

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 ninth report of the series today covering the then DCC ward-76.



Mitali School Pond is now a playground.

PHOTOS: RASHED SHUMON

The pond inside St Joseph School of Industrial Trades is still properly maintained.

# Alive in memories only



HELEMUL ALAM

Once Ward-76 of the undivided Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) was full of ponds, providing a much-needed breathing space for the residents. Due to negligence of the authorities concerned, most of the water bodies of the 0.548 sq km ward (now Ward-40 of Dhaka South City Corporation) were filled up at different times. According to a survey carried out in 2006 by the DCC, there were only two ponds in the area. While talking to the residents of the ward including Tikatuly, Narinda, Koratitola and Swamibagh areas, they said there were two more ponds that got replaced by an amusement park and a school. The water bodies were filled up before the DCC survey, they added. **ISLAM SHAHEBER PUKUR** The around 1.75-bigha pond on KM Das Lane in Tikatuly of Old Dhaka used to be surrounded by banyan and mango trees. Now, not even a fleeting glimpse of

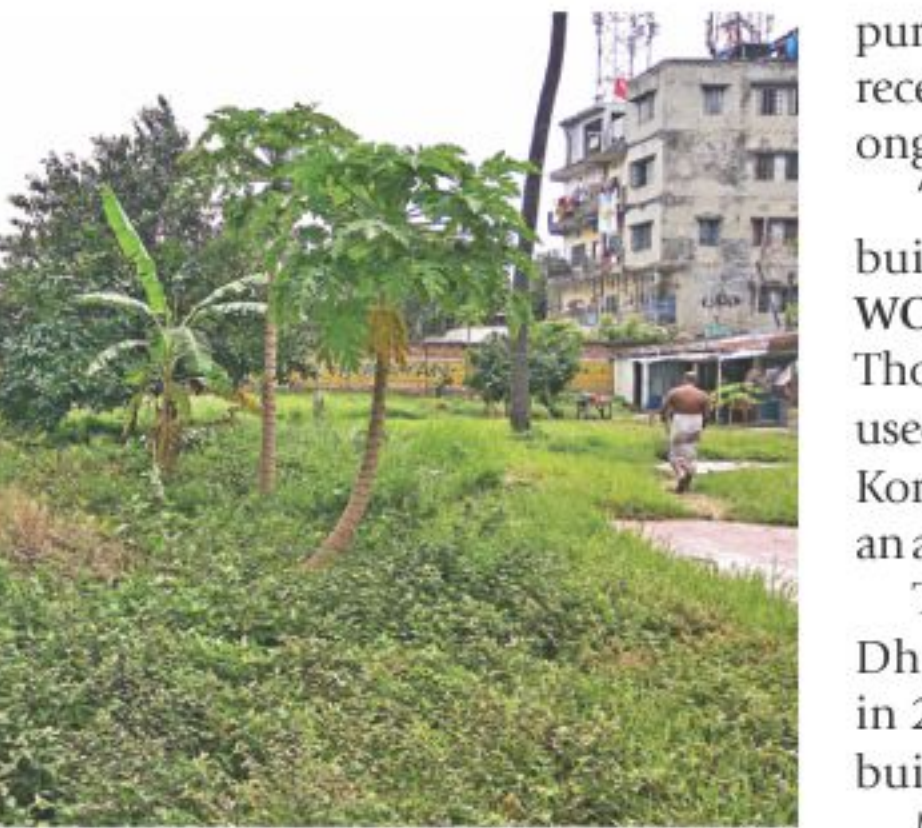


The pond replaced by an amusement park in Koratitola.



