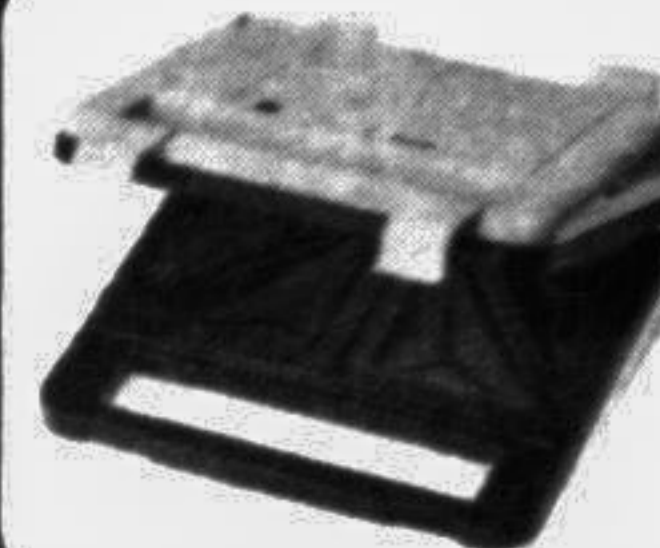


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DOWN TO EARTH Buriganga - A Dying River

By A S M Nurunnabi

The Buriganga river flowing in the south of the Dhaka city has seen the rise and growth of the city over centuries. At present the waterway is threatened with widespread pollution and gradual decay created by several man-made factors. Some of these causative factors are noted below.

The main centre of tannery industries in Dhaka is located in the Hazaribagh area. The tannery industries developed in this area from the early sixties because of the available advantage of discharging their wastes into the nearby Buriganga. According to a survey conducted by the Department of Environment, on the southern and western end of the river, there are about 175 tanneries, big and small. These tanneries are highly outdated and do not possess waste treatment facilities. The newly-established ones also are without this facility.

For the processing of leather, many chemicals are used, such as chromosol, sodium chloride, sodium sulphate, lime and other acid compounds. It is estimated that from each tannery in this area, about two thousand five hundred gallons of liquid wastes fall into the Buriganga every day. On this basis, 2500 to 3000 cubic metres of liquid wastes go into river water daily. Besides chromium, the wastes contain a large quantity of biological waste, leather, animal hairs, bloods, oil, grease, diluted and undiluted salt etc. For the preservation of aquatic life, the level of dissolved oxygen (DO) should not be over 5 PPM. But in the Buriganga, the level of DO is

found to be between 7 to 38 PPM.

According to the findings of the Department of Environment, the river bed is being silted up with the high volume of wastes, thereby making use of the river water highly dangerous for health. This big casualties of this ominous situation have been the fish resources of the river. Fishermen who in the past caught ruhi, katla, pangash, shoal etc. from parts of the river near Dhaka, hardly ever net these species nowadays.

The other serious polluters of Buriganga are the large number of sewer lines which emit into the river. Sewerage lines from Waseghat, Postogola, Farashganj Ghat, Mitford, Badamtali Ghat etc. regularly discharge untreated putrid substances into the river water.

On the shores of Buriganga live a tenth of the nation's 120 million population. And a fair share of the nation's industries uses its water and return to it thousands of tons of poisonous effluents regularly everyday. For want of any sewerage treatment plant, close to a million tons of pollutants find their way direct to the river from the bathing ghats and lavatory facilities along its banks everyday.

Moreover, most of the factories and industrial along the river banks have no waste treatments. Industrial wastes are dumped into the river from different salt factories at Kamrangirchar areas. Other polluting agents include mixed soap, soda and bleaching powder used by washermen at Chandighat, At Swarighat and Sadarghat, chemicals from different jewelry shops, ice

factories and bilge and oil from the river vessels are released into the river. From Sadarghat to Pagla Bazar, different cold storages and brickkilns dump solid and liquid wastes into river.

