

Form nat'l commission to protect rivers

HC asks govt

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

The High Court (HC) has directed the government to constitute a 'National River Protection Commission' consisting of the experts concerned within three months to properly preserve and develop the rivers of the country.

The court urged the government to have short-term and long-term plans as per the recommendations of the Commission for the development of all the rivers.

The HC also called for taking immediate steps to dredge the rivers Buriganga, Turag, Balu and Shitalakha around the capital and remove the dirty materials deposited in the riverbeds

within the next two years to improve navigations in these rivers within the next five years.

The court also ordered for dredging Jamuna, Dhaleshwari, Dhaleshwari-Buriganga, Old Brahmaputra-Bangshi, Bangshi-Turag, Jamuna-Punglikhal, Turag and Tongi canals within five years.

It also ordered for removal of all structures from the government lands on the banks of the rivers around the city and its Bakland dam.

The full text of the verdict, pronounced on June 25 containing the directives, was published on July 15.

The HC bench of Justice ABM Khairul Haque and

Justice Mohammad Momtazuddin Ahmed delivered the verdict directing the authorities concerned to send a copy of the judgment to the prime minister for consideration.

As per the directives, the exact boundaries of the rivers around Dhaka city will be determined through surveys by November 30 this year and the rivers will be designated as 'Ecologically Critical Areas' during this period to facilitate the demarcation work.

Once the demarcation is complete, the authorities concerned must have the riverbanks lined with pillars, tree plantation, walkways and pavements by November 30, 2010.

The verdict also observed that the future of Sujala-Sufola Shasya-Shyamola Bangladesh depends on the navigation of her rivers, otherwise, all development plans will go in vain.

Advocate Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, yesterday told The Daily Star that the HC in its verdict has categorically outlined the ways for saving the rivers of the country from pollution and illegal encroachments.

Now the main challenge is to implement the directives, she said, adding, the government will have to do this job along with the local people and the civil society.

DU student missing in sea

DU CORRESPONDENT

A student of Dhaka University went missing in the sea near Kalatali beach of Cox's Bazar yesterday morning.

The ill-fated young man was identified as Mostofa Mohammad Nawazish-ul-Kabir Mishu, a master's second semester student of the Institute of Education and Research (IER) of the university.

Sources said Mishu along with his three friends left Dhaka for Cox's Bazar Thursday night. At one stage of swimming at Kalatali point, he went into the deep sea around 10:30am yesterday but failed to reach shore due to strong current.

Two of his friends immediately tried to rescue Mishu by throwing a rope towards him but he could not catch it. Mishu was washed away in the sea.

DU Proctor Dr Saiful Islam Khan told reporters that he is maintaining regular contact with Cox's Bazar administration and local police. A rescue team has been working there to trace him, the proctor said, adding that the student could not be rescued till 9:30pm.

IER Director Prof Salma Akhtar said she has informed the DU vice-chancellor about the tragic incident.

Kabir hailed from Bogra and used to live with his family at Moghbazar in the city. His father Golam Mostofa died a few years back.



Nazia Chowdhury (standing, second from left) and Samin Riasat (standing, extreme right) won bronze medals at International Mathematics Olympiad in Germany yesterday. They pose for photo with other team members and team leader Dr Mahbub Majumder. (Story on Page 16)

TIPAIMUKH DAM

BNP did not protest while in power

Says food minister

DU CORRESPONDENT

Food and Disaster Management Minister Dr Abdur Razzak yesterday said if BNP would have protested when it was in power then India could not come so far with its Tipaimukh dam project.

"The international tender for the dam was floated in 2005 when Khaleda Zia was the prime minister. But no protest was made at that time," he claimed.

The minister alleged that BNP is trying to make chaos in the country with Tipaimukh dam issue only to make the government embarrassed.

Dr Razzak was speaking as chief guest at a discussion titled 'Practice of good culture is part of building the digital Bangladesh' at Bangladesh Photo Journalists' Association auditorium in the city. It was organised by Bangladesh Cultural Organisers' Foundation.

He said the AL-led government believes in the spirit of the liberation war, and as such secular and progressive cultural personnel and organisations can play a significant role to uphold this spirit and ideology.

