



Department of Forest brings out a procession from in front of the National Museum in the city yesterday on the occasion of National Tree Plantation Campaign and Tree Fair-2011.

PHOTO: STAR

Level of oxygen rises in Buringanga

BSS, Dhaka

The level of oxygen has increased in the recent times in the Buriganga making the river livable for different fish species, State Minister for Environment and Forests Dr Hasan Mahmud told journalists at his office yesterday.

"This is very good news that the level of soluble oxygen has gone up significantly in the Buriganga water this year than that of the last year for some measures taken by the government," he said.

The state minister quoted statistics that the oxygen level at Dhupkhali point of the river was measured 0.42mg on April 3, 2011 against 0.0mg on April 1, 2010.

The level of soluble oxygen has also increased slightly by 0.50mg on May 2 than that of the previous month, he added.

Soluble oxygen level at the points of Bangladesh-China Friendship Bridge and Pagla were recorded 0.96mg and 0.82mg on April 3 this year against the level of 0.0mg and 0.0mg on April 1 last year, said the minister.

Dr Mahmud said the government, to check environment and river pollution, has published a gazette notification after declaring the offshore areas of four rivers around Dhaka city -- Buriganga, Turag, Balu, and Sitalakhya -- "environmentally

endangered".

He said Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority is lifting garbage and wastes from river with the support of Climate Change Trust Fund.

The minister informed the media that the government has strengthened the drive of cleaning the river and the shores by conducting mobile court drives and has already realised Tk 6,88,825 as fine from the encroachers from January 2009 to April 2011.

He said the government is also planning to impose tax on the vehicles emitting black smoke and has issued circular to set up modern brickfields to contain carbon emission so that air pollution is checked.

The government has also launched a drive to stop marketing and use of polythene bags and filed a number of cases on charges of marketing banned polythene, he said.

The minister said the government for the first time has launched garbage-recycling project on pilot basis in different areas of the capital including Dhanmondi, Baridhara, Gulshan, Minto Road, and Gono Bhaban, and Khulshi and Nasirabad in Chittagong.

The project titled "Reduce, reuse, recycle-3R" will be implemented at an estimated cost of Tk 1,909.80 lakh by 2012, he added.

WASHPUR DOUBLE MURDER

Two brothers to die, four others to serve life in jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Two brothers were sentenced to death and their father, two other brothers and a brother-in-law to life in jail for killing two contractors of a construction firm in June 2007.

Judge Shahed Noor Uddin of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-1 of Dhaka yesterday handed down the sentence in presence of the convicts.

The convicts with death are Mohammad Nasir and Mohammad Yeasin while the lifers are Jamir Uddin alias Tilu Haji, his sons Ahmad Ali and Mohammad Ali and Tilu Haji's son-in-law Mohammad Muslim.

The court acquitted Abdur Rahman, Mabia Khatun and Sumi Begum as the charges brought against them were not proved.

After cross-examination of all 16 prosecution witnesses, the court pronounced the judgment.

Alam Hossain, 35, and Monir Hossain, 34, owners of Bandhu Dredging Prokalpo, a construction firm, were killed by a gang of

miscreants led by Muslim on June 1, 2007 at Char Washpur, outskirts of the city.

According to the prosecution, Alam and Monir, owners of a construction firm Bandhu Dredging Prokalpo, were supervising labourers who were digging to construct a culvert at Ghoppara of Char Washpur, near Hazaribagh around 10:00am on the date. Suddenly Tilu Haji's six sons and son-in-law Muslim, alleged owner of the land, attacked them with sharp weapons.

In the attack, Alam, Monir and Anwar Hossain were seriously injured. The victims were rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared Alam and Monir dead.

Following the incidents, Mohammad Altaf Hossain, brother of victim Alam, filed a murder case with Hazaribagh Police Station accusing Tilu Haji and eight others.

Special Public Prosecutor Abu Abdullah Bhuiyan appeared before the court while Advocate Ahsan Tarique defended the accused.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT FOR PARTIES

'Free politics from black money'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Speakers at a roundtable stressed the need for organised financial management of political parties to establish intra-party democratic culture and free politics from black money.

The speakers opined that political parties should come out of the culture of secrecy and publish annual reports on websites detailing their income, expenditure and status of wealth for accountability.

They said the government should take some responsibility of election expenses of the parties and the election commission should be free enough to impose electoral laws impartially against its violators.

The roundtable styled 'Transparency in political finance: challenges and solutions' at a city hotel on Monday night.

Rajshahi chapter of Shacheton Nagorik Committee (SNC), a citizen's body run by Transparency

International Bangladesh (TIB), organised the roundtable with its convenor Dr Chowdhury Sarwar Jahan Sajal in the chair.

Reading out the keynote paper based on TIB researches in 2010, TIB's researcher Shahjada M Akram said none of the political parties maintain accounts as per the rules. Usually all parties other than CPB and JSD maintain accounts through a register book that remain inaccessible to general members.

He also said the Election Commission (EC) lacks manpower and mechanism to scrutiny financial affairs of political parties and electoral candidates although the EC is responsible for controlling and examining political finance.

Executive Director of TIB Dr Iftekharuzzaman said the TIB researches showed that Bangladesh is better than Indonesia and Nepal in formulating laws to make political finance transparent, but the two other countries are better than Bangladesh

in complying with the laws.

