

# National unity, political will needed to save rivers

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a discussion yesterday said national unity as well as political will is needed to save the country's rivers from dying.

Environment is getting endangered, as the rivers are becoming extinct due to frequent withdrawal of water from the rivers and decrease of navigability, they added.

Styled 'Save Rivers, Save Country,' the discussion was organised by Nodi Shashon Pani Sangskar O Babbar Sangram Parishad, a platform struggling to save rivers, at the Institute of Diploma Engineers Bangladesh (IDE) to mark its 15th anniversary.

sary.

The speakers recommended developing proper diplomatic strategies to get the proper portion of water needed for the country from the rivers crossing Indian, Chinese and Nepalese borders.

Presenting a keynote paper at the discussion, Member Secretary of the platform Mohammad Tarikuzzaman Reza said river problem is one of the main national problems and it should be resolved with proper political decision and a national unity is needed in this regard.

"The projects to save the rivers undertaken by any government should not be changed by any other governments and that should be ensured in the country," he said.

It is high time to save our rivers,

he said, adding initiatives should be taken immediately in this regard and political parties should also address the problem with high priority.

Former secretary Syed Marghub Morshed said Dhaka city can be made a more livable and environment-friendly if the waterways around the city would have more navigability and threats of floods would be less in the city.

Chairman of Civil Engineering Department at Stamford University Prof Zahirul Islam, Prof Asaduzzaman Khan, Awami League leader Faiz Uddin Mia and engineers Dewan solaiman Ahmed and Sadar Uddin also spoke.

শিল্পবর্জন পরিবেশ দৃষ্টি: আমাদের করণায়  
৭ম প্রচ্ছন্ন প্রকল্প  
বালাদেশ পরিবেশ আইনবিদী সমিতি (বেলা)  
পরিবেশ বাচাও আন্দোলন (পবা)



Abu Naser Khan speaks at a seminar at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right are Sirajul Islam, Prof Jasim Uddin and Syeda Rezwana Hasan.

## 2,000 industrial units release toxic wastes in city

UNB, Dhaka

At least 2,000 industrial units operating in the city are constantly releasing toxic wastes polluting the environment at an alarming rate that result in spreading of diseases, including cancer.

Director of Environment Mohammad Shahjahan said this at a seminar on 'Threats on environment and public life from industrial waste' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (Bela) and Panibesh Bachao Andolan (Paba) jointly organised the seminar with former vice chancellor of Jahangirnagar University Prof Jasim Uddin in the chair.

Environmentalists called on the government to ask every industrial unit to set up effluent treatment plant (ETP).

Shahjahan said more than 2,000 industrial units within the city release toxic wastes that are polluting the environment at an alarming rate. They have visited 694 units of which 471 are extremely required ETPs.

Abdul Gani, a teacher of Buet, said, "I have tested in the laboratory leaves and edible foods and vegetable plants in industrial area of Savar. Toxic elements like lead, copper, zinc, chromium, cadmium, arsenic, nickel and iron originated from industrial wastes were found in all those tested."

The toxic elements in leaves, vegetables and food items are causing cancer, respiration problem, kidney infection and such other diseases, he added.

Leaders of both the organisations said few industrial units have

ETPs, but those are kept out of function.

Speakers noted with concern that the government had directed the owners of such industries to submit schedule of setting up ETP by June 30 last. FBCCI had also assured of obeying the government order but failed.

They underlined the importance of making the people conscious of the gravity of health hazards caused by toxic industrial wastes, adding that the government

should be very strict in abiding by the rule of setting up ETP by industrial units to save the environment from population.

They said toxic elements of industrial wastes get mixed with vegetables and foods, causing a number of serious diseases in human body.

Syeda Rezwana Hasan, Abdul Gani and Sheikh Muhammad Shahidullah also spoke at the programme.

## Tk 1,200cr project for export infrastructure dev

BSS, Dhaka

An export infrastructure development project worth Tk 1200 crore has been approved to reduce growing pressure of export and import in the Chittagong port.

The project, which includes an inland container depot (ICD) at Dhirashrom near Tongi, construction of double railway lines from Chittagong Port to Faujdarhat, and procurement of 10 railway engines and 120 flat wagons, has received the approval of the project committee of the Planning Commission.

The process for approval of the export infrastructure development project began in 2003. But the process was delayed and the construction work could not begin by June 2008. Now, the construction work under the project will begin in

November 2009 and will be completed in 2014, Bangladesh Railway sources said.

After completion of the project, there will be a scope for handling 15 percent of the containers in Chittagong through the ICD by 2016 and 30 percent by 2026.

The Shridham ICD under the project will be the country's second ICD with a capacity of 3.54 TEUs (twenty equivalent units). The ICD will be constructed on 137 acres of land at a cost of Tk 500 crore.

The country's first ICD was constructed at Kamalapur in 1987. Its capacity is 90,000 TEUs. Pressure is increasing on the ICD every year since its inception.

In fiscal 2007-08, a total of 82,000 containers were handled in the ICD. But this number is only 10 percent of the containers handled in the Chittagong Port.

