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Lagoons of deadly fishes

Regular drive a must to stop breeding in all 16 water bodies

HELEMUL ALAM

It was 3:00pm on Monday. A man and a woman were busy catching fish in a lagoon of the waste treatment plant in Pagla of Narayanganj. The lagoon was just next to another lagoon where poison was applied on August 30 to kill the fish in it as they were contaminated with heavy metals.

Noticing The Daily Star correspondent the two packed up their gear and started to flee with a bag half full of fish. They took the fish to their home half a kilometre away.

"I am not a fisherman... I am just catching fish which I eat regularly," claimed Dulal, who was catching fish along with his wife.

Like Dulal about 30 people of the area are involved in catching the deadly fish a major portion of the catch end up at different kitchen markets, said locals.

The Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) in association with the department of fisheries applied chemicals in two of the 16 lagoons of the plant to kill the fish as part of their yearly drive. The dead fish were later collected and burned.

"Wasa will carry out another drive soon and permission to kill fish in the other lagoons has been sought at the Wasa head office Monday," said Executive Engineer of Wasa Kamrul Hossain Bhuiyan. Wasa killed the fish of the 16 lagoons in July last year, said another official.

The drive was not very successful as the number of fish in the lagoons grew within a short period of time and fishing started again. There is a nexus of

security guards and fishermen, locals said.

A shopkeeper in the area told The Daily Star that around 30 people of the area, including areas surrounding Dhaka Match Factory, Nichandapur and Kadamtali, are involved in catching fish in the lagoons and selling them in Pagla kitchen market, Match Factory kitchen market and Jatrabari kitchen market.

A section of ansars of Wasa, who

are supposed to prevent fishing in the lagoons, allows people to catch fish at night taking Tk 100 to Tk 200 bribe, he said.

One person can catch at least 15kg fish a night, said Basir, a resident of Rasulpur.

Executive Engineer Kamrul refuted the allegation of ansars' involvement. "It is a false allegation... the 20 ansars deployed to prevent fishing round the clock are doing their best. Sometimes it is

not possible to guard the entire area with a few ansars," he said.

"We have submitted a proposal to build proper boundary walls and when the walls are done we will be able to prevent fishing," he said.

Wasa banned fishing and fish cultivation in the lagoons around 10 years ago as the fish of the lagoons contained too much metal. The lagoons contain human

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Dhaka Wasa last week poisoned deadly fish in two of its 16 lagoons of the Pagla water treatment plant in Narayanganj. The effort often goes in vain as locals fish in the other lagoons and sell the toxic catch in nearby markets.

Storm lashes two upazilas of Jamalpur: 20 hurt

UNB, Jamalpur

At least 20 people were injured and over 200 houses damaged as storm lashed two upazilas of the district early yesterday.

The affected upazilas are Melandaha and Madangan. In Melandaha, the storm hit Rikhipara, Telipara, Chinapara, Paharipatal and Gumarpara villages at around 3:00am, damaging over 200 thatched houses and injuring ten people.

Of the injured, two were admitted to the upazila health complex while the rest given first aid.

The storm swept Bajiterpara village of Madangan upazila at the same time, leaving 10 people injured and damaging some thatched houses.

The injured are undergoing treatment at the upazila health complex.

Tigers' final ODI today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh cricket team have one last chance to salvage pride when they take on world champions Australia in the third one-day international at the TIO Stadium in Darwin today.

The Tigers have already lost the series 0-2 and have to save face after two consecutive drubbings.

They were easily beaten by eight wickets in the second one-dayer while in the first game, the Tigers were bowled out for 74 and lost by a demoralising 180 runs.

The batting has been to blame, as they have scored 74 and 117 in two games while the bowling has lacked penetration.

The match, to be telecast live on STAR Cricket and Super Sport, will begin at 6:00am.

Sehri, Iftar timings				
Ramadan	Sep	Sehri	Iftar	
5	6			6-15
6	7	4-21		6-14
7	8	4-21		6-13

Prayer Timing		
September 6		
Fajr	Azan	Jamaat
5:45	4:21	4:27
Zohr	12:45	1:15
Asr	4:45	5:00
Maghrib	6:15	6:25
Esha	7:45	8:15

Source: Islamic Foundation

Zardari likely to win today's presidential polls

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's presidential hopefuls began a final push for support yesterday on the eve of an election that slain opposition leader Benazir Bhutto's widow is expected to win.

Asif Ali Zardari is the frontrunner in a three-way race to take power in a country riven by Islamic militancy and economic turmoil.

Security will be raised on election day, officials have told AFP, and Zardari has already moved house due to fears of attempts being made on his life, just nine months after Bhutto was killed at a campaign rally.

