

Factory fined Tk 19.5 lakh for polluting canal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The department of environment (DoE) yesterday fined a dyeing factory Tk 19.5 lakh for polluting Karna Para canal in Savar, the outskirts of the capital.
Bangladesh Dyeing Ind Ltd was also given an ultimatum of 24 hours to initiate the functioning of ETP.
A team of the DoE conducted the drive around 1:00pm, says a press release.
The team found that toxic liquid waste of red, blue, and purple colour from the industry was flowing into the canal.
Mentionable, The Daily Star recently ran a story on the canal pollution.



Members of International Crimes Tribunal, left, yesterday visit the memorial of the martyred teachers and employees of Dhaka University as they came there to investigate the killing during the War of Liberation, 1971 and another team of the tribunal, right, visits the martyred intellectuals' memorial at Rayerbazar in the city.



PHOTO: STAR

Boiler blast kills two, injures 50

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur
Two workers were killed and 50 others injured, eight of them critically, in a boiler blast in a tobacco factory at Najirerhat in sadar upazila yesterday evening.
The dead are Ranzina, 28, and Mahbul, 30 of village Najirerhat.
The injured workers were sent to Rangpur Medical College Hospital. The condition of Arzina, Roksana, Sabina and Rozina is critical, said the hospital director.
Eyewitnesses and fire fighter sources said the boiler in Siraj Varosha (SV) Tobacco exploded at about 6:15pm as the water in the boiler ran short.
Director of Fire Service and Civil Defence of Rangpur said auto-feed of the boiler did not work properly. This was why water of the boiler ran short and it exploded.
Meanwhile, thousands of villagers encircled factory and staged demonstrations in front of it as police did not agree to lodge any case in this connection.
When asked, OC of Kotwali Police Station Haider Ali said a general diary was lodged in this connection.

Accept constructive criticism

JS body suggests government

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
A parliamentary body yesterday called upon the government to accept constructive criticism against it from different quarters including the media.
The parliamentary standing committee on the information ministry also said the government should have the strength to accept criticism if it believes in democracy.
The House watchdog also termed the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) as a "white elephant" saying that it has failed to fulfill its objectives. The committee asked authority concerned to bring PIB under a legal framework immediately.
"In the meeting we have told Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad that the government and the media should work hand in hand to strengthen democracy," Obaidul Quader, chief of the JS body told reporters after the meeting at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhavan.
"The government must have accept criticism if it believes in democracy. Dispute will not bring anything positive," he added.
Obaidul Quader, also made comment on various other issues including the much-talked electoral slogan of ruling Awami League --

"charter of change" and "Digital Bangladesh".
"Nothing will change unless the government as well as leaders of Awami League do change their mindset and perception," Quader, also an AL presidium member said.
"The ministers and leaders of ruling Awami League should change their mind before asking people about the charter of change," he added.
On the slogan Digital Bangladesh, Quader said, putting some computers on tables in the government's different offices does not mean Digital Bangladesh.
"The government will have to ensure it so people can get all information about the activities of different ministries," Quader went on saying, adding that there are websites of different ministries where there was no update information about the respective ministries.
He also said even there are website of some ministries where only name of the minister and his photograph of oath taking ceremony have been put.
On PIB's performance, he said, "PIB has turned into a white elephant like Bangladesh Press Council. The committee asked the ministry to bring the institute under a legal framework to make it meaningful."

DHAKA TODAY

ICT Fair
Multiplan Centre Shop Owners Association will organise an ICT fair. Venue: Multiplan Centre, New Elephant Road, Time: 10:30am.

Workshop
BCSIR will hold a national workshop. Venue: IFRD auditorium, BCSIR, Time: 10:45am.

Seminar
FBCCI will organise a seminar. Venue: FBCCI auditorium, Time: 10:00am.

Human chain
CLNB will form a human chain. Venue: In front of National Press Club, Time: 11:30am.

Anniversary
Dhaka Commerce College will celebrate its 20th anniversary. Venue: College campus, Mirpur, Time: 9:00am.

Seminar
Paribesh Bachao Andolan will arrange a seminar. Venue: National Press Club, Time: 10:30am.