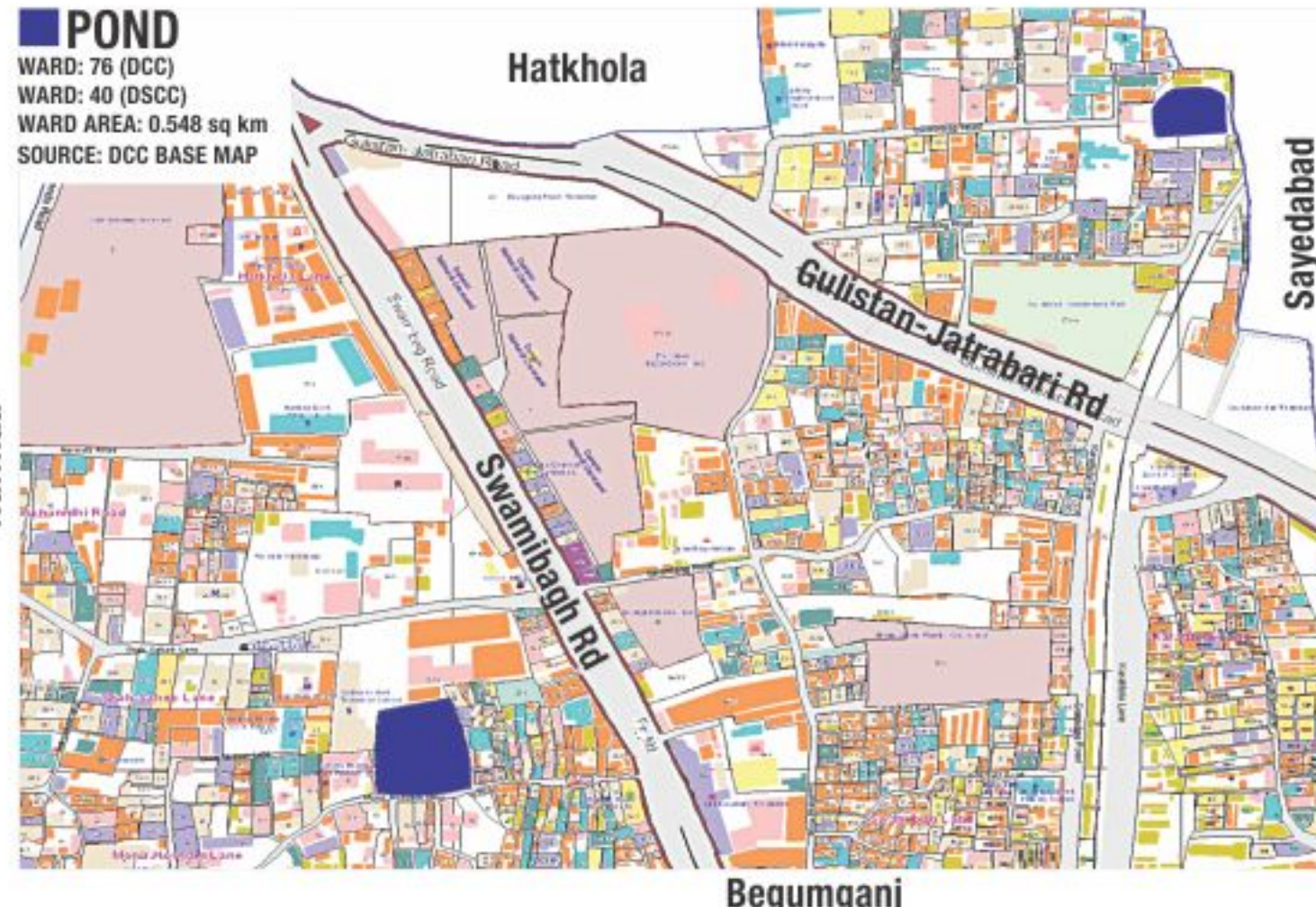
Islam Shaheber Pukur is filled up completely.

the pond -- Islam Shaheber Pukur -- remains. There is a school and some semi-permanent structures belonging to a developer company on the land where the reservoir once was. The owner of the pond was one Asif Chowdhury who purchased the land from Islam Shaheb -- an influential local, said Shahidul Islam. The elderly resident of Swamibagh said it was filled up around 2004/2005. Shahidul said a portion of the pond land belonged to the railways where Shahid Kazi Aref Ideal High school has been constructed. The rest of the land is being used by Mitul Properties Limited, a sister concern of Rupayan group. Indrajit Rajbongshi, headteacher of the school located at 18/7A KM Das Lane, said the land for the school was allotted by the government in 2008. The school was also established the same year. The school was built in memory of Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal leader Kazi Aref Ahmed, a Liberation War organiser, he added. Shafiqur Rahman, in-charge of Mitul Properties Limited, said they purchased the land from Asif Chowdhury in 2008. "But there was no pond at that time," he added. He alleged that even though they



