

## Air pollution

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life forms including plants. Cost of maintaining building structures in the urban areas also rises significantly due to such air pollution.

Doctors at the National Institute of Diseases of Chest and Hospital (NIDCH) in Mohakhali said number of patients soars at the very onset of the dry season and continues till the monsoon rain arrives.

NIDCH Director and Professor Dr Mirza Mohammad Hiron told The Daily Star that the number of patients with different chest and respiratory diseases is on the rise.

"We have thousands of patients treated during dry season for diseases triggered by allergic reactions, which strongly suggests it is related to exposure to pollution," Hiron said.

Airborne particulates are considered more harmful when they are 10 micrometers or smaller in diameter and in Dhaka the density of PM which is 2.5 micrometers or smaller has been found to be 9 times higher than the NAAQS recommendation.

Ambient air in the city becomes extremely polluted between October and March every year when rain is scarce and when thousands of brick kilns become operational, burning used automobile and rickshaw tyres, low grade coal and in many cases fuel-wood.

"Our study shows that during 120 days of the dry season the ambient air pollution remains very consistent in the city air," said a researcher of the Air Quality Management Project that ended in 2008.

## France praises Sudan's role in kidnap release

APP, Khartoum

A French envoy thanked Sudan's President Omar al-Beshir for helping to secure the release of a Red Cross worker held by kidnappers for nearly three months.

"I came on behalf of the French authorities to thank President Beshir and the Sudanese authorities for leading efforts that led to the release of the French ICRC worker," said Andre Parant, an adviser to French President Nicolas Sarkozy.

The kidnappers freed Laurent Maurice, an agronomist for the International Committee of the Red Cross, on Saturday after 89 days in captivity, first in Chad and then in Sudan's volatile Darfur region.

## Court ruling sparks

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of the precedence in the offices of the republic may be damaged creating indiscipline in the offices, he said.

Mahbubey Alam said the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court will now give the final decision on the matter.

When contacted, Cabinet Secretary Abdul Aziz said, "I think it would not be wise to say anything since the matter is pending with the court. Let it be settled...and then the government would be able to decide its next course of action."

A few bureaucrats, meanwhile, said a meeting of secretaries scheduled today might discuss the issue of revising the Warrant of Precedence as per court order although it is not on the agenda.

"The meeting had been called before the court gave its verdict and this meeting is not linked to the verdict. If any secretary raises this point, it might be discussed," said a secretary on condition of anonymity.

The Warrant of Precedence was formulated in 1975 and underwent some minor amendments up to 1986.

"Over the years this Warrant of Precedence has created an equilibrium in the overall structure of the state, so if it is necessary to change it overnight, it would likely to create a disequilibrium," said a top bureaucrat.

"Definitely it would create some pressure on the administration and can also contribute misunderstanding between the judiciary and the administration if finally the Supreme Court directs to change the longstanding Warrant of Precedence overnight," he said.

But Akbar Ali Khan, a retired top bureaucrat and also a former adviser to the caretaker government, thinks otherwise.

"I am worried about the constitutional implication of the court's decision," he told The Daily Star, explaining that it is absolutely a personal wish of the president and the prime minister to invite people to state programmes.

"But directing them in this regard should not be the function of the judiciary," he said. "The Warrant of Precedence is applicable to the state's ceremonial occasions to set the

## PM reaches

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The prime minister was given a guard of honour by a smartly turned-out contingent. Bangladesh Ambassador to Kuwait Shahed Reza was present.

Later, the PM drove to Bayan Palace in a ceremonial motorcade.

Hasina also visited the Bangladesh Bhaban in the capital of the Gulf state yesterday evening and had her dinner.

The premier will hold official talks with her Kuwaiti counterpart Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah today on a wide range of matters of bilateral cooperation, encompassing development assistance, investment and labour issues.

Earlier, the special plane sent by Emir of Kuwait Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, carrying the prime minister and the members of her entourage, took off from Zia International Airport at 2:07 pm (Bangladesh Time).

Awami League leaders, including Deputy Leader in Parliament Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Finance Minister AMA Muhiht and Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury, chiefs of the three services, dean of the diplomatic corps, and high civil and military officials, among others, saw off the PM at the airport.

"At the talks, Bangladesh will seek assistance for development of communications infrastructures, including the mega-project of Padma Bridge, and support for the country's energy sector," one official told UNB.

