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Ichhamati now a trickle

The fabled river on course to die a slow death thanks to encroachment, waste-dumping

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

The Ichhamati, the once vibrant river that features prominently in several Bangla literary works, has turned into a narrow channel filled with garbage, thanks to rampant encroachment and indiscriminate dumping of waste.

At some places in Pabna town, the river looks like a dying canal with the riverbed silting up, while at some other points, garbage chokes the water flow.

Originated in the Padma in Pabna's Shibrapur, the Ichhamati runs an 84km course across the district before meeting the Jamuna in Bera upazila.

Today, the river is hardly visible in Banglabazar area, near the point of its origin, because of roads, commercial and residential buildings, and business establishments.

Reckless encroachment even forced the river to change its original course, said Kabir Mahamud, the deputy commissioner of Pabna.

According to the government's Cadastral Survey (CS) records, published in 1922, the 9km section of the river that flows through Pabna municipality had 88.58 acres of riverbed. But the area dropped to only 54.53 acres as shown in the most recent Bangladesh Survey (BS) record map in 2013, said Md Mostak Ahmed, the district settlement officer, who has recently been transferred to Dhaka.

In the CS map of Pabna's Ramchandrapur mouza, the

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Relentless encroachment and garbage dumping have turned the Ichhamati river into a ditch in Pabna town. Many artistes found their muse in the beautiful river that once was. Inset, houses and road built on the river. The photos were taken recently.

PHOTO: AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU

Cyclone BULBUL 4,500 trees in Sundarbans damaged

Forest department says wildlife largely unharmed

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Cyclone Bulbul damaged 4,589 trees in the Sundarbans, mostly in the western part of the mangrove forest under Khulna and Satkhira districts, according to the Bangladesh Forest Department.

The storm did not leave behind any wildlife casualty, according to the department's damage assessment report.

Trees on both sides of the rivers Arpangasia and Shibsra were the worst affected, said the report.

The affected trees, which include both naturally-grown mangroves and planted trees such as babla, mahogany and raintree, were worth about Tk 62.85 lakh, said the report.

The forest department has decided to not remove any of the damaged trees,

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Cash crunch stalls ACC modernisation

MAHBUUR RAHMAN KHAN

The Anti-Corruption Commission could not start a project to use modern technology at its offices due to fund shortage in nearly three years.

In 2017, the ACC took a four-year plan to set up a digital archive and digital forensic lab and bring all of its offices under a single network.

The project titled Strengthening Capacity of Anti-Corruption Commission is aimed at improving the ACC's capacity to combat graft.

It also planned to set up a crime database management software and develop an online database of criminals.

"Initially, the expenditure was estimated to be Tk 1 crore. The government approved the amount. But we later realised that it will take at least Tk 10 crore to implement the project," said an ACC official, requesting anonymity.

"Having a system will be of no use if

officials don't know how to use it. The officials need to be sent abroad for training," he said, adding that the expenditure of training was also not estimated at first.

The ACC appointed a consultant for the project but very little has been done so far.

The need for a digital forensic lab came to the fore after a phone conversation between suspended ACC director Khandaker Enamul Basir and deputy inspector general Mizanur Rahman got leaked recently.

To verify the audio clip that contained evidence of bribery by the officials, the ACC had to send the file to National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre.

Moreover, there is no formal way of communication among different departments of the ACC across the country.

"Introducing e-governance and a digital system is a timely demand," he added.

When a complaint is received, it is sent to an evaluation committee. If the committee members find the allegation credible, they

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ROHINGYA GENOCIDE Myanmar defiant amid legal woes

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar has struck back after a surge of global legal pressure over its alleged crimes against the Rohingya, branding an investigation by the International Criminal Court (ICC) "not in accordance with international law".

On Thursday the ICC approved a full probe into Myanmar's 2017 bloody military crackdown against the minority Muslim group.

The decision came after rights groups filed a separate lawsuit in Argentina -- in which former democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi was personally named -- and a further submission of a genocide case at the UN's top court.

Two years ago some 740,000 Rohingya fled over the border into sprawling camps in Bangladesh in violence UN investigators branded as genocide.

Myanmar has repeatedly defended the crackdown as necessary to stamp out militants and has long refused to recognise the authority of the ICC - a position it reiterated Friday.

"The investigation over Myanmar by the ICC is not in accordance with international law," said government spokesman Zaw Htay at a press conference Friday.

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Folk fest ends with a potpourri of folk songs



Junoon performing on the last day of Dhaka International Folk Fest 2019 yesterday.

