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Rivers void of life forms

Buriganga, Turag, Norai too polluted to support oxygen supply

PINAKI ROY

The level of pollution in the Buriganga and most parts of Turag and Norai flowing around the capital is so high that no living organism can survive in the waters of these rivers, researchers say.

A three-year research finds that some invertebrates and small organisms come into being in these rivers when water flow increases during rains. But these life forms completely disappear in the dry season, they add.

The oxygen level of the Buriganga, Tongi canal of Turag and a part of Norai is less than one in per microgram. All species of local fish need 4-6 level of oxygen in per microgram to survive, says the study conducted by the water resources department, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet).

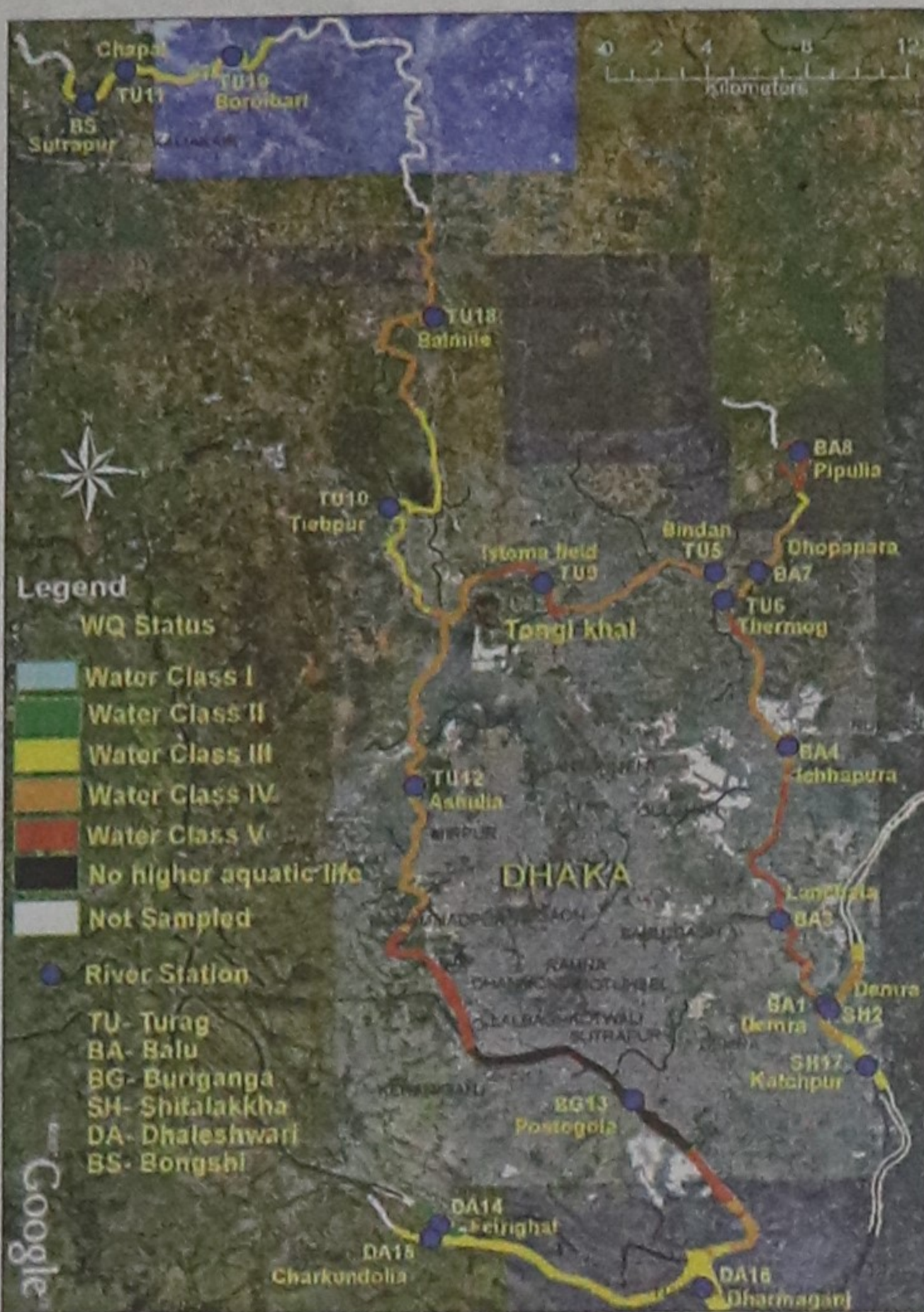
The researchers also conducted their study at 34 spots in 25 rivers in the northeastern region from April 2005 to April 2008. The outcome of the study also contributed to the department's preparations for a map showing quality of the country's 25 rivers.

