

# AL men filling 53-year-old pond without permission

*Sand lifting for the purpose also puts Patuakhali Bridge at risk*

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Patuakhali

Some ruling Awami League (AL) men have started filling up a 53-year-old pond at the heart of the district town without permission from the authorities concerned.

To fill up the four-acre pond in the name of setting up a medical college hospital, they are also lifting sand from Patuakhali River, posing risk to a 485.15-metre-long Patuakhali Bridge.

During a visit to the area on Wednesday, this correspondent saw sand lifting from Patuakhali River, only 200 yards from the bridge on Patuakhali-Barisal road.

Following a proposal for setting up a medical college hospital in the district town, Patuakhali PWD (Public Works Department) suggested taking 14.73 acres of land (including the pond under question) for the purpose. According to the suggestion, this land should be added with 16.5 acres of land belonging to 250-bed Patuakhali General Hospital to set up the medical college.

But the Department of Architecture sent a letter to Patuakhali PWD to find another land for the purpose, saying that around 30 acres of land needed for the medical college hospital should be on the same premises but the proposed land is away from Patuakhali General Hospital. In reply, PWD requested the authorities concerned to send a team to visit the spot for early decision, said AKM Kamruzzaman, executive engineer of PWD.

But some AL men on Wednesday started filling up the pond with sand drawn from the Patuakhali River with dredger.

The act poses threat to the Patuakhali Bridge that was built in 2005 at a cost of Tk27.17 crore.

Kazi Alamgir, organising secretary of district unit of AL, who is supervising the filling up work, told this correspondent, "We are filling up the pond to set up a medical college here."

PWD official Kamruzzaman, on the other hand, said, "I don't know

who started filling the pond as there is no final decision yet to set up the proposed medical college hospital on the land."

When contacted, Kamolendu Majumder, executive engineer of Roads and Highways Department, said, "We don't know the matter. We will take step if anybody does anything that harms the bridge."

Dr Md Shafiqul Islam, mayor of Patuakhali municipality, said, "A section of Awami League men are filling up the pond, ignoring my request not to do it without permission from the municipality authorities. They are forcibly doing it in the name of a medical college hospital. We want establishment of a medical college hospital in the town but due processes should be followed for it."

This correspondent failed to communicate with Amitav Sarker, deputy commissioner of Patuakhali, over his cell phone.

Shah Alam Sarder, additional deputy commissioner (ADC-Revenue), said,

"There is a proposal for setting up a medical college hospital on the land including the pond. I don't know anything more."

Mostafizur Rahman, deputy director of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority, said he does not know anything about the matter.

Sukumar Biswas, deputy director of the Directorate of Environment in Barisal, said he will go to the spot on Saturday and take legal step if any irregularity is found there.

Linkon Bayen, acting divisional officer of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyer's Association (BELA) in Barisal, said filling up any water body is illegal and a punishable offence as per law.

Visiting the pond area on Thursday noon, this correspondent saw that the said AL men started cutting trees there as they have allegedly taken a plan to cut down over 100 trees from the north and west sides of the pond without permission from the authorities concerned.



PHOTO: STAR

Experts examine the remains of the supposedly 200-year-old boat, lying below the ground at Kuakata sea beach for long, during their excavation at the spot yesterday.

## Experts visit ancient boat site at Kuakata

*Plan to salvage it by February 2013*

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Patuakhali

A team of archaeologists accompanied by high officials from Dhaka and Patuakhali yesterday examined the site of the historic boat, found under the sand in Kuakata beach on June 7 this year, to chalk out a technical strategy for salvation of the boat by February 2013.

As the team led by Director General of the Department of Archaeology Begum Shirin Akhtar reached the spot, about 1.5 kilometres east of Kuakata Zero Point, they found the 72-foot-long and 22.5-foot-wide boat covered with sand. They conducted digging, revealing a part of the wooden structure.

Experts believe the boat belonged to the Rakhaine settlers who escaped from the Arakan province of Myanmar and migrated to the area over 200 years ago.

At a meeting in presence of the superintendent of police, the acting deputy commissioner of Patuakhali and the UNO of Kalapara, the team formed a technical committee comprising experts.

The committee headed by Yves Marre, a French born Bangladeshi expert, will start work for salvaging the boat on December 23.

"We are confident that we shall be able to salvage and restore the boat which has historic value. However, it is going to be a challenging task," Yves Marre told this

correspondent.

Rear Admiral (ret'd) A Taher, former Navy chief, Professor Mozammel Haque of archaeology department of Jahangirnagar University, Md Shah Alam Sarder, acting deputy commissioner of Patuakhali, Munira Sultana, official of cultural ministry, Afroza Khan Mita, assistant director, regional office of archaeology department, went to the sight as members of the team.

