

Take immediate steps to protect Shitalakkhya from contamination

Environmentalists urge govt

BSS, Dhaka

Environmentalists yesterday expressed grave concern over the pollution of the river Shitalakkhya and urged the government to take immediate steps to stop the sources of contamination and enhance flow of water to save the river, and keep the capital habitable as well.

They expressed the anxiety during a field visit to the Demraghat and Kanchpur section of the polluted river onboard a boat.

The two-hour visit of the environmentalists, accompanied by a team of newsmen, was not pleasant at all as the blackening water of the Shitalakkhya was spreading bad odor, failing to bear with the magnitude of pollution it has been exposed to for year after year.

Chemical wastes from mills and factories, and discharges, including human excreta, from sewerage

lines are pouring into the river round the clock causing serious water contamination.

Yet, poor people living along the riversides were seen taking bath and washing clothes and utensils in the water of the Shitalakkhya since they do not have any other alternatives.

During the visit, the experts pointed to the journalists that Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) is supplying 2.2 million liters of water daily to the city dwellers from this river after treating at Sayedabad Water Treatment Plant.

"It is not possible to treat properly this type of contaminated water in our country. So, the contamination of Shitalakkhya water might be one of the reasons for bad odor in Wasa water in the city," said Save Environment Movement (SEM) President Abu Naser Khan.

He said the ground water in Dhaka city will also be contami-

nated in future if the pollution of the Shitalakkhya, the Buriganga and other adjoining rivers cannot be stopped.

He urged the government to implement the recommendations of the taskforce formed earlier on the Buriganga, and stop pollution and free the rivers from illegal encroachment.

The government would also have to ensure adequate flow of water from the upstream during the dry season, he said.

Environment researcher Shafiuddin Sarkar said human wastes and factory wastes must be treated first before releasing those into the rivers.

Human wastes should be treated initially by setting up septic tanks in all houses of the city, and then that will have to be treated in treatment plants before discharging into the river.

He, however, said the existing lone sewerage treatment plant at

Pagla can cope with the waste of only 2 million people, whereas the total population of Dhaka city is more than 120 million. Twelve more treatment plants are needed to save the adjoining rivers, he added.

Columnist Syed Abul Maksud said the people themselves are contaminating the river for lack of awareness. So, creation of awareness should be the first step to save the rivers.

Lack of farsightedness and flaws in development programmes adopted by the government are also responsible for the present condition, he said and urged the administration to take immediate measures to protect the river as well as the country from disaster.

SEM member Engineer Tofael Ahmed, former Metropolitan Chamber (MCCI) Director Qamrul Islam and Nagorbashi Sangathan President Ansar Ali were also present.



Former chief adviser Justice Muhammad Habibur Rahman speaks at an international conference on 'Genocide, truth and justice' at Brac Centre Inn in the city yesterday. Liberation War Museum organised the conference.

Wasa starts functioning in Khulna today

UNB, Khulna

The newly established Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) of Khulna comes into operation today, fulfilling the longstanding demand for water supply and drainage facilities to the citizens.

Khulna is the third city after Dhaka and Chittagong to have Wasa, which will be formally inaugurated by the LGRD Adviser Anwarul Iqbal on March 5.

Begum Shamima Sultana, Additional Divisional Commissioner, has been given the charge of Managing Director of Khulna WASA in addition to her responsibility, said an official handout yesterday.

An earlier gazette notification said the president gave an order to create Khulna WASA to meet the needs of the inhabitants of the city.

Govt plans to review existing policies to preserve wetlands

Devashish tells BBC Bangladesh Sanglap

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a bid to preserve the wetlands, the caretaker government is planning to review the existing policies, said Chief Adviser's Special Assistant Raja Devashish Roy, who is in-charge of the ministries of environment and forest and CHT affairs, yesterday.

"The government is strictly monitoring the issue and trying to review the policies to protect the wetlands," said Devashish at BBC Bangladesh-Sanglap at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city.

BBC Bangla Service in conjunction with the BBC World Service Trust organised the special Sanglap titled 'Environment and Development' moderated by BBC Guest Presenter Dr Nizamuddin Ahmed, professor of architecture at Bangladesh University of

Engineering and Technology (Buet).

Responding to a query, Devashish said the government sometimes faces problems in implementing the laws to protect the wetlands.

He said the government will also consider relocating a number of industries, which have been causing serious environmental pollution, to other places from the capital gradually and would take strict measures to stop production and marketing of polythene bags to protect the environment.

"We have already categorised the industries as red, orange and green and will start relocating the red industries from the city to other place as early as possible," said the special assistant.

Economist and Professor of Dhaka University Dr Atiur Rahman, Director of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association (Bela) Syeda Rizwana Hasan and President of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI) Hossain Khaled also took part in the Sanglap as panelist.

Although there are laws to preserve wetlands, these are not applied properly and for that reasons the real estate companies have filled wetlands around the capital to build houses, said the panelists who laid emphasis on applying law strictly to protect environment through preserving the wetlands.

They also observed that the country's environment has been badly affected and polluted as the government could not apply the laws strictly.

