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Save Karnaphuli



R.S. ANAN / ORION NEWS

The Karnaphuli River, considered as the lifeline to business activities for both the hill people and the plain land population in the country's far east region, is dying due to mindless encroachment, dumping of industrial and clinical wastes and lack of maintenance.

Encroachment of the riverbanks, unabated dumping of industrial, clinical and human wastes, unplanned fishing, unchecked oil spill from ocean-going vessels and mechanized boats have severely polluted the river. The river has been desecrated. What is flowing there is mainly sewage and polluted water. Increasing toxicity caused by industrial wastes has destroyed the natural purity of the river water.

Many study on the river said, 15-20 fish species of fresh water, 10-15 fish species of brackish water (mixed zone of fresh and saline water) and 5-6 fish species of migratory water disappeared over the years from the river due to severe pollution of its water.

Many known species of marine fishes have already disappeared from the estuary of the Karnaphuli and oth-

ers might be extinct soon if the abodes of aquatic creatures are not protected by reviving the water quality for the creatures. According to researchers, in 1976, at least 76 species of fish used to be found in the Karnaphuli river. At present, there are only 54 species of fish in the river.

The river water contains substantial quantity of industrial pollutants as more or less 730 industrial units of different categories on its both banks drain out their untreated residue into the river apart from urban sewage and substances extremely hazardous for aquatic lives. The Karnaphuli river receives approximately 760 metric tons of untreated sewage a day apart from nearly 200 metric tons of industrial residue.

The contaminated river water, experts say, is not only destroying the marine resources but also causing adverse impacts on socio-economic life of the people.

Rana, Tapas & Shohag
Dept. of Geography & Environmental Studies
University of Chittagong

Poverty

According to BBC poll, poverty is still the world's biggest problem. In your "Star business", the news was published on 18 January, and drew my attention.

The result of the poll also revealed that the issue is well ahead of climate change, terrorism and war. It was found that 71 percent people named extreme poverty as the biggest global issue.

Other issues like environmental pollution, the rising cost of food and energy, spread of diseases, climate change, state of the world economy and war, are the reasons behind poverty. These issues are much related to each other.

As a matter of fact, the world is our place to live in, and we have got the responsibility to make it a better place.

Mahmud Ali Kabir
Ex-BSS correspondent
Gopalganj

against them in response to their wild and untrue allegations against the government.

I think The Daily Star and the Prothom Alo might be interested to elicit public opinion on the issue.

Faqrul
California, USA

Low cost hydropower

A write-up on the interesting subject was published in a local English daily on January 21st. However, the writer was not very clear on the subject matter. Were these related to conventional hydro-power plants across the rivers Sangu, Matamuhuri and Mohamaya; or these power plants were to be driven by river currents, and located on barges or on shore? It left the write-up rather difficult to understand! The exact nature of the proposed plants needed clearer definition.

Further, the cost of power given at Tk.0.12 per kWh represented only the direct variable cost of generation at maximum production level. It did not include any fixed costs like overheads and cost of capital to finance the project. If these were included the cost of power would have been much higher! The capital cost for conventional hydro-power plants is possibly the highest, when compared with coal, oil, gas or even U-235 based nuclear power plants. Similarly, the cost of Tk.2.00 per kWh shown for gas fired

plant also represented only the direct variable cost, and not the usual commercial cost of power.

The proposal for increasing the dam height of Karnaphuli Dam and increasing the plant's generation capacity was also not realistic. It would involve the relocation and rehabilitation of a large number of local settlements. This needs uncalled for humanitarian and social problems. Considering these facts, I do not believe this should be an option or consideration. Rather, we should go for BMRE of the existing power plant there to increase its output to at least 80/85 percent of plant capacity, from the current level of operating at 50 to 60 percent capacity. This needs to be taken in hand, as soon as possible. After all, as we say, "A bird in hand is worth two in the bush."

Engr. S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

BNP's posture

The Secretary General of the BNP and his party members are talking about selling of Bangladesh to India, ever since India and Bangladesh signed a joint declaration following the visit of Sheikh Hasina. They know it very well that a country cannot be sold in a market. Therefore, if the BNP takes the liberty to spread lies, they must be prepared to listen to any kind of allegation

Indo-Pak borders

Reference to the border skirmishes between India and Pakistan. These two prominent neighbours of South Asia should revive the peace process. It is in the interest of both the countries to stop the blame game for political benefits and come to the table for talks. Both the neighbours share common culture and history, which should help them to ease tension and move forward towards prog-

Prevent misuse of gas



and 2) Making it mandatory to use gas burner which is turned on only when there is something on the burner and turned off when it is removed from the burner.

This burner was invented by one college student that was displayed in the science fair about 10 years ago. Unfortunately, none of the governments has tried to implement it.

Dr. M. Mahboob Hossain
Associate Professor
Department of Pharmacy
Northern University Bangladesh
Dhaka

Nowadays we are facing serious shortage of gas. Due to the deficit of gas industrial production will be hampered. For example, the garment factories are facing a serious problem.

