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'Oil spill' in the Bay

Pilots, passengers spot 3km slick off Sitakunda; DoE sends team

MORSHED ALI KHAN, from Chittagong

A three-kilometre long oil slick has been seen in the bay off Sitakunda in the district.

Pilots and passengers flying in and out of Chittagong Shah Amanat International Airport said they had noticed the strip 300 to 400 feet in width.

The reddish-black layer -- first reported on Monday -- was spreading towards Sitakunda.

Both the reason and the severity of the slick so far remained unconfirmed.

Zafar Alam, director of Department of Environment (DoE) in Chittagong, told The Daily Star that hearing the news he had sent a three-member team comprising a chemist, an inspector and an assistant secretary to the area.

"They travelled across the area on a speed boat and found an oil spill from an Indian flag carrier called Ocean Pearl," Zafar said.

However, the spill from the fertiliser carrying ship was not that big, he said. No



contact with the vessel has been made yet.

A DoE official seeking anonymity said ship-breaking yards, a few kilometres away, are also "strongly suspected" to be the source of the slick.

Sitakunda homes the country's lone ship breaking industry.

"Ship breaking is a highly polluting industry and it is already wreaking havoc on the ecology of the area," he said.

The official added the area is heavily fished and out of the navigational route. The matter would have remained unnoticed if the passengers and the pilots had kept mum.

Munir Chowdhury, director (enforcement) of DoE in Chittagong, saw the strip on Monday morning while on a Regent Airways flight to Dhaka.

"I was shocked to see the spillage over an area of more than three kilometres. The spill was in the direction of Sitakunda," Munir told The Daily Star yesterday.

Three pilots of Bangladesh Biman flights to Chittagong and Cox's Bazar also confirmed the report yesterday.

It is a huge spill, said the pilots requesting anonymity, and could be disastrous to the already polluted ecology of the area.

Lt Commander Mostafizur Rahman of Bangladesh Coast Guard told this

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The face-off between two groups of Bangladesh Chhatra League at the main entrance of Jagannath University yesterday.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

BNP to tell UN of 'torture' on SQ Chy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP will report to international communities including the United Nations about the "police torture" on BNP lawmaker Salauddin Quader Chowdhury, Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abdin Farroque said yesterday.

"When an MP was held without an arrest warrant and lawmakers were barred at the VIP lounge of an airport from seeing off a three-time prime

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Restriction on cars mulled for city

Muhith says it's a move to check traffic jam

SAJJADUR RAHMAN

"Private cars with less than four or five passengers will not be allowed to ply the city streets," Finance Minister AMA Muhith told reporters at his Secretariat office yesterday.

The minister said the government is thinking about restricting private cars to make public transport system more efficient. But he did not say when this decision would come into effect.

He admitted the government's failure in controlling the traffic situation in Dhaka.

Former director of UN ESCAP and a transport expert Dr Rahamatullah welcomed the government move but not without reservations.

"It [restriction] is very much in system. But you cannot do it unless you develop your public transport system," he said.

He opposed the disallowing of cars on

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BDR set to turn BGB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) is set to be renamed Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) officially as the BGB act would come into effect in a couple of days following President Zillur Rahman's formal approval yesterday.

Sources say after the bill was signed, the president's office, Bangabhaban, sent it to the Parliament Secretariat for a gazette notification.

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BCL men clash at JNU: 30 hurt

Committee dissolved

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 30 people, including eight policemen and five journalists, were injured yesterday in a factional clash of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) at Jagannath University (JNU) in Old Dhaka.

Following the incident BCL JNU unit committee has been dissolved, Mahmud Hasan Ripon, president of BCL central committee told The Daily Star last night.

The university authorities have suspended all the regular classes and examinations for the next two days. They have also formed an 11-member enquiry committee to probe the incident, said Kazi Asaduzzaman, the proctor.

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Check misuse of Islam

PM asks Islamic scholars

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called upon Islamic scholars of the country to stay alert so that none could engage in destructive activities using the name of Islam.

The premier made the call while addressing the prize and certificate distribution ceremony of National Children and Juvenile Cultural Competition of Bangladesh

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