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## Obituary

DU CORRESPONDENT

Kazi Shamsul Alam, father of Kazi Hasan Bin Shams, superintending engineer of Chittagong Development Authority, passed away at a hospital in New York, USA on Saturday at the age of 72, according to the American News Agency (ANA).

He left behind his wife, three sons and a host of admirers to mourn his death.

He will be buried today after reaching his body for USA.

Hazrat Ali Debol

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Hazrat Ali Debol, a cultural figure in Tangail, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at Tangail General Hospital on Saturday at the age of 46.

He left behind his two wives, three sons and one daughter to mourn his death.

He was buried at his family graveyard.

Activists of different cultural organisations in Tangail expressed deep shock at his death.

## Weather Today

### Light rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershower accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over all the six divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy rainfalls are also likely at places during the period, Met Office.

Highest temperature 35 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessor and lowest 23.0 degrees Celsius at Rangpur.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:10pm today and rises at 5:42am tomorrow.

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

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in percentage
Dhaka	33.3	26.6
Chittagong	32.0	25.5
Rajshahi	33.4	25.2
Khulna	34.2	26.4
Barisal	33.4	26.1
Sylhet	34.5	24.5
Cox's Bazar	32.6	25.5
	Max	Min
	Morning	Evening

### Condolence meeting

A condolence meeting will be held to pay respect to lyricist Prof Moniruzzaman. Venue: Central Shaheed Minar premises. Time: 3:00pm.

### Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 12th death anniversary of Comdr Abdus Shaheed, a politician, journalist and writer, says a press release.

On the occasion, a discussion will be held at 4:00pm at Taxes Bar Association auditorium in the city.



Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed distributes relief among the flood-affected people at Chandanbaisha union under Sariakandi upazila in Bogra and Khokhabari union under Sadar upazila in Sirajganj yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

Release Khaleda, withdraw cases against Tarique US BNP demands  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US chapter of BNP and its front organisations demanded immediate release of party chairperson Khaleda Zia and withdrawal of all cases against Tarique Rahman, reports US-based news agency NewsWorld.

In a statement they also said they would stage demonstration in front of the White House if Khaleda is not released immediately.

The former premier was detained irrationally during the month of Ramadan, the statement added.

They also protested the 'assault' to some BNP leaders on the day of Tarique's release and urged the BNP leaders and activists to remain united.

Project to improve quality of university edn  
METRO DESK

The government and the World Bank have recently appraised the proposed Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project which is expected to improve the quality of teaching and research environment in universities, strengthen the institutional capacity and effectiveness of the higher education sector and raise connectivity of the universities both among themselves and with the academic communities abroad, says a press release.

The proposed project would provide support mainly in three areas. First, the project would support initiatives by universities and their departments aimed at improving quality and relevance of teaching and learning facilities.

This support would be provided through an Academic Innovation Fund, a flexible instrument awarding additional resources, on a competitive basis, to departments and universities submitting the best proposals to improve programmes and university-wide facilities. Participants in this competition will be totally voluntary.

Speakers said the nation cannot be self-reliant leaving a huge number of people illiterate.

Most of the farmers of the country cannot read or write the labels on seeds, insecticides, fertiliser and packs of agro-products, causing improper application of these which very often result in production fall in agriculture, they added.

Speakers further said continuous efforts involving educated citizens is a must to make a huge number of illiterate people literate in the country.

They also underlined the importance of setting up literacy camps in each union across the country.

Non-government organisations, including FBCCI, press clubs and cultural organisations, should come forward with initiatives at district and upazila levels to remove illiteracy, they added.

They also stressed on spontaneous voluntary service with involvement of teachers of non-government schools, colleges, madrasas and jobless educated youths to reach the goal.

Speakers said the nation cannot be self-reliant leaving a huge number of people illiterate.

The right of education is no longer a privilege for the chosen few, United Nation (UN) has declared education as fundamental right for all, they added.

Besides, departments, participating on a voluntary basis, will also have the opportunity and support to assess their own strengths and weaknesses and act accordingly to improve quality of provision of education.

Secondly, the project would help build capacity both at UGC and in universities enabling them to fulfil their respective missions.

Activities in this area would include building strategic planning capacity at UGC, developing a strong sectoral monitoring, evaluation and planning system, including a Higher Education Management Information System both at UGC and at universities, developing a digital library to create access to global electronic publications for universities, providing training facilities to universities so that they can access Innovation Fund and make use of it effectively, if granted.

Thirdly, the government and the World Bank have also agreed, after extensive consultation with the universities, on the establishment of a Bangladesh Research and Education Network (BREDN).

Under this component of the project, a high performance Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) network will provide high speed connectivity among higher education and research institutions in both the public and private sector to enable academicians, scientists, researchers and students engaged in higher education and research to communicate with their peers.

BDR will also be connected with other regional and trans-continental RENs and thus link faculty and students of Bangladesh to the global academic community and learning resources. It is expected to facilitate international collaborative research and catalyze innovation in the country.