Presently, Kuwait Development Fund is providing aid worth \$ 660 million for 21 projects in Bangladesh.

A proposal for recruiting more workforces from Bangladesh will come up prominently during the talks with the Kuwaiti leaders, officials in Dhaka said.

Some 2.5 lakh Bangladeshis are now employed in the oil-rich Middle-eastern country.

Before the official talks today, Hasina will pay a courtesy call on Emir Sabah IV Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Dewani Emir.

The Prime Minister will return home early Wednesday.

## Strike at DU

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Chhatra League factions.

Israt Jahan Rochi, a radio jockey of Radio Amar said, "My listeners sent me SMS asking me not to go to the book fair because of the DU clash."

Meanwhile, 95 titles came out yesterday totalling 791 new books in the first week of the fair. With this, the number of new titles this year is 185 more on the corresponding period last year.

The new books include Aro Aktukhani Biggan of Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, Saat Diner America of Hasnat Abdul Hai, Satya Je Kathin of Jatin Sarkar, and Amar Chheleba of Chhatra Rajniti of Abdur Rauf.

Mizanur Rahman, proprietor of Mizan Publishers, said the last day of Dhaka International Trade Fair had drawn a large crowd there and that's why the participation of people here is less.

"We expect a large crowd from tomorrow," he said.

## Hosts' gold

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The end of the day India improved their tally to 67-40-22. Pakistan still held the second position with a tally of 17-23-27.

Sri Lanka, who excelled in athletics, followed Bangladesh closely with 13-26-36.

However, all eyes will be fixed on the Bangladesh-Afghanistan men's football final at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today, the penultimate day of the 12-day spectacle.

## Cricket glory

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 opener Anamul Haque's 38-ball 43 that featured four boundaries and captain Mohammad Mithun's brilliant 37 that came off only 21 deliveries. He smashed five fours and a six to entertain a vociferous crowd.

Sri Lanka took the silver in the event while Pakistan bagged the bronze after a nail-biting two-wicket victory against Nepal in the third-place deciding match at the same venue earlier on the day.

## Bill on MPs

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the bill saying that it would be helpful for lawmakers to be more cautious for ensuring their transparency and accountability if the bill is enacted into a law.

Jatiya Party lawmaker Mujib-Ul-Haque Chhunu however opined that enacting such law is not more important if lawmakers do not apply their conscience.

M Hafizuddin Khan, chairman of TIB Trustee Board, said passage of the bill is a must to set a guideline for the lawmakers.

TIB Trustee Prof Mozaffer Ahmad hailed the bill and hoped that lawmakers would support passage of the bill.

Dr Iftekaruzzaman, executive director of TIB, said, "The bill, if passed into a law, would make lawmakers accountable to their conscience and impose an obligation on them to avoid conflict of interest."

M Abdul Latif Mondal, a former secretary, said available records show that out of over 300 bills submitted by the private members, only six (all from treasury bench lawmakers) have been passed since the independence. "We hope this private members' bill will be enacted into law soon."

The HC delivered the verdict following a writ petition filed in 2006 challenging the Warrant of Precedence in 1986 that is used for all government purposes including ceremonial functions.

## Finger pointed

**FROM PAGE 1**  
section-164 in arms haul case filed under the section-19 (ka) of Arms Act in March 2 last year that made a remarkable development in the investigation.

Contacted, Investigation Officer (IO) of the case Md Muniruzzaman Chowdhury, a senior ASP of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in Chittagong zone, refused to disclose any information regarding the confessional statement.

However, sources said Hafiz made almost the same confession as he did in the arms haul case and hinted at involvement of the same persons in the case filed in connection with the ten truckloads of firearms and ammunition hauled at Chittagong Urea Fertilizer Company Limited (CUFL) jetty in the early hours of April 2, 2004.

In the previous confessional statement Hafiz implicated involvement of high officials of National Security Intelligence (NSI), Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) and the CUFL.

Investigation following the statement helped CID arrest two former NSI director generals (DGs) Major General

(ret'd) Rezaqul Haider Chowdhury and Brigadier Gen (ret'd) M Abdur Rahim, former director (security) Wing Commander (ret'd) Sahab Uddin, former deputy director (technical) Maj (ret'd) Liakat Hossain, NSI Field Officer Akbar Hossain, former CUFL managing director Mohsin Talukder and General Manager (Admin) Enamul Haq.

