

WEATHER FORECAST

YESTERDAY'S TEMPERATURES	DHAKA H 32.4 L 27.5	MYMENSINGH H 30.3 L 26.2	CHITTAGONG H 32.5 L 26.0	SYLHET H 30.7 L 26.8	RAJSHAHI H 34.0 L 27.7	RANGPUR H 28.3 L 25.9	KHULNA H 34.5 L 27.3	BARISAL H 32.2 L 27.3	COX'S BAZAR H 31.0 L 25.5
--------------------------	---------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	----------------------	------------------------	-----------------------	----------------------	-----------------------	---------------------------

Rain accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely to occur at most places over Rajshahi, Rangpur, Mymensingh, Dhaka, Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions with moderately heavy to heavy falls at places over the country till 6:00pm today, reports UNB. Day temperature may fall by (1-3) degree Celsius and night temperature may fall slightly over the country, says Met office. The sun sets in the capital today at 6:50pm and rises tomorrow at 5:15am.

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 eighth report of the series today covering the then DCC ward-81, which is now ward-45 of the Dhaka South City Corporation.

PART 8



The slow ripples of the water of this pond still soothe frazzled nerves. The water body is used by youths and elderly alike for swimming. Though the around 200-year-old pond in the capital's Dhupkhola has stood the tides of time, it needs protection from the threat of encroachment and pollution. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

Surviving the test of time

PONDS of Dhaka

HELEMUL ALAM

During the British period, a pond was dug up in the capital's Dhupkhola. It was shaped like a "dui anna" -- a currency unit formerly used in the Indian subcontinent.

The around 200-year-old water body was fondly called "Dui Ani Tola" by the locals. And just like the coin, it was also shaped like a diamond.

The water body was dug up as per the order of Jamindar (landlord) Gunendra Krishna Roy Bahadur of Bhagyakul (now in Munshiganj).

It has been said that Gunendra wanted people of the neighbourhood as well as the nearby areas to have a place that would cater for the households of the communities.

Along with that, the water body also offered a much-needed respite to the residents and allowed them to relax by its banks and spend time with their families and friends.

Gunendra also donated around 52 bighas of land to the people of the area that included land for the dhopas (washers), a graveyard and a sports club named, East-End Club.

The pond still exists in Dhupkhola. It is near Dhupkhola Math (field), built on the donated land.

The area falls under Ward-81 (old) of the Dhaka City Corporation, which is now Ward-45 of the Dhaka South City Corporation. The total area of the ward is 0.543 sq km.

Over the years, the pond went through numerous twists and turns in the course of its history.

First, it was auctioned off in order to pay off the Jamindar's debt. The water body was then purchased by a lawyer from Faridabad, Monmoth.

The lawyer renovated the ghat (landing spot) on the eastern side of the water body and donated the pond to the community.

Meanwhile, it was under a constant threat of encroachment. Also, people from the nearby houses kept on dumping waste in the water body.

In 1962, late SM Azad, a resident of the area, filed a case with SDO (sub-divisional office) court, against the illegal grabbing of the pond. After the

court's verdict, the pond became a property of the government.

Even in the early 90s, some influential persons again tried to grab a portion of the pond. But locals put up a resistance and the water body was saved, said a resident of the area.

Then in 1995, to protect the water body from being encroached, former Dhaka City Corporation mayor Mohammad Hanif constructed boundary walls with grill fences around it.

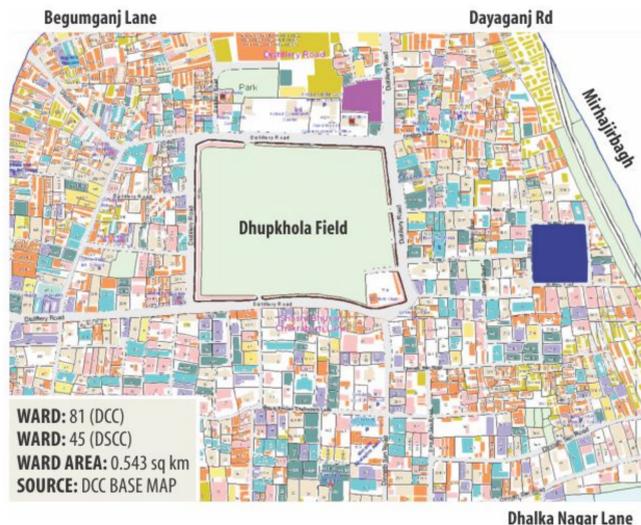
Afterwards, in 2010/11, the Dhaka deputy commissioner's office gave the custody of the water body to the Baitul Mamur Jam-e-Mosque, located next to the pond.