According to a survey report of the then British government in the early eighteenth century, 4,049 Rakhaines (including 1,909 women) lived in the southern region of present Bangladesh.

The number rose to 8,600 in 1911 and 16,394 in 1951

but later number of Rakhaine people decreased to 12,190 in 1961 and 3,713 in 1979, according to the history book.

Many Rakhaines died during the onslaught of devastating cyclones that hit the coastal areas in 1960, 1964, 1965, and 1970 while many others went back to Myanmar due to increased salinity and reduced productivity in their agricultural land and alleged occupation of their land and property by local Bangalees, sources said.

Now Rakhaines live in 515 households at 47 paras (small areas inhabited by community people) in six upazilas under Patuakhali and Barguna districts.



Sand extracted from the Laukathi River near the Patuakhali Bridge (inset) being carried through a pipe and dropped into the 53-year-old four-acre pond in the heart of Patuakhali town. A section of ruling Awami League men started the callous act on Wednesday without permission from the authorities concerned.

PHOTO: STAR

## Interns at SBMCH to resume work today

*To go on strike again if assaulters of docs not held by Dec 15*

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Barisal

The interns of Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital (SBMCH) will resume their duty today as they have decided to postpone till December 15 their indefinite strike in protest against assaulting two doctors by attendants of a patient who died at the hospital Wednesday morning.

"We will join duty on Sunday as we have postponed the strike till

December 15, considering the sufferings of the people. We will resume the strike if the assaulters are not arrested within that period," Dr Mehedi Hasan, president of interns' association at the hospital, said, announcing the decision that came after a joint meeting of the leaders of interns, Bangladesh Medical Association and Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad held at the campus Saturday afternoon.

After Karimunnesa Bibi, 60, who was admitted to the medicine ward of the hospi-

tal with a brain stroke at 2:20am on Wednesday and died at 6:30am that day, her attendants physically assaulted Tanmoy Barua, the on-duty doctor at the ward, and Mehedi Hassan, president of interns association of the hospital, alleging that the patient died due to negligence in treatment.

Demanding arrest of the attackers, the interns suspended all medical services at the hospital for an indefinite period.

The patients and their attendants underwent

untold sufferings as the 24-hour medical services at the hospital virtually collapsed after the interns also shut down the outdoor services and forced senior doctors to abstain from indoor and outdoor duties, except the emergency services, from Thursday.

Dr Ferdous Ahmed Shibir, director of SBMCH, however, claimed that senior doctors like registrars and assistant registrars performed their duties and treated patients during the strike period.

## Stalker attacks victim's house

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Rangpur

An alleged stalker and his accomplices ransacked the house of a union parishad (UP) chairman in Pirganj upazila on Thursday night.

Police said Sada Mia, son of Moklesur Rahman of Badnapara village and a third year student at Rangpur Charnichael College used to tease the daughter of the UP chairman on her way to college.

On information, the girl's brother along with his friends caught Sada and his accomplices on Thursday afternoon when they were teasing her and took them to the rice mill of the chairman.

Later, the stalkers were released after they gave a written undertaking, said locals.

Sada and his accomplices ransacked the chairman's house at night and fled the scene, they added.

## UP chairman's men swoop on rivals in Narsingdi

*30 injured, 25 houses vandalised*

A CORRESPONDENT,  
Narsingdi

At least 30 people were injured, three of them by bullets, as an incumbent union parishad chairman's men attacked the supporters of the former chairman in Raipura upazila of Narsingdi yesterday morning.

There had been a long-standing conflict between AL activist and Chairman of Mirzapur Union Parishad Manjur Elahi and former chairman of the union Faizur Rahman, also vice-president of the district unit of BNP, over establishing supremacy in the area,

police said.

Manjur Elahi's men equipped with spears and firearms attacked Faizur Rajman and his supporters at around 8:30am, leaving at least 30 people injured, three of them by bullets. The bullet-injured are Montaj Mia, 35, Iran Miah, 12, and Masum, 26.

The attackers also ransacked and looted at least 25 houses of Faizur's supporters.

Nine of the injured were admitted to Narsingdi Sadar Hospital. Of them, six were later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital as their condition deteriorated.

Being informed, police

went to the spot, dispersed the clashing groups and brought the situation under control.

No one was arrested in connection with the incident as of filing of this report at 5:00pm yesterday.

Our Mymensingh adds: Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) men allegedly attacked two Chhatra Shibir leaders at Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) yesterday.

They are Erhsadul Haque, general secretary of Shibir BAU unit, and Ashrafur Islam Khan, library secretary of the unit. They were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital (MMCH).

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