

Demarcation there, not the river

In the second part of this two-part series on the Buriganga, we inspect the south Keraniganj side of the river, where garbage dumping and encroachment continue unabated

MOKAMMEL SHUVO, back from Keraniganj

If you go to Telghat of south Keraniganj, you will see a road next to the Buriganga river. Beside it, there are some buildings, makeshift shops and a piece of land filled with garbage and earth.

You will also see a demarcation pillar somewhere in between all these that says "Kaliganj, Pillar-10, Buriganga river".

The distance between the Buriganga, considered to be the lifeline of Dhaka, and this pillar (used for ascertaining the river boundary) is around 100 feet.

As this correspondent was standing on the side of the road next to some makeshift shops and parked three-wheelers and rickshaws, looking at the boats docked along the bank, an elderly local came by and said, "You know the land you are standing on used to be Buriganga. You are actually standing on the river."

Md Lal Mia of Boiritole village



continued, "This is a nice trick the encroachers apply. They continue to dump garbage and, in a way, encourage others to do so. This way they also fill up the river land."

When asked, the 60-year-old also said the demarcation pillar had been there for a long time. It was set up by the Bangladesh Inland Water Transportation Authority (BIWTA).

"I have been rowing boats in the river since I was a child. It was not like this before... the river is dying in front of my eyes," said Lal Mia, on a depressing note.

Abdus Salam, another resident of the area near Telghat, said, "If you go along the road leaving the river on your right side from Telghat to the Babubazar bridge,

you will see garbage being dumped on the river in several parts. Once the river land gets filled up, many set up makeshift stalls there."

Locals alleged that people mostly dump garbage on the river at night.

Meanwhile, a water bus terminal was built at least 50 feet inside the river at Telghat. There was also a huge pile of earth dumped beside the terminal,



suggesting that the river area was being filled up to build a pathway from the terminal to the bank.

Sher Shah Mia, a lessee of the terminal, said, "BIWTA excavated the river at Telghat point for setting up the water bus terminal and dumped the excavated soil

in the river a year ago."

Mentionable, the river embankment road in South Keraniganj is just opposite the Sadarghat launch terminal in Old Dhaka.

The area falls under Suvadda union in Dhaka's Keraniganj upazila. It's a busy area, bustling with sellers and buyers of local garment products. There are also RMG factories in the area.

As one can easily assume, leftover products or scrap materials from those factories also find their way into the river due to the lack of a proper waste management system in the union.

Contacted, Suvadda UP Chairman Hazi Iqbal Hossain said they were trying to manage the waste properly but some unscrupulous people continue to dump garbage in the river.

Iqbal also blamed the BIWTA for dumping soil in the river while setting up the terminal.

"We will evict the makeshift structures built on the river land," he said.

Meanwhile, locals alleged that the river continues to suffer from mindless

dumping of waste and encroachment as the authorities concerned turn a blind eye to this menace.

KM Kabirul Islam, deputy director of the National River Conservation Commission, told this correspondent yesterday that BIWTA cannot build any structure on the river that can make the river narrow.

"They should have shifted it to the river bank," he added.

He said BIWTA should be more responsible and refrain people from dumping waste in the river. "Also, they should initiate drives to remove garbage from the river immediately."

Alamgir Kabir, joint director of BIWTA (port and traffic, Sadarghat), said local RMG factories are dumping waste in the river. "We will take stern action against them. We will also work with the upazila parishad to solve the waste management issue."

About the issue of encroachment, Alamgir said the demarcation process of the river land is yet to be completed.

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'As Durga Puja nears, some concerns remain'

Puja Udjapan Parishad demands strict security at mandaps

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After last year's mayhem during the Durga Puja celebrations, leaders of Bangladesh Puja Udjapan Parishad expressed concerns about this year's celebrations as well.

Addressing a press conference in the city yesterday, General Secretary of the Parishad Prof Chandranath Poddar said in the run-up to the puja celebrations this year, 12 to 13 mandaps have already been vandalised and attacked in different parts of the country.

JL Bhowmick, the president of the Parishad, alleged that the community has not been given justice for the attacks during the puja period last year while the perpetrators are being granted impunity.

"We demand that those involved in these incidents be brought to justice," he said. "We want to trust the government, but this year's puja is not entirely free of apprehension. However, we are on alert," said Bhowmick.

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NON-SMART NID

EC now to collect prints from all ten fingers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The EC is planning to collect finger prints of voters who have not given impressions from 10 fingers, for ensuring a hassle-free election.

EC officials said many voters, especially women and the elderly, face hassles in casting votes when election is conducted using electronic voting machines. On many occasions, fingerprints did not match with the database while using an EVM.

Officials pointed out that in most cases, fingerprints of women and elderly voters could not even be registered in EVM as their skin was either damaged or they did not have registered fingerprints.

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Speakers at the roundtable titled "Exploring the implementation of disability-inclusive WASH policy commitments in Bangladesh" yesterday. The event was organised by Water Aid Bangladesh and The Daily Star at the capital's The Daily Star Centre.

PHOTO: STAR

'Will always remain beside Bangladesh'

Saudi envoy says in a message

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Saudi Arabia will always remain beside Bangladesh in its journey towards development, said Saudi Ambassador to Bangladesh, Essa bin Yousef Al Duhailan.

In a message marking the 92nd Saudi National Day yesterday, he said Saudi-Bangladesh relation is deeply rooted and excellent based on strong foundation of religious, cultural, economic and humanitarian ties.

"Saudi Arabia always stands beside Bangladesh, especially in the time of hardship," he said.

Essa bin Yousef said Saudi-Bangladesh relations

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Coordination, investment, awareness top priorities

Speakers tell roundtable on disability-inclusive WASH policy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite there being well defined policies to ensure Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) for persons with disabilities, the field-level reality is far from meeting their basic needs, finds a study.

To address this issue, there is a need for inter-agency coordination, and investment in enhancing the knowledge and skills of government agencies, service providers and organisations of people with disabilities, the study recommended.

The information was shared at a roundtable titled "Exploring the implementation of disability-inclusive WASH policy commitments in Bangladesh" at the capital's The Daily Star Centre yesterday.

While discussing the study, speakers said most people are ignorant and insensitive to persons with disabilities, lacking the understanding that s/he can have a disability at any stage of life.

Therefore, creating awareness through media and school programmes should be a priority, speakers suggested.

Water Aid Bangladesh and The Daily Star organised the event, where Ashraf Ali Khan Khasru, state minister for the Ministry of Social Welfare, attended as the chief guest.

Mahfuj-ur Rahman, project

manager-HLP at WaterAid Bangladesh, presented the study findings based on 10 public policy document analyses and interviews of 28 government officials, service providers, and persons with disabilities working in Dhaka, Gaibandha and Rangpur districts.

The study highlighted a number of issues regarding the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the WASH sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Awareness through media, schools
- Inclusive national policy
- Disability-friendly infrastructure
- National committee to address disability in WASH sector

"The government's disability efforts at the district level focus on rehabilitation and inclusive education. But the WASH efforts don't systematically include disability," said Mahfuj-ur Rahman.

He placed six recommendations to overcome the issue, which include — following existing inclusive guidance while implementing national policies,

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AZAN 4:35	12:45	4:15	6:00	7:30
JAMAAT 5:10	1:15	4:35	6:05	8:00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION