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Down to Earth

Buriganga in Dire Straits

By ASM Nurunnabi

A very ominous picture of various damaging activities on river Buriganga has emerged. The damaging scenario extends in so any directions that the very existence of the river seems to be at stake. From a report of the Department of Environment (DOE), it appears that the pollution of the river has passed the critical level. Tons of refuse and waste — domestic and industrial - pour into the river daily, raising the solidity level of the water at an alarming rate. The level of dissolved oxygen (DO) too has been depleted to zero from four milligram per litre at various points of the river, whereas a minimum of six milligram of DO is necessary for survival of aquatic life. Now the river is already be-

coming a dying water body.

makes it quite clear why water pollution has turned so acute. Industrial wastes and other pollutants are being dumped into culprits is represented by at least 277 tanneries in the city's Hazaribagh area from which a huge quantity of polluted and toxic water flows into the river. Similarly, other industrial units situated along the river banks compound the intensity of water pollution.

on both sides of the river have occupied much of the space, leaving a very narrow strip in the middle of the river for navigation. Hundreds of acres of land on the river-bed have been acquired by unscrupulous people by earth filling.

Situation in this respect is very critical in the area stretching from Kamrangir Char to Kamalbagh slums. At Kamrangir Char alone, more than two hundred bamboo structured units over the river have been built as a slum complex sprawling over a mile of

And a profitable business is being carried on by renting these makeshift bamboo rooms to low-income groups.

On the other side of the river opposite to the Mitford Hospital, a large wholesale depot for sale of bamboos has reportedly come up. Even opposite the Sadarghat launch terminal, a multi-storied market has been built on the waters of the river. Industrial plots are being laid out adjacent to the China Friendship bridge. Along the sides of the Salimullah Medical College Hospital on the river bank, bamboo hutments have been raised as slum dwellings.

Also incidence of unauthorised collection of tolls on both sides of the river and extortions by terrorist groups is rampant. As a result, a lawless and chaotic situation is reportedly existing. Due to this, people of the affected areas are passing their days in great distress.

It is understood that the enemachers who allegedly operate under the aegis of influential quarters are more concerned about their immediate profit and have no idea of the geomorphology of the place or of the far-reaching damaging consequences of the criminal acts.

Now the DOE is understood to have come up with a plan to involve various government and private organisations to save Buriganga, we can still have some reasons to be optimistic about the fate of the river. For this, we need a wellorganised and co-ordinated campaign, under which not only organisations but the industries, factories and even individuals living here must be aware of their respective roles in saving the river. All the factories and industries releasing their waste and effluents must be made to install treatment plants as expeditiously as pos-

Side by side with a save-theriver campaign, legal actions should be undertaken, as opined by observers. Those who built unauthorised structures on the river or intending to do so should be made to face law without delay. According to observers, we have lost enough time to restore the river's health; now the pace has to be hastened both for the cleaning of its water and for plugging the sources of pollution. We all need to keep in mind that salvaging the river from the scourge of pollution is a matter of crucial importance.



Artistes of Bulbul Lalitkala Academy rendering songs at its auditorium yesterday in observance of death anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore. - Star photo

Bid to commit suicide at thana hajat

By Staff Correspondent A woman who was arrested by Demra thana police Thursday night on charges of possessing pathedrine injection allegedly tried to commit suicide at the thana hajat yesterday morning, police said.

Anwara Begum, 32, was arrested from West Jatrabari area in the city with 930 ampoules of pathedrine injection.

At about 10 am yesterday, police found that Anwara was trying to hang herself in the cell by using a saree. On-duty police foiled her attempt. She was later produced before the court. It could not be known why the woman tried to commit sui-

2 army officers gunned down in Assam

GUWAHATI, Aug 8: Two Indian army officers were gunned down here today while shopping in the northeastern state of Assam, police said, reports

AFP. The officers — a Brigadier and a Colonel - died instantly when two gunmen belonging to a separatist organisation opened fire with revolvers while driving past on a motorbike, a spokesman said.

