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## Laws lack teeth

Enforcement also missing to make matters worse

TAWFIQUE ALI

With various flaws and loopholes environmental laws in our country have failed to take any measures against influential quarters responsible for environmental degradation, experts said.

The foremost obstacle to implementation of the Environment Conservation Act of 1995 is that an aggrieved person has to take permission from the Department of Environment (DoE) and wait for two months to seek legal recourse under the law.

The government took five years to enact the environment court act in 2000 to set up special courts conducted by a joint district judge.

The court act requires one or more environmental courts at every divisional headquarters. But Khulna, Barisal and Rajshahi are yet to have any environment courts even after a decade, they said.

There are two environment courts -- one in Dhaka and the other in Chittagong. That apart, Sylhet joint district judge court has been delegated to deal with environmental cases.

"The law is there but proper implementa-

tion is missing," said Dr Atiq Rahman, executive director of Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies and lead author of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

The law requires Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for projects in consultation with the neighbourhood but there is no mechanism to monitor whether an EIA has been carried out in compliance with the proper standards, Rahman added.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, executive director of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (Bela), said that the foremost impediment to implementation of the legislations is the fact that a case under the law is tried at a lower court.

It means that a litigant has to fight a long legal battle against appeals at district judge court, High Court and Appellate Division.

"One potential barrier is that victims of environmental degradation are invariably poor and powerless. On the other hand, offenders are always wealthy and politically powerful," she said.

The affected people usually lack confidence

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



PHOTO: STAR

BIWTA workers demolish unauthorised structures on the Shitalakhyা at Fire Ghat in Narayanganj yesterday.

Four salt factories knocked down

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) along with Narayanganj district administration demolished portions of nine semi-concrete factories built illegally on the river Shitalakhyা as part of the ongoing drive yesterday.

Four salt factories -- Ali, Narayanganj, Uttara and Agrani were pulled down in Narayanganj area of Narayanganj.

Other structures were Narayanganj Pulse factory, SD Flour, Bangladesh Banijayaloy, Maa Monisha business house and a makeshift structure.

The drive resumed at 10:00am for the fifth day led by Executive Magistrate Abul Kashem, BIWTA senior

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

## Foreign office awaits major shake-up

REZAUL KARIM

A major shake-up is underway in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a new foreign secretary taking over soon and a number of new ambassadors and high commissioners being appointed, highly placed sources said.

Some of the new envoys are getting contractual appointments. Several diplomats seeking anonymity however said this might demoralise the serving career diplomats, while others feel that there is a shortage of experienced diplomats now in the foreign service.

Incidentally, the ruling Awami League (AL) while in power in the past had discouraged contractual appointments. However, over the last two decades, 30 percent of diplomatic positions were filled up by qualified personnel appointed on contract.

Majarul Quayes is taking over shortly as foreign secretary. Quayes passed from the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## Four out on bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five political leaders -- three from Awami League (AL) and two from BNP -- were released on bail yesterday.

AL leaders Haji Selim and Mohiuddin Ahmed, and BNP leader Shahjahan Omar and Shafiqur Rahman Babu, son of former finance minister Saifur Rahman, walked out of Dhaka Central Jail at around 6:30pm.

AL leader Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya was released from BIRDEM hospital.

They secured bail from the High Court (HC) on different dates last month but were released yesterday, said jailer Bazlur Rahman.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## Govt doubles bounty for BDR fugitives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday doubled the earlier announced Tk 50,000 bounty for helping arrest each fugitive BDR member suspected to have been involved in the February 25-26 mutiny and carnage at the BDR headquarters.

The home ministry said in a press release Tk 1 lakh will be given for providing information to nearby police stations or law enforcers about each absconding BDR jawan.

Identity of the persons giving such information

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



Payphones lose out to mobile phones. These booths at Kamalapur Railway Station are used as a stand for a bicycle.

## 6 die as bus, truck collide head-on

RU CORRESPONDENT

Six people, including an upazila chairman, were killed and around 30 bus passengers were injured in a road accident on Dhaka-Rajshahi highway at Senbagh under Puthia upazila of Rajshahi district early yesterday.

Putia police sources said that a Rajshahi-bound passenger bus of Hanif Paribahan from Dhaka collided head-on with a truck at Senbagh, leaving three people including the upazila chairman dead on the spot.

On information, police rushed to the spot and rescued the injured with the help of local people. Of the injured, 20 were admitted to Rajshahi Medical College Hospital (RMCH) in critical condition where three more succumbed to their injuries.

The rest of the injured were admitted to Puthia health complex.

The deceased were identified as Puthia upazila chairman

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## Three 'muggers' bullet-hit in fight with cops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three suspected snatchers sustained bullet injuries in a shootout between them and police in the city's Rayer Bazar early yesterday.

The injured were identified as Lutfur Rahman, 45, Mahbubur Mia, 39, and Noor Hossain, 30, hailed from Shahali area in Mirpur. They were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) for treatment.

Mohammadpur police said

a patrol team of Rayer Bazar

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

## Iran cracks down on protesters after polls

Ahmadinejad defends vote, 170 rioters detained

AFP, Tehran

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad yesterday defended his hotly disputed re-election as security forces cracked down on opposition protesters in Tehran, where fresh violence erupted.

Police said they have rounded up a total of 170 people over the massive post-election protests and street riots, which erupted in the Iranian capital after Ahmadinejad's defeated challengers complained of fraud and vote rigging.

Analysts have warned that the dramatic events could pose a risk to the future of the Shiite-dominated country, which has been under the control of powerful clerics since the Islamic revolution three decades ago.

But Ahmadinejad dismissed criticism of the election, saying at a press conference the massive turnout was a blow to the "oppressive system ruling the world," a reference to Iran's arch-foe the United States.

He said his margin of victory over his main rival, moderate ex-premier Mir Hossein

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## Online Poll

Do you support the significant rise in car prices in the proposed budget?

- No (64.6%)
- Yes (34.4%)
- No Comments (1.0%)

Total votes: 800

TODAY'S POLL  
No govt buildings have taken approval from authorities concerned since 1987, which is mandatory. Do you think it is necessary to probe and take action?

Please cast your vote at [www.thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net)