Save Basia river: Sultana Kamal urges government

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Sylhet*

The government must remove all illegal structures along the Basia river and punish the perpetrators for grabbing and polluting the waterbody, said Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) President Sultana Kamal yesterday.

The rights activist made the statement at a rally in Bishwanath upazila of Sylhet, jointly organised by Bapa, Surma River Waterkeeper and Bachao Basia Nodi Oikya Parishad.

The 56km long river flows through Sylhet and Sunamganj. But it has turned into a "narrow canal" due to pollution and grabbing, said locals.

Speaking as chief guest, the eminent environmentalist said rivers have to be protected. The prime minister must take initiatives to save these lifelines, she added.

Sharif Jamil, general secretary of Bapa, also addressed the event.

Migratory birds take off for their homes in another part of the world, as winter makes way for spring in the wetlands of Bangladesh. The photo was taken recently at Barishal's Babuganj upazila.

PHOTO: **TITU DAS**

ROAD ACCIDENTS

12 lives lost in 7 districts

STAR REPORT

With traffic rules being violated blatantly and little efforts to reduce fatalities, the country witnessed six road accidents in yesterday and another the day before, killing 12 persons and injuring seven, report our correspondents.

In Tangail, four workers were killed and three injured when a covered van hit a human haulier Dhaka-Tangail highway in Mirzapur upazila yesterday morning, said police.

The deceased were Jahanur Begum (18), Tapan Chandra Das (25), Morzina Begum (27) and Rasheda Begum (25).

Gorai Highway Police Station Officer-in-Charge Moniruzzaman said two victims died instantly, while the other two succumbed to injuries at Kumudini Hospital.

The covered van fled the scene, said the police officer.

Three injured -- Helena Begum, Parvin Begum and Rezia Akter -- were undergoing treatment at the hospital.

In Kushtia, two people died when a truck and a human haulier collided head-on on Kushtia-Rajshahi highway at Dashmile in Bheramara upazila yesterday.

Human haulier driver Shukur Ali (35) and his helper Alamin Hossain (22) were killed on the spot, said Kushtia highway police. Law enforcers seized the truck but the driver and helper fled.

A bus hit a motorbike on Pabna-Rajshahi highway at Muladuli of Ishwardi upazila on Friday night, killing two riders on the spot. The deceased -- Bachhu Mondol (40) and Bulbul Sheikh (35) were going to Mulauli from Dashuria, said Ishwardi Police Station OC Bahauddin Faruki.

In Manikganj, a pedestrian was killed as a bus ran him over at Manikganj bus stand yesterday.

Faruk Hossain (35), died on the spot, said OC Lutfar Rahman of Golora Highway Police Station.

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ILLEGAL FISHING

24 Sri Lankan fishers sent to jail in port city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Ctg*

Twenty-four Sri Lankan fishermen have been arrested from the Bay of Bengal on charges of fishing illegally inside Bangladesh's maritime boundary in Chattogram, said police.

Four fishing trawlers have also been seized during the drive, they added.

The detainees were handed over to Patenga Police Station on Friday night, while a court in Chattogram sent them to jail yesterday, said police sources.

An official press release from Bangladesh Navy said members of "BNS Omar Faruk" during their patrolling in deep sea spotted four fishing trawlers carrying foreign nationals in Bangladesh water territory near the port on Tuesday night.

The navy intercepted the trawlers -- Sea Horse, Wasana-01, Wasana-03 and Sanju Putha-07 -- and informed the higher

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Stop importing plastic flowers

Flower farmers tell human chain

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Savar*

Flower farmers in Savar yesterday formed a human chain demanding a ban on import of plastic flowers.

Under the banner of Savar Upazila Flower Farmer and Flower Businessmen Cooperative Society, around 150 people formed the human chain in Savar Bazar bus stand area beside Dhaka-Aricha highway from 12pm to 1pm.

Their demands are: stop importing fake flowers made of plastic from China, Thailand and India; make pesticide and farming equipment more accessible to farmers; create export opportunity and set up a wholesale flower market in Dhaka.

Farmers alleged that they're incurring a huge loss as imported fake flowers are flooding the market.

They said there are around 30 lakh people in the country involved in floriculture and it is an industry worth thousands of crores, yet some people are importing plastic flowers to damage the Bangladeshi market.

"In 2018, we would sell 100 roses for Tk 1,500-2,000 at the wholesale market, and the price reduced to around Tk 900 last year. Now, we're having to sell this same amount of roses for Tk 300," said Malu Mia, a flower farmer.

"This situation was created as plastic flowers are filling up the market. If the government doesn't take steps to save our industry, we would have to leave this profession," he added.