Besides, the then home secretary Omar Faruk, former chairman of Bangladesh Chemicals and Industries Corporation (BCIC) Brig Gen (ret'd) Imamuzzaman and a number of government high officials were quizzed in connection with the case.

No new name came in Saturday night's confession, sources added.

Meanwhile, CID investigators on Thursday made a 7-day remand prayer against former NSI DG Maj Gen (ret'd) Rezaqul Haider Chowdhury in the arms haul case.

The remand prayer was placed before the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Chittagong.

Hearing of the remand prayer would be held today in the afternoon, said the sources.

## River cleaning

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"This cleaning drive is a total waste because every day we are dumping similar amount of rubbish into the river. We have no other alternatives," he said.

On the other side near Balurghat and Talakpara, Jharna and her husband Sohrab manage 15 rickshaw-bins in Shahidnagar, earning a meagre living with 13 other collectors.

At exactly 9:00am on Sunday the couple defied the chill and pulled two of the vans towards the river. As they unloaded their half-rotten polythene-clad cargo into the slope of the embankment they said they are authorised by DCC to collect rubbish from Shahidnagar charging each household Tk 20.

"We feel very bad to dump the rubbish here every day. But we do not have an alternative. The city corporation bin men never come here," said Jharna as they kept unloading half a dozen rickshaw-bins arrived at the site for dumping.

Every day dumping of rubbish in the river is so rampant that at places small islands have been created. Mountains of household rubbish have been piled up every 100 metres mile after mile along the banks.

At Sadarghat Launch Terminal, at around 10:00am scores of large passenger vessels kept arriving from different southern regions. Once the passengers got off the vessels, workers swept the dirty floors of the huge vessels preparing for their return journeys. Soon layers of rubbish including polythene bags were strewn in the riverwater.

DCC Chief Waste Management Officer Capt (BN) Bipan Kumar Saha expressed dismay at the matter and blamed unscrupulous drivers for the crime.

"Nothing can justify such acts of dumping rubbish in an undesignated spot. I promise you we will hand out exemplary punishment for the offenders," he said.

Successive chiefs of waste management said the same on record to this correspondent but so far these perpetrators and their assistants could not be deterred.

Since the BIWTA launched the drive on January 6, onslaught on all the rivers around Dhaka has nonetheless continued with thousands of tonnes of liquid and solid waste pouring into the waters.

The Buriganga is now a lifeless pit with no water flow from upstream. Ever since the lean period sets in, the river's flow from the Jamuna in Manikganj and Tangail has been cut off due to heavy siltation at the sources.

The water in the Buriganga is now so toxic and foul that it cannot be touched. The only

## Govt seeks

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Attorney General Mahbubey Alam yesterday told The Daily Star that hearing of the stay petition would be held today.

Deputy Attorney General Nazrul Islam Talukder said the petition was filed for staying the HC verdict so that the government can file a regular leave to appeal petition with the apex court against the HC verdict after getting its copy.

The HC delivered the verdict following a writ petition filed in 2006 challenging the Warrant of Precedence in 1986 that is used for all government purposes including ceremonial functions.

## Criminals shoot at expat youth

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Criminals allegedly hired by a manpower broker shot an expatriate in Singapore yesterday in the city's Gendaria.

The victim, Moniruzzaman, 32, of Gazipur, was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Monir said Reaz, a manpower broker, of Louhajong in Munshiganj, took over Tk 16 lakh one and a half years ago promising him to send his three relatives to Singapore. But Reaz did not send his relatives nor did he pay back the money.

Besides, Monir said he came to Dhaka with his relatives as Reaz promised him to refund the amount.

Reaz took them to an under-construction building for negotiation, he added. At one stage, Reaz along with 15 others held them hostage and forced Monir to sign a paper that stated that Monir had received the money. Later the gang of Reaz fired on Monir indiscriminately around 4:30pm.

Monir alleged that there were two Rapid Action Battalion personnel in the gang but he could not identify the Rab men hired by Reaz.

Officer-in-Charge of Shyampur Police Station Muzammel Huq said they were looking into the matter but none was arrested yet.

