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Outcry ignored, result obvious

Locals keep protesting while factory waste continues to pollute waterbodies in Habiganj

MINTU DESHWARA, back from Habiganj

The water has a yellowish tinge and is even somewhat black in parts. The strong stench it emanates keeps people from going near it.

This is Ekhtiarpur canal, a waterbody testifying to severe pollution as the result of a factory dumping untreated liquid waste.

The canal leads to the Sutang River, which ultimately meets and pollutes the mighty Meghna. Along the way, it poses health risks to locals living along the canal and harms their livelihoods and the surrounding environment.

On World Rivers Day -- the theme of which is "waterways in our communities" -- The Daily Star takes a look at how one factory's pollution affected a local canal and all the communities which depend on it.

Many such factories and industrial establishments dump untreated waste into canals, rivers and other waterbodies in the Shahpur area in Habiganj's Madhabpur upazila.

Locals have protested on several occasions but Maize Advance Argo Refineries Limited (MAAR Ltd), which primarily produces starch powder, continued to pollute Ekhtiarpur canal since it started operations around eight years ago.

Nurul Islam, a resident of Ekhtiarpur village, said many people in the area were suffering from various diseases, including skin diseases due to contact with water

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An agro refinery factory dumps toxic industrial waste into Ekhtiarpur Canal in Habiganj's Madhabpur upazila, turning the water dark, causing severe water pollution, and immense public sufferings. Today is World Rivers Day 2020 with the theme Waterways in our Communities. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

PABNA-4 BY-POLLS AL nominee leads in polls marred by controversy

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

By-election to Pabna-4 was held yesterday amid a low voter turnout and allegation and counter-allegation over the polls.

BNP candidate Habibur Rahman Habib alleged that ruling Awami League men threatened his polling agents and they also faced harassment from police. He demanded a re-election to the constituency.

The AL, however, denied the allegation and said the BNP was trying to call the by-polls into question.

According to final unofficial results of 71 polling centres out of the total 129, AL candidate Nuruzzaman Biswas secured 141,732 votes, Reazul Karim Khokon of Jaitya Party 2,773 and Habib of BNP bagged 22 votes, Abdul Latif, returning officer of the by-polls, said last night.

Visiting 10 polling

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4th-time flood, incessant rain hurting the north

STAR REPORT

Recurrence of flood and incessant rain are hitting people hard in the northern districts of the country.

Vast areas of croplands have been submerged in the last few days due to heavy downpour and onrush of water from upstream.

Most of the farmers in the region were cultivating winter crops. If water did not recede quickly, the crops would be damaged, farmers said.

Many people, who returned home from flood shelters few days ago and were struggling to repair their houses, have left their houses again and taken shelter in flood centres.

However, officials of Water Development Board (WDB) in some districts said there was no possibility of long-term flood.

This year, flood first hit northern region in June. It hit the region in second and third phases in the following months. Finally, the fourth phase hit the districts last week.

Our correspondents from different districts reported on flood situation.

In Lalmonirhat and Kurigram, over 35,000 people of nine upazilas are still marooned by floodwater.

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FIRST YEAR OF BANGLADESH BANGABANDHU'S NATION-BUILDING CHALLENGES

First labour policy announced

September 27, 1972

SHAMSUDDOZA SAJEN

NATION PROUD OF BAF PATRIOTISM

Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman expresses his firm confidence that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country would ever remain intact under the united and coordinated efforts of the heroic Bangladesh Air Force, the Army and the Navy. In a message to the Bangladesh Air Force on the occasion of the First Air Force Day on the September 28, Bangabandhu says that the nation is proud of the discipline, devotion, and patriotism of the air force.

MANAGEMENT BOARD, COUNCIL TO RUN INDUSTRIES

A top management board will be set up for nationalised or taken over industries by the government. The board will ensure participation of workers in the management of the industries. The management board will consist of two representatives each from employers and workers and one from financial institution. But the wage structure and other financial benefits to be granted to the workers will not be within the scope of top management board. These will be directly handled by the government. This is disclosed by Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury, minister for labour and social welfare at a press conference in Dhaka today.