The panelists called for launching a social movement to stop earth filling of wetlands and the production and use of polythene bags.



Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain speaks at a meeting in memory of Bazlur Rahman, an eminent journalist and editor of the daily Sangbad, at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

National Flag Hoisting Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Flag Hoisting Day will be observed in the country today.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD- Rob) will hold a discussion at the National Press Club at 4:00pm today to mark the day.

On this day in 1971, ASM Abdur Rob, then vice-president of Dhaka University Central Students Union (Ducus), hoisted the first flag of independent Bangladesh at a huge student rally on the university campus. Student leaders Abdul Kuddus Makhon, Shahjahan Siraj and Nur Alam Siddique, among others, were also present.

12 Bangladeshis killed by BSF in Feb

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twelve Bangladeshis were killed by the Indian Border Security Force (BSF) in February, a report of human rights organisation Odhikar said yesterday.

Four Bangladeshis were also injured and three others allegedly abducted by the BSF.

"Such killings, injuries and abductions constitute grave violations of international law, abuse of human rights and are contrary to good neighbourly relations," the report observed. Odhikar urged the government to take immediate steps to this end.

According to the report, four people two outlaws and two dacoits -- were reportedly killed by police in crossfire or encounter in February. During that month, 12 people died in jail custody due to illness.

Besides, 24 were raped while 10 persons, including five women and three children, were victims of acid violence, the report added.

DU history deptt alumni assoc executives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Dr M Mofakkkharul Islam and Prof Dr AH Ahmed Kamal have been elected president and general secretary of the History Department Alumni Association of Dhaka University for the next two years.

The new executive committee for 2008-10 was formed on unanimous decision at a reunion of the association on February 29, says a press release.

The other office bearers are vice presidents Shafiqul Islam, Dr Nurul Huda Abul Mansur and SM Shafiquzzaman Khokon, treasurer Prof Dr Delwar Hossain, joint secretaries Hasanuz-Zaman Hasan and Dr Surma Zakaria Chowdhury and members Prof Mokaddesur Rahman, Prof ABM Mahmud, Mobin Uddin Ahmed, Prof Sharifullah Bhuiyan, Prof Muntasir Mamun, Ikram Ahmed, Al Amin Bin Hasim, Shafique Patwari, Tazin Ahmed, Mohan Khan, Nur Mohammad, Abdul Mannan Patwari, Abdul Khaleque, Ansar Uddin Ahmed, Solaiman Khan Mojlish, Mostafa Kamal Haider, Jahanara Siddiqui, Dr Abu Mohammad Delwar Hossain, Golam Sarwar, AKM Towhidul Alam, Selina Shirin Reeta and Majidul Islam Moni.

Prince Harry back in Britain from Afghanistan

AFP, Raf Brize Norton, England

Prince Harry arrived back in Britain yesterday after a 10-week tour of duty in Afghanistan fighting Taliban militants with the British Army.

The 23-year-old, a second lieutenant in the Blues and Royal Regiment of the Household Cavalry, touched down in an unmarked military plane at Royal Air Force base Brize Norton, near Oxford, south central England.

Harry left Afghanistan Friday night, the defence ministry confirmed earlier yesterday, after news of his deployment -- which had been kept secret under a deal between the British government and media -- was leaked by a US website.

Heading the welcoming party was his father, Prince Charles, and elder brother, Prince William, 25, who also trained as an army officer and recently began flying with the Royal Air Force.

The heir to the throne was smartly dressed in a fawn overcoat, dark suit and necktie as he was seen on television pictures arriving at the base. William was more casually dressed.

Harry, in combat fatigues and carrying his kit and body armour, filed down the steps of the Tristar jet, in its RAF blue livery, with fellow soldiers from Britain's 7,800-strong contingent in the NATO coalition in Afghanistan.

The returning troops arrived without fanfare and there was no official welcome on the tarmac as the troops instead filed into the terminal building.

ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION 114 ex-BAC officials to get posting

UNB, Dhaka

Some 114 former employees, out of 263, of the now-defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption (BAC), who were recently absorbed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), are likely to get postings either today or tomorrow.

After interviewing all the 263 employees, who were left out by the Justice Sultan Hossain Khan-led Commission, the ACC decided to reinstate 114 of them.

The employees include nine deputy directors, 19 assistant directors, 25 inspectors, 22 assistant inspectors, 3 assistant deputy inspectors, 2 head assistants, 2 stenographers, 1 upper division assistant, 4 assistants, 2 office assistants, 2 office assistants-cum-typists, 2 typists, 2 security guards, one driver and 18 constables.

About posting of the employees, ACC director general (admin) Col Hanif Iqbal, also the Commission's spokesperson, told UNB yesterday that the absorbed employees would get posting as soon as possible and the ACC is working on it.

Responding to a question, he said their postings would certainly help the Commission overcome the manpower shortage.

The Commission hopes that the inclusion of these officials will increase the working capability of the anti-graft body.

After its inception on November 21, 2004 following dissolution of BAC, the then Commission led by Justice Sultan Hossain Khan screened out

263 former BAC officials.

Later, the aggrieved officials filed writ petitions with the Higher Court challenging the decision.

