

Something stinky in Wasa water supply

Excessive use of chemicals, river pollution blamed

HELEMUL ALAM

For the past one week, residents in different parts of the capital are struggling to deal with a rather unpleasant whiff in the water supply.

The areas affected by the stinky water supplied by Wasa include Kamalapur, Gopibagh, Mugdara, Maniknagar, Jatrabari, Khilgaon, Chowdhuripara, Basab, Nayatola, Shantinagar, Rampura and parts of Mirpur.

It is not just the residential areas that are affected since establishments in the city's commercial hub Motijheel and The Daily Star's Karwan Bazar office also have to deal with the situation.

Basir Mahmud Ilias who works at Mizan Homeo Pharmacy of Toyenbee Circular Road complained that the filthy water smelt like rotten jute, so he dared not take a sip.

Gopibagh resident Saynuddin said: "We have to collect water from a deep tube-well at the Balu Math every day as we cannot drink this water because it smells really bad."

Istiaq, a resident of Rampura, said taking a bath was a real nuisance because he had to apply a body spray to get rid of the disgusting odour. Not even boiling the water was any use.

"I have to buy a bottle of mineral water daily for my five-year-old daughter,"

explained Anis, another resident of the area.

Wasa officials blamed river pollution and the use of additional chemicals at the Sayedabad water treatment plant for the crisis.

Md Nurul Islam, an executive engineer of Wasa, acknowledged the plant currently used more chemicals during the dry season since pollution levels in the surface water always remained high.

However there was no risk after consumption. The only noticeable change would be in the taste of the treated water.

In an effort to tackle the problem Wasa has decided to set up a pre-treatment unit

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Leopard beaten to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Villagers beat a leopard to death at Bangaon village under Ranishankoil upazila in Thakurgaon yesterday afternoon.

Police and local people said the animal, coming out of its hiding from a wheat field, suddenly attacked and injured five people at about 3:00pm.

The injured are Aliub Ali, 37, Wahab Ali, 40, Abdur Razzak, 32, Ataur Rahaman, 32, and Azhar Ali, 26.

Hearing their screams, villagers rushed to the spot and beat the leopard with iron rods, sticks and spears to death.

Later, the locals hung it

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PHOTO: QUAMRUL ISLAM RUBAIYAT

Carcass of the leopard, beaten to death after it attacked villagers, is hung on a tree at Bangaon village under Ranishankoil upazila in Thakurgaon yesterday.

Cruel father kills 2 kids

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A father drowned his two children in a pond at Purbo Mudaka village in Tongi on Tuesday night.

Police arrested Abdul Huq, 32, a farmer, who admitted to killing his two-year-old son Ratul and four-year-old daughter Chhobi.

Hearing the news, their mother Fahima Begum went unconscious.

The villagers said Abdul Huq drowned his two children in a pond near his house at about 9:00pm while Fahima was busy with household chores. Their neighbours noticed two bodies floating in the pond at about 10:00pm.

Police recovered the bodies and sent those to the Gazipur

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100 heritage sites listed

Gazette notification soon to conserve those

TAWFIQUE ALI

The government is all set to publish a gazette notification within next week to urgently conserve around one hundred buildings and sites that are parts of the country's national heritage in the capital.

Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk), to this effect, sent the gazette notification on Tuesday to the government press for publication, sources said.

Once the gazette is published no enlisted heritage property can be demolished, reconstructed, altered, and modified in the name of development without approval of the government's Nagar Unnyan Committee (NUC).

The public and works secretary heads the high-powered NUC. A standing committee, formed by the NUC on June 23 last with the government's chief architect as its convenor, submitted its first-phase list of 93 heritage buildings and four areas in the 400-years-old capital city to the works ministry on December 4.

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SHANKHARIBAZAR Injured old woman dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An elderly woman, who was injured Monday in a partial collapse of ceiling of a century-old building in the city's Shankharibazar area, succumbed to her injury at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) yesterday.