The present government has assumed the state power with a lot of challenges and has been working on these issues, he added.

Amjad Hossain, Arun Sarker Rana, MA Karim, Poet Rabindra Gope and Nazmul Hasan Palash also spoke.

Meanwhile, Water Resources Minister Ramesh Chandra Sen has said the government would call a meeting of the Joint River Commission (JRC) in solving the Tipaimukh dam issue if the parliamentary committee finds the dam harmful for the state.

He was speaking at a discussion titled 'Tipaimukh dam: Interest of Bangladesh and politics of the opposition' organised by South Asia People's Union Against Fundamentalism and Communalism at the WVA auditorium in the city.

"We will call the JRC meeting where our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will be present," he added.

Dr Qazi Kholiqzaman Ahmad, president of Bangladesh Economic Association, said the two prime ministers should sit in formal meeting and solve the problem through mutual understanding and cooperation.

Problems of the common rivers should be resolved through consensus of all the countries concerned, he added.

Presided over by National Professor Kabir Chowdhury, the discussion was also participated by Engineer MA Matin, former director of Water Development Board, Dr MA Kashem, former director general of Water Resources Planning Organisation, and journalist Shahriar Kabir.

Low over Bay

UNB, Dhaka

The monsoon low over the northwest Bay and adjoining area intensified into a well-marked low over the same area.

Under its influence deep convection is taking place over the north Bay.

"It is likely to intensify... Squally weather may continue over the north Bay and the maritime ports of Bangladesh," said a Met office special bulletin yesterday morning.

The maritime ports of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Mongla have been advised to hoist local cautionary signal number three.

Qulkhawani

METRO DESK

Qulkhawani of ATM Riazul Islam, a freedom fighter and veterinary doctor, will be held today, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil will be held at his South Banasree residence to pray for salvation of his departed soul.

Relatives, friends and his well-wishers are requested to attend the programme.

He passed away at his residence on July 16 at the age of 68.

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

Mugger shot in gunfight with police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mugger was injured in a shoot-out between his accomplices and police in the capital's Tejgaon area yesterday.

Bullet-hit Alamgir, 38, was admitted to Pangu Hospital under police custody.

Assistant Commissioner Shyamol Mukherji of Detective Branch said three muggers waylaid an auto-rickshaw carrying a woman to Agargaon

and trying to snatch valuables from her at gunpoint on Mirpur Road near Ganabhaban around 1:00am.

The gunfight ensued when a nearby police patrol led by Sub-Inspector Masud Khan of Tejgaon Police Station rushed to the spot hearing her screaming and retaliated against the muggers' firing.

The gunfight left Alamgir lying on the spot while his accomplices managed to escape.

Akhaura port faces setback for long

OUR CORRESPONDENT, B'baria

Akhaura land port in Brahmanbaria faces serious setback in unloading exported goods to Agartala land port in India for long, as the Indian side unloads goods at their whims.

According to Akhaura port office, loading and unloading time of the bordering land ports was fixed by both the countries from sunrise to sunset. But the Indian side hardly follows the decision.

It was alleged that due to negligence of India to follow the proper timetable, the smooth functioning of Akhaura port is hampered, creating the suffering to the workers of the stranded vehicles near the port.

As Agartala port does not maintain the proper timetable and shows different plea to unload the Bangladeshi trucks at the shed of their port, the trucks of both the countries remain stranded on the route due to whimsical decision of the Indian port.

As a result, the Bangladeshi exporters are to count a heavy loss daily amounting to more than Tk 2,000 per truck.

Akhaura land port sources said long queue of trucks loaded for export to India are to

wait for days together as they cannot dispatch all ones at a time due to lack of good response of India.

The authorities of Akhaura land port are to send maximum 35 to 40 loaded trucks at a time to Indian port. After returning of the said trucks, they are to send another phase there gradually. But they cannot send several phases a day or a number of trucks at a time. As a result, trucks remain stranded in a long queue at Akhaura port.

When contacted, Imtiaz Ahmed, LCO of Akhaura port, said they could earn more than about Tk 200 crore as revenue per year if the Indian side extended the time of unloading daily.

They are always ready to do their full-time duty in order to export goods to India every day, but India cannot make time to receive and unload the goods from Bangladesh, LCO added.

