

CARE staff in Bogra allegedly assaulted by local municipal administrator

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

CARE Bangladesh at Shonatola upazila has suspended all its activities protesting physical assault and verbal abuse of one of its employees by a local BNP leader and municipal administrator.

It was announced at a press briefing at the Jatiya Press Club Thursday. A Faruk Sarker, Project Coordinator Rural Maintenance Programme, Munshi Obidul Islam, GM (Administration) and Shilpa

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Body of abducted boy recovered from city lake

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pallabi Police recovered the body of a teenage boy, abducted earlier from his Pallabi residence, from a lake in front of Dhaka Commerce College in the city yesterday morning.

Belal Hossain Rana, 16, son of Nurul Islam, was abducted by an unidentified gang of hoodlums from in front of his Dha block, section 12, Pallabi residence at about 8:00pm on Tuesday, sources said.

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Milosevic wants Clinton, Annan to testify

AP, The Hague

Slobodan Milosevic accused the UN tribunal of being "an accomplice in crime," and said yesterday he will seek to call former US and European leaders to testify at his war crimes trial.

Among those he intends to summon are former US President Bill Clinton, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, as well as leaders from Germany, Britain and Italy.

For a second day, the former Yugoslav president rejected charges of mass deportations and

murders in the Balkans, and blamed his accusers of massacring refugees during the bombing of Kosovo.

Milosevic, who listened to a two-day-long litany of charges against him by the prosecution, was granted

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extra time to respond. Presiding judge Richard May told him he could have 90 minutes on Monday before the trial hears its first prosecution witnesses.

Milosevic is trying to shift the blame for Yugoslavia's turmoil on the West. He says they twisted the

facts and were themselves responsible for the deportations of ethnic Albanians from Kosovo.

"This false indictment is to persuade the world that Serb forces performed deportation, which is a notorious lie," he said.

He also accused the Albanians of "genocide," and charged that international troops sent to enforce the truce in Kosovo helped hide the bodies of their victims. His allegation was he mirror image of the charge against Serb forces accused of digging up bodies and moving

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PHOTO: STAR

Thousands of people, in groups and families, thronged Dhaka International Trade Fair to avail themselves of the clearance sale yesterday, the weekend and concluding day of the month-long fair.

DOWN TO EARTH

City's wetlands dwindle due to dev frenzy

ASM NURUNNABI

No figure as to the total number of water bodies within the limits of Dhaka City is available. It is however no secret that some leading real estate developers have filled up large areas of wetlands thus damaging not only the serene landscape but also exacerbating the drainage problem by blocking the outlets. Complete environmental assessments should have been done before allowing projects in such large areas normally required by the real estate developers.

Town planners have said that housing projects in such areas adversely affect the physical characteristics of those areas. Rajuk has reportedly been trying to prevent grabbing of the vast remaining water bodies as per government directive. It has however proved to be a difficult task. Dhaka continues to expand haphazardly as developers have increasingly claimed the wetlands in and around Dhaka City. This way, the ambitious private sector developers and shortsighted housing planners are all contributing to the rapid disappearance of such lands.

As an inevitable fallout of the development frenzy, the canals and wetlands are also being filled up for

construction of roads and markets apart from apartment complexes. These are being done without making any alternative arrangements for the draining of sewage as well as excess rainwater from the city proper. As a result, not only is the shrinking landscape distorting the land characteristics, it is also threatening the environment and causing ecological imbalance as well.

The apparent lack of any long-term plan to protect low-lying lands from the clutches of developers or re-commissioning the old city canals to solve the problem of water-logging have led experts to apprehend that all this may cause the death of city's many neighbourhoods before long. Not too long ago, we have seen how vulnerable the city became due to unprecedented water-logging after heavy downpours following a deep depression in the Bay, upsetting the normal city life for several days.

In this context, the serious plight of the river Buriganga may be mentioned. Although the Department of Environment launched a campaign to save the river from widespread pollution, so far very little has actually been done. According to the depart

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Rupsha Bridge Project Three 'extortionists' held for threatening foreign consultants

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Khulna thana police have arrested three persons for their alleged involvement in toll collection and threatening foreign consultants of Rupsha Bridge Project.

The arrested persons are Humayun Kabir, secretary of BNP 37 no. ward, Alauddin Ahmed, a Jubo Dal activist and Abul Kalam of Jubo League.

When asked, OC of Khulna thana said the three were arrested yesterday morning as per list supplied by city special branch. He admitted that they are unruly elements of Labonchara area.

Police also raided the house of expelled Awami League leader Mohammad Hossain Mukta, KCC Commissioner of ward no. 37. But he escaped scaling boundary wall

sensing arrival of police. The neighbours alleged that police helped Mukta escape arrest.

None of the Rupsha Bridge Project has so far lodged any written complain against the arrested persons, leaders of city BNP said.

A high official of KMP also admitted arrest of the three without any warrant. Leaders of Jubo League have protested the arrest of their activist Abul Kalam without any specific charge.

Earlier, a gang of miscreants, had given death threats to Japanese and Thai consultants of the Rupsha Bridge Project for not paying toll as demanded.

On the night of February 10, a gang of eight allegedly stormed into the rented apartment of an Indian consultant and demanded a

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No steps against unfit vehicles till Eid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the government deciding on 'humanitarian' grounds to defer till the Eid a 'crackdown' on illegal autorickshaws, rickshaws and thousands of other unfit vehicles, the city streets were choked with vehicles even the day before yesterday causing serious air and noise pollution.

Traffic police officials however attributed this to various reasons which include Eid rush, presence of a large number of Hajji pilgrims and relatives accompanying them, a huge gathering of VIPs at the Awami League sponsored National Convention on Crime Against Humanity and traffic on about 360 extended city bus routes.

They also said that with the Eid nearing, thousands of poor people from the rural areas have flocked to

the capital to work asrickshawpullers during the Eid rush. This has led to an alarming rise in the number of the manually run three wheelers.

The BRTA and the Traffic Department of DMP have agreed to 'defer the crackdown till the Eid on humanitarian grounds' because the authorities do not want these poor people to be deprived of their earning prior to the festival, sources said.

They mentioned that the ruling party or its allies are 'illegally' organising rallies and processions on busy city streets at rush hours every day, defying the existing ban and ignoring sufferings of people. On Wednesday, there were three rallies and processions on busy intersections. One rally held at Malibagh crossing was attended by Works Minister Mirza Abbas. Jamaat-e-Islami's convention recently saw a crowd of about 10,000 people.

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