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in road accidents

in Lohagara and Mirersarai

bound truck rammed into roadside shops at Thakurdighir bazar in Lohagara thana at about 5 pm, killing three people and injuring six. One of the in-

The dead were identified as Noor Mohammad, 36, Nurul Amin, 45, Abdul Jalil, 60, and Abdul Hossain, 55. The injured were admitted to local health complex.

tagong-bound truck collided with a Noakhali-bound microbus near Jorarganj bazar in Mirersarai thana at about 10 am. Driver of the microbus. whose identity could not be known immediately, died on

The accident left four people

injured. They were admitted to local hospital. The truck driver managed to escape. Police seized the vehicles.

Separate cases were filed. Another report from Narayanganj adds: Three persons, including an auto-rickshaw driver, were killed in a road accident at Awkhabo Bottola on the Dhaka-Sylhet road

under Rupganj thana yesterday. The police said the accident occurred when the Dhakabound auto-rickshaw carrying two passengers, collided head on with a bus coming from the opposite direction. Driver to the auto-rickshaw and the passengers died instantly.

The police identified the driver as Abdul Khaleque Dewan, 35, and identity of both the passengers could not be known immediately.

The police seized the bus but its driver escaped. The bodies were sent to Narayanganj General Hospital for autopsy. A case was registered with Rupgani thana.

Dacoity at

By Staff Correspondent

Police said the gang entered the house of one Forhaduddin

They broke open the almirah and took away Tk 20,000 share certificates and other goods from the house.

A case has been filed with

Running with a borrowed uniform

distance runner was the centre of attention in a heat for the women's 5,000 metres Thursday even though she finished three minutes behind the winner, reports AP.

Habtemariam Nebiat elicited loud whistles and cheers at Olympic Stadium by running without a bra and with an oversized vest, leaving her breasts exposed for much of the

Seemingly unaware of the reason for the fuss, the 18-yearold runner continued around the oval with a blank look. In the last few laps, she tugged at her shirt in an apparent attempt to cover up, only to further expose herself.

Genet Gebregiorgis, an Ethiopian who was in the same heat and spoke for Nebiat afterward, said Nebiat does not have a proper uniform and had to borrow one. "She has no sponsor. She is

poor," Gebregiorgis said. Eritrea a country of 3 million people, gained independence from Ethiopia in 1993.

Rupsha bridge From page 1

iuda said Bangladesh must develop its infrastructure facilities, including communications and power supply, to attract Japanese private sector investment in the country.

To another query, he said at present bilateral trade favours Japan. In 1995, Bangladesh's import from Japan stood at 347 million US dollars against its export totalling 146 million dollars.

From Bangladesh, Japan buys shrimps, frozen fish and jute products etc. while Bangladesh buys from Japan capital machinery, equipment, transport, electrical goods and chemicals.

In reply to a question, Counsellor Hagiuda said Japanese grant to Bangladesh would further increase if the system of receiving aid was streamlined and improved. About Japanese aid utilisa-

tion in Bangladesh, he said, "I understand it's improving, it's a general impression."

city house

An unidentified gang took

away cash, gold ornaments. share certificates worth about Tk four lakh from a house at Ji gatola under Dhanmondi thana in the city early yester

Ahmed breaking open iron grills at about 2 am.

Dhanmondi thana in this regard. However, none was arrested in this connection till last night.

EC team to visit in Nov ATHENS, Aug 8: An Eritrean

pean market. A BBC report said last night regard yesterday.

The EC letter also said that they would give a fresh opportunity to export frozen fish only after the EC delegation scheduled to visit Bangladesh in November, certifies that the shrimp processing plants in the country are maintaining the required standard and hygienic

Otherwise the ban will continue, said the BBC quoting an official of the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock.

Upendra Chakma

Agartala, the capital of Tripura on Thursday and held talks with leaders and officials, including Chief Minister Dashrath Dev Barma and Deputy Chief Minister Baddyanath Majumder.