## HC asks

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The BRTA chairman recently held meetings with four manufacturers of motor speed controlling devices to understand how long it would take to install those in all 12 lakh motor vehicles in the country.

Sohel Aman, project manager of Monico Ltd that produces one such device, told The Daily Star, "If all of the four manufacturers start selling and installing their devices, the job can be completed in six months."

Speed governor seal is a device used for controlling speed limits of motor vehicles in line with officially approved speeds for different types of vehicles.

Whenever a driver tries to cross an approved speed limit, the device limits the vehicles acceleration by adjusting the engine's fuel injection system.

According to the eighth schedule of the Motor Vehicle Ordinance 1983, the maximum speed for light vehicles like cars is 113 kilometres per hour (kmph), for buses and minibuses it is 56 kmph, for heavy vehicles like lorries it is 40 kmph, and for fire brigade vehicles 48 kmph.

In yesterday's suo moto rule upon the government the HC also asked the former to explain within three weeks why it should not be directed to properly implement the traffic laws and rules through controlling speeds of vehicles, and by examining drivers' licenses.

An HC bench of Justice AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik and Justice Borhan Uddin issued the rule following media reports on the accidental death of Hamim Sheikh.

The home secretary, the inspector general of police, joint-commissioner (traffic) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), the BRTA chairman, and deputy commissioners (traffic) of north, south, east, and west zones of DMP must respond to the rule.

Earlier in the day, Advocate Manzil Murshid, a lawyer of the Supreme Court, placed the issues of The Daily Star of February 5 and the daily Prothom Alo of February 4 before the HC bench. The two newspapers contained the news of Hamim's death and an elaborate report on rampant reckless driving by bus drivers on the streets of the capital.

On March 10, 2008, the HC directed the government authorities to take steps to install speed governor seals in all types of motor vehicles by March 2009.

The 2008 ruling also said if automobile owners failed to install the device by the deadline set by the court, BRTA and the police department would be empowered to impose a fine of Tk 200 for each day of violation, which would be doubled if the vehicle was caught the second time without a speed governor seal.

## MD of Jamuna

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Shamim Islam, managing director of Jamuna Builders Ltd which constructed the Jamuna Future Park Shopping Complex, on the same night submitted two appeals to the Rajuk chairman against the Rajuk notice, stating that he submitted the appeals as per the HC direction.

Rajuk Chairman Nurul Huda yesterday filed the contempt of court petition stating that the HC had not issued any direction for submitting appeal to Rajuk chairman against the notice.

Shamim flouted the HC directive by misquoting its order, he said.

The HC will hear the petition today.

## Ahmadinejad

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months and if they don't agree, we would start ourselves," Ahmadinejad said.

"Now Dr (Ali Akbar) Salehi, start to make the 20 percent with the centrifuges," the hardliner told the atomic chief, who was sitting in the audience.

Britain said that if Iran ploughed ahead with higher uranium enrichment, it would be in breach of five United Nations Security Council resolutions.

"Reports that Iran is planning to enrich some of their fuel to 20 percent level of enrichment are clearly a matter of serious concern," a spokeswoman for the foreign ministry said in a statement issued in London.

US Defence Secretary Gates, meanwhile, called on the international community to stand united against Iran.

"No one has tried more sincerely to reach out and engage with Iran than President (Barack) Obama," Gates said after meeting his Italian counterpart Ignazio La Russa in Rome.

"The international community has offered the Iranian government multiple opportunities to provide reassurance of its intentions. The results have been very disappointing."

"If the international community will stand together and bring pressure on the Iranian government, I believe there is still time for sanctions and pressure to work. But we must all work together."

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which brokered the nuclear fuel proposal, offered no immediate comment on Ahmadinejad's latest remarks.

World powers fear Tehran wants to enrich uranium to very high levels for use in an atomic weapons programme. Iran insists its nuclear enrichment drive is purely for peaceful purposes.

## US under-secy

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residence Jamuna yesterday morning.

PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad briefed the media after the meeting.

The US Under-Secretary also appreciated the government-sponsored new education policy and Hasina's role in tackling terrorism.

McHale hoped that the present democratic government of Bangladesh through its innovative initiatives and development programmes will be able to bring about socio-economic prosperity for its people.

Among other issues, bilateral relations between Bangladesh and the USA and Madrasah education in Bangladesh also came up for discussion.