"We are maintaining the pond ever since," said Kabir Choudhury, joint secretary of the mosque committee.

The around 2.5-bigha water body is still there but it needs protection as it came under threat of encroachment

DHUPKHOLA POND

SIZE: 2.5 bighas (approx)
WARD: 81 (old)
OWNER: Govt
CUSTODIAN: Baitul Mamur Jam-e-Mosque
AT PRESENT: Needs protection



numerous times, he said.

Kabir said they cultivate fish in the water body and with the income they generate from selling fish, they maintain the mosque and the pond.

"But at times it gets difficult to keep the water clean as residents from the nearby houses keep on dumping waste

in the pond," he alleged. Also, drainage and sewage lines go into the pond directly, polluting its water.

The depth of the pond is around 35 feet, he said.

"Around 30 years ago, there used to be swimming competitions in the pond," he said. "On holidays, we

would gather by the water body to root for the swimmers. There would be a community atmosphere surrounding the area."

"You should have seen the area back then. It was like a festival. Even national swimmers like Mosharrif Hossain used to drop by to enjoy the competition," said a nostalgic Kabir.

During a recent visit, this correspondent saw a group of youths swimming in the water body.

Rouf Siam, a fifth-grader, said he learnt to swim in the pond. Standing next to him were his friends, ready to jump into the water body. "All of us learnt to swim here," they shouted in unison.

But due to its present condition, the pond is mostly used by the slum dwellers now, said locals.

Mohammad Malek, a rickshaw-puller, said they use the pond for bathing, while the women for household work.

While talking to the residents of the area, many said although the pond is still alive, the authorities concerned should take immediate steps to save it from the threat of encroachment and pollution.

(Edited by Hasan Meer)



DHAKA RETURNING TO NORMALCY! Life is getting back to normal in the capital, as it once again sees traffic congestion yesterday afternoon with people rushing to board public transports to reach their destinations. The photo was taken in Farmgate area.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Road crashes

FROM PAGE 4

In Gopalganj, a bus helper was killed and 20 people were injured when a Dhaka-bound bus fell into a ditch beside Dhaka-Khulna Highway in Poraton Mukusdipur area under Mukusdipur upazila on Friday night.

The deceased is Dulal Hossain, 32, of Doskhin Jonjulia village in Pirojpur.

The injured were admitted into different hospitals in the district, said police.

In Manikganj, a local Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leader who was injured in a road accident on Thursday died at Dhaka Pongu Hospital in the capital on Friday evening.

Abir Bepari, education secretary of Ghior upazila unit of BCL, was injured seriously as a truck hit his motorcycle on Dhaka-Aricha highway at Tepra under Shivalaya upazila of Manikganj on Thursday afternoon.

He was rushed to Manikganj Sadar Hospital and later shifted to Dhaka Pangu Hospital where he died.

Abir, of Beparipara village under Ghior upazila, was a student of Ghior Government Degree College.

In Rajbari Sadar, a man was killed as his motorcycle collided head-on with a microbus on Rajbari-Kushtia road in Durgapur area on Friday.

The deceased Abdul Hannan, 40, of Doskhin Mul village in Kushtia was an employee of Rajbari Deputy Commissioner office. He was going to his workplace from home, said police.

In Narayanganj, a motorcyclist was killed and his co-rider injured as a truck hit his vehicle in Kanchan Pourashava Nolpoth area of Rupganj upazila yesterday.

The deceased is Rafiqul Islam Rubel, 24, of Jamalpur.

DU celebrates

FROM PAGE 4

at 37,064 while the number of teachers is 1,885.

Since its inception, Dhaka University has made significant contributions to the modern history of the country. Following the partition of India, it became the focal point of progressive and democratic movements in the then East Pakistan. Its students and teachers played the central role in the rise of Bangalee nationalism and acceleration of the movement for an independent Bangladesh.

35 lakh new voters

FROM PAGE 4

upazilas for 28 days in the second phase and 118 upazilas for 21 days in the third phase.

The upazila election offices will receive applications for transferring voting addresses and drop dead people from the electoral rolls between November 25 and December 15.

The draft of updated voter list will be published across the country on January 2 to receive complaints over it till January 17. And the final voter list will be published on January 31 after disposing of complaints, if any.