

**WEATHER FORECAST**

**YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES**

<b>DHAKA</b> H 33.2 L 28.2	<b>MYMENSINGH</b> H 32.0 L 27.4	<b>CHITTAGONG</b> H 33.4 L 26.2	<b>SYLHET</b> H 33.0 L 25.3	<b>RAJSHAHI</b> H 35.1 L 27.0	<b>RANGPUR</b> H 34.8 L 27.0	<b>KHULNA</b> H 32.0 L 26.8	<b>BARISAL</b> H 32.5 L 27.3	<b>COX'S BAZAR</b> H 32.2 L 25.7
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Light to moderate rain thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty winds likely to occur at a few places over Rangpur, Mymensingh, Sylhet, Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and at one or two places over Rajshahi division till 6:00pm today, reports UNIS. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:59pm and rises tomorrow at 5:15am, says Met Office.

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 unabated. The Daily Star mapped 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 fifth report of the series today covering the then DCC ward-86, which is now ward-50 of the Dhaka South City Corporation.

**PART 5**



Maita Pond is now a school.



Chandankotha Pukur turned into a community centre.

PHOTOS: RASHED SHUMON

# Concrete replaces oasis

**HELEMI ALAM**

## POUNDS of Dhaka

There used to be three ponds under ward-86 of the undivided Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), but it is impossible to find the water bodies anymore since all of them have been filled up.

Two of them were filled up by DCC and the third one was by its owner.

Now, a community centre, a school and several buildings stand firm on the filled up pond land.

The names of the ponds were Chandankotha Pukur, Maita Pukur and Boro Pukur.

However, the DCC map, which was published after a survey carried out from February to April 2006, showed that there was only one pond in the area as two others were already filled up.

Ward 86 – now Ward 50 of Dhaka South City Corporation – comprises south and west Jatrabari, north-west and south-east Jatrabari and Wapda Colony. The area is around 0.859 sq km.

**CHANDANKOTHA PUKUR**  
The 103-decimal pond existed since the British period.

According to locals, during monsoon, water overflowed the banks of the water body, creating links with the



Boro Pukur replaced by buildings.

canals.

But after construction of the Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra (DND) embankment in the 60s, the canal mounds were blocked, which also affected the pond, they added.

Though the pond was still there in the 70s, quality of the water deteriorated, said Mohammad Mamun, a local.

After the independence, the pond was mainly used for fish cultivation, he said. The water body was owned by 16 people. Three of the owners left the country, he added.

Mamun said his family was one of the owners of the water body.

The panchayat (local governing

body) in 1987/88 donated the land to the government making it a waqf (endowment) property for building a hall to hold Eid jamaat (congregation).

But the DCC filled up the pond in 1993/94 and built a community centre instead.

"We are still giving khajna (tax) for the land but no eidgah field in there. Also, the 13 of us [owners] were promised a katha of land each, which we did not get," he claimed.

The panchayat used to cultivate fish in the pond and pay tax from the money they got after selling the fish, he claimed.

Ayub Ali Sardar, a resident of the

WARD 86 (OLD)	SIZE (APPRX)	OWNER	FILLED UP	AT PRESENT
Chandankotha Pukur	103 decimal	Govt	90s	Community Centre
Maita Pond	47 decimal	Govt	2000s	School
Boro Pukur	4 bigha	Individual	80s	Buildings



area, claimed that the names of the owners were included in the cadastral survey (CS) records. The 70-year-old also alleged that the DCC did not agree to fill up the pond without constructing a community centre there.

Atiub alleged that an influential local grabbed two bighas of the pond land by making false documents and erected structures on it after five years back.

He said the residents of the area filed two cases against it and a legal battle is ongoing. An Eidgah field will be constructed soon after recovering the land.

The two bighas were on the western side of the pond, he added.

**MAITA POND**  
The 47-decimal pond existed even in the 80s.

Though the water body was under the Dhaka deputy commissioner's office and existed as Khas land, DCC filled it up partially to set up a pump of Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) in the 90s.

Most of the pond was still there even after setting up the pump. But drug peddlers and addicts used the area as their den, claimed Ayub Ali Sardar, whose family has been living in the area for over 50 years.

Afterwards, a school was constructed on the pond land in 2011. Atiub claimed that he took the

initiative to construct the school with the help of a local lawyer.

The pond was filled up by the DCC around the same time Chandankotha Pukur was filled up, he added.

**BORO PUKUR**  
Like the pond, the name of the area ceased to exist as the owner renamed the area Surujnagar after filling it up around 15 to 20 years back, said locals.

They said the association filled up the water body in the 1990 and renamed it Surujnagar.

Mohammad Atiqullah, president of Surujnagar Owners' Association, said, "My grandfather Hajj Abdul Gafur purchased the land from two jomshars (landlord) – Amanda Hiru Binsah and Harihash Boshak."

"Afterwards, my father Surujzamal constructed the buildings on the land as the pond was about to be grabbed and others had started to fill up portions of it," he claimed.

He said the pond water was clean and used by many. But the pond on around four bighas of land was getting polluted after construction of the DND embankment in 1961.

Twenty eight buildings have been constructed on the land.

Ayub Ali, a 70-year-old local, said, "Like many others, I used to swim and catch fish in the pond."

"You should have seen the size of the fish I caught there," said a nostalgic Ayub.

(Edited by HASAN MEER)



**Ershad claims he was 'bound' to take over in 1982**

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad yesterday claimed that he did not have any intention to take over the power of the country in 1982, so he was bound to do so.

"I am called autocrat sometimes. But I did not want to take over the power. Neither did I have any fault. I even organised an election [1984] but nobody participated," Ershad said at a discussion held in the parliament on the proposed budget for 2017-18 fiscal.

At the beginning of his speech, Ershad recalling the



Indiscriminate dumping of effluent from surrounding factories and households of Sylhet city has turned the water in Chhora Khal pitch black. The water recently in Kazir Bazar area of the city before the canal feeds away even after heavy monsoon rain over the past few days. The photo was taken on the near Kazir Bazar area of the city before the canal feeds the River Surma.

**Woman found dead in house**

**Family claims murder, in-laws claim suicide**  
**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, CG**

Police yesterday recovered the body of a 19-year-old woman from her in-laws' house in EPZ police station area of Chittagong city.

Ripa Akther, daughter of Ruhul Amin of Patiya Dangarchar, was murdered, claimed her family.

Ripa, who got married to Mohammad Intiaz just five months ago, was about to visit her parents yesterday, but Intiaz informed her brother Didarul Alam over the phone that they were taking Ripa to a hospital as she fell sick. Some time later, he again called him to inform that they were taking Ripa back home, said Didarul.

When Ripa's family members arrived at her house, they found her lying unconscious in bed while all the male members were out of the house, he added.

Intiaz's mother claimed that Ripa hanged herself from the ceiling in her room.

EPZ police said the reason behind the death would be known after an autopsy.

PHOTO: SHEKHANASIR