But it is a matter of great regret that we have no headache about this.

Noor Jahan Shimu
BBA, SUST

ress and prosperity. A vast majority of people are keen to have a peaceful relationship with each other. Quest for peace will help reduce the vast budgets allocated for defence and the same can be used for other purposes like eradication of poverty and illiteracy, electricity, clean water etc.

Mohammed Sadullah Khan
Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Distorting history

We are appalled by the news that the Awami League government has changed facts relating to the history of independence in the new edition of Paribash Parichiti Samaj, a school textbook for Class V.

Bhutan was the first country to recognize Bangladesh in 1971, but in the new edition of the book, it has been cited that India recognized Bangladesh independence on December 6, 1971 followed by Bhutan on December 7. We deplore this action and feel sorry for the younger generation who will grow up without knowing the true history of their country.

Nur Jahan
Chittagong

Poor cricket

I believe Sewhag was absolutely right when he said the Bangladesh was an ordinary side. Look at the way Ashrafal batted in the second Test. I would like to drill it into the minds of the BCB for the last time that "ASHRAFUL WILL NEVER CHANGE". I am not a cricket player, but even I have enough common sense to realize that Bangladesh were four early wickets down and survival was the key. How many times has he gotten himself out like this? It's no use swinging your bat around in anger and cursing. What he should have done was take off his helmet and given himself a good whack in the head! It is because of people like Ashrafal that Sewhag stated that Bangladesh is an ordinary side. Ashrafal does not care about his team and plays for his own performance. I also disagree with Jamie Siddons that there are no replacements for Ashrafal. What about Aftab Ahmad, Alok Kapali or the other ICL players? I was also surprised to see the way Shakib played a wide delivery to get himself out. This is not expected from a top international player.

Hats off to Mahmudullah for his brilliance. Even the Indian players were congratulating him at the end of the innings. Keep it up! Mushfiqur Rahim is also doing well. Keep it up. For the remaining Bangladesh cricket team, I have one piece of advice for you... "SHAPE UP OR SHIP OUT".

Aminur Rahim
New DOHS, Dhaka

Politics in cricket

In the last IPL auction we saw that top all rounder Shakib al-Hasan and all Pakistani players were neglected by the IPL selectors. The quality of these players cannot be questioned.

Cricket should remain above politics.

Md. Mahbubur Rahman
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My lost letter!

This is to thank The Daily Star for its dedicated website. Four years back my first-ever letter to any newspaper was published in The Daily Star on its 6 October, 2006, issue. Ever since that letter was published, people's outlook about me and my own outlook about life totally changed quite a lot. But unfortunately, I completely forgot the day and the month of the publication and was confused about the year, while I have been in great need of that Daily Star issue recently. As I forgot the day and month of the publication, I was rummaging through the old issues of The Daily Star but to no avail. Tired, I was almost giving up the hope of retrieving the letter anymore when I luckily came across the search box and thus, to my utter happiness, found what I was looking for so long. Mere words are not enough to express my rapture upon looking at my old letter.

I, therefore, thank The Daily Star very much indeed for its dedicated and reader friendly state-of-the-art website and wish everyone concerned with The Daily Star all the best.

A Rahman Shibly
Applied Linguistics and ELT
Department of English
University of Dhaka

Royal Bengal Tiger

It is very pathetic that we don't hesitate to kill our national animal "The Royal Bengal Tiger." I was struck with wonder to hear that at a village in Sathkhira the local people killed our pride "The Royal Bengal Tiger". In fact, the forest department personnel are not skilled enough, therefore when a tricky situation arises things go beyond control. Moreover, the way we are cutting down trees and destroying forests, the animals will soon have no place.

Sometimes due to lack of food wild animals come out of the jungle and move to the nearby locality. However, the forest department people must know how to handle such stray animals.

Shohag Mostafij
MBA-Stream: Strategic & International Management
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Behind gas crisis

Some insiders tell us different stories about Bapex and BGFCL's capacity and performances. We learnt that in the last 37 years Bapex drilled only 16 wells.

To ease the present gas crisis, as an immediate step, Bapex will have to drill 5 new wells and work over one old well by SGFL. To drill the new wells Bapex will have to add at least one new rig which is under process of procurement.

If the Bapex proceeds at snail-speed as it has been moving for the last 37 years, the country will face a serious gas shortage. I believe more than 80% of vehicles are running on CNG, our fertilizer factories are producing urea and it is supporting gas generated electricity generators for most industries.

To maintain the domestic cooking and private cars, the flow of gas will have to be increased from the present supply situation.

The situation is already grave and dependence on government explorers will aggravate the situation due to lengthy tender process, inexperience of Bapex and BGFCL engineers and staff. The present govt. immediately after assuming power initiated a move to procure a rig and one year has already elapsed and the tender process is still on. By the time the agents get their own rig to drill new 6 wells, I presume, the tenure of this government will be almost over.

