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3 rivers now biologically dead: DoE

MORSHED ALI KHAN

Experts at the Department of Environment have classified three rivers in the capital as "biologically dead."

Laboratory tests have proven that the water in most parts of the Buriganga, Turag and Balu rivers contains no dissolved oxygen and is therefore totally devoid of aquatic life.

A senior DoE scientific official said, "According to official standards, the minimum level of dissolved oxygen necessary to sustain life is 5 milligrams per litre."

"For the last several months we have found no oxygen whatsoever."

Whilst the Department of Environment (DoE) did not test toxicity, DoE experts said they believe the water in the three rivers is highly toxic and hazardous to the millions of people living along the riverbanks.

During the dry season the water flow in areas around the

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River cleaning, dumping go together

MORSHED ALI KHAN

Hundreds of tonnes of rubbish is being dumped into the Buriganga every day, making futile the Tk 6 crore project of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) to clean the riverbed.

The rubbish is dumped into the river on both banks of the river stretching from Mohammadpur to Postogola and Kholamora to Zinzira.

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC)-sponsored door-to-door rubbish collectors collect the household rubbish generated in densely populated areas like Kamrangir Char, where around a million people live, Shahidnagar, Sowarighat, Waizghat, Babubazar, Shyambazar, Mitford Nolgolla and beyond, and invariably unload their rickshaw-bins into the river.

Solid waste management is nonexistent along the river which raises questions about the utility of the cleanup drive that continues in full swing nearby.

Locals in Kamrangir Char gathered on the embankment Saturday morning and termed the drive "ridiculous and futile", pointing their fingers at the huge piles of freshly dumped rubbish in the river.

Just yards away from the embankment, a grab excavator mounted on a barge was busy scooping up sludge and rubbish from the riverbed.

Babul Sheikh, a businessman in Kamrangir Char's Umbrella Masjid area, said the money should have been spent first to prevent dumping of rubbish into the river.

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PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ
 This recent photo taken in the city's Shaheed Nagar area shows dumping of garbage right on the riverbank.

Maya reinstated as city AL gen secy

AL starts grassroots meeting today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling Awami League formally starts its move today to strengthen the party's grassroots level activities, resolve conflicts and promote coordination among the party leaders, workers and lawmakers, according to a decision taken at its extended meeting on January 30.

Main opposition BNP has also started similar programmes on February 6 to strengthen the party.

Meanwhile, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya was reinstated as general secretary of

Dhaka City unit of AL yesterday through a decision by an executive committee meeting of the city AL.

Qamrul Islam, state minister for law, was discharging duties as acting general secretary although Maya returned home before the December 29, 2008 election after being absconded during the then caretaker government regime.

Qamrul told reporters that he has given up the post after being directed by party president and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Maya

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Extortionists threaten to kill 5 BKMEA executives

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

An extortionist demanded huge amount of toll over cellphone from five executives of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA) and threatened to kill them in case they do not meet the demand.

BKMEA filed a general diary with Narayanganj Sadar Model Police Station in this regard.

BKMEA senior assistant

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Cell phone crime goes unabated

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Extortion and threat to high profile people using cell phones is going unabated as law enforcers could hardly trace the criminals who manage their SIM cards without following proper registration procedure.

Sources observe that the menace has reached an intolerable level as even Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her nephew lawmaker Fazole Noor Taposh could not escape such threats issued recently by the criminals.

However, following threats issued from a newly registered cell phone number, Rab and

Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission in a joint drive arrested three cell phone distributors--Lokman Hossain, Rafiqul Islam alias Miraj, Shafiqul Islam alias Ranju on Thursday.

The callers and the sellers of the RUM (removable user identity module) card are still remaining out of the dragnet due to fake registration, sources said.

Rab sources said they are trying to nab the callers but tracing them is difficult as the RUM card was reached to the subscriber after passing three steps--dealers, sub-dealers and retailers.

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MD of Jamuna Builders faces contempt charge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A contempt of court petition was filed yesterday with the High Court against the managing director of Jamuna Builders Ltd on charge of misquoting its order in two separate appeals submitted to the Rajuk chairman.

On February 3, the HC in an order summarily rejected a writ petition challenging a Rajuk notice that asked Jamuna Builders Ltd to demolish the unauthorised top four floors of the 10-storey Jamuna Future Park Shopping Complex.

