

# City breeding epidemic by not treating excreta

Wasa can meet only 10pc of Dhaka's sewerage needs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The capital runs the risk of raging epidemics with its groundwater being increasingly infested with hordes of disease germs from untreated human excreta, a seminar in the city said yesterday.

The Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) currently can meet only 10 percent of the city's sewerage service needs, it was also revealed.

Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa), an environment watchdog, organised the seminar on 'Method and Management of Converting the Excreta into Resources' in the seminar room of the civil engineering department of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet).

The city's lack of means to treat excreta of its 10 million dwellers has given rise to a very high-risk health and hygiene situation, the seminar

participants observed.

Managing Director of Dhaka Wasa ANH Akhter Hossain said, "Recently a number of extremely harmful viruses and bacteria, including escherichia coli, have been detected on several occasions in the groundwater of Old Dhaka."

Escherichia coli, commonly known as E. coli, is a rod-shaped bacterium which inhabits and attacks the large intestine of both

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PHOTO: STAR

Drizzle brings relief to city dwellers yesterday evening from sweltering heat that scorched the country over the last couple of weeks. Dhaka recorded the highest temperature at 36.5 degrees Celsius yesterday.

## PM calls for steps to cut accident risks

*Distributes goat, credit among the physically challenged*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has called for measures in accident-prone areas, particularly in mills and factories, to reduce the risk of accident that causes disability.

She made the call while speaking at a function, marking the distribution of cheques in grant and interest-free micro-credit, wheelchairs and goats to the physically challenged and organisations working for them at Shaheed Suhrawardy Indoor Stadium in the city yesterday.

"Whatever we are doing for the disabled is not mercy. We think they deserve it," the prime minister told

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## Rumsfeld makes surprise Iraq trip

2 US soldiers, 3 Iraqis killed in clashes

AGENCIES, Baghdad

US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld yesterday made a surprise visit to Baghdad, flying into the eye of the storm over Americans torturing prisoners that has sapped Washington's credibility in Iraq.

Hours after US lawmakers viewed "sadistic" new photographs of US troops torturing Iraqis, the embattled secretary met Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez, the US commander in Iraq, and Major General Geoffrey Miller, the new head of US prisons there.

Iraqi prisoners gave US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld a frosty reception when he toured the nearby Abu Gharib jail. Hundreds of

Iraqi security detainees watched from behind a concertina-wire perimeter fence as Rumsfeld toured the facility in a Rhino Runner armoured vehicle.

Some of the prisoners gestured a thumbs-down to their surprise visitor, others held aloft a tattered Iraqi flag. Most stood in silence with their arms folded as they were paraded for their US guest.

His trip looked like a robust answer to critics who say Rumsfeld, one of the architects of the Iraq war, should resign, six months before President George W. Bush seeks re-election.

As international anger at US conduct in Iraq -- and at its

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## Change of power in India won't affect ties: FM

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister Morshed Khan yesterday welcomed Indian people's electoral verdict for a new government, saying that Bangladesh will work together with whoever holds power in New Delhi.

In his initial reaction to reporters over the Indian election results, he said Dhaka-New Delhi bilateral relations would not be affected with any change of power in India.

"India is our neighbour and we attach much importance to our relation-- we are willing to work together with whatever party forms the government, for the benefit of the two peoples and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc)," Khan said.

In reply to a question, he said with the change of government

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## Fertiliser traders decry fare hike by light cargo vessels

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Fertiliser Association (BFA) yesterday protested the arbitrary fare hike by the light cargo vessels which carry bulk items from the outer anchorage of Chittagong Port.

The vessel owners almost doubled the charges on different routes without any convincing reason and new rates were made effective from May 7, alleged Kofil Uddin Ahmed, chairman of BFA, a body of fertiliser traders and importers' grouping, while talking to journalists at Hotel Purbani yesterday.

For example, he said, the fare for carrying goods from Chittagong to Noapara in Jessore has been raised to Tk 405 from Tk 230-250 earlier.

The association demanded reasonable rates and feared, other-

wise, the retail fertiliser prices will go up significantly.

"The lighter cargo vessel owners increased the bulk item-carrying charges without discussion with the government or any other organisations related to the export-import business," Kofil said.

Mosharraf Hossain, director (import) of BFA, and one of leading fertiliser importers, Ainul Haque, were also present.

The association leaders alleged that the vessel owners also imposed a number of pre-conditions which, they believe, will create problems in transportation of goods from one place to another. The new system stipulates that an importer will have to pay 60 percent of the fare in advance and the rest on delivery of the goods, they explained.

"In the past, we used to pay the

charges on transportation and delivery of goods," Kofil said.

The vessel owners, however, told The Daily Star that they grounded the hiked charges on impending monsoon season when sailing in rough weather is risky. They maintained that the charges were increased only 15 percent, but would be reduced again during winter.