Gas and coal are the country's most precious natural resources. Here the snail-speed tender process should be made one-stop.

Shafiqul Islam, NY

Hindering passengers' movement

I was travelling from ZIA by GF249/14th January on my way to London, Heathrow via Bahrain. Scheduled departure time of the flight was 2000L.t. The flight was fairly over booked resulting in gradation and adjustment of overflow of passengers. Besides some of the passengers also do report later than 45 minutes before the departure time. So airlines at times do have to close check-in counters late for fear of losing revenue. Moreover, most airlines are cash strapped these days. However at about 1920L.t. when I was being checked in, a group of 5-6 checked-in passengers turned up desperately at the counter after being refused entry at the gate by the airport security staff, under instructions of the shift immigration officer in charge, because of their late reporting. I got startled. The GF traffic officer at first rebuked them for late reporting at the gate but later on pacified them by saying to go back and wait near the gate. At about 1925L.t. when I reported at the gate, I was also told to hang on by the airport security staff. They assured us that GF staff would manage the shift immigration in charge. At one stage we came to know that immigration authorities had told the GF staff to reschedule the departure time, which of course would have been unethical and a false declaration. However, one of the GF traffic officers rushed near the gate and informed the security staff that the officer in charge immigration had permitted the few remaining passengers to get in, but to our surprise they did not take his words for granted and one of them went

Peace in Middle East

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said recently that Israel must have a presence in the West Bank



even after a peace agreement is achieved, dealing a fresh blow to the visiting US Middle East envoy's effort to restart peace talks.

To settle the problem of Jerusalem and bring peace to the Mid-East—at least for a little while, it will take a miracle. There'll never be true peace. In the meanwhile, there's more turmoil to come in the region, sad to say. It's not caused by the Lord but by selfishness and by man's inhumanity to man, by lust and greed and pride, the same things that have always caused wars.

I'm afraid the poor Palestinians are going to suffer a while longer, along with many other refugees around the world. But blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. And blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the Earth.

Ted Rudow III, MA
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US foreign policy

After one year of running the world's strongest country, President Barack Obama has now understood that it is not easy to change the US foreign policy.

He is working under the shadow of the Bush administration. No change of America, no change of its foreign policy. So no change for the world!

Md. Abdul Wahab
BBA
Independent University
Bangladesh (IUB)

EU opposes death penalty

A killer must be taken to justice and get punishment as per the law of the country, even if that punishment is death penalty.

Personally I oppose death penalty because, I strongly believe, the government is to protect life and not to destroy it whatever crime an offender may have committed. Death penalty is the ultimate indignity to the offender and to the government that executes it. It is inhuman, uncivilised and unacceptable by any human norm.

Tayeb Husain
Lund, Sweden

Abolishment of visa

This is with reference to Prof. Md. Nurul Absar's letter published on the 25th of January, proposing abolishment of a visa system between India & Bangladesh.

I write from across the border to express complete agreement with Prof. Absar. We Bengalis of India have always looked with misty eyes to our east. For so many of us our ancestral homes, which have been woven into our imaginations by the stories of our grandparents, lie across the border. It is such an aberration of fate that we who are joint heirs to the same glorious culture and we who cherish the same language as our mother tongue, be today kept

apart by something as mundane as the hassles of procuring a passport and a visa. It is time a debate started in both our countries on this subject.

Prof. Absar hedges his argument upon the goodwill created by Sheikh Hasina's state visit to New Delhi. Certainly her visit was historic and will lead to strengthening of ties. But I assure him, and with him all my brothers in Bangladesh, to remember that a special place in the hearts of the 80 million people of West Bengal is forever reserved for them. No ups and downs in international relations, or the games of statecraft that are played out, can ever dilute that unparalleled affection and esteem with which we hold Bangladesh and its people.

Satyaki Chanda
Benoy Bose Road
Kolkata, India

Duty free cars

In the on-line poll survey, the readers opined against the duty free car privilege to be given to the MPs. I think the government should take note of this poll survey and reconsider its decision regarding giving the privilege to the MPs. If the government ignores the result of survey, it may have to pay the price later on, as the survey result is the reflection of people's mind.

If the government sticks to its decision of giving the privilege to the MPs, then the government should also consider giving this facility to all the people of the country. As a matter of fact, I think the country men deserve this facility more than the MPs.

The MPs are elected to serve the nation and not only to enjoy the facilities at the cost of the national exchequer. There are many countries in the world, where this privilege is given to all the people of that country. Bangladesh may also follow suit without depriving or hurting anybody.

Saleh Mohammad Ayub
Kalabagan, Dhaka

Global warming



Global warming is now major issue. It can only be countered if people stop pollution, stop harmful gas emissions by reducing the large number of industries that emit harmful gases including sulphur dioxide, carbon mono-oxide and also many other gases that severely affect the environment. People of the world should at least take small actions

to reduce the bad effects of global warming. If no one takes any action against global warming then Bangladesh and the countries in the world will suffer a lot and the condition of those countries may become unmanageable.

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