

Move to make Karnaphuli pollution-free

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR
Department of Environment (DoE) has taken initiative to save the river Karnaphuli from pollution and keep it navigable.
To that end, DoE started issuing notice from Monday to 40 industrial units and establishments on both the banks of the river that are apparently polluting and creating barriers to its navigability. The department asked them to submit their documents in support of their ownership.
The DoE identified the units during a recent survey to measure pollution in the river water and ensure environmental clearance by the industrial units.
The authorities served notices last year to over 300 industries which are contributing to the river pollution to a great extent at Sagarika, EPZ, Kalurghat, Roufabad, Aturer Depot, Bayezid Bostami, Chaktai, Khatunganj and Sadarghat in the port city, sources said.
The recent survey also revealed serious pollution in the river water due to the industrial wastage and sewerage that find their ways to the river through eight canals everyday.
The canals included Noakhali Khal (canal), Chaktai Khal, Majhirghat Khal, Gupta Khal, Mohesh Khal, Sundari Khal, Shikalbaha Khal and Ferry Ghat Khal.
The quantity of dissolved oxygen (DO) was found minimum 0.1 milligram per litre (mg/l) against the standard level of 4.5 to 8.5 mg/l while chloride highest 4010 mg/l against the standard level of 150 to 600 mg/l, suspended solid (SS) highest 243 mg/l against the standard level of 100 mg/l, chemical oxygen demand (COD) 1544 against standard level of 200mg/l and coliform up to

500 n/100ml.
DoE Senior Chemist Mustafizur Rahman Akhand told The Daily Star that the level of DO and SS at the mouth of the canals fluctuated very much that has been threatening lives of aquatic animals and plants to a great extent.
He blamed the untreated wastage of industrial units alongside the river and the canals carrying the wastage from inside the city for the highest level of the COD.
He emphasised the need for immediate disconnection of drains that carry wastages from the industrial units and residential areas of the city of over 40 lakh people.
Prof Manjurul Kibria of Chittagong University Zoology Department in one of his surveys found that of the 66 species of fresh water fishes, around 20 to 25 species and of 59 species of saline water fishes, 10 species already disappeared from the river due to pollution.
"This is the high time to save the river by hook or by crook and if the pollution cannot be stopped, not only fishes, all types of aquatic animals and plant will be disappeared from it," Prof Kibria said.
DoE Director Abdus Sobhan told The Daily Star on Sunday that they carried out the survey to identify the structures that are creating barrier to the navigability of the river and improve quality of the river water.
"The level of the coliform in the water indicates how much human excreta finds their ways to the river through the canals and help the people contacting water-borne diseases like jaundice and typhoid," he said.
He said the industrial units will get time to take environmental clearance and stern action will be taken against the violators.



Like Noakhali in the city's Chaktai area, a good number of canals carrying sewage and garbage flow into the Karnaphuli to pollute the river everyday. The photo was taken on Sunday. **ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIDDER**

Ctg Customs House limps along

Lack of manpower hampers activities, create scope for corruption



Chittagong Customs House Bhaban. **STAR PHOTO**

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD
Shortage of human resources hampers activities at Chittagong Customs House alongside creating scope for part-timers to work there.
Working on "no work, no pay" basis at important sections, the part-timers, known as Tonni, stand as a barrier to maintaining official secrecy, said the sources.
The customs house is running with the workforce less than what was approved for it back in 1982 though its activities increased by several times by now, sources said.
With no recruitment taking place since early nineties Customs House, Chittagong is now left with a total of 668 officials and employees against 792 authorised posts (as per organogram of 1982).
At present there are some 32 first class officers against 41 approved posts and 95 third class staffs against 135 posts.
There is only one official sweeper for 40 toilets and only two official security guards to take care of the whole of the three-storey Chittagong Customs House building.
In absence of recruitment, some 285 officials and employees had been working in the same place over the last ten years.

