



The never-ending Bhabadah waterlogging saga continues, with stories of negligence, mismanagement and even alleged corruption piling up. Beyond just people of the area, rivers such as Teka and Hari are victims to the whole situation as well. As excavated earth is dumped back onto them, both of the rivers suffer from siltation, which is raising the riverbed as well as choking the rivers' width.

PHOTO: MOKAMMEL SHUVO

# Short-term fix, long-term trouble?

WDB excavation project dumps earth, that too back into the rivers



MOKAMMEL SHUVO

On one hand, it's good news that the government has taken up a river excavation project at Hari and Teka rivers to recede water from the waterlogged Bhabadah region.

On the other, locals are complaining of a brand new woe, as they say the contractor is dumping the sediment back into the river just a feet away from the excavation spot.

The projects are being implemented by Jashore Water Development Board (WDB), with the aim to enhance navigability of the rivers, along with receding stagnant water in Bhabadah region, which has inundated lakhs of people.

During a recent visit and another in mid-April last year, this correspondent found truth to the locals' astonishing allegations.

According to Bhabadah Pani Nishkashan Sangram Committee, a citizens' body demanding mitigation of the longstanding waterlogging issue, the Teka and Hari rivers have shrunk and become divided into three canals due to the dumping of excavated earth into

them. "WDB is clearly violating the foreshore law of 2013, by doing this," said Iqbal Kabir Zahid, an adviser of the committee.

Contacted, Executive Engineer of Jashore WDB Tauhidul Islam said they are implementing the 3.7 kilometres

**The Teka and Hari rivers have shrunk and become divided into three canals due to the dumping of excavated earth into them.**

river excavation works along a 12-metre wide spot in Teka River, upstream from the Bhabadah sluice gate.

In Hari River, the department is implementing 5 kilometres of emergency excavation works at a three-metre wide spot, downstream from the gate, the engineer said.

The total cost of the project is Tk 3.18 crore, he added.

He offered an explanation for dumping the earth back into the river,

saying this is because works for the Hari river works are being undertaken in an emergency basis to drain out the stagnant water.

However, he had no explanation for why the same was being done for the Teka river works, which is not an emergency project.

Ronojit Bauali, convener of the Sangram Committee, alleged that rather than solving the waterlogging problem, the Water Development Board only wants to prolong it so that they can pocket some money by capitalising on the never-ending crisis.

"Come rainy season, the deposited earth is going to clog the river again," he said.

Zahid cited another Jashore WDB project that aimed to reduce waterlogging in the region but allegedly ended up contributing to it.

He was speaking of Water Development Board's installation of 20 pumps at Bhabadah sluice gate which pump out water from the waterlogged areas.

But this only ends up depositing sediment and elevating the riverbed, clogging the drainage system of the

area and inundating numerous villages, according to Zahid.

Due to the project, the river has become silted up to Khulna's Dumuria upazila, around 50 kilometres downstream from the Bhabadah sluice gate, he said.

Meanwhile, using the Bhabadah Pani Nishkashan Sangram Committee's preferred tidal river management (TRM) method for eight years till 2013, the river was made around 15 to 20 feet deeper, said Iqbal Kabir Zahid.

According to WDB sources, the level of the river was zero at sea level when the tidal river management project was run, while it is now silted and thus raised up to around 2.5 metres.

Zahid said WDB's apathy to TRM, a proven natural method to solve waterlogging, is contributing to killing the stream.

Supporting the elevated flow project, WDB Jashore Executive Engineer Tauhidul Islam said around a metre of silt has been washed away due to the flow of water created by the water pumps.

However, activists and locals have rejected his claim.

# Home for Harijans

BCC provides flats for 92 families



PHOTO: TITU DAS

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barishal

A section of the Harijan community has received modern residential flats from Barishal City Corporation (BCC).

BCC Mayor Serniabat Sadiq Abdullah was present during the hand-over programme last week in the city's Kawnia area.

The recipients, who work as BCC cleaners, said they have been cleaning the city for many years but did not have standard accommodation where they previously lived.

To ensure their better standard of living, 92 families were given flats in the six-storey "Kawnia Harijan Sebak Colony" building, according to BCC.

Dulari Rani, one of those who received a flat, said, "We couldn't believe that we would ever live in a modern flat, but at last, our dream has come true."

Joyanta Kumar Das, secretary of a Harijan colony said so far, 136 families got flats from BCC, but around two-third of families working under BCC are yet to get them. "We demanded flats for all community members," he said.

Uttam Kumar Bhakta, a Harijan community leader, said, "There are at least around 4,000 Harijan and Dalit people living in the city's five Harijan colonies. Their lives are harsh. We also demand such flats for them."

"Each Harijan family will get a 550-square-foot flat with two bedrooms, one dining room, one kitchen and toilet as well as a common space cum community centre. All families will live here without having to pay for utilities," he added.

According to BCC, 390 Harijan cleaners work under its conservancy department, said BCC Conservancy Officer Dr Rabiul Islam.

Speaking at the programme, the BCC mayor said, "Every Harijan family living here [in the city] will get flats, not only BCC staffers."

The mayor then announced increasing the salary scale for Harijan people working for BCC.

He distributed keys to the flats among the families through a lottery.

# Celebrating the country's rivers



OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A cultural show on the country's rivers was held at Mymensingh Zila Shilpakala Academy auditorium on Sunday evening.

Initiated by Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, the local Academy organised the event titled "Tero Shoto Nadi Sudhay Amake" as part of a countrywide programme.

Artistes of Swakhhor, a local cultural group, and Shilpakala Academy performed on the occasion.

Reciter Dwipshikha Khan also performed in the event.

A discussion was also organised, where district cultural officer Hamidur Rahman spoke, among others, anchored by Surya Khan.

Speakers at the event called for united efforts to save the country's rivers.

**Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh**  
Office of the Mayor  
Goalanda Pourashava  
Rajbari District

**Invitation for e-Tender Notice**

Memo No: Goal/Pou/BMWSSP/2022/237/006; Date: 16/01/2022

1	Ministry/Division	Local Government Division.
2	Implementing agency	Department of Public Health Engineering.
3	Project/program name	Bangladesh Municipal Water Supply and Sanitation Project (30 Pourashavas).
4	e-Tender IDs and package No.	647585 and Package No.: BMWSSP/WD-17
5	Description of works	Installation of Distribution Pipeline and House Connection of Goalanda Pourashava.
6	Name, designation & address of official inviting tender	Name: Md. Fardous Alam Khan Executive Engineer Office of the Mayor, Goalanda Pourashava, Rajbari District. Tel. No.: 06-42356244
7	Information	This is online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the national e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. Interested persons/firms can see details in the website: www.eprocure.gov.bd.

GD-147  
Executive Engineer  
Goalanda Pourashava  
Rajbari District.



A new endangered species of wild dogs has been spotted at Satchhari National Park in Habiganj's Chunarughat recently, during a camera trapping by a team of researchers. Earlier, locals claimed to have heard of its distinct whistle-like calls in the area.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

# Call of the wild

Endangered wild dogs found for first time in Satchhari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A new species of wild dogs has been spotted at Satchhari National Park in Habiganj's Chunarughat. The species is listed as endangered under the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, according to IUCN Bangladesh official Simanta Dipu.

Satchhari range officer Mahmud Hossain informed that the wild dogs were recently spotted

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