Announcing the country's first ever labour policy, Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury also reveals that workers management council, with

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Gonoforum faction ousts gen secy

Decides to hold council in December

UNB, Dhaka

Ousting party general secretary Dr Reza Kibria, a faction of Gonoforum leaders on Saturday decided to hold the party's national council on December 26 next.

In an apparent move to hasten the split in the Dr Kamal Hossain-led party, the decision was taken at an "extended meeting of Gonoforum's central committee" convened by the faction at the Jatiya Press Club.

Party president Dr Kamal Hossain and general secretary Dr Reza Kibria were not invited to the meeting.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, party executive president Dr Abu Sayeed said their meeting has decided to hold Gonoforum's national council on December 26 to

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Landmine detection rat wins bravery award



AFP, Londres

Heroes come in all shapes and sizes. A five-year-old giant African pouched rat called Magawa, however, has to be one of the world's most unlikely life-savers.

The rodent has won the animal equivalent of Britain's highest civilian honour for bravery because of his uncanny knack of sniffing out landmines and unexploded ordnance.

British veterinary charity the PDSA on Friday awarded Magawa its Gold Medal "for his life-saving bravery and devotion to duty", which had transformed the lives of people in Cambodia.

Magawa, who was trained by the Belgian charity APOPO, has sniffed out 39 landmines and 28 items of unexploded ordnance, making him the

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36 more die from virus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirty-six people were reported dead from Covid-19 in 24 hours till 8:30am yesterday, according to a press release issued by the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).

With this, the total number of deaths rose to 5,129 while the death rate stood at 1.43 percent.

Another 1,106 cases were recorded in the meantime, taking the total number of people infected to 3,57,873, added the press release.

Against a number of 10,765 tests, the positivity

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PRAYER TIMING SEPTEMBER 27

Fajr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha
AZAN 4:35 12:45 4:15 6:00 7:30
JAMAAT 5:10 1:15 4:30 6:05 8:00

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION

Bangladesh, Saudi FMs to have talks today

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen and his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud will discuss bilateral and current issues over phone today.

The telephone conversation is scheduled to begin at 5pm, an official told UNB yesterday.

The Saudi government on Wednesday positively responded to workers' issues ending barriers to their return to the workplaces in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

The first batch of over 300 passengers left Dhaka on flight SV-802 of Saudi Airlines early yesterday.

The Saudi government recently raised the issue of 54,000 Rohingyas but it could not be confirmed whether the issue will be discussed or not during the telephone conversation.

Bangladesh is already overburdened with over 1.1 million Rohingyas living in Cox's Bazar district.

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Large potholes on the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway near Abdullahpur in the capital. The section of the road used by vehicles going to Mymensingh division and the northeast. The road has become prone to accidents due to its poor condition. Repairs have been made but those did not help. The photo was taken on Friday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

VACANCY IN US SUPREME COURT

Trump set to pick Amy Coney Barrett

Say reports as focus shifts to Senate

AGENCIES

US President Donald Trump was set to unveil his Supreme Court nominee yesterday, barely five weeks out from the November 3 presidential election, with US media reporting that he has chosen conservative judge Amy Coney Barrett for the job.

If the 48-year-old law professor is indeed nominated and confirmed, her appointment would consolidate a conservative majority in the country's top court.

Citing sources close to the process, various media outlets, including The New York Times and CNN, said Trump would put forward the 48-year-old judge.

"We are going to be announcing somebody great," the US president said in Virginia on a whirlwind three-state campaign tour Friday.

"Tomorrow [Saturday] I think is going to be a big day!" he added, as the crowd roared with approval.

The president did not name his nominee but earlier said his decision was made. Barrett was "outstanding" he said.

Media reports noted the mercurial Trump could still change his mind before the official announcement, expected at 5:00 pm (2100 GMT) Saturday.

Democratic opponents, led by presidential candidate Joe Biden, have demanded that Republicans back off on replacing Ruth Bader Ginsburg -- a liberal icon -- until after the November 3 election.

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