During water quality assessment using bio-indicators method, the researchers collected samples thrice from the Chadnighat point of Buriganga but twice failed to get any single living being.

Bio-indicators respond to the quality deterioration from multiple and varied pollution sources and thus provide an overall picture of water quality.

"In this method we collect sediments from the riverbed and test the environmental health of the river by counting available aquatic creatures in those. The

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AL finalises team for talks with govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League (AL) yesterday finalised a nine-member delegation led by its Acting President Zillur Rahman for the on going dialogues between the government and political parties.

The decision was taken at an AL central working committee (ALWC) meeting held in the party president's office in Dhamondi, presided over by Sajeda Chowdhury.

The other delegates are AL presidium members Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Amir Hossain Amu, Abdur Razzak, Tofail Ahmed, Suranjit Sengupta, Motia Chowdhury, Aatur Rahman Khan Kaiser, and Acting General Secretary Syed Ahsrafur Islam.

The party will send the names to the government soon. After about a two and half hour meeting, Ahsrafur Islam told reporters that the ALCWC urged the government to meet its six-point demand, including permanent and unconditional release of party chief Sheikh Hasina.

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MADDHAPARA MINE Unsold rocks dead weight on project

SHARIER KHAN

The cash-strapped Maddhapara Granite Mining Co Ltd (MGMCL) is being burdened with as much as 2.3 lakh tonnes of unsold hard rock worth Tk 25 crore in its inventory because of an inappropriate rock crushing and sorting plant.

The inventory was built to store only 40,000 tonnes of rock. Although the country annually consumes 60-70 lakh tonnes of imported rock, MGMCL's rock is failing to attract even the government-owned rock buyers.

"Unless the company gets a permanent customer like Bangladesh Railway or the Roads and Highways Department, the MGMCL will be facing deeper financial crisis in future," said a competent source. Bangladesh Railway alone consumes 15-20 lakh tonnes of rock.

Sources said all the boulder rock produced at the mine is selling quickly but the crushed granite that constitutes 80 percent of the

production has remained unsold because the size is not in demand.

Operating with a loan of Tk 16 crore from Petrobangla and three of its affiliates, the MGMCL has so far earned Tk 7 crore mainly by selling boulders to the Water Development Board.

North Korean trading company Namnam, formed in 1992 and based in Bangladesh, built the mine at least eight years behind schedule under a contract signed in 1994.

An official of the mining authority said, "Namnam has installed a crushing and sorting plant that sorts and crushes rock inappropriately leaving those undersized." He added that since the plant was installed the MGMCL has repeatedly requested Namnam to change the design.

Namnam authorities argue that the plant was built as requested by Petrobangla and delivered at the end of the mine's construction and that the MGMCL never requested

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Govt working to get AL, BNP support for credible polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman yesterday said the caretaker government is working to enlist support of the country's two large political parties in its ongoing efforts to ensure a credible and meaningful general elections and a stable post-election situation.

"Like Awami League (AL), BNP is also a major political party with large populist support-base. That is why we are trying to include both the major parties (BNP and AL) into our efforts," he told reporters yesterday morning emerging from the inaugural ceremony of the first biennial conference of Bangladesh Economic Association (BEA), Chittagong chapter.

Zillur said the government's prime objective is to create confidence among different political parties, the people and the nation.