Sources said Kanchanlata, 65, died at about 10:00am after she was taken to the hospital Tuesday night.

Three women sustained injuries in partial collapse of ceiling of the old building Monday night.

Following the collapse, Kanchanlata was taken to Mitford hospital. Her family members then brought her back home from the hospital

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52 civilians killed in Lanka fighting

Govt predicts imminent victory over rebels

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's president said yesterday the Tamil Tiger rebels were on the verge of defeat, but dozens of civilians were reported killed as fierce fighting continued in Asia's longest-running civil war.

In a national day address, President Mahinda Rajapakse said he was confident the Tigers would be finished within days, even as the United States and Britain called for a ceasefire to get trapped civilians to safety.

With the rebels' campaign for a separate Tamil homeland ravaged, a UN spokesman said heavy shelling had killed more than 50 civilians and forced the evacuation of the only hospital in the battle zone.

Rajapakse said the "shadows of terrorism have almost been wiped out," with the last

remnants of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) -- who launched their militant struggle in 1972 -- cornered in the jungle.

"I am confident that the Tigers will be completely defeated in a few days," he said.

A military offensive over the past year has dismantled the Tigers' mini-state in northern Sri Lanka, where the rebels have lost 98 percent of the territory once under their control.

UN spokesman Gordon Weiss told AFP that at least 52 civilians were killed in one shelling attack late Tuesday.

"We don't know who is responsible or how many shells hit, but we have this report from our staff," he said adding the region's only hospital was evacuated on Wednesday after 16 hours of shelling, including a cluster bomb attack.

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Reshuffle in admin again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday made further reshuffle at the top level of the civil administration.

Social Welfare Secretary Sunil Kanti Bose has been transferred to the Post and Telecommunications Ministry.

Besides, six additional secretaries, who were attached to the Establishment Ministry as officer on special duty (OSD), got new postings.

Of them, Mohammad Majidul Karim was posted to Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad Secretariat, Rafiqul Islam to Election Commission Secretariat, Mostafa Kamal to Commerce Ministry, AZM Shafiqul Alam to Agriculture

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No children's corner at Boi Mela

RAKIB AHAMMED

Holding his mother's hand, tiny Hridoy was hurrying her from one corner of the fair to another to look for a book he could buy.

His mother Mita Islam wasn't happy at all about the stall layout at the Ekushey Boi Mela this year.

"We have been moving around for half an hour now. There is no children's corner and it's not easy to walk from

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Visitors gather at the stall of Liberation War Museum at Amar Ekushey Boi Mela yesterday to see photos, clippings and other memorabilia related to the war.

Thailand denies fresh migrant abuse claims

AFP, Bangkok

Thailand's government yesterday denied fresh allegations of cruelty towards boat people from Myanmar, after migrants found off the coast of Indonesia told of being beaten and dragged out to sea.

About 200 men from the minority Muslim Rohingya group were found in a boat off northern Sumatra island on Monday, saying they had spent three weeks at sea after Thailand cast them adrift, Indonesian navy officials have said.

They are the latest batch of Rohingya found off nearby countries in recent months with similar stories of mistreatment at the hands of Thai armed forces, in embarrassing allegations for the kingdom's six-week-old government.

"Please wait for the Indonesian official investigation -- don't believe the foreign media reports," said Thai Foreign Minister Kasit Piromya of the alleged abuse.

Deputy Prime Minister Suthep Thaugsuban insisted all migrants were treated well, but said that Thailand would expel any Rohingya arriving on its shores.

"I want to reaffirm that the Thai authorities have treated Rohingya under international humanitarian principles," he said.

"Please be aware that they are entering the country illegally -- we will not allow them to live here."

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2.93 lakh cases pending with HC

Says law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday said as many as 2.93 lakh cases are pending with the High Court (HC) and number of such cases is much higher at lower courts causing untold sufferings to litigants.

The government is considering reintroducing the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) system by amending Civil Procedure

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