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The river Karnaphuli is gradually dying due to illegal encroachment and massive pollution. Thousands of tons of garbage and solid wastes find their way into the Karnaphuli through some 22 canals and drains of the city. With Chittagong Water and Sewerage Authority (WASA) yet to develop any sewer system in the city, around 400 tons of wastes are simply dumped in the river. Besides, there are some 720 industrial units along the river at Chittagong and Chandroghona. Of them, 217 units have been identified as polluters releasing harmful chemical wastes. On the other hand, illegal encroachments and unplanned construction of installations are causing serious siltation of the river. Huge piles of logs and bamboos cause deposition of mud at different points of the river and the outlet of Chaktai canal, the backbone of drainage system of the city, and thereby raise the river bed. All these pose a threat to the Karnaphuli, the economic lifeline of the port city, and cause a serious health hazards to the people living along the river. Chittagong Port Authority (CPA), responsible for taking care of the river near port channel, has been conducting massive eviction drives. The Mercantile Marine Department also awards penalties to the polluters. But their efforts seem to go in vain. Environment conscious people want a comprehensive plan and coordinated efforts by the authorities concerned to save the river.

STORY BY ABDULLAH -AL MAHMUD

Untold miseries of Kalurghat Bridge

MOHIT UL ALAM

It has hit us hard, the Chittagonians, that the age-old Kalurghat Bridge has gone unrepaired for so many years.

Its sister bridge, the Shah Amanat Bridge, has met with the same fate. It's nothing but a ramshackle of rotten wooden planks.

Both these bridges are the only lifeline between Chittagong and the southern district, Cox's Bazar.

With these two Bridges becoming almost inoperable thousands of people suffer inestimably in their daily journey from and to Chittagong.

There are many new bridges built across the country, in many areas of very small importance, and bridge-inauguration has become a culture with our ministers. But spanning bridges on the Karnafuly never seems to be on the priority list of the communications ministry.

The railway is the owner of the Kalurghat Bridge, and year after year it goes on just applying some face lifting, without ever going for an overhauling. The railway has enough money to do it, so it should

start doing something about it. The Shah Amanat Bridge should be at once replaced by a modern concrete bridge.

That both these bridges have never been taken up for reconstruction looks to me to be a political defeat for the ministers from Chittagong. They have not been able to prevail over the central government, the communications minister in particular, to release fund for the development work of these two bridges.

Reports say that the jam at Kalurghat takes about four hours, and that at Shah Amanat three hours. Since big lorries are not allowed to ply on the Shah Amanat, there is an extra jam at the Kalurghat.

The traffic jam has chain effect on the routes to Chittagong. And, unfortunately, roads from these two bridges converge at Bahaddarhat, a permanently jammed-spot, and, about which we have written in this column so many times before.

The experience of the travellers is quite nightmarish. As the development in road communications

all over the country has occurred, the bus service network has connected the furthest points with the capital. People now make journey from distant Teknaf to Benapole border by taking the same bus.

Against this increased mobility of people, the jams at the bridges are surely an encumbrance.

People also take buses that connect with the Chittagong and Dhaka airports direct. So, passengers catching international flights may be thwarted in their purpose by the delay at the bridges. Sick people also travel from south Chittagong to Chittagong, Dhaka, or across the border to India, for treatment. These patients may be having the worst ordeal of their life at these junctions.

I have a series of suggestions to make: Take up a rapid action plan to rebuild the bridges. Build a third bridge at the mouth of Patenga jetty, to diversify the routes. And, in the meantime, introduce a couple of ferries at the Khalurghat bridge point.

Besides, as feeding roads there may be two more roads carved out from the river up to the city bypassing Bahaddarhat altogether.

Chittagong War Cemetery

Cemetery speaks of World War

NURUL ALAM

Chittagong War Cemetery has become a scenic spot for visitors from home and abroad.

Clothed by evergreen and flowering shrubs, the cemetery is located in the city on a hilly site on seven acres of land near Chittagong Art College just overlooking Finlay hills. It looks like a natural amphitheatre.

But it bears the memory of love and tears. The bodies of 755 warriors of Second World War were laid to rest here. The graves were marked by bronze plaques.

Those buried here were from the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, West Africa,

East Africa, Myanmar (Burma), The Netherlands and Japan.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission bears the expenditure for maintenance of this cemetery, officials said.