They were scheduled to visit a number of refugee camps but it was cancelled following the inconclusive talks with the

plained to the delegation that those who returned home earlier this year are yet to get back their lands. They cited the case of 130 families of such returnees in Dighinala thana alone. They also said that refugees who returned in 1994 in two batches also failed to get the facilities promised under a 20-point agreement with the then government.

But Kalparanjan Chakma dismissed the allegations and said that 107 families in Dighinala could not get their lands back because of disputes. Their problems are being taken care of, he added.

The delegation is scheduled to return home today.

A pilot project for develop-

ment of maternal and neonatal

healthcare system, funded

jointly by the government and

a World Bank consortium, is

likely to be replicated through-

out the country under the

Fourth Population and Health

Project, according to official

ical officers of thana health

complexes in four districts have

been given six months' training

on Essential Obstetric Func-

tions (EOF) and anaesthesia.

Under the pilot project, med-

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Let's make things better PHILIPS

A healthcare project likely to be replicated countrywide

By Naimul Haq Nurses and midwives were also given six weeks' intensive training on pre-natal and postnatal care of patients.

The project, launched in 1994, covered Feni, Bhola, Sirajganj and Tangail districts. The project will be completed in June next year. "Officials concerned are

convinced that the project may be replicated and the World Bank, monitoring the project. has given a green signal," said a senior official of the Directorate of Health Services which is implementing the project.

If the project is replicated, all healthcare personnel in thana and union health complexes will be brought under a package' training programme in phases. This will significantly reduce child and maternal mortality rate in rural areas, by providing improved maternal and infant healthcare services at thana and union levels, the officials said. According to statistics

available from the World Health Organisation (WHO), Directorate General of Health Services and other sources. about 30,000 women die in Bangladesh during childbirth which among the highest in developing countries. Seven babies in every hundred die during birth and 50 per cent are born under-weight (less than 2,500 grams).

Over 94 per cent of childbirth in rural Bangladesh takes place at home, majority of which are attended by relatives or neighbours who have no knowledge about medicare sys-

Only 0.8 per cent of the total deliveries take place at thana health complexes, 0.7 per cent at private nursing homes while the lowest, 0.2 per cent at family welfare centres. The existing high level of

maternal and infant mortality can be significantly reduced childbirth takes place under the supervision of Trained Birth Attendants (TBA), the officials

Frozen food PM convinced

A woman in a remote Chittagong village being taken to

By Staff Correspondent

hospital for childbirth.

The European Commission has extended the August 15 deadline by a month to allow export of pre-ban consignments of frozen fish including shrimp from Bangladesh to the Euro-

that the EC sent a letter to the Bangladesh government in this

conditions.

From page 1

refugee leaders, the BBC said. The refugee leaders com-

From page 1 August 3 with a 'green passport' but declined to mention the

visit as a business trip. He faxed some medical documents to The Daily Star in favour of his claim that he had gone to Singapore for treatment.

The Daily Star that as the Prime Minister was not at home then, he had sought permission from Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad for going abroad and the latter verbally gave him permission. "I also informed Dr S A Malek, Political Advisor to the Prime Minister about this," he added.

teriorating, he could not wai for a written permission (GO) and "my staff arranged the visit. As immigration at the airport wanted to see the GO and it was not possible then to show the GO, they gave the green passport instead of diplomatic passport."

Neither the Foreign Ministry asked for the green passport nor the passport was declared invalid when he received

The state minister, however, did not say why he had not surrendered his old passport after

that some other people were also possessing more than one passports and cited two examples — a joint secretary and a director of Shilpakala Academy.

tary said that 'certain quarter was conspiring against him (Abul Hossain) these days. Some sources in the Awami League, seeking anonymity,

however, said that he had been involved in various irregularities that needed to be addressed by the Prime Minister immedi-

"To date, no such communication has been made," the EC official said, adding that a second request could be made under the laws.

that if after the second request the results of the verification are not communicated to the requesting authorities within four months, the requesting authorities shall refuse entitlement to the preferential tariff measures.

refuses to cancel the 6,910 GSP certificates by October 1, the Customs authorities of the Eu-

respective importers to pay the 12.5 per cent duty they enjoyed "illegally." That would give a severe

sector, especially the knitwear exports. If Bangladesh cancels the

6,910 GSP certificates, an estimated 28 million US dollar or Tk 126 crore would have to be who pay it to their buyers.