Due to absence of any rules and regulations in the sector, a big slice of the cargo fares go to the middlemen, depriving the owners, said a vessel owner.

"By introducing the new rates, we are trying to establish a system in the trade, diminishing middlemen's

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## BCL activist shot dead; father, brother hurt in JCD attack

UNB, Chittagong

An activist of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) was shot dead and his father and elder brother were injured in an armed attack on their house allegedly by Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) cadres at Amtoli village in Bhojpur Union of Fatikchhari upazila early yesterday.

Witnesses said seven armed men attacked the house of Saleh Ahmed and shot his two sons--BCL leader Mohammad Zakaria and BCL activist Osman Gani--as they came out of their house.

Both were rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital where doctors declared Osman dead, police said.

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## Tk 11 lakh mugged in Ctg

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Muggers snatched about Tk 11 lakh from a distributor of Lever Brothers in broad daylight at Nasirabad Housing Society in the city yesterday morning.

The incident occurred at 10:15am at road no-4, only 200 metres off the firm's office, police said.

Mohammad Nurul Islam alias Shahin, the distributor, his partner Alamgir Kabir, cashier Mohammad Nurun Nabi on a private car were going to the bank to deposit Tk 10.88 lakh. As their car slowed down due to bad condition of the road, there appeared four armed muggers, said the victims.

Talking to this correspondent by phone Nurul, "One of them first

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## 12 killed in Gaza raid

REUTERS, Gaza

Israel killed 12 Palestinians in southern Gaza yesterday after back-to-back ambushes claimed the lives of 11 of its soldiers in the worst blow to the Middle East's mightiest army in two years.

The new spiral of violence intensified debate between proponents and opponents of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to evacuate settlers from Gaza, now stalled by rightist hard-liners in his own Likud party.

Witnesses said 11 Palestinians, four of them militants, were killed in helicopter missile strikes in Rafah refugee camp, near the area where militants blew up an explosives-packed troop carrier on Wednesday. Five soldiers in the vehicle were killed.

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PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia talks to the physically challenged at a function at Shaheed Suhrawardy Indoor Stadium in Dhaka yesterday. She distributed Tk 2.62 crore in grants and microcredit, wheelchairs and goats among them.

## Up tobacco tax to deter smoking

Anti-tobacco bodies urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Taxes on tobacco products manufactured in the country should be increased in the budget for next fiscal year as a step to banning the use of tobacco in phases.

Anti-tobacco bodies Adhunik and the Coalition Against Tobacco (CAT) made the demand yesterday.

Speaking at a 'Meet the Press' held at Dhaka Reporters Unity office, leaders of the two organisations pointed out the government has spared the tobacco industry tax increases in the last couple of years.

"Enhanced taxes on tobacco products will raise their prices, which will discourage smoking," said Amanullah Khan, CAT presi-

dent.

Tobacco-related illness causes a huge productivity loss and also loss of lives, he said and suggested a ban on use of tobacco products in phases.

He mentioned that the World Health Organisation says tobacco is addictive narcotic and there is no rationale behind allowing tobacco use.

It is estimated that there are 1.5 crore male and 50 lakh female smokers in Bangladesh. Tobacco kills about 35 lakh people globally a year including a substantial number in Bangladesh, the journalists were informed.

Referring to a Unicef study,

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## EC to provide 105m euro for pry edn

UNB, Dhaka

The European Commission will provide 105 million euro equivalent to approximately Tk 7.85 billion to Bangladesh for Second Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP-II), a sector wide programme on quality primary education.

Economic Relations Division (ERD) Secretary Mirza Tasadduk Hossain Beg and EC delegation chief Ambassador Esko Kentchynskij signed a contract yesterday in this regard on behalf of their respective sides.

PEDP-II, the total cost of which is \$1.815 billion, incorporates lessons learned from the first PEDP as well as other sector wide programmes in Bangladesh and the region. PEDP-II will focus on improving the quality

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## New images shock US lawmakers

UK set to dismiss prison pictures as fake

REUTERS, Washington

Members of the US Congress saw new images of violence and sexual humiliation from a US-run Iraqi prison on Wednesday in a closed viewing one lawmaker likened to a descent into "the wings of hell."

Lawmakers said images showed inmates apparently being coerced to commit sodomy, wounds possibly from dog bites, a number of dead bodies, and examples of "sadistic torture" and "sexual humiliation."

Some top Republicans urged that the still pictures and video not be released publicly, saying they could endanger US forces overseas.

"What we saw is appalling. It is consistent with the photos that you've seen in the press to date. They go beyond that in many ways in terms of the various activities that are depicted," said Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, a Tennessee Republican.

"There were some awful scenes. It felt like you were descending into one of the wings of hell and sadly it was our own creation," said Sen. Richard Durbin (news, bio, voting record), an Illinois Democrat. "And when you think of the sadism, the violence, the sexual humiliation, after a while you just turn away, you

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