About Tk 70,000 are spent a month to keep up this cemetery, Chittagong War Cemetery manager Md. Abu Sayeed said.

Foreigners mostly the Britons and the kith and kin of the dead warriors visit this cemetery to pay tributes, Sayeed said.

The cricketers of England team who came here for a test match recently, visited the cemetery, he said.

A British woman accompanied by her husband visited the grave of

her warrior father I.A.F.M. Crispe who served under Royal Engineers, Sayeed said. She burst into tears while placing wreaths at the burial plaque. She took picture of her father's grave from Chittagong War Cemetery, he added.

The plaque on her father's grave reads-"In loving memory of a good father and husband, Sleep beloved, take thy rest". Those words were written on the plaque after burial at the request of the warrior's family members.

However, several hundred people mostly the young ones throng the scenic spot for a break as the port city lacks suitable park for recreation. During the first half of the day,

college and university going boys and girls arrive at this spot for gossiping or passing some time with their fiancée and fiancé.

Besides visitors, irrespective of age and sex crowd the war cemetery, thinking it as a park just to take free air, witnesses said.

"The visitors are not allowed to sit inside the park and eating or smoking is totally prohibited for the sake of keeping it neat and clean, Sayeed said. They can just either move around or gossip standing beside the trees or greenery and nothing else," he said.

Three sentries and some gardeners look after the cemetery, he said. "The cemetery area is a bit secure."



Chittagong War Cemetery

STAR PHOTO

theweekthatwas

PCJSS agitation from Dec 2

Parbattya Chattagram Jano Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) on the concluding day of its council on Sunday announced a series of programmes in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

The three-day council was held at Baghaichhari in Khagrachhari.

The programmes include barricade and agitations in the hill districts on December 2 for implementation of peace agreement and dawn to dusk hartal on December 8 demanding removal of CHT Development Board Chairman Abdul Wadood Bhuiyan MP by November 30.

PCJSS President and CHT Regional Council Chairman Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma alias Shantu Larma addressed the closing ceremony. PCJSS Political Affairs Secretary Ushatan Talukder presided.

BATB exports vegetables

British-American Tobacco Bangladesh (BATB) as part of its initiatives to export quality vegetables handed over the first consignment of vegetables to Eurasia Food Processing Bangladesh Limited on Monday.

Moinul Islam Chowdhury, Managing Director of Eurasia Food Processing Bangladesh Limited, a Bangladesh-UK joint venture, received the consignment of three tons of Kachumukhi (an arum like vegetables) from BATB Managing Director Stephen Deintith.

Earlier, BATB signed an agreement

with Agro-based Industries and Technology Development Project - II to help farmers cultivate exportable vegetables in the country.

Civil society urged to help curb crime

Members of civil society have to come forward and work unitedly to curb crime in the country.

The speakers made this call at a view exchange meeting organised by the Fatikchhari Journalists Council, Chittagong (FJCC), at a city community centre here on Friday.

They said to put an end to crime at Fatikchhari by some 20 policemen alone is impossible. They stressed on dividing

the administration in Fatikchhari, the largest upazila of the country, into three to find out ways and means to curb crime there.

Professor Dr. Jamal Nazrul Islam in his speech as chief guest said with the rise of terrorism in the international arena and its impact also encouraged criminal activities here. Former ambassador Advocate Md. Foyez, former Chittagong chamber president Farid Ahmad Chowdhury, Chittagong Union of Journalists President Mostaque Ahmad, BMA, Chittagong unit General Secretary Dr. Khurshid Jamil Chowdhury and Federation of Chittagong Shop Owners Associations President Alhaj Salahuddin also spoke with FJCC convener SM Shoyeb Khan in the chair.

Hons in e-business introduced

The Computers Limited (TCL) and the Huddersfield University of the UK jointly introduced the BA (honours) in e-business course here on Saturday at the Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB), Chittagong building.

The programme on e-biz, which is to teach the learners through virtual learning environment method, is the first of its kind in the country.

A seminar was held on the occasion of commencement of the new course.

Professor Golam Sarwar Chowdhury, Chairman, Department of English, Chittagong University, was present as chief guest and Waliul Maruf Matin,

Chief Executive Officer of Chittagong Stock Exchange as special guest.

John Fairhurst of Huddersfield University presented the key-note paper at the seminar.