Meanwhile, Akhaura port earned Tk 168.5 crore as revenues by exporting goods to India in the last fiscal year.

Akhaura port office sources said cement bags, stone chips, Bombay Foods, fish, dry fish and toys are the main items which are exported to India through Akhaura, a busy land port of the eastern zone of the country.

Faruk blames meltdown for Ashulia unrest

UNB, Dhaka

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan yesterday called the recent incident of labour unrest at Ashulia industrial belt an outcome of the global economic recession.

"This is a consequence of global recession. As the prices of products in the global market have experienced sharp fall, the factory owners failed to pay the labours and this resulted in such unrest," he said while addressing a workshop on WTO affairs at Hotel Sonargang in the city.

Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute organised the workshop on 'WTO Notification Procedures and Obligations.'

The function, presided over by Prof MA Taslim, was also addressed by Mahbubur Rahman, president of International Chamber of Commerce-Bangladesh.

Blaming the developed nations for the global financial crisis, the minister said that because of their wrong policies, the poor countries have been suffering financially.

Bangladeshi labours are very disciplined in their work places and they have also proved their skills and capability while working abroad.

"So, our labours should be allowed to have access to global movement," he said.

Faruk, however, said the situation has been improving and the global economy is regaining its strength.

Emphasising on capability enhancement of the government officials in the WTO negotiation, the minister said steps would be taken to strengthen the WTO cell at his ministry.

He said that those officials having training on WTO matters should not immediately be transferred to other jobs.

Hizb-ut men distribute leaflets in Ctg, Rajshahi

STAR REPORT

Members of Hizb-ut Tawhid, an Islamist outfit, yesterday distributed leaflets through newspaper hawkers in Chittagong and Rajshahi yesterday.

The police, however, arrested two Hizb-ut men when they were giving leaflets to newspaper hawkers for distribution in Chittagong.

Our staff correspondent in Chittagong reports: The arrestees were identified as Jamal Uddin, 38, son of Md Hossain of Laxmipur, and Munir Khan, 32, of Barisal.

Acting on a tip-off, a team from Kotwali Police Station arrested the two in the city's Cheragi Pahar Mor area around 8:00am, police said.

Witnesses said the two were also inserting the leaflets

into the newspapers the hawkers piled up before distribution. The leaflet had messages criticising the present administration system and the modern education system.

Arrested Jamal Uddin told reporters that they were engaged in preaching the true message of Islam, as the people are not following the Quran and Islam properly.

Our staff correspondent in Rajshahi adds: The Hizb-ut Tawhid men also gave money to the newspaper hawkers for insertion of their leaflets into the newspapers and distribute them among newspaper readers.

In the leaflets, the Hizb-ut Tawhid claimed that their organisation is not a banned or militant outfit. It also described how they were harassed by different governments.

Prof Aminur Rahman passes away

UNB, Dhaka

Dr. AHM. Aminur Rahman, Professor of Political Science department of Dhaka University, passed away due to a cardiac arrest at Birdem Hospital early yesterday at the age of 60.

Dr Rahman left behind his wife, one son and one daughter and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

He was buried at his family graveyard at Khagadhar in Mymensingh after his namaz-e-janaza at DU Central Mosque after Zohr prayers yesterday.

Dr Rahman had joined the political science department as a lecturer on August 11 in 1973.

Vice Chancellor Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique, Pro-VC Dr Harun-or-Rashid and Treasurer Dr Mijanur Rahman in separate messages expressed their deep shock at the death of Dr Rahman.

Staff correspondent add: Speakers at a meeting yesterday paid tribute to Dr AHM Aminur Rahman, Professor of Political Science, University of Dhaka, says a press release.

Bangladesh Political Science Society organised the meeting to condole the death of Dr Aminur Rahman.

Samity Convener Prof DR Giasuddin Molla, executive board member Prof Dr Nurul amin, Dr Sabir Ahmed and Dr Md Abdur Rashid spoke at the meeting.

They also prayed for salvation of the departed soul and conveyed sympathy to members of the bereaved family.

Kalpna Das

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Kalpna Das, mother of Beena Bhoumik, managing director of Landmark Group, passed away yesterday, says a press release.