Cardiac patients receive free consultations at Birdeem

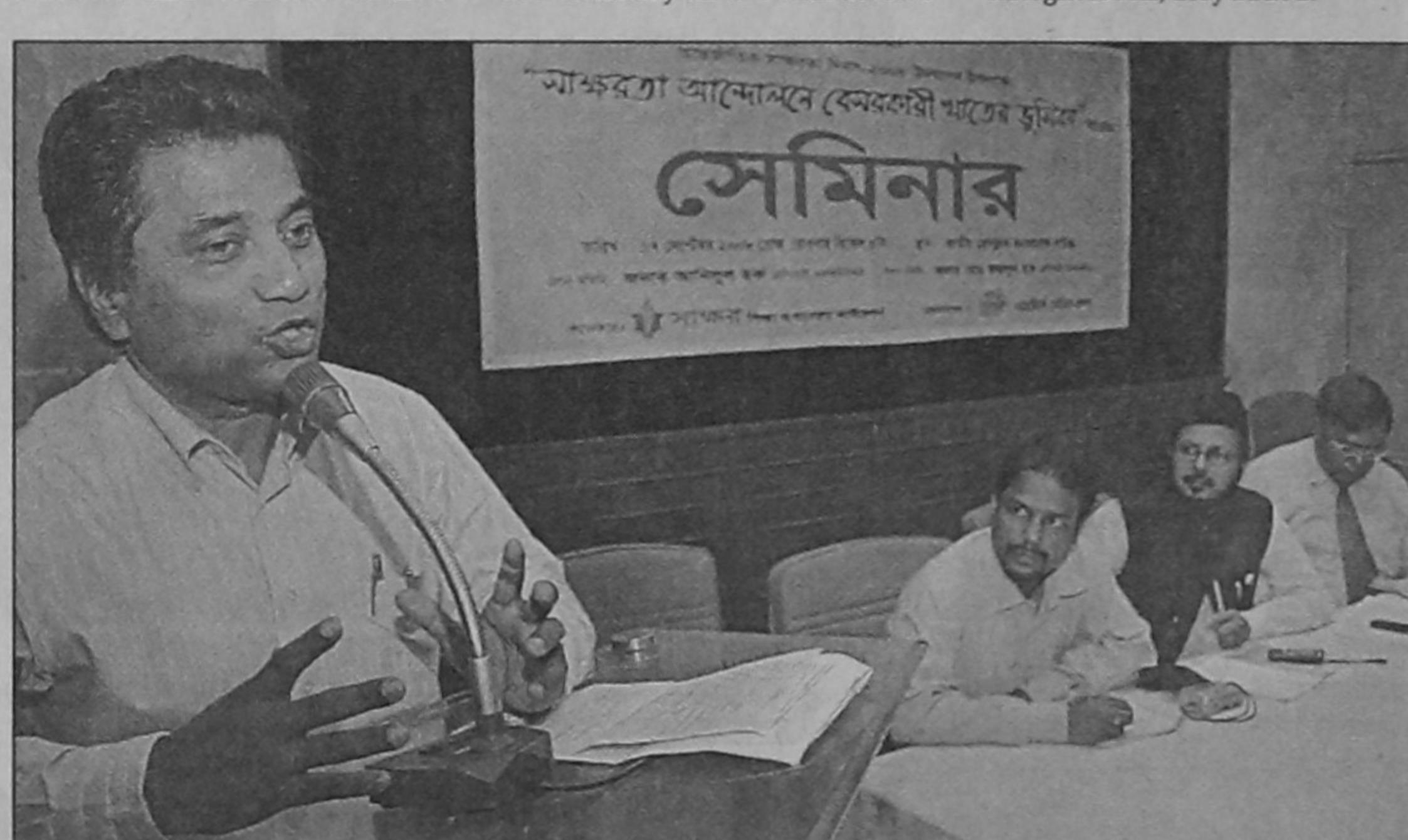
BSS, Dhaka

Around 100 cardiac patients received free consultations at 'Free Heart Camp' at Birdeem Hospital in the city on Saturday.

Ibrahim Cardiac Hospital and Research Institute of Bangladesh Institute of Research and Rehabilitation in Diabetic Endocrine and Metabolic Disorder (Birdeem) organised the medical camp for heart patients.

Apart from the consultations, special discounts were offered for some tests and open-heart surgery.

Chief Executive Officer of Birdeem Prof M Maksudul Haque, senior consultants, nurses and technicians took part in the camp.



Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) President Annisul Huq speaks at a seminar on the role of private sectors in literacy movement at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

## Students, bus staffs clash in city: 10 hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 10 people were injured in a clash between the students of Shamoli Ideal Technical Institute and bus employees at Mohammadpur in the city yesterday.

The angry students ransacked at least 12 vehicles. Police detained three of the students.

Sources said the clash ensued at around 11:30am following a quarrel over the bus fare.

Boarding a Latrabari-bound bus on route 12, the students offered half the fares, which the bus employees refused and forced them to get down the bus at Mohammadpur Town Hall. It angered the students and started ransacking the buses.

The bus employees and the students chased each other, leaving at least 10 people injured.

Later, police rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. They also arrested three students.

Mohammad Hafizul Islam, officer-in-charge (OC) of Mohammadpur police, told The Daily Star that they are trying to

## BUS ROBBERY BID Bandit killed in police firing