

Fishes, aquatic plants in Baikka Beel dying

Sanctuary drying up for lack of rain for long

MINTU DESHWARA,
Moulvibazar

The ecosystem in Baikka Beel of Hail Haor, a large water body in Sreemongal upazila, faces a great threat due to a drastic fall in water level.

Different types of aquatic plants in the sanctuary have rotten and made its water extremely polluted. Fishers are dying as they do not get enough oxygen in the water.

Sreemongal upazila nirbahi officer Ashfaqul Haque Chowdhury attributed the situation to lack of rainfall.

Dead fishes, especially of big varieties like rohit, katla, mrigel, kalibous and grass carp, have been seen floating on the water.

Birds living in and around the water body are also dying as they eat dead fishes and drink polluted water.

Moniruzzaman, field level officer of Climate-Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CreL) programme in Baikka Beel of Hail Haor working to protect its ecosystem, said he saw a lot of dead fishes floating on the water while traveling through the water body recently.

"A strong stench came from the water body, indicating severe pollution," Moniruzzaman added.

Taking the opportunity



PHOTO: STAR

Two dead fishes bear testimony to the degree of pollution in Baikka Beel, a sanctuary in Sreemongal of Moulvibazar, due to drastic fall in water level.

of shallow water, a section of villagers are stealing fishes of the sanctuary which is well-known as a natural abode of varieties of fishes and birds in the area.

This correspondent recently found many locals busy catching fishes in the western part of the water body.

A b d u s S o b a n Chowdhury, president of the Beel management committee, however, dismissed the allegation.

imposed Section 144 in the Beel area to prevent theft of fishes, the practice continues unabated.

Locals alleged that some members of the Beel management committee were involved in the theft.

A b d u s S o b a n Chowdhury, president of the Beel management committee, however, dismissed the allegation.

Although the local administration has

RAILWAY WESTERN ZONE

Awfully poor security still a big cause of concern

EAM ASADUZZAMAN,
Nilphamari

Awfully poor security arrangement leaves the infrastructure of West Zone of Bangladesh Railway (BR) as well as its staff and passengers highly vulnerable, especially against the backdrop of recent destructive activities by the activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir.

There are only 737 policemen under the Government Railway Police (GRP) for security of three lakh passengers travelling daily by 110 inter city, mail and local trains plying 1550-kilometre railway tracks, said sources of the West Zone of BR.

There are 220 rail stations in 22 administrative districts under Rangpur, Khulna and Rajshahi divisions in the zone.

Surprisingly, GRP is not provided with fast running trolleys to safeguard the vast tracks network.

Jamaat-Shibir activists during their political agitation in February and March conducted several destructive activities, including setting fire to Bogra railway station in Bogra district, Bamondanga railway station in Gaibandha and three railway coaches of 'Silk City' intercity train at Rajshahi station, removing fishplates of railway tracks at different places in Chapainawabganj and Bogra.

Office of the superintendent of GRP in Saidpur railway district, the only office of this kind in West Zone, supervises all the 12 GRP stations and 16 GRP police camps under West Zone.

These are poorly manned and instead of inspectors, less experienced sub inspectors are working as officers in charge at all but one GRP police stations.

There is no GRP station in



PHOTO: STAR

Like other Government Railway Police stations under the West Zone of Bangladesh Railway, this one at important Parbatipur junction in Nilphamari district remains without adequate manpower and logistics, leaving security of installations as well as passengers and staff vulnerable, especially during political agitations.

divisional headquarter Rangpur, strategically important Bogra and busy Natore junction.

Earlier there was a suggestion to set up a GRP station after every 100 kilometres of railway but it was not implemented due to various complexities, sources said.

"GRP is the most neglected unit of Bangladesh police. In many cases unskilled, sick, aged or those who received

departmental punishment for gross offences are sent on deputation to serve under the GRP," said a high GRP officer in West Zone on condition of anonymity.

Most of the GRP stations and barracks are housed in old and shabby buildings and so, often the policemen have to work in unhealthy environment.

When contacted, deputy inspector general (DIG) of GRP Shohrab Hossain said,

"In order to strengthen the GRP, a proposal has been submitted to the department concerned of the government with suggestion to create two more GRP districts in Ishwardi of West Zone and Dhaka of East Zone.

The proposal included suggestion to create 100 new posts of GRP officers and appoint 1000 new constables in phases under the railway's east and west zones.

RAJSHAHI, RANGPUR DIVISIONS

BNP enforced hartal passes off almost peacefully

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Barring a few incidents of violence in three districts, BNP-enforced daylong shutdown in Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions yesterday passed off peacefully.

The main opposition party called the hartal in the two divisions, demanding release of its central leaders. However, the ongoing HSC and its equivalent examinations remained out of the purview of hartal, reports our correspondent.