The result of all this is that we are now living near a dying river. Perhaps before long, the river with which the livelihood of the people of Dhaka from divers occupations is associated, will be a severe burden for them. From use of the different poisonous chemicals-borne water of the river, people living on its banks at Syambazar, Badamtali, Waseghat, Swarighat, Mitford, Killermore, Islambagh areas are reportedly afflicted with various forms of diseases, besides a high incidence of skin diseases.

The river, on account of the presence of the high volume of different pollutants, has changed the healthy and transparent colour of its water. Some parts of the river look brownish, some parts reddish and some parts greenish in colour. The river appears to have lost its charm and natural beauty under the pressure of the heavy burden of industrial wastes from various quarters.

The cleansing of the Buriganga river on all counts has, therefore, become an urgent task. The pollution needs to be eradicated by banning industries of all sizes and kinds from emptying any waste without due treatment processes. The Department of Environment has a great responsibility in this respect. In the event of our failure to take remedial measures on a priority basis, we may be living by a stinking cesspool before long.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina called on President Abdur Rahman Biswas at Bangabhaban yesterday. — PID photo

CPI joins Deve Gowda's coalition govt

NEW DELHI, June 28: India's new prime minister on Friday inducted two communists in his expanded cabinet of ministers in an attempt to deepen support for his government among the complex coalition of lower-caste, regional and left-wing parties, reports AP.

Indrajit Gupta, leader of the Communist Party of India, was sworn in by President Shankar Dayal Sharma along with 13 others that Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda picked to widen the regional and political representation in his cabinet.

Although portfolios were not announced, newspapers speculated that Gupta was likely to be given the powerful home ministry. The other member inducted from his party was Chaturanan Misra.

Among others included in the expanded cabinet was a legislator from a breakaway faction of the Congress Party, that was routed in the general elections held in April and May.

He also included two representatives from India's re-

mote northeastern state of Assam to give a regional balance to his cabinet. Most of the ministers Gowda had chosen when he formed the government on June 1 were from the southern states.

Yogendra Alagh, an economist who is the vice chancellor of the New Delhi's prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru University, was also sworn in as a minister.

India's communists had been opposed to free-market policies that the government of Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao had introduced in 1991.

But when they joined the coalition, they agreed to go along with policies to keep Indian markets open to foreign companies and to further deregulate the economy.

Gowda gave a pro-liberal signal by appointing P Chidambaram as finance minister. Chidambaram was one of the architects of the economic reforms introduced by former Prime Minister Rao, and had deserted Congress to form a new southern party.

Jubo League leader shot in city

By Staff Correspondent

A young man was shot by some unidentified people in Kachukhet area under Cantonment thana in the city last night.

The injured person identified as Ismail was admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) at around 9:30 pm, said a DMCH source. It was learnt that the injured person, who sustained bullet injuries in his leg and abdomen, is the local leader of pro-Awami League Jubo League.

Extortionists attack bus counter in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, June 28: Two employees of a bus counter were injured when a group of extortionists attacked them with firearms in the port city tonight, reports UNB.

Witnesses said three miscreants equipped with sawed-off rifle and pistols swooped on the counter of Sohag Paribahan at Dampara in Doublenooring thana and demanded toll.



The Bangladesh Garments Sramik Federation brought out a procession in the city yesterday protesting inadequate fire safety measures in garments factories. — Star photo

G-7 for debt-relief

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should be subsidised largely by International Monetary Fund resources.

But at Bonn's insistence, they stopped short of endorsing outright a plan for the IMF to sell part of its gold reserves to underwrite debt relief.

They also urged creditor nations to go beyond a two-thirds write-off of the bilateral debts of the poorest countries. The leaders praised the dollar's slow recovery from record lows on currency markets since last year's Halifax Summit.

On another disputed issue, making freer trade conditional on the adoption of basic labour standards by emerging nations, the leaders agreed that the world trade organisation should discuss the question in Singapore in December.

American and French insistence on core standards to bar forced prison labour and child labour and allow free trade unions led to a lively debate, a Canadian official said.

This 'rich men's club', which accounts for two-thirds of the world's gross domestic product and half of its trade, also attracted protests. A small group of left-wing activists marched outside, accusing it of 'sacro-monetarism'.