Tensions rose further after a failed assassination attempt on Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, whose car was hit by sniper fire on Wednesday as it drove to meet him at an airport.

Zardari will face a multitude of problems if he wins a secret ballot among lawmakers and takes charge of a nuclear-armed state



Asif Ali Zardari

where bombings and suicide attacks have killed nearly 1,200 people in the past year.

Pakistan's economy is backsliding with inflation rampant and a volatile political situation contributing to a 40 percent fall on the stock market since January, in a country already reliant on foreign aid.

The unrest that has struck the nation has been attributed to

militants angry at former president Pervez Musharraf's support for the United States and its "war on terror."

Musharraf's resignation triggered Saturday's election but his military policy is likely to continue with Zardari.

The 53-year-old presidential hopeful has said that Pakistan will continue to back the US in its efforts to defeat terrorism if he is elected.

"I will work to defeat the domestic Taliban insurgency and to ensure that Pakistani territory is not used to launch terrorist attacks on our neighbours or on Nato forces in Afghanistan," he said in a Washington Post article.

"We stand with the United States, Britain, Spain and others who have been attacked."

Islamabad is heavily dependent on the billions of dollars that have headed here since Musharraf backed the US after the September 11 attacks in 2001, and in its subsequent invasion of Afghanistan.

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Eid shoppers crowd Gausia Market area yesterday, the first weekend in Ramadan. City dwellers start early shopping as it gets difficult for them to visit the popular malls while the items become pricey days ahead of Eid.

N'ganj factory owners demand adequate gas supply

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Industrialists from Narayanganj's Araihaaz, Rugganj and Bhulta belt yesterday called for adequate gas supply to their units immediately for smooth production.

They said if factories cannot rev to full production, it would be hard for them to pay their workers.

About 700 small and big factories, including spinning, weaving and dyeing mills, chemical factories and steel mills are grappling with immense production losses due to inadequate gas supply or low gas pressure, they said at a press conference at the Jatiya Press Club.

Araihaaz and Rugganj

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'Anti-graft drive slows down as govt now giving priority to poll'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) Chairman Prof Muzaffer Ahmad yesterday said the caretaker government's anti-corruption drive is slowing down as it is now giving more importance to the parliamentary election to be held in December.

"The caretaker government is now more busy with holding the next parliamentary election. The anti-corruption drive is now getting less priority," Prof Muzaffer told reporters after a debate award ceremony.

Asked about the effectiveness of the anti-corruption drive since many accused are getting released on bail, he said the bail system

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Prices of veg, oil fall

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The prices of some commodities, including green chilli, aubergine and cucumber, came down in the kitchen markets yesterday.

However, the prices of other commodities remained stable. The price of non-brand edible oil dropped further in the wholesale and retail markets in the city.

The price of green chilli that witnessed a soaring price of Tk 100-120 per kg went down to Tk 65-100 per kg in the retail markets yesterday.

The price of aubergine came down by Tk 10-15 per kg yesterday. A kg of aubergine was sold at Tk 35-65 per kg yesterday while the price went up to Tk 45-80 a kg two days ago.

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Aman production cost to rise in 16 N-dists

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

Aman production cost is likely to rise significantly this season in the 16 northern districts due to higher prices of fertilisers and other farm inputs, according to a Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) field level survey.

Asked about this, DAE officials in Bogra said production cost of Aman rice this season has been estimated at Tk 28.80 per kg on an average in the northern region compared Tk 20.79 per kg last season.

And production cost of Aman paddy, which was Tk 14.20 a kg last season, might go up by Tk 5.40 a kg

this season.

Price rise of fertilisers, fuel, pesticide, seeds and other inputs and higher wages of farm workers account for the increased cost of Aman cultivation, the officials said.

Farmers will have to bear an additional expenditure of about Tk 3,500 crore this season to achieve the targeted production of Aman rice, said the DAE officials.

Production target of Aman rice has been fixed at about 43.31 lakh tonnes with 17.18 lakh hectares of land under Aman cultivation in the northern districts this season.

DAE estimates said farmers in the region will have to spend about

Tk 12,473 crore for Aman cultivation this season as against about Tk 9,004 crore last season to produce nearly the same quantity of rice.

Production cost has risen to Tk 72,613 per hectare this season from Tk 52,581 last season.

A senior DAE official mentioned that price of Triple Super Phosphate (TSP) has risen to around Tk 73 per kg from Tk 28 over the last few months. Cost of seeds has increased to Tk 1,020 per hectare from about Tk 750 during this period.

Farmer Mohammed Ali of village Tarafartaj in Gabtoli upazila of Bogra told this correspondent

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450 Bangladeshi job seekers without food, water in Riyadh

STAR REPORT

Around 450 Bangladeshi workers have been stranded in the Saudi capital Riyadh with no food and water as their employer said they arrived in the country well ahead of schedule, the Arab News reported Thursday.