170 more cases to be dropped

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The government yesterday recommended withdrawal of 170 more cases classifying those as "politically motivated".
One of the cases was filed against veteran freedom fighter and sector commander of the Liberation War Lt Gen (ret) Mir Shawkat Ali, who died on November 20.
State Minister for Law Quamrul Islam revealed this after the 24th meeting of the national committee to review politically motivated cases at the home ministry.
Of the cases, 145 were filed under the Penal Code, while the rest, including that against Mir Shawkat, were filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission.
Four cases filed against former Proshika chairman Qazi Faruque and two against Jatiya Party (Ershad) lawmaker Ruhul Amin Hawlader were recommended for quashing.
As many as 1,566 cases sent by relevant district committees were placed before the national committee yesterday for review. Of them, 126 were filed by the ACC.
Of these, proposals to withdraw 101 cases filed by the ACC and 256 filed under the Penal Code were rejected.
The review committee has yet to see 1,400 cases filed under the Penal Code, the minister said, adding that all the recommendations of graft cases have been taken care of.
The district committees have so far selected 10,293 cases filed under the Penal Code and 518 filed by ACC for review.
Most of the cases recommended for withdrawal were filed during the tenure of the BNP-led four-party alliance and the last caretaker government.
As many as 6,655 cases filed under the Penal Code and 314 filed by the ACC have been recommended for withdrawal so far, the state minister informed the press.
Some of the recommended cases filed under the Penal Code have been disposed of, but the ACC has yet to quash any.
Asked why the ACC is not taking action against the recommended cases for withdrawal, the state minister said the anti-graft watchdog is an independent body and considering or rejecting the recommendations is up to them.
State Minister for Home Shamsul Hoque and senior officials of the home ministry and police department were present.

NGOs overlap programmes

Say regulatory body officials
ALPHA ARZU
NGO Affairs Bureau (NGOAB) has decided to limit the non-government organisations' programmes so they cannot get concentrated in the same places with the same projects.
Some NGOs are operating in the same places for the same beneficiary groups, said the bureau officials.
Such concentration deprives thousands of remote area people of the services and facilities provided by the development organisations, they added.
According to a senior official, the bureau found at least ten districts where more than fifty foreign funded NGOs have been working.
And they do not know how many local NGOs are operating in the same areas, he said.
He added the same people constantly benefit from the programmes of those NGOs, which deprives the poor and underprivileged people of other remote areas and districts.
"During approval and foreign fund release, we scrutinise these issues to avoid concentration and make more people to benefit across the country," Khurshid Alam, deputy director of NGOAB, recently told The Daily Star.
Some NGOs concentrate their programmes in Dhaka, Chittagong, Jessore, Barisal, Tangail, Khulna, Dinajpur and Sirajganj for better communication facilities, said the bureau sources.
Data show 1180 foreign funded NGOs out of 1420 in Dhaka division have programmes in Dhaka district alone

while only three NGOs work in Sherpur.
It was also found 81 foreign funded NGOs have been working in Chittagong, 42 in Barisal, 38 in Tangail, 68 in Jessore, 51 in Khulna, 44 in Dinajpur, and 30 in Sirajganj.
Only three NGOs are found operating in Laxmipur, Munshiganj, and Sherpur and five NGOs in Panchagarh, Chuadanga, and Feni.
Most of these organisations' projects involve informal education; primary, maternal, and child health care; and different awareness programmes on education, family planning, sanitation, safe drinking water, women empowerment and girl children's education etc.
NGOAB has taken stricter steps during fund release for the micro-finance operators in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), said Khurshid.
He added just one NGO is allowed to operate the micro-credit among the same loan receivers in CHT areas.
Tajul Islam of NGO Federation of Bangladesh, an apex body of over 500 local and national NGOs, told The Daily Star that the programme and area concentration is a problem.
He said it should be handled effectively so everyone can get the services and facilities provided by the non-government organisations.
He also pointed out that other regulatory body can also consider the problem and undertake to take the NGO facilities to large number of underprivileged population of remote areas.

ELEVATED EXPRESSWAY

Court order on bidder's offer likely today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The chamber judge of the appellate division is expected to pass an order today on whether authorities concerned have to open the technically non-responsive bidder's financial offer for the proposed elevated expressway.
Attorney general's office filed a petition on Monday seeking stay of a High Court (HC) order, asking for opening of the said offer, to expedite construction process of the expressway.
Barrister Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh, counsel for Sikder-KCC JV that was rated technically non-responsive in the final bidding for the project, said they opposed the government petition for the stay.
The court of the chamber judge is expected to pass an order today in this regard, he said.
Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan, secretary to Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA), implementing agency of the 26-kilometre Dhaka Elevated Expressway (DEE) project, told The Daily Star that they sought a remedy from the appellate division so

