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The Daily Star honoured for environment campaign

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Daily Star has received the National Environment Award 2009 in environment education and campaign category, for promotion of

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PM pledges to evict all river grabbers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday made a strong pledge to evict those who have encroached upon rivers irrespective of their identity and strength.

"I want to declare unequivocally that whoever the encroachers are, however powerful they are, they will be evicted," she said while addressing a programme organised on the occasion of the World Environment Day 2009.

Whatever it costs, the government will retrieve the country's river system, which is now in a severely constricted condition because of pollution and encroachment, she said.

Hasina said the government is taking initiatives to formulate an integrated policy and plan to save the country's environment and rivers from pollution and preserve water resources.

She urged all to prepare for coping with the

gradually changing climate regime and engage in environment-friendly activities in their everyday life as Bangladesh is at the forefront to receive the adverse impact of climate change.

The Department of Environment of the environment and forest ministry organised the programme at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium.

"All our rivers have lost the free flow they had in the past because of heavy silt deposition," Hasina said. Once the rivers are given back their original navigability, the frequent overflowing will cease, reducing the negative impacts of the global climate change in the region, she added.

Since time immemorial, the ample river system of Bangladesh has maintained the environmental balance in the region, she said. But the quality of water of the rivers contiguous to Dhaka has so deteriorated so much that it is no more fit for any use, she observed.

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- Countrywide dredging programme starts with the Jamuna soon.
- Long-term river management plan under prime minister's supervision.
- Industries would be forced to install effluent treatment plants.
- Stern action against industries violating environmental laws.
- The government to set up its own central effluent treatment plants.
- Shrimp farmers will not be allowed to damage embankments.
- Raising green belts along the coast and across the country.

Suicide blast at Pak mosque kills 38

Troops bar Swat refugees from returning to their homes

AP, AFP, Peshawar

A suicide bomber killed 38 people attending Juma (Friday) prayers at a mosque, while a roadside bomb left four soldiers dead in Pakistan's tribal belt the latest violence to rock the country's northwest as the army says it is beating back the Taliban in the Swat Valley.

Malik Naveed Khan, police chief of North West Frontier Province, said 38 people were killed and 50 wounded in the explosion.

"We fear the death toll may rise to 45 because people are still trapped under the debris. Rescue work is under way," Atif-ur-Rehman, the top government official in Upper Dir, told AFP by telephone.

"The mosque courtyard is littered with

blood and human flesh," he added. The attacks came as US envoy Richard Holbrooke met with top Pakistani officials after evaluating the plight of some of the nearly 3 million Pakistanis made refugees by the Swat offensive. Hundreds trying to return home to Swat on Friday were stopped by troops.

Pakistani leaders insist they are serious about wiping out militancy in Swat, a one-time tourist haven that largely fell under Taliban control over the past two years. The US backs the operation and sees it as a test of the government's resolve in taking on al-Qaeda and Taliban militants along the Afghan border region.

The generally broad public support in

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3 schoolboys arrested on murder charge

They killed classmate over trifling matter, say Ctg police

CU CORRESPONDENT

Three schoolboys were arrested Thursday night on charge of killing a classmate in a quarrel over a digital music player near Beribadh under Pahartali Police Station in the port city.

The detained students are Farhad, 14, son of Mohammad Alam of Biswa Colony, Parvez, 15, son of Enamul Haque of City Gate, and Shuvo Chowdhury, 14, son of Asish Chowdhury of Kattali area in the city.

Police said they picked up the three students of class-VIII of Mostafa-Hakim High School from their houses at about 8:30pm following a tip-off and took them to the killing spot on the night.

Around 3:30am yesterday, the detained students allegedly confessed to their involvement in the killing of their classmate Shahriar

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BIWTA workers yesterday continue their demolition of the wall of The Merchant Ltd, which was erected encroaching on the Turag at Pagar of Tongi.

PHOTO: STAR

32 more illegal structures on Turag removed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) yesterday, the third day of the on-going eviction drive, dismantled parts of two major and at least 30 makeshift structures erected on the river Turag.

With the assistance of Gazipur district administration BIWTA tore down the illegal Kamarpara Bridge in Masimpur mouja and Hossain Dyeing at Pagar mouja of Tongi.

On-duty senior Executive Magistrate Abul Bashar Md Ameer Uddin said his team demolished parts of Shajid Washing and Dying factory till 3:00 pm and said emphatically that the drive would continue today.

Ameer said, "We were inspired by The Daily Star campaign against river-gobblers and polluters."

"The entire eviction drive slowed down, as BIWTA could not use its large tugboat in pulling down heavy constructions," he added.

Officials said the drive would last longer than the authorities had earlier thought.

BIWTA Director (ports) Mahabubul Alam also praised The Daily Star for its vigorous campaign against encroachment and pollution and said it is The Daily Star that inspired and expedited the eviction move.

Atul Sarkar, assistant commissioner (Land) of Gazipur, said the heavy tugboat of BIWTA did not come in handy, as it could not pass through the narrow passage under the railway bridge over the Turag.

The drive, however, continued under the Tongi Bridge and in

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11 fishermen hurt in Nasaka firing in Bay

Bangladeshis forced to stop fishing near St Martin's island

A CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Nasaka, the border security force of Myanmar, opened fire on a group of Bangladeshi fishermen in Batirdia sea channel under Teknaf upazila near Saint Martin's Island, Thursday morning, leaving 11 fishermen wounded, according to a delayed report.

Bangladeshi fishermen have not been able to go fishing in the channel since the incident.

Fishermen said Nasaka fired gunshots at them within the maritime boundary of Bangladesh in East Bay of Bengal and looted their fishing nets and other valuables.

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They said fishermen in Cox's Bazar area have been catching Hilsa fish in large numbers since June 1. Till Thursday they caught Hilsa worth about Tk 6 crore, they added.

"Nasaka entered into the channel Thursday morning and attacked us, so that we don't go fishing there," said a fisherman. He said Myanmar citizens however have been fishing in the channel without any trouble since Thursday's incident.

Amir Hamza, 45, who fled from the channel in the face of the attack, said Nasaka have been attacking Bangladeshi fishermen in a bid to

WFP claims its biscuits totally safe

UNB, Dhaka

World Food Programme (WFP) has claimed the high-energy biscuits that caused toxicity havoc after consumption by the school students in Khagrachhari district recently, were completely safe.

"There are no pathogenic bacteria detected in the biscuits," said the UN food organisation in a statement citing a laboratory test report, received on Thursday.

It said, "High energy biscuits manufactured for the organisation in Bangladesh are completely safe for consumption, according to preliminary laboratory tests carried out by the Institute of

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Obama calls for separate Israeli, Palestinian states

AP, Dresden

Prodding the international community, President Barack Obama called yesterday "for all of us to redouble our efforts" toward separate Israeli and Palestinian states. "The moment is now for us to act," he declared.

Alongside German Chancellor Angela Merkel one day after his trip to the Middle East, Obama said: "The United States can't force peace upon the parties." But he said America has "at least created the space, the atmosphere, in which talks can restart."

The president announced that he was sending special envoy George J Mitchell back to the region next week to follow up on his speech in Cairo a day earlier in which he called for both Israeli and Palestinian leaders to give ground in the longtime standoff toward the elusive goal of peace.

Obama says Israel must live up to commitments it made under the so-called "Road Map" peace outline to stop constructing settlements and that the Palestinians must control violence acts and statements that incite violence.

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