"The government is moving forward by harmonising legal procedures and humanitarian aspects to get rid of the present crisis so that an atmosphere of

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Taliban attack helps 1,100 inmates flee Afghan jail

AP, AFP, Kandahar

More than 1,100 prisoners escaped during a brazen Taliban bomb and rocket attack on the main prison in southern Afghanistan that knocked down the front gate and demolished a prison floor, officials said yesterday.

Afghan officials said that at least 15 security guards were found dead.

The complex attack late Friday included a truck bombing at the main gate, a suicide bomber who struck a back wall and rockets fired from inside the prison courtyard, setting off a series of explosions that rattled Kandahar, the country's second biggest city.

A Taliban spokesman, Qari Yousef Ahmadi, said 30 insurgents on motorbikes and two suicide bombers attacked Sarposha Prison

and freed about 400 Taliban members.

One of the militants who escaped, Abdul Nafai, called an Associated Press reporter and said the insurgents had minibuses waiting outside the prison during the attack and that dozens of militants fled the scene in the vehicles.

Police official Mohammad Jamal Khan said more than 1,100

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Khaleda's cantonment house cleaned up in release anticipation

Party wants govt to act on its own to free her

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detained BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's cantonment residence is being cleaned up in anticipation of her release, though the former prime minister has yet to appeal to the government.

Party leaders said they would not submit any petition to the

caretaker government for their chief's release. They want the government to act on its own to free her without attaching any strings.

Sources close to Zia family said the Shaheed Moynul Road house is being tidied up in the hope that Khaleda would be released anytime next week.

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'RELEASE OF POLITICIANS' Parties react sharply to Dr Kamal's remarks

UNB, Dhaka

In a latest fracas in the political arena, major political parties dismissed as "wails from a broken heart" Dr Kamal Hossain's remarks perceivedly against the release of Sheikh Hasina and a move to release Khaleda Zia.

Awami League, BNP and Workers Party leaders told the UNB that they did not expect such comments from a "guardian" like Dr

Kamal Hossain who virtually termed Hasina and Khaleda corrupt and rebuked the caretaker government for releasing Sheikh Hasina and its move to set free Khaleda Zia.

Acting Awami League General Secretary Syed Ahsrafur Islam said, "He is our guardian. We don't expect indecorous remarks from him. We expect sober comments from him."

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4 of a family killed in road crash

UNB, Habiganj

Four members of a family were killed when an ambulance skidded off the Dhaka-Sylhet highway and fell into a ditch at Bezura in Madhabpur upazila early yesterday.

The dead were identified as Dr Mujibur Rahman, 52, of Akhlu sub-health complex in Sadar upazila of Moulvibazar district, his wife Nazma Begum, 40, son

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Pakistan lift Kitply Cup

MOHAMMAD ISAM

Pakistan buried their off-field issues to lift the Kitply Cup trophy with a 25-run victory against India in the blockbuster final at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Dhaka last night.

First it was the 205-run second-wicket stand between man-of-the-series Salman Butt and man-of-

the-match Younis Khan, who both got centuries, that took them to a formidable total of 315 for 3 and later, it was Umar Gul's four-wicket haul that made sure India were halted at 290 in the penultimate over.

With 32 runs required from the last two overs, India still had an outside chance and when skipper

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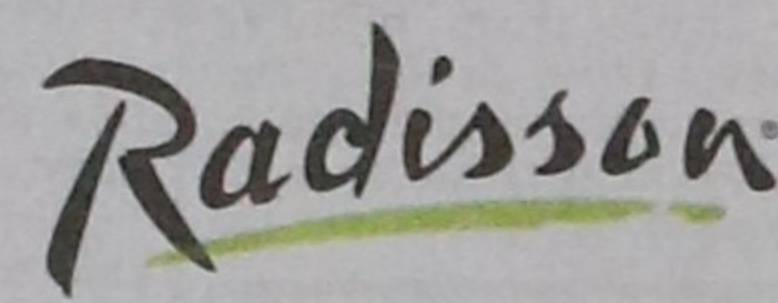
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