

Once Dhaka was adorned with several hundred ponds. Like canals, only a handful exist now. But they are also in death throes due to negligence of the authorities concerned. Although, according to the Field, Open Space, Park and Natural Water Body Protection Act 2000, filling up of any water body including pond is illegal, it's going on unabated. The Daily Star found 63 ponds in the maps of undivided Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) in its 28 wards out of 90. A survey for the map was carried out between 2003 and 2011. While many of the water bodies were filled up over the period. We are publishing the first report of the series today covering the then DCC ward-90, which is now ward-54 of the Dhaka South City Corporation.

**PART 1**



This is what remains of the two ponds under Khandakar Bari and Munshibari in the capital's Jurain.



The pond beside Khandakar Road is now a school.



Tulabaghicha Pond turned into a ditch and rickshaw garage now.

PHOTOS: RASHED SHUMON

# Oases lost to urban sprawl

**PONDS of Dhaka**

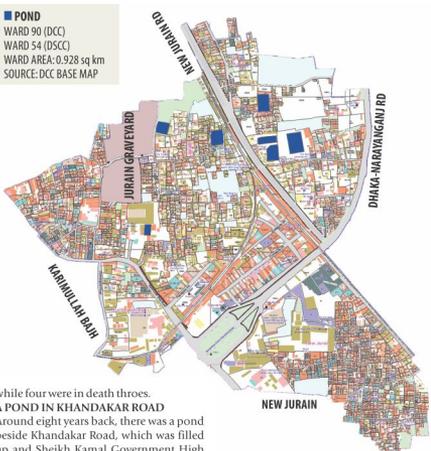
**HELEMUL ALAM with HASAN MEER**

Once ward-90 of the undivided Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) was full of ponds, but almost all of them ceased to exist as the owners have filled up the water bodies for construction of schools, buildings, a mosque, rickshaw garages or tin-shed structures.

Though necessary, the government organisations did not bother to keep a pond in the ward-90 (now ward-54 of Dhaka South City Corporation) comprising Karimullah Bagh, New Jurain Alambagh and South Jurain (including the mazar area) areas.

The DCC prepared a base map carrying out a survey in February-April 2006, which showed there were at least seven ponds in the ward.

During a recent visit, this newspaper found there used to be at least 11 ponds in the area. Seven of which ceased to exist



while four were in death throes.

**A POND IN KHANDAKAR ROAD**  
 Around eight years back, there was a pond beside Khandakar Road, which was filled up and Sheikh Kamal Government High School was built there.

Md Zakir, an elderly staff at the school, said a six-storey school building was constructed in 2015 under an education ministry project.

"The water was clean around 50 years back and people used to swim there on a

regular basis. The water became dirty around 15 years ago due to dumping of waste, and the pond eventually turned into a dirty doba (ditch)," he said.

Mohammad Aminul Islam, deputy director of the project named "Project

construct 11 high schools and six colleges in Dhaka city" said they received the land from the food ministry through the Dhaka Deputy Commissioner's office.

He said the pond water was unusable as the authorities concerned did not take proper protection measures. A large portion of it was filled up earlier, he claimed.

He said they got the pond from the ministry in 2013. The registration of the pond land (around 50 decimals) was done on November 6, 2012.

Muhammad Hanif, a resident of the area, said, "Locals as well as the workers of a flour mill of the food directorate and nearby kitchen markets used to take baths in the pond. Many of us also learnt to swim there. It was there till the 90s. But the water became dirty."

**TWO PONDS IN KHANDAKAR BARI**  
 There were two ponds under Khandakar Bari beside Khandakar Road, which were filled up to make way for a housing project.

One of them was filled up completely and the other partially in 2008. Locals said the land of the ponds was around 7.75 bighas.

Hanif, a local, said ownership of the ponds was under Khondokar Bari but they sold it to one Mir Quasem Ali. He later sold it to a company named "Care-e-Nagar".

Contacted, Eng Aminal Islam of "Care-e-Nagar" said they were going to construct seven buildings consisting 90 flats in total. He said they bought the land from Mir Quasem. "We have already constructed four buildings," he said.

**JURAIN MAZAR MOSQUE POND**  
 There was a pond beside the Jurain Majarsharif Shahi Jam-e-Mosque that was filled up for building an extension of the

Jurain Masjid Pond is now an extended part of a mosque.

AREA/NAME	SIZE (APPRX)	OWNER	FILLED UP	AT PRESENT
Khandakar Road Pond	50 decimal	Govt	2000s	School
Jurain Mazar Mosque Pond	1.5 bigha	Govt	2000s	Mosque extension
4 Ponds in Munshibari Area	5.5 bigha	Individual	80s, 90s	Buildings
West Jurain Pond	1 bigha	Individual	2000s	Factory, Garage
Tulabaghicha Pond	59 decimal	Individual	90s	Mosque, Garage
Paschim Jurain Koborosthan Road Pond	1 bigha	Individual	2000s	Buildings
2 Ponds in Khandakar Bari	7.5 bigha	Individual	2000s	Buildings

## Road crashes kill 12

**CITY DESK**

Twelve people were killed and 13 others injured in road accidents across the country yesterday and on Tuesday.

In Dhaka city, a police constable and his daughter were killed as a bus hit them while walking beside a road at Della in Demra yesterday evening.

Arifuzzaman, 40, who was posted at the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court in Dhaka, was declared dead at Dhaka Medical College Hospital while his daughter Sumanya, 15, died instantly, said police.

In Nilphamari, two people were killed and three others injured as a microbus and a truck collided head-on on Rangpur-Saidpur

highway at Chikhi Bazar in Saidpur yesterday, reports BSS.

Mamunur Rashid, 42, and Monirul Islam, 40, died on the spot, said police.

In Chittagong city, Rafail Mandal, 52, of Chandhari road area in the city, was killed as a bus rammed his motorcycle at Tiger pass intersection early yesterday.

The driver of the bus coming from Lalkhanbazar area lost his control over the vehicle and hit a rickshaw before killing Rafail, witnesses said.

In another incident, another motorcyclist, Md Saim, 28, of Anwara Upazila in Chittagong, was killed as a truck hit his vehicle in Moizartek area on Tuesday night.

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## Don't use loudspeaker during Ratha Yatra

**Police request Hindu devotees**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

In the wake of recent militant activities, police have requested the Hindu devotees not to use any loudspeaker during Ratha Yatra (a festival of drawing chariot).

The Ratha Yatra Utsav would be celebrated for nine days from June 25. The devotees on the occasion bring out processions with chariots and distribute Prasad (the food offering to a deity).

Police made the request in a meeting at the police headquarters on Monday to discuss about security and traffic

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## US handling of Bangladeshi diplomats inappropriate

**Says foreign secretary; raises the issue with Washington**

**DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT**

Amid recent arrests and "inappropriate treatment" of Bangladeshi diplomats in the United States, Dhaka on Tuesday officially raised the issue with the US Department of State and called for addressing the issue.

Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Md Shahidul Haque, who is currently on a two-day visit to Washington DC, raised the issue during his meeting with US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas Shannon

at the State Department on Tuesday.

"The Foreign Secretary raised the issue of inappropriate treatment of Bangladeshi diplomats in the US and expressed concern in this regard. Haque hoped that the issue would be addressed by all concerned US authorities in a manner reflective of mutual trust and respect between the two friendly countries," according to a press release of the Bangladesh Embassy in Washington.

Under Secretary Shannon reiterated the

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