The premier and the under-secretary of state stressed the need for increasing people-to-people contact as one of the ways to further strengthen the existing bilateral relations between the two countries.

Hasina requested the US government to take best care of Bangladeshi expatriates living in the United States.

She focused on US President Barack Obama's Cairo speech and said the world people and humanity will be benefited if all aspects of the speech are reflected on global issues.

The PM also called for more US investment in Bangladesh, as her govern-

## SC judges

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set up an independent secretariat for the judiciary.

He said a proposal has been submitted to the government for raising salaries and facilities of the judges.

Enhanced salaries and perks would help the judges to work with renewed vigour, he added.

Earlier in the day, the attorney general's office and the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) accorded a farewell to outgoing chief justice Md Tafazzul Islam.

Justice Tafazzul, who went into retirement yesterday, said the judges and lawyers alone cannot establish justice and the rule of law. The judiciary, executive and legislative will have to work in unison to that end.

In their speeches, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam and Bar President AF M Mesbahuddin commended the work of the outgoing SC chief.

The attorney general mentioned that Justice Tafazzul presided in two historic cases - Bangabandhu murder case and the one regarding constitution's fifth amendment.

Judges of both the Appellate and HC divisions and SC lawyers were present at the function held at the chief justice's courtroom.

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Ahmadinejad insisted that world powers "unconditionally" accept exchanging Iran's low-enriched uranium (LEU) for high purity 20 percent enriched uranium to be used as nuclear fuel for the Tehran reactor, which makes medical isotopes.

Ahmadinejad's statement comes just days after he indicated in an interview on state television last Tuesday that Iran was ready to send its LEU abroad for conversion into 20 percent nuclear fuel.

ILNA news agency reported that foreign ministry spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast said that enriching uranium to 20 percent was Iran's "right and not in contradiction to the NPT (Non Proliferation Treaty)" to which Tehran is a signatory.

Iran and world powers are locked in a stalemate over the UN-drafted deal, which envisages the Islamic republic's 3.5 percent LEU being sent to Russia and France for enrichment to 20 percent and then returned as fuel for the Tehran reactor.

Iranian officials have opposed this proposal, saying they would prefer a simultaneous exchange on Iranian soil, a plan rejected by world powers.

Ahmadinejad said Sunday that if the world powers "come forward and say 'we will exchange (uranium) unconditionally and cooperate on your reactors and medicine'... fine then we will cooperate" too.

Salehi too emphasised that world powers have little time left to enter into a fuel deal with Iran.

"If they do not enter this fuel exchange we have to be ready for 20 percent enrichment," Fars quoted him as saying.

He said Iran had "received messages" for the exchange and there was "optimism in talks... but not much time was left" for the world powers.

## Extortionists

**FROM PAGE 16**  
secretary Md Akram Hossain yesterday in his complaint alleged that Tk 10 to 15 lakh was demanded as toll from BKMEA first vice president Alhaj Abdur Rashed Rasu, directors GM Faruque, Hasan Mahmud, Tapash Kumar Saha and Moteleb Joarder.

The person introduced himself as top terrorist Mizan over the two cell phone numbers 01741443429 and 01675690646.

BKMEA director GM Faruque said phone calls were made to him twice and the caller threatened that if he (Faruque) did not pay Tk 13 lakh as toll he would be killed within 48 hours. Tapash Kumar Saha said the extortionist demanded Tk 10 lakh from him.

Narayanganj Sadar Model Thana Officer-in-Charge Akter Hossain confirmed the incident and said police were investigating the matter.

## 3 rivers

**FROM PAGE 16**  
city is cut off by rising silt levels at the mouth of the Jamuna's main water conduit.

When the water source is cut off, millions of litres of industrial and household waste accumulates in the river.

Between early September and May the water turns deep purple and black and foul odours are common.

The only movement occurs when high tides push the water slightly upstream and the low tide downstream.

The situation is not likely to improve until the floodwater from the Jamuna River in Manikganj flows in during the rainy season.

The government is planning a Tk 1,000 crore mega-project to restore the flow of the rivers by dredging the source at Jamuna in Manikganj as well as diverting water towards Dhaka.

Discriminate encroachment and massive pollution have already prompted the government to declare these four rivers ecologically endangered.