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

ZAHANGIR ALOM

The fifth Dhaka International Folk Fest (DIFF) 2019 concluded yesterday and featured mesmerising performances by Malek Kawal and Chandana Majumdar from Bangladesh, Sattuma from Russia and Junoon from Pakistan.

Malek Dewan and his troupe began the evening with Maizbhandari and Qawwali genres. The pulsating beats of dhol and kortal, in harmony with the melody of Nagarsang Kirttan, mingled with one of the timeless compositions of Maizbhandari Sufi song.

Sattuma, a famous Russian folk band, then took over the stage to amuse the audience with scintillating Karelian-Finnish scores. The Finnish word "sattuma" means "hitting the mark", and the band has been all around the world with their instrumental tracks since 2003 and continues to make a mark in different corners of Russia, USA, Finland, Scandinavia, Estonia, and

Germany, with their neo-folk tracks. Their performance concluded with the symphonic recital, blending traditional and modern tunes.

Renowned folk singer Chandana Majumdar was the penultimate performer of the night. Prior to her performance, she said she would start with Lalon Shah compositions like "Dhonno Dhonno Boli Tarey", "Manush Chhara Khyapa", "Shirmi Khawar Lobh Jaar Achhe" and "Koi Holo Mor Machh Dhora".

"When I started realising the philosophical essence of Lalon Shaijee's songs, they embedded a deep emotion in my heart. The Bard's songs constitute the core of our cultural heritage," said Chandana, who later rendered the songs of Radharaman Dutta, Rajjab Ali Dewan, Shah Abdul Karim, along with a few Murshidi numbers.

At the festival, the singer captivated the audience with popular numbers, "Amar

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They beat me up with rods, sticks

Says RU student after BCL men broke his arm

RU CORRESPONDENT

A student of Rajshahi University was confined to a dormitory room and beaten with iron rods and sticks allegedly by two Bangladesh Chhatra League activists yesterday.

The victim -- Shohrab Mia, a third-year student of Department of Finance and Banking -- was admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH).

RMCH doctors said Shohrab needed 15 stitches on his head, his left arm broke in two places, and he had injuries in his legs.

Shohrab, at the hospital, told The Daily Star, "Asif Luck of Islamic Studies department and Humayun Kabir Nahid of Bangla department took me to room-254 of our dormitory [Shaheed Shamsuzzoha Hall] and started beating me."

"I cried loudly and requested them not to beat me, but not only did they keep on beating but also threatened me of dire consequences if I had made any sound."

According to witnesses, as Shohrab started screaming and bleeding, the accused left him and went out of campus. Students then rushed him to a clinic on campus and later moved him to RMCH as his condition was critical.

Seeking anonymity, one

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Doctor-to-be dies by 'suicide'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Police recovered the hanging body of a 5th-year medical student in Faridpur Sadar upazila yesterday, around 48 hours after he had gone missing from his dormitory.

The dead -- Nayan Chandra Nath, 25, son of late Dilip Chandra Nath of Daganbhuiyan in Feni, was an examinee of professional medical exam at Faridpur Medical College, said police.

The college authorities filed a general diary with Faridpur Sadar Police Station on Thursday afternoon after he had gone missing, said Sub Inspector (SI) Bilal Hossain of the police station.

His body was found hanging from the ceiling of a saw mill at Posra village in the upazila. Informed by the locals, police recovered the body around 7:00am,

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Half million for half dollar coin



CNN ONLINE

This coin was worth half a dollar when it was made in 1838. It has now sold for \$504,000 at auction.

The 1838-O Capped Bust Half Dollar was auctioned on Friday in Baltimore by auction house Stack's Bowers Galleries, which described it as "a truly legendary coin ... that will forever be revered, studied and dreamed about."

It isn't just old, it's extremely rare. Only 20 were ever created, and the Smithsonian Institution believes only 11 still exist. Stack's Bowers says it could be as few as nine.

The specific coin auctioned is called the Cox Specimen, which last changed hands in the 1980s, according to the auction house. It features a woman wearing a band that reads "Liberty" on one face, and the national symbol of the bald eagle on the other.

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JAMAAT 5-40	1-15	4-00	5-24	7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



অগ্রগতির ধারাবাহিকতায় প্রাচীন ঐতিহ্যের শহর বাগেরহাটের মোল্লায় কল্যাণমুখী শরীয়াহ ব্যাংকিংয়ের পথিকৃৎ এক্সিম ব্যাংকের ১২৬তম শাখা, মোল্লা রোড শাখার

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কল সেবার: ৯৬২৪৬