135 crore.

Farmers in Rangpur demonstrate for fair price of jute RANGPUR, Aug 8: With the

gradual decline in jute price. farmers demonstrated in the town Wednesday demanding an immediate rise in price of the agri-product to an optimum level to save them from ruination, reports UNB.

They also held a rally at the Town Hall which was followed by a procession that paraded different streets chanting slogans in favour of their demand to fix the jute price at Tk 500 per maund.

The farmers at the rally accused the ruling party of reneging on its electoral commitment to revamp the jute sector by ensuring a fair price for it.

They alleged jute was being sold between Tk 150 and 200 per maund while its minimum production cost is over Tk 350. They called for opening jute purchase centres at district and thana levels to ensure its fair

Presided over by Saweruddin, the rally was addressed, among others, by farmer leaders Mahamudul Hasan Manik. Nazrul Islam Hakkani, Advocate Sumsuzzaman, Chanda Ghosh, Abdul Quddus and Anwar Hossain Bablu.

Cong apologises From page 1

ever, that he had no immediate

plan to topple Gujral's multiparty centre-left coalition. "It is our political responsibility to let the government survive," he said, while stressing that only his 112-year-old party could provide long-term

The Congress has been trying to return to power since it was voted out last year. But it is still struggling to retrieve lost support after ruling India for more than four decades.

stability to the world's largest

democracy.

Water crisis From page 1

jured policemen included Pa-

trol Inspector Muminul, Sub-Inspector Aminur and constables Santosh, Mofazzal, Sarwar, Atiar and Borhanuddin. They were admitted to Rajarbagh Police Hospital. Police said people of Bangshal area had also put up

ago following disruption in water supply for three days. House building

demonstrations three months

From page 1

Life and Pragati. The consortium also includes Beximco Investment Company Limited and Shaw Wallace.

NHFC sources said if the authorities grant it licence to operate, it will go for financing the urban housing needs in a big way. More foreign partners including international financial institutions from Germany and the World Bank are likely to join the consortium.

DBHFCL began its operation on July 15, last year. It has a paid up capital of Tk five crore. It expects to raise the paid up capital to Tk 20 crore, an official of the company said.
It comprises the country's

major NGO, BRAC and two Insurance companies — Delta Life Insurance Company Limited and Green Delta Insurance Company Limited. The company's lending op-

eration has, however, been small so far. Out of 100 or so applicants, only 33 have been given loans.

PLEASE CONTACT:

8 killed, 10 injured

Eight people were killed and 10 injured in separate road accidents in Narayanganj and Chittagong yesterday, report

Five people were killed and 10 injured in two road accidents

thanas in Chittagong yesterday. They said a Cox's Bazarjured died on way to hospital.

In another mishap, a Chit-

England 76/0 at tea TRENT BRIDGE, England, Aug 8: Stopgap opener Alex Stewart hit a scintillating half century as England replied boldly to Australia's 427 all out in the fifth Ashes cricket Test here Friday, reports AP.

Stewart, captain Mike Atherton's second opening partner in this series, hammered 52 runs off 62 balls in England's 76 for no loss at tea on the second day. Atherton was unbeaten on 18. Pir Dudu Miah laid to rest FARIDPUR, Aug 8: Pir

Mohsenuddin Dudu Miah was laid to rest at his family graveyard at Bahadurpur in Shibchar thana of Madaripur district today, reports UNB. His namaj-e-janaza, conducted by his brother Pir Mohi-

uddin Dadan Miah, was held at

Bahadurpur Shariat Madrassah

premises after Jumma prayers. A large number of people, including leaders of political parties and his devotees, took part in the janaza. Communications Minister

Anwar Hossain and BNP leaders Abdus Salam Talukder, Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, Abul Khair Chowdhury and Imam of Baitul Mukarram Mosque Moulana Moniruddin also at-

tended. Five Year Plan

From page 1

crore for the Press Institute, Tk 5 crore for the Film Development Corporation and Tk 14.26 crore for other programmes.