Another farmer Alamgir Hossen said, "I used to cultivate flower on 180 decimals of land but now I grow flowers on only 60 decimals of that land, because it's not as profitable anymore." He also pleaded the authorities concerned to save the industry.

According to Savar upazila agriculture office, there are about 2,000 flower farmers in the area. They cultivate several species of flowers, mostly rose, on around 250 hectares of land.

'Govt gagging media even for telling truth'

Says Mozammel Babu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It is not the government's job to gag the media, yet it continues to do so even when media broadcasts the truth, a top TV journalist said yesterday.

Ekattor TV Chief Editor Mozammel Babu also lamented the hindrances being created when publishing online content, at a seminar "Role of media in preventing extremism" at Jatiya Press Club. He said TV channels are held accountable for every line of a video content, yet [online] "portals" seem to get away with it.

Syed Ishtiaque Reza, editor-in-chief of Gazi TV and Sarabangla.net, said it is easy to blame the media.

Chief of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime Unit of DMP Monirul Islam urged both print and electronic media to run reports with caution to help tackle militancy.

Center for Social Advocacy and Research Foundation organised the programme.

Rape victim in fear of life

Accused threatening her family, she alleges

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Gazipur*

A rape victim and her family members in Gazipur city are passing days fearing for their lives, as the rape accused and his associates are allegedly threatening them.

The family claimed that the perpetrator wants to hush up the issue and settle it through "social arbitration".

Two children of the family have stopped going to school in the last few days, while other members have limited their movement outside home in fear of attack by the accused Imran Hossain (45) and his associates, said the victim.

Imran Hossain on February 15 morning lured the victim to his rented house at Rawshan Sarak area in the city. Previously acquainted with the victim, he told her to visit his home with the false promise of a job.

Once the victim reached the house, Imran forced himself on her, while one of his female associates stood guard outside.

In fear of social stigma, the victim intially did not disclose the matter. But a day later, Imran called her and attempted to blackmail her, saying she would have to pay him Tk 2 lakh unless she agrees to visit his house again.

Severely distraught, the victim attempted to take her own life on February 16, but her brother found her and later she told him about the incident.

On February 18, the victim filed a rape case against Imran and his female associate with Basan Police Station under Gazipur Metropolitan Police (GMP).

The victim claims that since then, the accused and at least a dozen of his associates have been pressuring her family to withdraw the case. "They tried to threaten us into leaving this area," said the victim.

"Meanwhile, someone claiming to be a

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Four held on abduction charges

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *N'ganj*

Rab claimed to have arrested four members of a kidnapping gang from Narsingdi yesterday.

The arrestees are Abhit Miah, Pappu Miah, Maria Akhter Monti and Badal Miah (58), said Rab-11.

The four abducted one Rasel from court area on December 28 last year. They tortured him and demanded Tk 10 lakh ransom. He somehow escaped and admitted to a hospital.

On February 20, he filed a compliant with Rab-11. Based on that, they arrested the four, said Alep Uddin, its senior assistant director.

'An unmatched columnist'

Friends, colleagues remember Mohammad Badrul Ahsan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mohammad Badrul Ahsan will live forever in the hearts of readers through his unmatched columns, speakers said yesterday at a memorial meeting.

Friends, admirers and colleagues of late Mohammad Badrul Ahsan organised the gathering at a city club.

Mahtab Uddin Ahmed, managing director of Robi; Zahida Ispahani, director of Ispahani; MA Noor, a senior lawyer of Bangladesh Supreme Court; Mamun Rashid, managing partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers; Bashir Ahmed, managing editor of now defunct weekly First News; Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star; columnist Syed Badrul Ahsan; MA Monem, former managing director and CEO of Biman Bangladesh Airlines; Mahrukh Mohiuddin, managing director of University Press Limited; and Muneer Ahmed Khan, managing director and creative chief of Unitrend Limited, shared their memories with Mohammad Badrul Ahsan, among others.

A host of friends, colleagues, and admirers of the noted columnist gathered to pay tributes to him.

PHOTO: **STAR**

Mahtab Uddin said on a personal level, Badrul Ahsan was very social; he loved to engage in conversation.

"He was a real patriot who left behind a posh life in Dubai and USA and came back to his motherland," Mahtab added.

Zahida Ispahani said 14 lakh people got light in their eyes so far because of a dream of Mohammad Badrul Ahsan, as he helped to build an eye hospital.

Mahfuz Anam said, "When he first sent me his writing, I was spellbound... Without any hesitation, I can say that in my 29 years in The Daily Star, I published columns of many writers and columnists and I will publish many in future, but he

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Age: Maximum 32 years for Officer, 36 years for Senior Officer, 40 years for Principal Officer & 42 years for Senior Principal Officer as on **March 15, 2020.**

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Deputy Managing Director & CHRO
Head of Human Resources Wing