February 10 of 2009 identified 81 people as encroachers of 50 canals, he said, adding that the eviction drive has remained suspended due to absence of any government nominated first class magistrate in the KCC for the last two years.

The 81 encroachers include former KCC mayor Sirajul Islam, police inspector Md Moniruzzaman, retired forest officer Md Shahjahan, Sub Registrar Nurul Islam, proprietor of Ashraful Ulum Mahila Jamaat Unnayan Sangstha Arshad Ali.

Besides, a ward office, a primary school, a factory for making turmeric dust, a crematorium, a college, KDA bus terminal, truck terminal and a women's sports complex are among a large number of unauthorised structures erected on these canals during the last 10 years, the KCC estate officer said.

Besides disturbing daily activities of people, waterlogging causes damage to infrastructure and environment, said Prof Dr Dilip Kumar Datta of environmental science department of Khulna University.

He stressed the need for formulation of new policy guidelines to save important water bodies like Mayur River from pollution and encroachment to protect fish resources and biodiversity in the area.



PHOTO: STAR

Once profusely flowing Mayur River beside Khulna city now gives a pitiful sight, thanks to the influential people's encroachment on the banks and authorities' indifference to the matter.

## SNIPPETS

### AL leader found dead

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

Police recovered the body of an AL leader hanging from a tree in Pakundia. The deceased was identified as Mohammad Shahabuddin, 55, general secretary of Pakundia Hosendia union AL and a resident of Kumarpur Purbapara village. Police and locals said Shahabuddin's body was recovered from a riverside tree in Chakdier Shingupar area at about 10:00am. He went missing on Tuesday night. Police could not say whether it was a suicide or murder. Earlier, on Tuesday, a Juba League leader was murdered in Karimganj over previous enmity.

### Man jailed for killing wife

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

A man was sentenced to life term rigorous imprisonment (RI) yesterday in Shajadpur upazila for killing his wife in 2005. Judge Umme Kulsum of Second Additional District and Sessions Judge's Court gave the verdict against Shafiqul Islam, 27, son of Mujibor Rahman of Binnadair village under the same upazila. The court also fined Shafiqul Tk 5,000, in default, to suffer three months more in jail. According to the prosecution, Shafiqul murdered his wife Awlyar in their village home on August 8 in 2005 after an altercation over family affairs. Victim's father Shamsul Haque filed a murder case and police arrested Shafiqul and submitted charge sheet.

### Indian fishermen sent home

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

All 79 Indian fishermen who were rescued from the Bay here just after the tidal surge last week were handed over to the officials of Indian Embassy on Tuesday afternoon. Patuakhali jail authorities handed over them to Balbir Singh, first secretary of the Indian Embassy. All the fishermen were later brought to Kuakata and from there a coast guard team took them upto the boundary line on the Bay along with their five fishing trawlers.

### Stipends distributed

PRESS RELEASE

Serve the People, a non-government organisation at Chakhar in Barisal has distributed stipends and crests among 20 meritorious students of the area for their outstanding results in Secondary School Certificate examination. In association with Habib-Shahzadi Foundation the NGO gave Tk 2000 and a crest to each student at a reception organised at Fazlul Huq Institution in Chakhar on Sunday. The reception was chaired by the foundation's president Begum Shahzadi and UNO of Banaripara Abul Kalam Azad attended the reception as chief guest.

## 20 hurt as BCL rivals lock in fierce clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Madaripur

Twenty people were injured in a clash between two rival groups of Chhatra League over admission to class eleven of Government Nazimuddin University College yesterday.

When former sports secretary of the college students union Miraz Hossain came to the admission control room of the college he had an altercation with the student union's present General Secretary Zahir Mollah, said witnesses.

At one stage the Chhatra League men got divided into two groups and engaged in a fierce clash with locally made weapons.

Police and Rapid Action Battalion brought the situation under control after about two hours.

Of the injured, Zahir

Mollah, 25, Miraz Hossain, 25, Sujon Jamadar, 24, Al Amin, 17, Masud, 22, Kanon, 23, Nishad, 17, Nannu, 18, Safa Karim, 23, Sohag, Tuhin, Hanif Sharif, 18, and Asad have been admitted to hospital.

Seeing the students engaged in a violent clash, the college authorities informed police who brought the situation under control, said college Vice Principal Zebun Nahar.

"The clash followed a feud over students' admission to class eleven of the college. When the college authorities informed me about the clash over phone I sent police to the spot and they brought the situation under control," said Superintendent of Police Md Nazrul Hossain.

The opponent student groups blamed each other for the incident.

## Nine shops gutted in Sunamganj

UNB, Sunamganj

At least nine shops were gutted in a fire which broke out at West Bazaar in Doarabazar upazila headquarters early Tuesday.

Police and fire service sources said the fire originated from an electric short circuit at a shop of Kafil Miah at about 2:00am and soon engulfed eight adjacent shops.

At least 20 people were injured while extinguishing the fire.

Later, fire fighters with the help of local people doused the fire after two hours of frantic efforts.

The affected shop owners claimed that the extent of loss caused by the fire could go upto Tk 20 lakh.



PHOTO: STAR  
Women voters wait in long queues for their turn at Chehelgazi union parishad (UP) polling centre in Dinajpur Sadar upazila during the UP election yesterday.

## Poll-related violence leaves 70 injured

STAR NATIONAL DESK

At least 70 people were injured in UP poll-related violence in Moulvibazar, Gaibandha, Munshiganj and Sirajganj districts yesterday and on Tuesday night.

In Moulvibazar, post-poll violence in Rajnagar upazila yesterday left at least 28 people injured.

Our correspondent quoted Rajnagar police and local people as saying that the supporters of defeated chairman candidate Kawser Uddin and chairman-elect Milon Bakht clashed at Premnagar village in Monsurnagar Union at around 10:30am, leaving at least 28 people from both sides injured.

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