The private sector invest-

ment in the mass media is expected to be in newspapers, journals and periodicals. Under the draft FFYP, 95 per cent of the population and 90 per cent of the geographical areas of the country will be brought under TV coverage by

providing more powerful TV

relay broadcasting stations and a second channel will be opened primarily for educational programmes. Appropriate facilities will be set up to bring the total area and population of the country under radio coverage. Bangladesh Betar will implement 18 development projects including establishment of broadcasting sta-

tions at Comilla, Thakurgaon, Rangamati and Mymensingh during the fifth plan period. Private sector will be encouraged to set up FM broad-

casting centres. Modern laboratory facilities will be developed in NIMC for conducting training for the radio, TV and other electronic media personnel and for re-

of Bangabandhu.

The ALCWC meeting observed one-minute silence as a A scheme will be undertaken to fund educational films and a

film will be produced on the life

The other programmes in this sector under FFYP includes creation of a modern archive for research, preservation and maintenance of the classic films and computerisation of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha

'Poverty alleviation scheme must 5 am atop Bangabandhu Bhaban, AL central office and all party offices across the country.

fateha offered at his mazar at Tungipara at 7 am on the day. Fateha will also be offered at the mazars of other shaheeds of Bangabandhu family in the capital at 7:30 am. Feeding the

The portrait of Bangabandhu

will be garlanded at

Special prayers will be offered at mosques, churches and temples and milad mahfil will be arranged. A mourning procession will

from noon to 2 pm.

upon the people to arrange milad mahfil across the country and hold rallies and processions demanding trial of the killers of Bangabandhu and his family members.

ensure human dignity' NEW DELHI, Aug 8: Founder mats were present. of Grameen Bank Prof Prof Yunus in his 75-minute lecture dwelt on the activities of Muhammad Yunus said here

employment.

his creativity and ensure human dignity, reports BSS. "To create a poverty-free world, we need new analytical framework which takes ensuring human dignity to every human being as its central task," he said while speaking at the third D T Lakdawala Memorial

today that a poverty alleviation

scheme must provide every poor

with the opportunities to reveal

Memorial Museum auditorium. Organised by the Institute of Social Sciences, the function was presided over by Indian Finance Minister P Chidambaram.

Lecture on the "towards creating

a poverty-free world" in Nehru

Home Minister Indrajit Gupta, Samata Party Chief the Grameen Bank and suggested measures to remove the curse of poverty from the soci-He said the policy needed for

Referring to the Grameen Phone, Prof Yunus said it is a nationwide cellular telephone company which hopes to serve about one million cellular phone users in both urban and rural areas of Bangladesh by

telephone ladies of the villages. "A poor woman who never saw a telephone or even an electric bulb in her life will own a cellular phone and start selling the service of the phone to the villagers to earn better income," he added.

Bank. Prof Yunus said with the modern development of infor-

humanity closer to a borderless and distanceless world. "If we start feeling comfortable, was can move from regional to inter regional, and finally to global agreement to allow free and unhindered flow of people, finance, commodities and services from any location of the planet to other location.

Bank had proved that the poor people were credit-worthy and they were willing to be self-em-

He said as his health was de-

Abul Hossain said.

the diplomatic passport in 1996, he went on.