Mahanagar Sarbojonin Pooja Committee President Kajol Devnath and General Secretary Tapash Kumar Pal condole the death and conveyed sympathy to members of the bereaved family and prayed for salvation of the departed soul.

Dilara Begum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dilara Begum, a social worker of Kalindi Mridha Bari of Keraniganj and mother of Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote Dhaka City Unit General Secretary Wahiduzzaman Mati, passed away at her residence yesterday at the age of 89, says a press release.

She left behind her six sons, one daughter and a host of relatives to mourn her death.

Awami League presidium member Abdur Razzak, AL lawmaker and cultural activist Tarana Halim, Bangabandhu Sangskritik Jote leaders and political leaders expressed deep shock at her death.



Light rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely to occur at many places over Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions and at a few places over Rajshahi and Dhaka divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

The sun sets in the capital at 7:47pm today and rises at 6:23am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 36.7 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 24.5 degrees Celsius at Srimangal.

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

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	34.3	27.3	69	59
Chittagong	32.8	26.5	72	66
Rajshahi	35.2	27.8	80	79
Khulna	32.7	27.5	76	69
Barisal	31.8	27.1	73	73
Sylhet	36.7	25.7	72	61
Cox's Bazar	31.8	26.0	87	75



Workshop

Bangladesh Protibandhi Kalyan Samity organises a workshop on people with disabilities in agricultural development. Venue: Khamarbari AKM Giasuddin Milky auditorium. Time: 9:30am.

Conference

FBCCI and Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries jointly organise a conference on 'Bangladesh-India economic relations'. Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 10:00am.

Seminar

Brac organises a seminar on nutrition of baby and mother. Venue: Sasakawa auditorium, ICDDR, B. Time: 3:00pm.

Roundtable

The daily Destiny organises a roundtable on traffic jam and management in Dhaka city. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:00am.

News in Brief

NHRC condemns torture

METRO DESK

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) yesterday condemned the recent incident of torture of one 'Tabarak Hossain' on July 11 at Village Boilla under Gumastapur upazila in Chapainababganj, says a press release.

Commission chairman Justice Amirul Kabir Chowdhury in a statement said torture of the young man by the so called local leaders hanging him with a tree is inhuman and violation of human rights and demanded punishment to the offenders.

He urged the law enforcing agencies to take immediate legal action against the perpetrators to bring them to book.

Hena Das hospitalised

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Comrade Hena Das, eminent woman leader and central committee member of Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), was shifted to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical College Hospital (BSMMU) from the Lab Aid Hospital yesterday, says a press release.

She has been suffering from old age complication for a long time and was admitted to Lab Aid Hospital on Saturday when she fell sick.

CPB President Majurul Ahsan Khan and General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim visited her at Lab Aid Hospital on Saturday.



Drama personality Ramendu Majumder speaks at a cheque handover ceremony at Pisciculture Bhaban at Shyamoli in the city on Saturday.

Support for autistic children

METRO DESK

The mother of a student of Society for the Welfare of Autistic Children (SWAC) Afroza Nizami donated the proceeds from the sale of her self-composed poetry CDs to SWAC for the welfare of the students on Saturday, says a press release.

On the occasion, a cheque handover ceremony was held on SWAC premises at Pisciculture Bhaban at Shyamoli in the city.

Drama personality Ramendu Majumder was present at the programme as the chief guest with SWAC Chairman Engineer Anwar Hossain in the chair.

SWAC has been working relentlessly for the last 10 years for the development and rehabilitation of the autistic children in the country.

Ekushey Padak winner poet Zahidul Haque was also presented at the function.

Training course begins

METRO DESK

The 44th Foundation Training Course of Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) began at its auditorium at Savar yesterday, says a press release.

A total number of 234 civil servants representing 19 different cadres are participating in the four-month course. Cabinet Secretary M Abdul Aziz was the chief guest with Md Delwar Hossain in the chair.

Aziz in his speech said, "We need well-trained, qualified sincere, dedicated and bright officer with positive attitude for development of our country." "This course would vastly improve your professional confidence and hopefully will provide you with the desirable cohesiveness, transparency, commitment, dedication, accountability, discipline, efficiency and effectiveness."