

Katakhal almost dead

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

Katakhal Khal, an important canal flowing through Sadar and Basail upazilas of the district, has become almost dead due to mindless grabbing and pollution.

The canal originates from Louhajang river at Karata in Sadar upazila and ends five km away at Ihinal river in Nothkhola under Basail upazila, said newly joined Assistant Commissioner (AC-Land) Abdur Rahim Sujan.

Local residents, however, illegally built structures including shops and dwelling houses occupying both banks of the canal in the last two decades, stopping the flow and polluting the water, he added.

Several elderly citizens in Karata said zamindar Wazed Ali Khan Panni Chand Mia, locally known as 'Atiyar Chand', dug the canal at the beginning of 1900 for facilitating communication in the area.

Water used to flow through the canal all through the year, during the dry season, they said, adding that wholesalers from different places in the country would come to the traditional Karata Market with big boats. After the '90s, influential people started grabbing the canal and also constructed concrete structures on its banks, they said.

Although an eviction drive was started by

the district administration in December, 2015, it was stopped for unknown reason, said freedom fighter Shamsul Alam Kayes Chowdhury of Karata.

Previously, students from different parts of the district came to the college through the canal, said Alim Mahmud, vice-principal of Government Saadat College. "Now the canal has been filled up and water flow has stopped at different places. The water has also become polluted, posing a health hazard for locals," he added.

Students and teachers of the college, especially those who live in the hostels, are the worst sufferers due to the bad smell from the garbage dumped into the canal, Alim added.

Karata Union Parishad Chairman Khalkezzaman Chowdhury Maznu said all the garbage of Karata Bazar is dumped into the canal, polluting it badly.

The canal also needs to be excavated to revive its flow, he said, adding that the union parishad could not do it due to lack of funds.

The authorities are preparing a list of illegal occupiers of the canal and will start a drive as soon as possible to evict them, AC Rahim said.

The newly joined Deputy Commissioner of Tangail Mohammad Nurul Amin said the district administration will do everything to



This photo of Katakhal Khal, an important canal flowing through Karata area in Sadar and Basail upazilas of Tangail, bears testimony to widespread encroachment and mindless pollution. PHOTO: MIRZA SHAKIL



Shitalpati mat-weaving tradition at risk

HABIBUR RAHMAN with ANDREW EAGLE

For well over a century the people of Subidpur village in Pirojpur's Kawkhali upazila have been producing naturally cool shitalpati mats woven from the reed-like murra plant locally called paikar. While around two decades ago a hundred families in the area were involved in year-round shitalpati production, these days the number has fallen to sixty; those artisans who continue to pursue the age-old tradition face difficult times. The price of paikar is on the rise.

Subidpur's mat-weavers purchase the paikar from growers in neighbouring Rajapur upazila of Jhalakathi district. "For twenty bundles we have to pay over Tk 8,000 now," says one weaver, Nibas Patkar. "We pay even more if the quality of the paikar is good." He notes that while the price for a bundle of paikar, each consisting of eighty stems, rises every year, sales prices for shitalpati mats remain stagnant.

"It's times there are additional labour costs too. After buying the paikar its outer casing is removed. The stems are kept in water for up to seven days before being sun-dried ready for use.

"Those who cannot remove the outer part of the paikar stems themselves will have to pay Tk 4,000 for others to do the job," says Nibas. He

says additional miscellaneous costs might add another Tk 2,000 to process the paikar bundles into mats.

"From twenty bundles, at most we can make 25 mats," says another weaver, Ripon Patkar, who like many in the village is proud of the weaving tradition he learnt from his parents and grandparents. "The origins of shitalpati weaving in this village are unknown us," he says. "It was so long ago."

The villagers of Subidpur hope that the government can step in to save their heritage. "If the government provided some land for us to grow paikar," says weaver Robin Patkar, "we could manage. Many have already left the profession, even the country, for the economic crisis we face." The future looks grim. If no steps are taken to assist this community, the traditional art of shitalpati weaving may be lost entirely.

Rice price hike in 2 dists

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The price of rice has gone up by Tk1 and Tk 2 per kilogram in Dinajpur and Naogaon in a week again ended.

The rice traders hinted of price rise again after the festival.

Rice traders of Dinajpur and Naogaon said they are buying rice at high price from the millers as the supply is short in the markets against the demand.

"I have not seen such instability in rice markets in the last 34 years," said Proshanta Ghosh, a wholesale rice trader of Gudurbaria in Dinajpur town.

