

Establish special platform to save rivers

Experts tell Bapa seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Establish a special platform with the authorities concerned to save the rivers, said the environmentalists and urban experts at a seminar yesterday.

They said demarcation of riverbanks is a must to help restore their original shape and ensure adequate flow of water.

The speakers also expressed deep concern over illegal encroachment, siltation and pollution of rivers, especially of those surrounding the capital.

They said, "People will not survive if we fail in protecting the rivers."

The seminar titled 'Demolition of illegal structures on the Buriganga and next course of action' was organised by Bangladesh Paribesh Andolok (Bapa) in association with Institute

of Architects Bangladesh (IAB) at the National Press Club in the city.

"We proposed a law for demarcating the banks of all the rivers, but unfortunately the previous government did not pass it. Unless the banks are demarcated as per the CS record of 1912, the rivers cannot be protected," said Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, a member of Buriganga Taskforce, while talking to journalists on the sideline of the seminar.

Presiding over the seminar, Prof Sayeed, also Bapa vice-president, said he would again try to activate the taskforce that was established with the representatives of the ministries of land, shipping, environment, public works and Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) in 2004, and try to strengthen the demand.

Appreciating the government drive for demolishing the illegal

structures on the riverbanks, he said besides demarcating the government should immediately make a design on the maintenance of the banks and their beautification.

The BIWTA (Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority), which is now authorised for 111-kilometre-long riverbanks around the city, can do it now without any delay, he added.

Mokhlesuzzaman, former director general of Water Development Board (WDB), said a platform should be established with the authorities concerned to save the rivers.

The land ministry should come forward first in this regard, he noted.

BIWTA Chairman S K Bose said a few measures should be taken immediately ahead of the rainy season.

He suggested that the DCC and Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) should make sure that no garbage is dumped in the Buriganga, while the environment department and industries ministry should ensure that all mills and factories maintain industrial wastewater treatment plants so that river waters are not polluted.

"Demolition of illegal structures is important, but improvement of water quality is more important," said Bose.

He noted that the source of the Buriganga should also be dredged to increase the water flow of the river.

Architect Iqbal Habib in his keynote presentation suggested formation of a taskforce with BIWTA, DCC, WDB, Wasa and concerned professional and civic bodies, which will be entrusted to making a design for the maintenance of Buriganga riverbank.

A project could also be designed in public-private partnership for beautification of the banks as was done in case of 'Dhaka City Beautification' project, he added.

IAB President Mobashsher Hossain said involvement of the locals must be ensured in implementing the beautification, protection and maintenance of the riverbanks.

Columnist Syed Abul Maksud said the proposals aimed at saving the rivers are welcomed, but the authorities must be careful so that no people who are living on the riversides are evicted illegally.

Malik Bila Khan of CEGIS, former WDB Engineer Abdur Razzak, BIWTA Secretary Syed Monowar Hossain, Ward Commissioner Azizullah and Architect Fahim Ahmed also spoke on the occasion.



Architect Iqbal Habib speaks at a seminar at National Press Club in the city yesterday. Columnist Syed Abul Maksud, extreme left, and Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, second from left, were present.

Warehouse of perfume factory gutted in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The warehouse of a perfume factory at Uttara in the city was gutted in a fire yesterday evening.

Police and fire brigade sources said the fire originated from an electric short circuit inside the warehouse of Moon Star Private Ltd at 5:55pm. As soon as gas cylinders exploded, the fire spread fast inside the factory.

Four units of fire brigade managed to douse the fire at 6:55pm.

"Almost all the goods inside the warehouse were damaged in the fire. The goods worth Tk 1.40 crore had been kept locked inside the warehouse since 2005 following a case filed by the customs authorities," Sub-inspector Mohammad Saleh of Uttara Police Station said.

Saleh said a general diary has been filed with Uttara Police Station in this connection.

17 Indians await HC clearance to return home

UNB, Comilla

Seventeen Indian nationals, including a woman, who have completed the term of punishment in Comilla Jail are awaiting clearance of the Indian High Commission to return home.

Jail officials said the Indians were held and convicted on charge of smuggling arms and drugs. They have completed their jail term weeks ago and are eagerly waiting to return home.

Complaint arose about their return home as they suppressed real name and address. Indian High Commission after verification of their given identification and address refused to give them clearance to return home.

Officials said the matter was informed to the higher authorities for immediate return of the Indian nationals.

Gold ornaments worth over Tk 50 lakh looted in Gazipur

UNB, Gazipur

A gang of robbers looted gold ornaments from a jewelry shop worth over Tk 50 lakh at Porbari Bazar in Sadar upazila early yesterday.

