

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. But many of the water bodies were filled up before the period and also even after the survey. We are publishing the second report of the series today covering the then DCC ward-89, which is now ward-53 of the Dhaka South City Corporation.



It is hard to imagine this used to be a pond even around 15 years ago. Now concrete structures have replaced the water body. The photo was taken at Commissioner Road in the capital's East Jurain area recently.

Now all that remains is memory



HELEMUL ALAM

Even around 15 years ago, every Friday after the Juma prayers people would hurriedly gather on Fazil Ali Sardar Road popularly known as Commissioner Road in the capital's Jurain area.

Locals as well as others from the neighbouring areas would form a queue beside a water body; and soon a constant buzz of chatter would fill the air.

The area -- under ward-89 of Dhaka City Corporation (now 53 of Dhaka South City Corporation) -- would wear a festive look then, and the queue would keep on getting bigger.

The line was to buy a Tk 200 token for fishing in an around 10-bigha pond beside the road.

The owner used to cultivate fish in the pond and let people fish there on Fridays after buying a token, said Mohammad Salauddin, a shopkeeper in the area.

People from other neighbourhoods would also drop by, he said. "It was a gathering of friends and neighbours."

Everyone would be in a celebratory mood, reminisced many of the elderly residents.

The children would sit patiently next to their fathers while they fished. Soon the children would get bored and start playing amongst themselves, while their mothers chatted on.

Now the pond only remains in memories as it has been replaced by buildings.

The privately-owned pond was filled up around 15 years back, and the owner started selling it as plots.

One Ahsanullah, the owner, sold it to around 53 persons dividing the water body into the same number of plots in 2003-2004, said residents of the area.

The pond, however, is not in the base map of Dhaka City Corporation as the survey for the map was carried out in 2006. The pond was filled up before that.

The owner along with his family left the area soon after selling the water body. No one was allowed to take a bath or swim in the pond as it was being

used for fish cultivation, recalled many of the elderly locals. They said the fishing stopped as the owner started filling it up.

Imdadul Islam, a businessman in the area, whose father purchased a katha of land from the owner, said the pond was there since before the Liberation War. It was a clean-water pond.

"The owner started to fill up the pond after 2003-2004," he said. Since then, it was being filled up gradually, he added.

"We used to catch fish here," he said pointing towards a corner of the land, "Our home was just beside the pond."

As the pond was filled up completely, the area had been facing waterlogging since then, claimed Ashraf Uddin, a local. He said the water body was also being used as a retention area. Many others echoed him.

"Now, many areas go under knee-deep water after rain," he said.

There was another pond in the area - Malek Mistri, which was filled up back in 1991/1992, he said.

The ward comprising East Jurain is around 0.736 sq km.

(Edited by Hasan Meer)



A baby girl grabs on to a dress in a clothing store. With Eid knocking on the door, shoppers are busy searching for suitable gifts for their near and dear ones. And this young shopper seems to have her eyes fixed on the bright and colourful dress. The photo was taken on Wednesday in the port city's Prabartak More area.

Five aspiring

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Anisul Hoque, novelist Selina Hossain and actor and writer Kayes Chowdhury among others were present. Around 11,000 playwrights took part in the contest. The five winners written by the winners will be adapted into dramas and aired on Boishakhi TV from the first day of Eid till the fifth day at 10:35pm. The competition started on March 30 and the last date for submission was April 15.

ASP Mizan was

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he left his Uttara residence around 5:00am on Wednesday as he had no official vehicle.
Mizan might fall victim to muggers at that time, he said. Police recovered the body of ASP Mizan near Birulia Bridge on that day.
Locals, however, said they did not hear about any recent mugging during sharing vehicles as in the past.
Mizan's father Abdul Baki Talukder said it is a pre-planned murder. Assailants technically took him to the area, he added.
Meanwhile, Inspector General of Police (IGP) AKM Shahidul Haque yesterday said different intelligence agencies already started investigation.
The police chief was talking to reporters while observing security issues in Gulshan's Police Plaza Market.

Trader dies

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when they started moving with the money in the microbus, Sajib tried to stop them, said Abul. The miscreants then ran him over and fled, said the OC, adding that Hazrat was also injured.
Sajib and Hazrat were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared Sajib dead around 2:30am.
Meanwhile, Sajib's father Abdur Rashid, 50, fell sick after hearing the death news, said the family.

Cox's Bazar Australia increases fund for nutrition

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Australia will provide an additional AUD 3.9 million to the World Food Programme to improve nutrition and build community resilience in Cox's Bazar.
Undernutrition and food insecurity are at crisis levels in Cox's Bazar. More than 30,000 people live in refugee camps and 100,000 others are in makeshift camps or hosted in the community, said an Australian High Commission press release yesterday. They also have been affected by cyclone Mora.

BGB deployed to check train ticket anomalies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Railway authorities yesterday deployed Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) at Rajshahi Railway Station to check sale of tickets in black market.
The sale of advance tickets for different routes from Rajshahi started on Wednesday. On that day, the tickets were sold for journeys on June 30. Yesterday, advance tickets were sold for journeys to be made on July 1.
The authorities also deployed a mobile court to check anomalies in ticket sale, said Khairul Alam, general manager of railway west zone, adding, the station areas were kept under surveillance through CCTV cameras.

BGB members would respond to calls or any information on anomalies in ticket sale, railway officials said.

Visiting the station yesterday, this correspondent found BGB members helping people maintain queues.

Meanwhile, many people returned empty-handed failing to get tickets for desired dates.

Mahmud Hossain, a potential ticket buyer, said his sister collected four tickets in the morning, but he could not get a ticket for his friend in the afternoon.

The railway authorities will be selling advance tickets until June 25.

From June 26, advance tickets will be available, as usual, ten days before the journey.



With BGB deployed at Rajshahi train station to check anomalies, people queue up there to buy tickets. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: STA