He said rice production dropped in the

country for different reasons, including neck blast disease.

During a visit to rice markets in Dinajpur town, this correspondent found Miniker being sold at Tk 56 per kilogram, BR-28 is available at Tk 50 to 51 while Swarno is sold at Tk 49 per kilogram.

In wholesale market, each 50kg bag of Miniker is sold at Tk 2700, BR-28 at Tk 2450 and Swarno at Tk 2350.

Rashedul Mia, an 'easy-bike' driver of Ramnagar area under Dinajpur town, said he bought Swarno rice for Tk 47 per kg last week, but the price has risen to Tk 49 now.

Akhaura port to shut for six-day

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Brahmanbaria

Export and import of goods through Akhaura land port will remain closed for six days from June 25 due to Holey-Eid-ul-fitr.

However, the immigration activities will remain open under special arrangement.

Md Shaiful Islam, general secretary of C&F Agents Association, said the export and import activities will resume on July 1.

Sub-Inspector Piar Ahmed, in-charge of Akhaura land port immigration, said they will keep immigration open under special arrangement during the vacation.

Attack on journo at BNP office

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Projpur

Some unidentified people attacked journalists at a press conference arranged by a faction of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) yesterday.

The incident took place at the district unit office of the party at Post Office Road in the town.

Around ten journalists were confined inside the office at that time.

Journalists present there said they went to the BNP office as district leader barister M Sarwar Hossain called a press conference there against the district unit president and general secretary.

Around 50 people suddenly attacked them with iron pipes and sticks in the presence of police. They saved themselves by locking the door of the office.

Police rescued the journalists after they contacted high officials over phone.

Sarwar claimed that the youths from the ruling party attacked the journalists under the influence of some BNP men.

District BNP had arranged a press conference recently at Pirojpur Press Club, protesting a report on Pirojpur district BNP. In the press conference, BNP men criticised Sarwar.

Sarwar arranged the counter press conference yesterday.

District BNP President Gazi Nuruzzaman Babul said he returned to Pirojpur from Dhaka yesterday.

"I was not informed about the press conference," he said, adding that they often face obstacles when they arrange any programme in their party office.

In a written speech, Sarwar claimed that top district BNP men have internal connection with the ruling party men.

"Although thousands of leaders and activists all over the country have been used, those top leaders were not facing such a situation," he said.

District vice-presidents Md Liaqat Ali Sheikh Barshad and Md Nazrul Islam Khan, also Nazirul Huda Upazila Parishad Chairman, were present at the press conference.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Pirojpur Sadar Police Station Md Masumur Rahman Biswas, however, said no such incident took place at the BNP office.

Office of the Project Director
Urban Resilience Project (URP)
Dhaka North City Corporation Part (DNCC Part)

Request for Expression of Interest (REOI) for "Financial Management and Planning Specialist (National)"