The summit, which opened on Thursday evening by backing US President Bill Clinton with a forceful pledge to fight terrorism, also issued proposals to reform the United Nations to reduce bureaucracy

and make development aid more effective.

The terrorism statement promised to crack down on fund-raising, weapons supplies, incitement to violence and to bring perpetrators to justice.

"We reaffirm our absolute condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, regardless of its perpetrators or motives," the leaders said in a joint statement.

Foreign and interior ministers of the G-7 countries plus Russia are to meet in Paris in July to discuss practical measures in addition to a package of 40 proposals on fighting organised crime due to be approved at the Lyon Summit.

Clinton and French President Jacques Chirac, host of the summit, made a brief statement to reporters after the leaders approved the special declaration at their opening dinner.

"We understand that an attack on one of us is an attack on all of us, and that none of us is invulnerable," Clinton said.

Clinton, who came to Lyon vowing to make terrorism his top priority, said he was "convinced that the G-7 leaders are every bit as determined as I am to take stronger action." He noted that all the G-7 nations faced the challenge of guerrilla violence, citing recent attacks in Paris, Manchester, Tokyo and Oklahoma city, as well as Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Russian ship with 139 sinking off coast of Scotland

ABERDEEN, Scotland, June 28: A Russian Cruise ship with 139 people on board was reported sinking today off the coast of Scotland, the coast-guard announced, reports AFP.

Two rescue vessels and three helicopters were on their way to the ship, the Alla Tarasova, 11 kilometres off the northeast coast of Scotland, for a possible evacuation of passengers, coastguards said.

Bobm threat

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popular car model in the kingdom, it will be difficult to trace unless a license plate or other details are known.

However, officials also said they found the crank shaft from the truck bomb, which it has a serial number or other identifiable marking could help lead investigators to the owner.

Saudi officials said they had a good description of the two men who parked the truck outside the housing compound at the King Abdul Aziz Military Base in Khobar.

Megawhile, two US Air Force transport planes arrived in Germany with 43 people who suffered burns and broken bones in the blast, said Army Maj. Bruce Shearer. They were taken to Landstuhl regional medical center and all were listed in stable condition.

The Midnight File

G-7 adopts 40-pt plan to fight terrorism

LYON (France), June 28: A 40-point plan aimed at reinforcing international cooperation in the fight against crime, including new counter-terrorism measures, was adopted by G-7 leaders today. French presidential spokeswoman Catherine Colonna said, reports AFP.

Bid to snatch luggages at ZIA: 4 held

By Staff Correspondent

Police arrested four persons from the Zia International Airport (ZIA) on charge of trying to snatch luggages from the customs area yesterday, according to police sources.

Two security personnel at the ZIA were suspended following the incident. The Civil Aviation Authorities also formed a three-member committee to probe the incident, according to sources in the airport security.

Cantonment police said that the arrested persons were Abdur Rahman, Suruj, Anwar Ali and Mizanur Rahman.

Khaleda

From Page 1

Begum Zia after recovering from sickness, spent several hours at the party office last night. Apart from party leaders and workers, a large number of people also thronged the office to meet her.

City BNP president Mir Shawkat Ali gave the welcome speech at the meeting attended by presidents and general secretaries of the thana committees of the City.

It was addressed, among others, by Abdul Aziz Master (Teigaon) Ehsanul Haq Shetu (Mohammadpur), Abdul Bashir (Sutrapur), Nabilullah Nabil (Demra), Kudrat Elahi Lilon (Uttara), Abdul Malek (Mirpur), Ahsanullah Ashan (Pallabi) and Chowdhury Alam (Ramna).

The thana committee leaders said the party secured a large number of seats in the June 12 elections despite harassment and a negative role of the administration.

Ciller to form coalition with Welfare Party

ANKARA, June 28: Turkish conservative leader Tansu Ciller's True Path Party (DYP) reached agreement today to form a coalition with the Islam-based Welfare Party, a senior Ciller aide said, reports Reuters.

"The deal is done, may it be auspicious," DYP deputy chairman Necmettin Cevizli told reporters in parliament during talks between members of the two parties.

Mujib coat

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three dozens of Mujib coat and we expect to get more."