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Strike at DU lessens crowd

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Amar Ekushey Boi Mela at Bangla Academy witnessed relatively small crowd yesterday owing to tension in the area following a strike at Dhaka University.

A lurking sense of fear stood in the way of booklovers visiting the venue, said the publishers.

The stall owners said many people opted to stay off the DU campus fearing further violence following the strike.

The strike was called by Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal to protest at the death of a DU student in a clash between two

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ABUBAKAR'S DEATH JCD strike at DU observed peacefully

DU CORRESPONDENT

Academic activities at Dhaka University were greatly disrupted yesterday due to the strike enforced by the pro-BNP student body Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal in protest against the death of Abubakar Siddique.

Presence of students on the campus was very thin. Very few classes were held in some

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WHEN WILL THEY EVER LEARN: A few days back, a student of Willes Little Flower School at Kakrail was run over by a bus on this road in front of the school. A photo taken yesterday shows guardians with their little kids crossing the same busy road desperately.

PHOTO: SHAFIQUL ALAM

Bill on MPs' code of conduct hailed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lawmakers from two major political parties and leaders of the civil society yesterday at a discussion appreciated the private members' bill titled "The Members of Parliament Conduct Bill 2010" placed in the parliament recently.

They also urged all concerned, including the lawmakers, to take immediate steps to enact the bill as a law.

The speakers also said even though there was hardly any precedence of enacting a private members' bill, this bill merited special consideration as it is designed to ensure high moral standards within and outside the House in performing lawmakers' duties.

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) organised the discussion on the bill at the city's Cirdap auditorium.

Speakers opined that qualitative changes in the politics and parliament are expected once the bill is enacted into law. So, enactment of the bill is necessary, they said.

The bill was placed in parliament on January 14 seeking to enact a code of conduct for the lawmakers.

On the day, the bill was sent to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions for further scrutiny.

According to the rules of procedure of the parliament, a "private member" means a member other than a minister, either from the treasury bench or the opposition bench.

The Awami League lawmaker Golam Mawla Roni and BNP lawmaker Nilufar Chowdhury Moni in the meeting supported

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Ahmadinejad for 20pc uranium enrichment

AFP, Tehran/ Rome

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad yesterday ordered Iran's atomic chief to begin higher uranium enrichment, raising the stakes in a dispute with the West days after seeming to accept a UN-drafted nuclear deal.

Ahmadinejad's declaration drew immediate fire from Britain, which said it was "clearly a matter of serious concern," while US Defence Secretary Robert Gates called for mounting "international pressure" on Iran.

Ahmadinejad in a speech at an exhibition on laser technology broadcast live on state television blamed world powers for the stalemate over the nuclear fuel deal, but left the door open for possible negotiation over the proposal.

"I had said let us give them (world powers) two to three

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US under-secy speaks highly of steps on development

UNB, Dhaka

Visiting US Under-Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Judith A McHale highly praised the present government's development initiatives and assured of providing all necessary cooperation in implementing development programmes, projects and plans.

McHale came up with the appreciation and assurance when she met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official

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SIKALBAHA 55MW POWER PLANT

Power generation to start Thursday

NUR UDDIN ALAMGIR, Ctg

After more than seven months of delay and missing two deadlines, the Sikalbaha 55MW furnace oil-fired rental power plant is expected to be launched on Thursday.

Private company Energies Power Corporation set up the plant at a cost of Tk 260 crore with German equipment at Sikalbaha, on the bank of the Karnaphuli, under Patiya upazila in Chittagong.

Talking to The Daily Star, Energies Managing Director Javed Hossain claimed that when in full production the plant would be able to

generate 73.8MW power, which will be supplied to the Chittagong region under the Power Development Board.

"As per the contract with the government, we would supply 55MW power to the national grid and after successful generation we would talk about the rest 18.8MW," he said.

Trial generation at the Sikalbaha plant started on January 1 this year, adding up to 45MW power to the national grid on an irregular basis, Javed said.

Earlier, the price for per unit power was fixed at Tk 8.87 based on the price of furnace oil on

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OnlinePoll ✓
 Do you think introduction of smart cards will protect overseas jobseekers from fraudulent recruiting agencies and reduce harassment during and after immigration?
 Yes (69.7%)
 No (25.0%)
 No Comments (5.3%)
Total votes: 903
TODAY'S POLL
 Would you support if the government introduces hefty peak-hour charge on private cars to discourage the use of those to ease the traffic congestion in the capital?
 Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net