- Urban Resilience Project (URP) is a multi-agency project being implemented by four agencies - a) Programming Division under the Ministry of Planning, b) Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) under the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives; c) Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (RAJUK) under the Ministry of Housing and Public Works; and d) Department of Disaster Management (DDM) under the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief. To respond to the critical gap in the management of disaster risk in Bangladesh particularly in an urban setting, this project represents the multi-phase national Disaster Risk Management (DRM) program to build institutional capacity to respond and mitigate the impact of earthquakes in the rapidly urbanizing cities of Bangladesh. The objective of the overall engagement is to develop a comprehensive approach to managing earthquake risk through a structured process of knowledge development, education, and planning that involves a wide range of stakeholders to increase their capacity and to build ownership. The specific objective of the project is to enhance national-level and local-level DRM facilities and agencies in Dhaka and Sylhet to effectively plan and respond to urban disasters. This will be achieved by developing disaster response systems, including emergency operations center, interoperability communication systems, rescue and search equipment, and related training and drills etc.
- The Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (GoB) has obtained a credit for the "Urban Resilience Project (URP)" from the International Development Agency (IDA) and intends to apply part of the proceeds of this credit to pay for procurement of services from national consultants for a role of Financial Management and Planning Specialist. As part of his/her duties, the consultant will assist the Project Management Unit (PMU) in overall financial management and planning functions of the project. He would assist DNCC in ensuring planning process, smooth flow of project funds, preparation of IFRs, preparation of annual financial statements, coordination of project audit, among other relevant tasks.
- The scope of this Consultancy services include, but not limited to:
 - Preparing and updating a financial management manual that would be embodied in the Operational Manual for the project, b) Assisting Project Director (PD) in preparation of annual budget estimates, revised budget and financial plan complying the approved budget line, c) Preparing annual and quarterly disbursement forecasts, d) Reconciliation of funds transferred and disbursed, e) Processing payment, f) Ensuring Internal Control, g) Maintaining Computerized Accounting System as well as Registers, books and records, h) Development of a Chart of Accounts, i) Maintaining Fixed Assets Record, j) Preparation of Financial Statements and Reports etc.
- The qualifications/specialised knowledge/experience required are:
 - A professionally qualified accountant (CA, ACCA, CPA, CMA, CIMA) or Masters in Commerce, Finance, MBA (major in Finance) with minimum of 05 (five) years of post qualification experience. Operational knowledge in accounting software will be an added advantage, but not mandatory.
 - Proven track record of ability to develop a Chart of Accounts befitting the relevant computerized accounting system and the reporting;
 - Experience in the effective supervision of personnel;
 - Self-guided, strong organisational and planning skills with the ability to work independently as a team player and under pressure;
 - Strong interpersonal communicative skills, experience in team leadership and participatory management;
 - Ability to impart training to the project staff on financial management system.
- Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) now seeks applications from eligible applicants to indicate their interest in providing the services. Applicants are required to provide information indicating that they are qualified to perform the services. This should include complete CV with detail information about employment history with duties and responsibilities, academic details, major publications (if any), expected remuneration, contact address including telephone number and e-mail.
- The Consultant will be selected using the Selection of Individual Consultants method in accordance with the World Bank Guidelines. Selection and Employment of Consultants under IBRD Credits & Grants by World Bank Borrowers' January 2011 revised July 2014.
- Interested applicant may obtain Terms of Reference (TOR) upon request from the address below either by e-mail or in person during the office hours (9.00am to 5.00pm) or it can be downloaded from www.dncc.gov.bd
- Expressions of Interest in hard copy in sealed envelope clearly marked "Financial Management and Planning Specialist (National)" must be delivered to the address below by July 27, 2017 during office hours.

Unmarked speed breakers in Barisal pose risk

IM JAHIRUL ISLAM JEWEL, from Barisal

Unmarked speed breakers pose risk for commuters on three highways passing through the district.

The speed breakers on Barisal-Dhaka, Barisal-Khulna and Barisal-Kuakata highways cannot be seen from a distance as there are no markings or signs to warn the drivers.

The speed breakers can be seen only from very near, when it is too late to control the speed of the vehicles, said bus driver Sumon.

"Although I am a regular driver on the highways, I sometimes forget about the speed breakers due to the absence of markings or signs," said car driver Akbar Rahman. Some speed breakers are made so badly that a car cannot cross over them easily, he added.

"Some passengers in the back seats got injured a month ago when I crossed the speed breaker at Kashipur in Barisal city as I did not notice it until I was very near to it," said Jamal Hossain, a highway bus driver in the district.

The speed breakers are traps for new drivers, he said, adding that many new drivers will come on the roads during



Eid and they may have accidents due to the speed breakers.

"Some days I will fall off the bike and get badly injured because I did not notice the speed breaker in Kaligira on Barisal-Khulna highway," said Riyad, a biker of Ruapotal area in Barisal city.

Patients, particularly pregnant women, suffer the most, said Dr Mabbur Rahman of Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital in district.

There are 17 speed breakers on around 15 km of highways under Barisal city, and 19 on 20 km from

Barisal to Bakerganj of Barisal-Kuakata highway. None of them has any marking or sign to warn drivers.

All the speed breakers should be marked with colours immediately to avoid accidents during the Eid rush, drivers said.

"We painted the speed breakers about three weeks ago but the paint was washed away by the rain. We will paint them again during sunny weather," said Golam Mostafa, executive engineer of Roads and Highways Department in Barisal.

Stalker caught in CCTV camera

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhalakathi

With the help of recently installed Closed Circuit TV (CCTV) camera in Jhalakathi town, police arrested a youth who was stalking three schoolgirls near Jhalakathi Government Women's College yesterday.

Police produced arrested Sunil Shikder, 22, son of Aftab Ali Shikder of Agorbaria village in Sadar upazila, before a mobile court led by Executive Magistrate Md Mokbul Hossain that sentenced him to one-month imprisonment.

Jhalakathi Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Md Mahmud Hasan said Sujan and his two associates were teasing three schoolgirls on the way to their educational institution yesterday noon.

Seeing the act in the CCTV camera he sent some policemen to the area, who caught Sujan from the spot, the ASP added.