

Photo Feature





Desperate Urbanization

While we celebrate 400 years of Dhaka's creation as the capital of Bengal, the inhabitants of the river Buriganga fight to survive through the challenges of daily life. What was once known as Dhaka's lifeline is very much on life support itself and much of the blame can be laid on the ignorance of the Dhakaites.

With a burgeoning national population of 160 million people, it is now clichéd to point out Dhaka's rapid transformation into a concrete jungle. With much of the city's greenery stripped off and replaced with wastage from both humans and machines, Buriganga best resembles a wasteland from the movies. To punish for our ignorance, its inhabitants face the risk of waterborne diseases such as malaria, typhoid and dengue.

However, the fight goes on. As pressure groups rally for access to safe drinking water and proper sanitation facilities for the multitude of people still occupying the banks for both work and home, a strife for livelihood is evident with the alarming number of brick kilns and harbors.

This month in Photo Feature, we look at this wasteland and hope to call out for awareness. Not just another one-time call, but also a stringent one reinforced with the honest belief in hope.

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△ **Ghosts of Ships.** Skeletons of ships rest along the banks for picking scrap metal

△ **Mystic River.** Ferries race across the murky river waters for fastest freight unload before heading off for the next shipment contractor





△ **Lonesome Green.** A tree juts out bravely in cold irony against the concrete banks ■■



△ **Grabbed.** Encroachment of precious land in full-fledged form with avenues of wasted tires

By the Numbers

Tk 210 million.

Already spent by the Government in an ambitious Buriganga-Turag River Cleaning Project.

Tk 285.

To dredge and grab per cubic meter of garbage from the riverbed and more than that to collect the floating and solid waste from the riverbank.

0.50-0.84 mgs per litre (mg/L).

The presence of dissolved oxygen gas in the water of Buriganga, while standard surface water is 5 mg/L in Bangladesh, shows a laboratory analysis.

300.

The number of various effluent discharge outlets in the capital and Narayanganj.

Source: Department of Environment & World Bank reports