Police said some 7/8 robbers swooped on the bazar at 2:00am, tied two night guards - Amir Ali and Saiful Islam and gave them a good beating, leaving them injured.

Later, the miscreants entered the Mati Jewelry owned by Babu Sukomal and looted 30 kilos of gold ornaments.

The injured night guards were rushed to sadar hospital.

3 killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

accident occurred at around 5:00pm on Friday.

The dead was identified as Saleha Begum, 30, wife of Maulana Habibur Rahman, senior teacher of a local madrasa.

Our Correspondent from Magura adds: Former general secretary of Magura Lawyers' Association Advocate Akteruzzaman Mridha was killed in a road accident at around 5:00pm on Friday.

The accident occurred when a sand-laden truck hit the rickshaw carrying Saleha and her two sons while they were going their home at Lamkipur village of Hajiganj after treatment at Hajiganj Bazar. Saleha died at the spot.

Angry mob put up a barricade on the road for over two hours following the accident. Later police and upazila administration brought the situation under control. Police seized the truck.

The accident occurred when a motorbike coming from opposite direction collided head-on at Balidanga area on Magura-Mohammadpur road with his motorbike, leaving Advocate Mridha and his wife Nargis seriously injured.

Advocate Mridha along with his wife was going to their village home Nikorhata.

Locals rushed them to Magura Sadar Hospital in a critical condition where Advocate succumbed to his injuries after a while. Condition of Nargis was stated to be critical.

A Correspondent from Kishoreganj adds: A minor boy was killed in a road accident at Shukhia Bazar area on Kishoreganj-Pakundia road in Pakundia upazila yesterday.

The dead was identified as Minhaz, 6, son of Golap Mia of Baro Ajoldi village of Pakundia upazila.

Shawkat Alam, Officer-in-charge (OC) of Pakundia Police Station, quoting locals said a Tomtom, locally made three-wheeler, ran over Minhaz, leaving him dead on the spot.

Police sent the dead body to Kishoreganj Sadar Adhikar Hospital for autopsy. Police seized the Tomtom but its driver managed to escape.

Police and witnesses said the

Yunus embarks on 19-day visit to US, Germany, Venezuela today

BSS, Dhaka

Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus leaves Dhaka today on a 19-day visit to the United States, Germany and Venezuela.

In Washington, Prof Yunus will take part in a Senate hearing on duty-free access of Bangladeshi textile products to the USA. He will make presentation arguing the Bangladesh's case at the hearing.

Chairman of the US Senate Finance Committee Max Baucus invited him to testify at the hearing.

The microcredit pioneer will also receive the Chancellor-Nichols Award, the highest prize presented by Vanderbilt University, in Nashville, Tennessee.

The Bangladeshi community in Nashville will accord a reception to him.

Prof Yunus will visit the Venezuelan capital of Caracas at the invitation of President Hugo Chavez. He will have a meeting with the Venezuelan president and address an international conference organised by BANESCO, the largest commercial bank in Venezuela.

During his visit to Germany at the personal invitation of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Prof Yunus will address the opening of German Savings Bank Convention in Bonn as the keynote speaker.

Chancellor Angela Merkel and President of the European Parliament Prof Hans-Gerd Pottinger will also speak at the opening function.

Prof Yunus will also attend the World Bank Forum organised by the German government in Berlin to focus on the future of Africa, particularly the role of microfinance in the context of G8 meeting in June.

He is expected to return home on May 24.

Body to probe DMCH incident

UNB, Dhaka

A four-member committee has been formed yesterday to investigate the Thursday's incident at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

The committee led by Head of the Surgery Department Prof Dr Ashraf Ali has been asked to submit its report within next seven days.

The other members of the committee are Prof of Neuro medicine Dr Deen Mohammad, Prof of Kidney Department Dr Mohibur Rahman and Assistant Director (Administration) of DMCH Dr Nasiruddin.

Activities at the DMCH came to a halt on Thursday after the doctors went on work abstention for six hours following a clash with the hospital's employees that left four people injured.



Bangladesh Rabindra Sangeet Shilpi Sangsta takes out a procession from in front of Public Library in the city yesterday on the occasion of the 18th National Rabindra Sangeet Festival-1414.

JADID AL-QADEA SUSPECT Al Amin out of touch with family for last two years Says father

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

The Jadid al-Qaeda militant suspect, apprehended by Sylhet Kotwali police on May 2 for his presumed links with the Sylhet Railway Station bombing on May 1, had been out of touch with his family for the last couple of years, said his father.

