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Still no agency to enforce preservation law

Land filling across the city goes unchecked

By Staff Correspondent

Land filling across the city continues unchecked, thanks to the government's failure to form a separate agency to put a preservation law into practice.

The Preservation of Play-ground, Open Spaces, Parks and Natural Water-bodies in the Metropolitan areas, Divisional Towns and Municipalities, enacted on September 18 last year, bans filling of low-lying lands. The law prescribes a maximum penalty of five years in prison or/and Tk 50,000 in fines.

Property developers are gobbling up thousands of acres of designated low-lying areas and flood-flow zones across the city, said Rajuk engineers and planners.

But not a single case has been filed so far under the preservation law despite an increasing

incidence of the offence. The Gulshan police station, for instance, refused to accept a case expressing ignorance about enactment of such a law.

Imdadul Islam, Superintendent Engineer of Rajuk, said Rajuk lodged a complaint against the police station to the Inspector General of Police after Gulshan police refused to record a case against the Cooperative Society of the Senakalyan Sangstha, which was filling about one bigha area of the Gulshan Lake on the western side of the Shooting Club.

Land filling has assumed massive proportions in Ashuliya, a protected low-lying area classified as Flood Flow Zone in the Master Plan. The authorities of Shikdar Medical College located near Hazaribagh have engaged

BIWTA dredgers to fill hundreds of acres of designated low-lying areas, including the natural canals.

In the east of the city, the filling of the Rampura canal, Hatir Jheel and vast wetlands by leading developers is running high.

Requesting anonymity, representatives of two big property developers said by law they own those low-lying stretches but are ignorant about the protection law. The developers downplayed the necessity to obtain a clearance from the authorities concerned for the land change.

Minister for Public Works and Housing Engineer Mosharraf Hossain admitted that a handful of people were responsible for

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Jamaat-backed ISKP calls 48-hr hartal in Ctg from today

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, Jan 13: Jamaat-backed Islami Samaj Kalyan Parishad (ISKP) will enforce a 48-hour hartal in the port city from 6 am tomorrow demanding release of its 40 activists arrested on November 10 last year.

They were arrested during a clash with police in front of Jame-Mosque over holding of a Tafsir Mahfil in the city.

The Chittagong chapter of All-Party Action Committee (APAC) has extended its support to ISKP-called hartal.

Meanwhile, Chittagong Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCCI) continued informal discussion with Jamaat leaders for the past two days to convince ISKP to withdraw hartal, chamber sources said.

CCCI president Saifuzzaman Chowdhury Javed, senior vice

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PM to open eco-park project in Ctg on Jan 17

By Staff Correspondent

A botanical garden and eco-park, the first of its kind in the country, will be set up in Chandranath reserve forest in Sitakunda thana under Chittagong Forest Division.

The main objective of the Tk 3.57 crore project covering 1000 acres of land is to conserve biodiversity, maintain ecological balance, preserve 'gene pool' of the rare local and foreign species of plants and provide recreational facilities.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is scheduled to inaugurate the project on Wednesday. It would be implemented during 2003-2004 with government funds.

Experts pointed out that the National Botanical Garden at the city's Mirpur is 'situated in dry plains' where geographical a

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Three shot in city

By Staff Correspondent

Three people received bullet injuries in separate incidents in the city yesterday.

The injured were identified as Tutul, owner of a phone-fax shop, Mokbul, a businessman dealing in audio-video cassette and CDs, and Anser Ali, a truck driver of Amin Bazar. They were admitted to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Witnesses said Mokbul and Anser were injured during a gunfight between two groups of miscreants in the city's Amin Bazar area at about 3 pm. The miscreants also ransacked some shops in the area.

In another incident, a gang of extortionists stormed into the shop of Tutul in Mirpur at about 1 pm and asked him to pay toll. As Tutul refused to oblige, they fired on him. He received bullet injuries in his back and was admitted to DMCH.

Two separate cases were filed with Mirpur police station.

Gender gap cause of acid throwing

Opinion exchange programme told

By Staff Correspondent

Widening gender inequality in the society is giving rise to incidents of acid pouring, which can be stopped through empowerment of women.

Participants at an opinion exchange programme on 'Social initiatives to prevent acid pouring' also observed that despite the enactment of a new women repression prevention law, such crime continues unabated thanks to lack of proper implementation of the law and negligence by the law enforcing agencies.

Chaired by Jawshan Ara Rahman, the programme organised by daily Prothom Alo at

the CIRDAP auditorium in the city yesterday was attended also by a number of acid survivors who called upon all to come forward to ensure that not a single woman becomes victim of acid pouring any more.

Among others, Chairman of the Trustee Board of Acid Survivors Foundation Kazi Fazlur Rahman, Chairperson of Jatiya Mahila Sangstha Ivy Rahman, Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman, Commerce Secretary Golam Rahman, celebrities and people from all walks of life participated in the programme.

Ivy Rahman said, "Attitude of the male-dominating society towards women has to be

changed first to put a stop to acid pouring."

The acid victims should not think that their lives have ended; they have to establish themselves, she said and expressed her concern over the fact that culprits facing charges of acid pouring are getting bails.

Prothom Alo Editor Matiur Rahman disclosed that at present twenty incidents of acid pouring are taking place on an average every month in the country.

Prothom Alo started raising funds for the rehabilitation of the acid victims since April last year, and people form all walks of life have

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Cheap method evolved to remove arsenic

20 litres in 20 minutes for initial cost of Tk 2,000

By Naimul Haq, back from Chandpur

A simple, cheap and user-friendly method has been evolved to remove arsenic from tube well water and resolve an endemic problem in the country.

The method reduces arsenic level from 100 parts per billion (ppb) to less than 5 ppb, well below the WHO limit of 50 ppb.

Environmental scientists from Stevens Institute of Technology in New Jersey, US, evolved the technique through laboratory experiments and field trials in a Chandpur village for about a year.

"The technique has proved very successful in Bangladesh and we have received requests from China, Argentina, Ghana and Chile to try this in those countries", team leader Dr. Xiaoguang Meng announced while demonstrating the technique at a village in Kachua in the district yesterday.

State Minister for Planning Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir and Chief Engineer of Department of Public Health and Engineering (DPHE) Quaderuzzaman were present.

In the technique called 'direct co-precipitation filtration (DCF)', two milligrams of iron powder is mixed with about 20 litres of arsenic contaminated water in a

bucket. The iron powder instantly dissolves and absorbs the arsenic molecules. Invisible particles are then formed in the water, which do not dissolve.

The water is then filtered

through highly absorptive common sand (granular silica) filling one third of another bucket with a hole at the bottom. A tube is connected to the hole to collect

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Charge sheet against 4-yr-old boy: Suo moto rule on DC

NILPHAMARI, Jan 13: A Division Bench of the High Court has issued suo moto rule upon the Deputy Commissioner and others in connection with chargesheeting of a four-year-old boy in a criminal case, reports UNB.

The Bench comprising Justice Amirul Kabir Chowdhury and Justice Bijon Kumar Das in its rule also directed to suspend proceedings of the case for three months, officials here said today.

The suo moto rule of the High Court came following a UNB report published in The Daily Star on January 11.

The report said Kechua Mahmud, an influential person of village Kachukata under Sadar thana filed a criminal case following a case against 9-people including a 4-year-old-boy Lebu Mia. Without spot investigation police submitted charge sheet against all the accused and obtained a warrant for their

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