The owner of a tailoring shop at Ramna Bhaban market admitted receiving orders for about two dozens of Mujib coat. He quipped "Many of our customers who would earlier come to us for making safari suit have now placed orders for Mujib coat."

Safari suit was used by two former presidents Ziaur Rahman and H M Ershad.

Another person working in a shop at Elephant Road also told this correspondent that a section of their old customers was now coming for Mujib coats.

BNP supporters

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Hospital. Residents of Dewanhat, Kadamtali, Agrabad, Mogoltuli and Cement Crossing areas reported "heavy gunfire" after 10:30 pm.

Chittagong Metropolitan Police Commissioner Modabber Hossain Chowdhury told UNB that JCD leader Saiful Alam was arrested in the morning on charge of murder.

4 BCP activists

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(Kushtia). After the autopsy at Chudanga sadar hospital, the bodies were handed over to their relatives yesterday.

Police arrested one Razaul of BCP who got injured in the incident. He has been admitted to the sadar hospital of the thana.

A case has been filed with the Chudanga police. None was arrested till filing of this report tonight.

Kalapur calm

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Chowdhury. The committee had been asked to submit its report by the July 4. The enquiry would continue for two days more, it is learnt.

Battalion Commander Anwarul Islam and 5 others Ansars personnel including two officers have been closed in the district headquarters in connection with the incident.

Women's seats Interview of AL nomination seekers July 1

By Staff Correspondent

The interview of the candidates seeking AL nomination for contesting polls to 30 reserved seats for women in the Jatiya Sangsad will begin at 9 am on July 1 at the Awami League Central Election Steering Committee office in Dhamond.

Eleven-member Awami League Parliamentary Board (ALPB) led by its chairman Sheikh Hasina will interview the nomination aspirants.

Till yesterday, the last date for submission of applications, 274 women submitted applications seeking nomination.

Earlier, 693 application forms were collected by women willing to contest the July 7 election for 30 reserved JS seats on AL tickets, but many of them later did not submit the forms.

BNP's gratitude

From Page 1

country. It expressed concern at attacks made on party leaders and workers by political opponents and police atrocities.

The meeting said that though the people had extended their all-out support to BNP in the last elections but its victory was snatched through widespread irregularities and rigging in the polls. The party would take legal steps in this regard, it added.

The meeting decided to gear up organisational activities at the grassroots level.

It expressed concern at the report that many Bangladeshis, along with other including US soldiers became the victims of a terrorist act in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday.

Motia visits flood-hit Sherpur

SHERPUR, June 28: Agriculture, Food, Disaster Management and Relief Minister Begum Motia Chowdhury today visited flood affected Nalhabari, Jhenagati and Sibdari thanas of the district, reports BSS.

She also instructed district and thana level officials to prepare a list of the affected persons on emergency basis and said the government would take all possible steps in helping the flood affected people.

The minister addressed a joint meeting of district level officials, public representatives and local elite at Sherpur Circuit House and three different meetings at three affected thanas of the district.

The affected people told the minister that on rush of waters from across the border, damaged crops, houses and rural infrastructure of the three thanas of the district.

They called upon the minister to provide them with house building materials, and credit for agricultural rehabilitation.

Begum Motia Chowdhury distributed some relief materials among the affected people.

Members of parliament Atiur Rahman Ati and MA Bari and deputy commissioner of Sherpur and other senior officials were present.

HSC

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taker government in the first week of May due to June-12 parliamentary polls. Meanwhile, the government has decided not to establish any centre out of the thana headquarters.

EC receives

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with the EC in prescribed forms along with the fees within 45 days after the gazette notification of the results, the official said. As soon as the EC receives such petitions, those are immediately forwarded to the election tribunal, the officials added.

The EC has set up 61 election tribunals across the country to deal with election-related cases. It was learnt that the District Judges and the Additional District Judges, in addition to their normal work attend the tribunals to dispose of election-related cases.

"Although the law says that these cases should be disposed of within six months, but it does not specify anything if a case is not disposed of within that time period," said an official explaining why there was a backlog of election-related cases in the country.

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