Malik Bila Khan of CEGIS, former WDB Engineer Abdur Razzak, BIWTA Secretary Syed Monowar Hossain, Ward Commissioner Azizullah and Architect Fahim Ahmed also spoke on the occasion.

Introduce 3-yr course on midwifery

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday underscored the need to formulate a national midwifery policy with a view to ensuring quality education for midwives and recognising their work by introducing a separate cadre.

They also called for introducing a three-year degree course on midwifery instead of the existing one-year course to make them skilled and competent so that the midwives can help reduce maternal and child mortality rates.

UNFPA and Directorate of Nursing Services (DNS) organised the roundtable titled 'Midwives reach out to women wherever they are' at the IDB Bhaban conference room in the city to mark the International Day of Midwife.

In his welcome address, UNFPA Representative Purnima Chakraborty said that ensuring skilled attendance at delivery and emergency obstetric care can make greater progress in improving maternal health.

"We need to ensure that qualified midwives with high quality education are deployed in all the places where women give birth and

we need to designate posts for them with enabling work environment," he observed.

Presenting the keynote paper, Ira Dibra, nursing officer of DNS, said the country's annual child delivery stands at around 40 lakh with only 14 percent taking place in presence of skilled birth attendant.

She pointed out that there are no midwives in true sense in Bangladesh. Currently, 20,000 nurses are providing midwifery services after attending one-year midwifery course, which is not up to the mark of international standard, she added.

Ira recommended introducing pre-service long-term training or course in the nursing training institutes. The midwives should be registered under Bangladesh Nursing Council, she added.

Shafiqullah Bhuiyan, assistant coordinator (Training and Research) of Maternal and Child Health Training Institute, also spoke.

Farid Hossein, bureau chief of the Associated Press, moderated the discussion chaired by Roselaind Bibi Baroi, director of DNS.

Bodies of four students recovered from Padma

UNB, Munshiganj

The bodies of four students who met watery grave in the river Padma on Friday were recovered yesterday.

The dead were identified as Shakhat Hossain Lincoln, first year BBA student of East West University, Saiful Islam, first year honours student of English Department of Kabi Nazrul Islam College, Fazlur Karim Ivan, first year student of Dhaka University's Marketing Department and Moshed Khan, first year student of Geography department of Kabi Nazrul Islam College.

Local administration with the help of villagers netted the bodies of Shakhat and Saiful in the morning while that of Ivan and Moshed were pulled up with fishing hooks in the evening.

All the bodies were handed over to their families without postmortem as per request of their relatives, said Deputy Commissioner M Moniruddin.

Nine students went to Louhajong at 3:30pm on Friday and four of them went missing as they went to take bath in the river.



Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed presides over a meeting of Council of Advisers at his office in the city yesterday.

FROM PAGE 1

and brokers to step up their deceptive activities, sources pointed out.

DISTRESS OF VICTIMS

Two victims of deception -- Mizanur Rahman and his uncle Anarul Islam -- were found at Paltan Police Station recently. They came all the way from Adarshapura in Jhenidah town to help police nab manpower broker Shah Alam Khokon, who had taken Tk 3.30 lakh from them four years ago promising them jobs in Saudi Arabia.

The OC also said since Abdul Hamid is a poor Kabiraj without any arable land of his own, he should not be able to bear Al Amin's educational expenses. "It is likely that militant outfit Jadid al-Qaeda exploited Al Amin in return for bearing his educational expenses."

Once a wholesale rice trader, Ararul now works as a day labourer to make a living for his five-member family.

Mizan, who was an employee of a reputed toiletries company, is still jobless. He now moves from door to door seeking help to repay the money taken from a bank by mortgaging his ancestral house.

The two men had also sold out two bighas of cropland to pay the money demanded by the broker. They also had to sell other belongings including seven cows to collect money said to be required for visa.

They had paid Tk 1.40 lakh for two visas bought from one Basir, an accomplice of Khokon. Asked by Basir, they paid another Tk 1.90 lakh to Khokon towards the end of 2002. At the time he maintained an office with its signboard reading Afaf Aviation Service at Malibagh in the city.

Everything seemed to go on smoothly. They underwent medical tests twice but after that Khokon disappeared. He changed his cellphone number, removed the signboard of his office and moved

recently. "We have instructed police to take firm legal steps against the accused in such cases so that they cannot go unpunished," he said.

In reply to a question, he said they have no plan at this moment for any crackdown on unscrupulous agencies or brokers or taking steps