Meanwhile, the BNP-enforced 18-party alliance will enforce a dawn-to-dusk hartal in the district today to mount pressure on the government to rescue district Jamaat leader Prof Nazrul Islam, who was allegedly abducted on the night of April 11.

In Lalmonirhat, hartal supporters yesterday vandalised four vehicles and a meat shop at Saptana Bazar in Sadar upazila. They also blocked Rangpur-Kurigram Road at Borobari point in Sadar upazila, Lalmonirhat-Burimari highway in Sapti area of Aditmari upazila, in Votmari area of Kaliganj upazila, in Paruliya and Milonbazar areas of Hatibandha upazila, and in Courtoli area of Patgram upazila in the morning.

In Sirajganj, Police fired blank shots to disperse the pickets, who hurled brick chips at the law enforcers in Kazipur area in the town during hartal hours.

Officer-in-Charge Md Rafiqul Islam of Sirajganj Police Station said law enforcers had to fire blank shots when pro-hartal activists started throwing brick chips on the on-duty in Kazipur area at around 9:30am.

Sirajganj district unit of BNP will enforce a half day hartal in the district today, protesting attack on its procession in the town allegedly.

edly by AL men on Saturday afternoon.

BNP district unit General Secretary advocate Mokaddesh Ali blamed the AL men for attack on their procession led by former state minister Iqbal Hassan Mahamud Tuku at around 5:00pm.

In Rangpur, pro-hartal activists set fire to Pirganj upazila Awami League office during yesterday's hartal. Locals, however, extinguished the blaze.

BNP leaders and activists brought out a procession in the city at about 2:00 pm in favour of hartal. All kinds of vehicles, except rickshaws and battery-run auto-

rickshaws, were off the roads.

In Kurigram, chase and counter-chase took place between police and pickets in the town at around 8:00am. Except this incident, the hartal in the district was by and large peaceful.

In Joypurhat, the daylong shutdown in the district passed off peacefully.

All shops and business establishments remained closed. BNP-led alliance brought out a procession in the town. No untoward incident was reported from anywhere in the district.

The BNP-led 18-party alliance will also enforce a

daylong hartal in the district today to mount pressure on the government to rescue district Jamaat leader Prof Nazrul Islam.

The alliance gave the hartal call at a meeting held in the town on Friday night with Md. District BNP President Mozahar Ali Prodhan in the chair.

According to the family and party sources, Prof Nazrul Islam, joint secretary of the Joypurhat unit of Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami, was picked up by unidentified men from his house at Shebpara in the town on the night of April 11.

Ruhul Islam, officer in-charge of DB police, Tangail, said local people detained Ruhul Amin in the morning and informed them.

Ruhul was then produced before the district Judicial Magistrate Court where he admitted to his involvement in the killing during a confessional statement.

Earlier, Delduar police arrested Jahangir Alam and Robi Mia, two of the five accused in the case.

"We had to attend classes in scorching sun," said another student, Toma Akhtar Nipa.

Upazila vice chairman Fatema Khanom, president of the governing body of the col-

lege, said they sought cooperation of local donors to rebuild the college as 'the authorities turned a blind eye to the matter despite repeated pleas.'

Principal AKM Kamruzzaman said, "We have to face a serious problem in the upcom-

ing year final examination on May 4 if the college was not reconstructed immediately."

Contacted, upazila nirbahi officer Abul

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have already wrote to the deputy commis-

sioner, seeking emergency help for the pur-

pose.

A storm lashed the village on April 16,

destroying houses, crops and a few educa-

tional institutions.

PHOTO: STAR

Pickets in action in Malopara area of Rajshahi city, right, the main street of Rangpur city during yesterday's shutdown enforced by BNP in Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions demanding release of the party's central leaders.

PHOTO: STAR

Students of Manoswita Women's College at Slouljalia in Kathalia upazila under Jhalakathi district attend classes under the open sky on Saturday as a nor'wester on April 16 destroyed the college house made of wood and corrugated iron sheets.

PHOTO: STAR

Firoz murder: Another held in Tangail

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Tangail

Detective Branch (DB) of police here yesterday arrested a man in local Jubo League leader Firoz murder case.

The arrestee is Ruhul Amin, son of Fazal Ali of Elaslin village in Delduar upazila.

On April 12 last year, Firoz Ahmed, general secretary of Elaslin union unit Jubo League, was stabbed to death by criminals in front of his house.

A day after the killing, Firoz's elder brother filed a murder case with Delduar police station accusing five identified and several unidentified people.

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PHOTO: STAR

Classes under the open sky as storm blows down school

A CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

Students of Manoswita Women's College at Slouljalia in Kathalia upazila are attending their classes under the open sky as nor'wester has destroyed the institution.

We became astonished to see the condi-

tion of the college when classes resumed on

Saturday after a vacation due to HSC exami-

nations, said Keya Shikder, a first year stu-

dent.

"We had to attend classes in scorching

sun," said another student, Toma Akhtar

Nipa.

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