CUJ demands govt holidays

Chittagong Union of Journalists (CUJ) called upon the managements of the newspapers and news agencies to introduce the holidays for their staffs as enjoyed by the government employees and officials.

CUJ leaders at a joint meeting with the senior journalists here on Sunday also called for proper implementation of general and optional leaves for the newspapermen and demanded holiday on Shah-e-Quadr.

They warned against any unilateral decision on leaves by Bangladesh Sangbadpatri Parishad or Newspaper Owners Association of Bangladesh (NOAB). Otherwise, CUJ would go for legal measures for safeguarding fundamental rights of its members, they added.

Former CUJ presidents Mahubul Alam, Akhter Un Nabi, Md. Yusuf, Muhammad Idris and M Nasirul Haq, elderly journalists Bimalendu Barua, Osmanul Haq, CUJ leaders Shahidul Alam and Nazim Uddin Shyamol also spoke at the meeting with CUJ president Mostaque Ahmad in the chair.

Rush Festival ends

The Rush Festival of the Hindu community was observed with due religious fervour and solemnity in the city and

greater Chittagong.

A five-day Rushilia in observance of the birth centenary of Adwytanandapuri Maharaj ended on Tuesday at Tulshidham at Nandan Kanon in the city.

State Minister for Forest and Environment Jafrul Islam Chowdhury in his speech as chief guest assured all out government support for the recognition of Hrishidham and Tulshidham established by Adwytanandapuri Maharaj at Banskhali in the district and Nandan Kanon in the city respectively.

With Narayan Mitra Chowdhury in the chair, Binod Bihari Chowdhury, Advocate Dipok Gosh, Chinmoy Das Braxmacharya and forest conservator Abdul Moteleb also spoke at the ceremony.

Mayor's call to religious leaders

Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury here on Sunday urged the religious leaders, particularly the Imams of mosques, for building public opinion against wrong, injustice and crime.

Mohiuddin was addressing a function held at Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) auditorium on the occasion of disbursement of annual allowances among the Imams, priests and social workers.

He said the religious leaders could play a significant role in building moral character of common people through their advice. As such, the mayor urged the religious leaders, particularly the Imams, to draw public attention to the current crisis and give religious solutions to them through Khutbas during Juma prayers or speeches at other religious gatherings.

The mayor gave TK. 1200 each to 975 Imams and other religious and social leaders.

He said since the religious leaders were entrusted with the responsibility of switching off and on street lights of the city six years back, it stopped wastes of power for two hours daily and had been saving TK. 50 lakh of CCC a year.

First grand convocation of RRU

The First Grand Convocation of Royal Roads University (RRU), Chittagong Campus was held here on Saturday.

Dr. Eric West, Associate Vice President of RRU distributed certificates among the graduates in Chittagong at the convocation held on The Progress Meritocracy Limited (PML) Exclusive Campus at Khulshi.

Dr. Eric in his speech said quality education and standard of the RRU already drew attention of the people here. He called upon the graduates to uphold the tradition of the university in the days to come.

M Moniruzzaman, CEO and founder of The Progressive Meritocracy Ltd that offers MBA programme in Chittagong under RRU, gave vote of thanks at the convocation.

Drishly recitation workshop

The eighth recitation workshop of Drishly, a socio-cultural organisation in Chittagong, ended here on Friday with a call for exercising tenderness of mind and good qualities of human nature to

help establish peace in the society.

The speakers at the closing session of the three-day workshop said it was the reciters who helped the famous poets remain alive in the people's mind even after their deaths and spread message of peace and humanity.

Managing Director of local daily the Dainik Purbokone Jasim Uddin Chowdhury was present as the chief guest. Drishly Debate Club Chairperson and Principal of Sunshine Grammar School Safia Rahman, Drishly Permanent Committee Chairperson Brigit Dayes, Lions Club of Chittagong Bernali President AHM Kafil Uddin, General Secretary Subrata Das and Treasurer AMM Mohiuddin were present as special guests. Drishly President Principal Hasina Reza Soma presided.

Govt to facilitate female education further

BNP central vice-president and former minister LK Siddiqui said that the government would provide more facilities for women education in the country.

The former minister said this while he was addressing a mothers' gathering organised by guardian mothers at Sitakunda Girls School and College on Thursday.

LK Siddiqui, also president of the governing body of the school and college, presided. Principal Zarina Akter made the address of welcome.