Meantime, Foreign Affairs Adviser Iftakhar Ahmed Chowdhury yesterday said the Kuwaiti government assured him of every effort to resolve the problems faced by Bangladeshi workers there, reports UNB.

Citing a Bangladesh Embassy official in Riyadh, the Arab News said the local Bangladeshi mission

has been arranging food and other provisions on a daily basis for the stranded workers for the last four days.

The employer, Arsee Contracting Company, who hired the Bangladeshis on job visas however claimed that the problem was over and that 300 of the workers were dispatched to different locations with jobs.

"The remaining 150 workers will also be employed on Saturday," said the company's spokesman using a single name, Ejaz.

He said the recruitment company in Bangladesh sent the workers all at a time, ignoring the firm's

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Shibir cadre Nasir's aide arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, CTG

Detectives yesterday arrested topnotch criminal Jahangir Alam who was reportedly the bodyguard of detained Shibir cadre Nasir.

Son of late Hafizur Rahman, Jahangir, 50, hails from Dharmapur of Fatikchhari upazila. He was wanted in eight cases.

Acting on a tip-off, a DB team led by Assistant Commissioner (AC) Wahidul Hoque Chowdhury raided the Majitertek area under Karnaphuli Police Station at around 3:00pm and arrested him.

Police said Jahangir sent hired killers to kill expatriate businessman Gunnu Mia and his brother-in-law Rashed in the Karnaphuli Market area on Tuesday.

On receiving the information, the law enforcers from Kotwali

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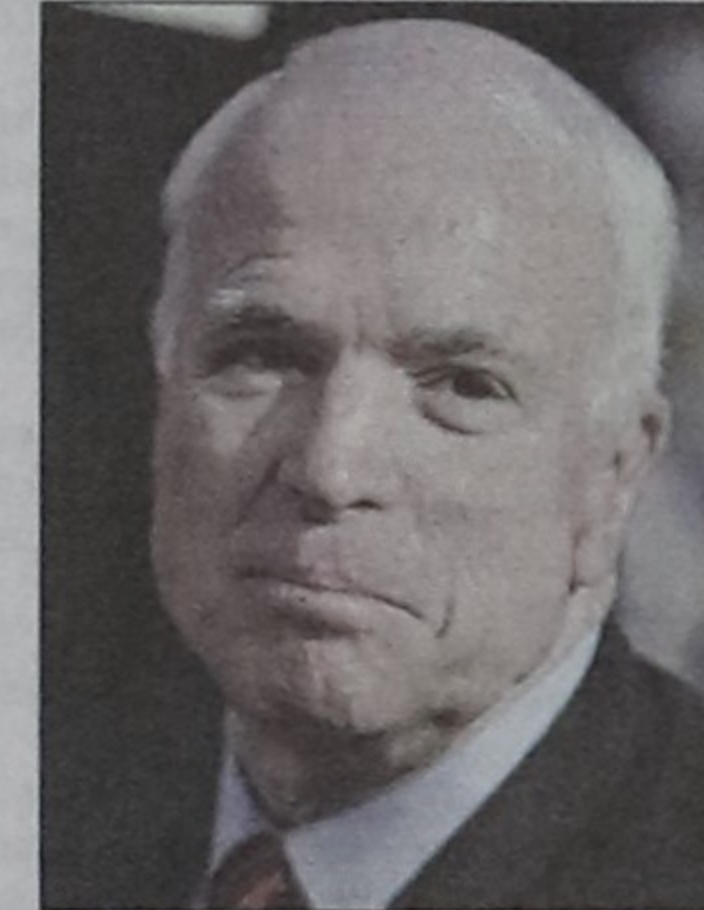
McCain accepts nomination, to fight for political change

AFP, St Paul

John McCain vowed to fight for America as long as he draws breath, in a patriotic pledge to bring political change as he accepted the Republican presidential nomination.

The 72-year-old war hero and free spirit senator offered himself as a warrior to fight one final battle for his country, arguing a character forged in war gave him the judgement and vision to lead from the White House.

"I don't mind a good fight," said McCain, who appeared on stage late Thursday in a white spotlight following a video extolling his



John McCain

heroic story as a Vietnam war prisoner, "a man who found his strength in a tiny dank cell miles from home."

McCain's speech ushered in the critical phase of the US election, a frenetic cross-country marathon including three face-to-face debates, which will decide whether he, or Democrat Barack Obama moves into the White House.

"In the end, it matters less that you can fight. What you fight for is the real test," said McCain, exactly two months from election day.

McCain, who has a reputation of bucking party's orthodoxy, promised he and vice presidential

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