Recently, there has been a settlement between the Commission and the left-out officials who agreed to withdraw the cases.

The ACC started interviewing them on February 7 after the withdrawal of cases.

Rhyme & illustrate contest

Dano is organising a 'rhyme and illustrate' contest on the occasion of International Mother Language Day, says a press release.

With every 400gm regular and instant Dano pack children will get a rhyme book.

There is a set of four individual books with different interesting Bangla rhymes.

In each book there is a page for the participants where they are supposed to write their self-composed rhymes and draw as they like.

The entries have to be submitted by April 10, 2008.

A panel of judges consisting eminent personalities will select the winners from two individual groups.

The winners will win attractive prizes like computer, colour TV, digital camera, digital dictionary, bicycle and so on.



Prof Salahuddin M Aminuzzaman, middle, speaks at a roundtable on 'Proposed local government commission ordinance and supplementary proposals' at Cirdap auditorium in the city yesterday. On his right are Mohsin Ali and former agriculture minister MK Anwar and on his left are Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon and CPB General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim. Governance Coalition organised the roundtable.



Recipients of 'Anannya Top Ten 2007' award pose for photograph with the guests, including litterateurs Muhammad Zafar Iqbal and Selina Hossain, at the award giving ceremony at the National Museum auditorium in the city yesterday. Anannya, a fortnightly magazine for women, honoured Syeda Rizwana Hasan, Dr Dipu Moni, Eliza Sharmin, Kohinoor Kamal, Tahmina Anam, Salma Shahnaq Shaheed, Anusheh Anadil, Dr Jahanara Ferdous Khan, Rupali Chowdhury and Anjulika Khisa with the award for their outstanding contribution to various fields.

Call to integrate people with disabilities into mainstream

BSS, Dhaka

Primary and Mass Education and Cultural Affairs Adviser Rasheda K Chowdhury yesterday suggested building up a greater social movement with a view to integrate the people with disabilities into the mainstream of development.

A social movement can be launched by forging an alliance at all levels -- from the grassroots to the policy making level, she said, adding that the issue of the movement should also be included in the government's agenda as it would not be possible to ensure national development if the people with disability remain outside the mainstream.

The adviser said this while speaking as the chief guest at a workshop on 'Global campaign on education for all children with visual impairment', jointly organised by National Forum of Organisations Working with Visual Impairment (NFOWI) and International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI) at a local hotel.

ICEVI Chairperson Dr Bhushan Punani presided over the workshop, while its Secretary General Dr MNG Mani was present as the special guest.

Over 100 participants from home and abroad attended the workshop. The adviser said the government has included the issues of physically challenged people in the formulation of women development policy.

The government is also committed to enrolling the students with disabilities at the educational institutes in line with the theme 'Education for All'. As part of this, the government has provided more funds to the education sector, she added.

Dr Bhushan Punani stressed the

need to introduce disabled-friendly technology to ensure the welfare of the people with disability.

Dr MNG Mani said, "Public-private partnership needs to be synchronised so that the people with disabilities can be incorporated into the mainstream of development."

WEATHER TODAY logo with sun and cloud icons.

Temperature may rise

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with temporary partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 24 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Light fog may occur over the river basins of the country during early morning, Met Office said, adding that day temperature may rise slightly over the country.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 30.7 degree Celsius was recorded at Jessore and the lowest of 13.0 degrees at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:02pm today and rises at 6:19am tomorrow.

The highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Table with columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max, Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning, Evening). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.

BPR election postponed

BSS, Dhaka

The biennial general election of Bangladesh Public Relations Association (BPR), which was scheduled for March 6, has been postponed due to unavoidable reasons.

The decision was taken at the executive committee meeting of BPR recently. The fresh date for the election will be announced soon, said a press release.

Interested PR personnel working in various government, semi-government organisations, autonomous bodies and private organisations are requested to contact with ASM Bazul Haq (9560874, 01710956097); Faisal Mokammel (7120344, 01711100519) for enrolment and membership renewal within March 15.

DHAKA TODAY logo.

Conference

The inaugural ceremony of the conference on 'Governance in education: Transparency, accountability and effectiveness' will be held. Unesco and Bangladesh National Commission for Unesco jointly organise the conference. Venue: International Conference Centre, Chief Adviser's Office. Time: 9:30am.

Discussion

A discussion will be held on trial of war criminals and international law. Venue: TSC auditorium. Time: 3:00pm.

Reception

University & Industry Alliance, University of Dhaka will accord a reception to Dr A Atiq Rahman for his winning 'Champions of the Earth 2008' award. Venue: Senate Bhaban, DU. Time: 4:00pm.

Education conference

Unnayan Onneshan organises the first national education conference on 'Whither policy reforms in education in Bangladesh: Lessons and challenges'. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 9:00am.

Seminar

Export Promotion Bureau organises a seminar on 'Duty free market access provided by the developed countries'. Venue: Conference room, TCB building. Time: 2:30pm.

Art exhibition

The inaugural ceremony of a group art exhibition will be held. Venue: Russian Centre of Science & Culture. Time: 4:30pm.