WARD 76 (OLD)	SIZE (APPRX)	OWNER	AT PRESENT	
St Joseph School Of Industrial Trades Pond	1 bigha	School	Protected	

WARD 76 (OLD)	SIZE (APPRX)	OWNER	FILLED UP (APPRX)	AT PRESENT
Islam Shaheber Pukur	1.75 bighas	Individual	2004/2005	School, Buildings
Wonderland Park Pond	N/A	Govt	2002	Amusement park
Mitali School Pond	5 kathas	School	80s	Playground



## Adieu, war hero

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Valiant freedom fighter Syed Shahidul Haque Mama was laid to rest at Martyred Intellectuals Graveyard in the capital's Mirpur yesterday after the nation paid rich tributes to him for his contribution during the 1971 Liberation War. He was buried at around 2:30pm following his second namaz-e-janaza was held at Dhaka University Central Mosque, Shahidul's nephew Syed Aminul Haque told The Daily Star. His first namaz-e-janaza was held at Dhaka University Central Mosque after tributes were paid to him at Central Shaheed Minar. Shahidul Haque, the chief of "Mama Group Guerrilla Bahini" during the Liberation War, died at a hospital in Qatar on Friday night, ending over a two-month-long battle for life following a massive cardiac arrest. He was 64. After the body arrived in Dhaka early yesterday, it was kept at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University. His coffin was then taken to the Central Shaheed Minar at 10:40am. Sammilita Sangskritik Jote arranged the programme. A police team led by a senior magistrate of Dhaka District Administration gave a guard of honour while freedom fighters gave another guard of honour when his coffin, wrapped in national flag, was kept on the premises of the Shaheed Minar. Then, the coffin was kept on a makeshift stage



People from all walks of life pay tributes to valiant freedom fighter Syed Shahidul Haque Mama at the Central Shaheed Minar in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## SOLVING YEAR-LONG WATERLOGGING IN CTG Restore river, canals: Experts

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

The waterlogging in Chittagong city is mostly a man-made situation caused by unplanned urbanisation, destruction of water bodies, canals, drains and natural hills and forests, said experts. After Monday's flooding that the residents of the port city experienced for the fifth time in the last three months during this monsoon, The Daily Star yesterday spoke with two urban planners regarding the causes of the flooding and the probable remedies. They said siltation of the Karnaphuli river and its channels as well as canals connecting it also aggravated the situation. Major dredging in the Karnaphuli, building navigation gates and water retention reservoirs for the river and excavation of new canals would improve the situation, they advised. An effective management mechanism needs to be introduced to preserve the existing canals, drains and ponds and natural resources such as the hills and forests, two urban plan-

ners told The Daily Star yesterday.

In their opinion, the waterlogging problem would be well addressed if the functionality of these resources is ensured by reclaiming these from encroachers and by protecting these from indiscriminate littering. Town planner Engineer Subhash Barua, who is also vice president of Forum for Planned Chittagong (a platform advocating development of Chittagong city), said unplanned urbanisation is one of the main reasons for the city's waterlogging. "However, there's not much you can do about it now since thousands of structures have been built in an unplanned way, leaving no room for the accumulated water to disperse during the monsoon." "So, all you have to do is make the best effort with your existing opportunities to improve the situation," he said, adding that all the canals and drains will have to be desilted first to raise their water retention capacity. "Hill preservation and hill management are vital aspects in improving the waterlogging situation as drains and canals are silted with soil

washed out of hills during the monsoon," he said. The hills need to be planted with grass and trees and a drainage network should be built there incorporating silt traps, he added, explaining that the silt traps or small ponds, built on a foothill, would help stop siltation of drains and canals by collecting soil washed out from hilltops. Both sides of all canals will also need to be freed from obstruction and illegal encroachment so surface water can easily disperse through these. Aside from waterlogging during monsoon season, many parts of the city including Agrabad, Halishahar and Bakalia remain flooded almost all year long during high tides in the Bay of Bengal. Asked how to address this situation, Shahinul Islam Khan, chief town planner of Chittagong Development Authority (CDA), said the riverbed of the Karnaphuli has elevated due to siltation and a comprehensive dredging work is necessary to enhance its water retention capacity.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

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