A statement issued by the state minister's private secre-

EC deadline

He quoted the relevant laws

ropean Union would ask their

The DOE survey report the river freely from all sides. In this respect, one of the main

Besides, onslaughts on the river are being carried on from other sources. Lately, we have seen pictorial reports of the large-scale encroachments on the river. Bamboo enclosures

Indian Army Chief

visits his ancestral

home in Satkhira

SATKHIRA, Aug 8: The visit-

ing Indian Army Chief, General Shankar Roy Chowdhury, spent more than an hour at his ancestral village at Town Sreepur in Debhata thana of the district today, reports UNB. General Chowdhury reached

a helicopter and drove two

kilometres in a car straight to

his family's house at Town

Sreepur this noon.

The Indian Army Chief, accompanied by his wife Krishna Roy Chowdhury, stayed in the house for sometime and recalled the sweet days of his childhood. General Chowdhury is the grandson of Anukul Roy Chowdhury who was a landlord

permanently at village Sodpur in Hasnabad thana of 24-Parganas, West Bengal. Later, General Chowdhury visited the Town Sreepur BDR camp where he was received by Khulna Sector Commander Col

Mohammad Shahidul Haque.

He was also give a guard of hon-

our there.

in the area. His family left the

village after 1947 and stayed

The India Army Chief exchanged views with the elderly people and local journalists in the BDR camp and recalled the days during the Bangladesh Liberation War.

Jalil and Major Ziauddin, took

part in the war against the

He, along with Major M A

Pakistan Army in Satkhira area under Sector 9. Earlier Gen Chowdhury had visited the Jessore Canton-On arrival at the Jessore Cantonment, the Indian Army

Chief and the members of his entourage were received by the local Area Commander, Major General Abu Kaisar Fazlul

Uniform edn From page 1 the NGOs and many of those are following their own curricula. Many kindergartens are found to be giving emphasis on

teaching English while many

others Arabic and Islamic

The curricula of many of these schools are below the standard set for primary level while kindergartens and English medium schools are imparting education at primary level which is opposed to the

values and culture of our soci-

The committee recom-

ety, sources pointed out.

mended a curriculum reflecting religious, social and moral val-It also said the curricula should reflect the spirit of the Liberation War, and uphold the mother tongue, literature, culture and history of the nation at primary, secondary and higher

secondary levels of education.

gested the government to re-

consider the policy of supplying

books free of cost at primary

level, irrespective of rich and

The committee also sug-

3257, Cable: DAILYSTAR, DHAKA. Email: dstar@bangla.net

manner.

ALCWC From page 1

> mark of respect to Bangabandhu and others of the August 15 tragedy and prayed for salvation of the departed souls. The meeting instructed leaders and workers of Awami League and its front organisations to observe national

> mourning day in a befitting

gramme, members of the AL

According to the pro-

central working committee will offer fateha at the mazar of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib at Tungipara on August 12. On August 15, national and party flags will fly at half-mast and black flag will be hoisted at

Bangabandhu Bhaban and wreaths will be placed and destitute will also be arranged at different wards of the city

be brought out from the party's central office at Bangabandhu Avenue at 4 pm. The ALCWC meeting called

George Fernandez MP, Geeta Mukherjee MP (CPI), Acting High Commissioner of Bangladesh in New Delhi, Alim Ul Haque, academics and diploeradication of poverty must be

much wider and deeper than the

policy for the provision of more

the year 2003. Many of the Grameen borrowers, he said, will become the

He said ultimately Grameen

borrowers will become the owners of the telephone company by buying up the shares, as they did in the case of Grameen

mation and communication technology, every person on the planet will have an e-mail address by 2003. He said technology and economic necessity will bring the

Speaking on the occasion, Indian Finance Minister P Chidambaram paid tributes to Prof Yunus and said the Grameen

- Star photo

The state minister also told

"I found that I was carrying the green passport only when the plane touched the tarmac of Changi Airport in Singapore,

getting the new one. he argued

From page 1 months.

Sources said if Bangladesh

blow to the readymade garment

given as indirect compensation to the Bangladesh exporters Cancellation of the other 8,562 GSP certificates will cost another 30 million dollar or Tk