they do not have to comply with the HC direction.
Sikder-KCC, rated as technically non-responsive and rejected from financial evaluation, filed a petition with the HC that directed BBA to open Sikder's financial proposal, said Bhuiyan.
The BBA secretary said they would prefer Box Type girder, which is comparatively more expensive but beautiful to look at, to construct DEE.
Ital-Thai Development Company that won the bidding according to BBA has proposed Tk 8703 crore for construction of Box Type and Tk 7700 crore for I Type.
The parliamentary standing committee on the communications ministry at a meeting on December 23 called for the relevant bidding documents of both Sikder and Ital-Thai to examine them.
Bhuiyan said they could not place the tendering documents to the parliamentary committee until the matter is settled at the court.
Prof Shamsul Hoque, a member of the tender evaluation committee, said the

concessionaire (contractor) has to complete the project in three and a half years as of the date of issuing work order.
The BBA intends to sign the concession agreement in the first week of January and then issue the work order.
The proposed route of the expressway runs from Shahjalal International Airport through Kuril, Banani, Tejgaon, Moghbazar, and Kamalapur Stadium along the existing rail track.
Then, it passes through Gulbagh, by the Syedabad Water Treat Plant, across Demra road to reach Kutubkhali through Dania.
The project will require acquisition of a good deal of private land after Kamalapur.
The expressway will remain open (suspended) at both the ends to facilitate future extension. Ramps will be used to get on it.
It is planned to extend by 25km towards Gazipur from the airport point and 5km towards Narayanganj from Kutubkhali, said Prof Hoque.



Onneshan forms a human chain in front of the National Press Club in the city yesterday demanding a stop to the eviction of slum dwellers.



Nagarik Sanghati and CMRL form a human chain in front of the National Press Club in the city yesterday demanding the implementation of the law related to use of jute and jute-made goods.

Girl's body found

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Police recovered body of an unidentified teenage girl, 13, from a house at Fulchar village in Keraniganj yesterday.
Hands, legs and mouth of the body tied with a trouser was recovered in a plastic sack at about 8:00am.
There were several stab marks on the body.
Md Shah Alam, SI of Keraniganj Police Station, said the girl might have been killed any time in the night and the body was dumped there.

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(বিকেএসপি সংলগ্ন)

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সর্বোচ্চ ২০%*

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Witnesses threatened by wives of accused BDR trial prosecutors allege

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Wives of two accused of BDR headquarters' record wing in BDR mutiny threatened the family members of two witnesses -- sepoy assistant Noman Abdullah Mamun and sepoy Feroj -- recently, the prosecutor alleged.
Prosecutor of Special Court-9 Lt Col Mizanur Rahman informed it to the court yesterday while he was presenting arguments against the 111 accused of the recording wing.
Mizanur Rahman said at a press briefing after the court proceedings that they advised the witnesses to file a general diary on the matter.
The wife of havildar Afzal and the wife of Nazrul went to Feroj's house two weeks earlier and threatened his mother and wife.
Meanwhile, Afzal's wife gave verbal threat to the wife of Noman when she went

to take treatment at BDR hospital.
The prosecutor placed his arguments on allegations against another 23 at the court at 13 Rifle Battalion.
Another BDR Special Court-10, headed by Col Khandakar Obaidul Ahsan started its proceedings at 10:00am and continued it for four hours against 337 accused under Rifles Sports Board (RSB) and all Directorates of Pikhana Headquarters.
During the day's proceedings, 25 accused cross-examined two witnesses while the two placed their depositions against 19 out of the accused jawans of BDR.
At one moment, Lance Nayek Abdul Hafej pleaded himself guilty and the court accepted his plea.
Before the court adjourned, one of the accused told the court, "We have to wake up at 3:00am. The jail authority

supplied us insufficient food. We have to sit here all day."
The court said though there is no provision to provide foods, the court supplied it to them after it adjourned.
The accused then told the court that they were not supplied any meal after the end of the day's proceeding.
Col Ahsan then asked the prosecutor about the matter who also informed the court that the supply of meal has been stopped.
Allegations against the mutineers of RSB and all directorates of Pikhana include abandoning the Darbar Hall and expressing solidarity with the mutineers, staging rebellion with firearms, instigation, distributing leaflets and taking no measure to control mutiny.
Both courts have been adjourned till 9:00 am today.