The manpower shortage forced the authorities to allow some 50 part-timers known as "Tonni" to work against different vacant posts at both import and export divisions of Chittagong Customs House for a daily payment of Tk 80 each.
Tonnis are working as assistants, computer operators and peons for a long period ranging from 10 to 15 years. They also assist newly posted principal appraisers (PA), appraisers and inspectors at the customs house working on deputation from value added tax (VAT) and other offices under National Board of Revenue (NBR).
"Recently 14 office assistants and senior assistants have been promoted to the posts of appraisers. In absence of recruitments these 14 posts are lying vacant and are being manned by the Tonnis," said a customs official preferring anonymity.
Thus being engaged in confidential and important works like assessment of goods, Tonnis some times get involved in corruption and irregularities, he alleged.
An official at Audit Inspection and Research (AIR) branch said three Tonnis were caught red-handed while trying to release imported printing paper worth Tk 20 lakh by forging sig-

natures of principal appraiser and appraiser on January 14.
While talking to this correspondent on Tuesday one of such Tonnis identified as Sheikh Abul Hasan said he has been working at Group 4 of Chittagong customs house from 2000.
"Having crossed the age limit of government job far ago I am now left with no other option other than the hope for getting permanent in my job here," said Hasan.
The customs officials while talking to this correspondent said seven Tonnis at customs assessment desk have been sacked for their involvement in corruption and irregularities.
They said regularising the service of Tonnis or training for the officers coming on deputation can prevent appointment of Tonnis in important works and check corruption.
Deputy Commissioner (Preventive) Shamsul Islam said lack of manpower forced the Chittagong customs house authorities to engage the part-timers. However, anyone involved in corruption is getting punishment. Joint Commissioner (Import) Md Moazzem Hossain also echoing the same said the authorities have been making proposals for recruitments to overcome the manpower shortage from time to time.

the week that was



Awami League Adviser Amir Hossain Amu, fourth from left, unveils the cover of a book on Chittagong mass killing of January 24, 1988 at a function at Chittagong Press Club auditorium on Saturday. Journalist Nirupam Dasgupta, second from left, wrote the book titled "Chattagram Ganohatya: Pratyakkhadarshir Jobanbandi." **STAR PHOTO**

Book on Ctg mass killing launched

Awami League Presidium Member Amir Hossain Amu MP said the government would take step soon to revive the sensational Chittagong mass killing case of 1988 to unmask the evil forces behind the incident and punish the culprits involved.
He said the mass killing of 1988 January 24 in Chittagong was an attack on the forces of the non-communal and oppression-free country and the August 21 grenade attack was the second edition of January 24 incident.
Amu was addressing the publication ceremony of a book titled "Chattagram Ganohatya: Pratyakkhadarshir Jobanbandi" (Chittagong Mass killing: Statements of Witnesses) at Chittagong Press Club auditorium in the port city on Saturday. Journalist Nirupam Dasgupta of Bengali daily the Sangbad wrote the book.
Premier University Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Anupam Sen presided over the ceremony where human rights activist Advocate Rana

Industrial police station soon

Grand Alliance lawmaker Mainuddin Khan Badal said an industrial police station would be set up in the Kalurghat industrial area soon.
He said this while he was speaking at a view exchange meeting at the Chandgaon Police Station on Friday.
He said setting up of a police investigation cell in the Mohra area is also under process.
Deputy Commissioner (North) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) Banaj Kumar Majumder, Assistant Commissioner SM Nurul Huda, freedom fighter Nurul Bashar, former ward commissioner Abu Taher also spoke at the meeting with Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Chandgaon police station Raoshan Ara

in the chair.
He warned of stern action against the policemen if they do not provide legal support to the female garment workers in their need.

Anti-drug awareness programme begins

Speakers emphasised creating mass awareness about the fatal consequence of drug to make a drug-free society.
They were addressing at the inaugural function of 15-day long anti-drug awareness programme and special drive on the DC Hill premises on Thursday.
Deputy Commissioner (DC) AKM Farid Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury was the chief guest at the function organised by the district administration.

Smriti Bhaban inaugurated

Chittagong University (CU) Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Abu Yusuf Alam underscored the need for preserving the glorious memories of the freedom fighters, the best sons of this soil, who sacrificed their lives to free the country.
He was addressing as the chief guest the inaugural function of 'Smriti Bhaban' (memorial building), constructed by CU on the ancestral home of martyred CU staff Naval Commando Mohammad Hossain Bir Pratik at West Dhanoi village at Safinagar under Hathazari upazilla on Monday.
The VC said relics, books and the documents would be preserved at the memorial that would inspire the next generation.



Participants pose for photograph with the guests at the Regional Maths Olympiad organised by the Prothom Alo under the auspices of Dutch Bangla Bank Limited (DBBL) at Saint Placid's School in the port city on Saturday. **STAR PHOTO**