Speaking as the chief guest, Rajshahi lawmaker Fazle Hossain Badsha observed the influence of black money in the country is so deep that certain political party in the recent past siphoned off the country's money to abroad.

He suggested a change in the political culture and electoral process.

Rajshahi University (RU) Social Science Faculty Dean Dr Mizan Uddin said political parties must take lesson from the Soviet Union where a political concept was rejected for losing confidence of people.

RU teacher Nurul H Chowdhury, former BNP MP Lutfunnessa Hossain, editor of local daily Sonali Sangbad Liakat Ali, RU teachers Pranab Kumar Pandey, Golam Rabbani, Ilias Hossain and Dr M Rafikul Alam, Dr Mojibur Rahman, development worker Tawhidul Alam Tia, politicians Sadrul Isalm, Nawsher Ali, Morjina Parveen, among others, spoke.

Khaleda distributes foods

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia for the second day yesterday distributed cooked foods and essential commodities among the poor in the city marking the 30th death anniversary of former president Ziaur Rahman.

During her five-hour generous service from 11:00am she visited about 30 spots in the city to distribute cooked foods, rice, pulse, potatoes, lungi, saree and money in cash among the destitute men, women and children.

Khaleda distributed foods at Banani Community Centre, Shaheenbagh Math in Tejaon, Baridhara, Badda, Nabisco, FDC, Satratar More, Bangla Motor, Green Road, Adabar, Gabtoli and Mirpur areas.

She will also distribute foods among the poor in the city today.

Keep sincere on reporting parliament

Speaker urges media

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speaker Abdul Hamid in the parliament yesterday called upon the journalists to keep careful and sincere while reporting on him and issues on parliament proceedings.

Abdul Hamid's call came a day after some newspapers published a news item on him, which the Speaker rejected outright.

Some newspapers yesterday published a news item quoting Speaker Abdul Hamid as saying in the parliament that the opposition party's demand for holding mid-term election will remain a daydream.

"I never said so in the parliament yesterday [Monday]. The fact is that food minister while speaking in parliament raised the issue," said Abdul Hamid.

"As the Speaker I cannot involve in the matter." Abdul Hamid, who was presiding over the sitting at that time, also read out names of four newspapers that published the news and called upon to publish a correction on the issue.

"I request all media outlets to be careful while publishing news on the Speaker and different other issues over the parliament proceedings," said Abdul Hamid.

In presence of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, also leader of the House, the ruling alliance lawmakers supported the Speaker by thumping up desks.

Govt mulls ban on tobacco farming

UNB, BSS, Dhaka

The government is seriously considering banning tobacco cultivation to produce additional food grains on cultivable land for ensuring food security, Food and Disaster Management Minister Abdur Razzaque said yesterday.

"We would be able to produce additional rice on our cultivable lands by restricting tobacco cultivation. The price of one lakh tonnes of rice is Tk 550 crore, which is more than the budget of many ministries," he said at a function at Hotel Ruposhi Bangla in the capital, reports UNB.

Tobacco companies claimed they contribute a huge amount of revenue to the government exchequer, but time has come to consider how much revenue we get from tobacco companies and how much rice we import every year, Razzaque said.

State Minister for Law Quamrul Islam said the government has decided to enact a strong anti-tobacco law to check tobacco consumption and protect the people from the deadly consequence of tobacco use.

"Tobacco Control Law 2005 will be amended in near future to stop tobacco cultivation," he said.

The Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) and PROGGA, Anti Tobacco Media Alliance (ATMA) and Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids jointly organised the function marking the World No Tobacco Day 2011.

11 more get anthrax

STAR REPORT

Eleven more people have been infected with anthrax in Sirajganj and Pabna, health officials confirmed yesterday.

In Sirajganj, Marium, 10, Asadul Islam, 25, and Rabbi Hossain, 26, of Mohonpur Satbila village in Ullapara were diagnosed with the infection on Monday while Ayesha, 60, of Mohonpur Satbila village and Rimu, 4, and Bayezid, 7, of Sharatoil village in Shahjadpur were diagnosed Tuesday.

The six are suspected of having contracted the infection after locals slaughtered a sick cow a few days ago and distributed its meat among villagers, Ram Chandra Saha, sanitary officer of Sirajganj Civil Surgeon office said.

He said a three-member team of Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) led by Dr Apurba Chakraborty has visited the villages and collected skin and blood samples from the infected.

A total of 39 people in Shahjadpur and Ullapara upazilas have come down with the infection since Friday.

In Pabna, three children, an aged man and a woman were found to have got anthrax at Raut village in Faridpur upazila on Tuesday. They are Maruf, 11, Al Amin, 8, Happy Akhtar, 15, Shahid Ali, 65, and Asma Akter, 42.

Of them, Shahid Ali was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital last night. Health official told our Pabna correspondent that the villagers were also infected after processing meat after a sick cow was slaughtered.

Attack on press owner protested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Owners of printing presses, book binding shops and paper houses in the city's Motijheel area observed one-hour work abstention from 10:00am yesterday protesting attack on a press owner of the area on May 29.

Under the banner of Motijheel Press Owners' Association, they held a protest rally on Arambagh Girls School premises, says a press release.

The organisation leaders said some armed men attacked Saidur Rahman, an owner of Vai Vai Printers at Fakirapul, who is now fighting for life at a city hospital.



Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia distributes foodstuff in the city yesterday on the occasion of the 30th death anniversary of former president Ziaur Rahman.

PHOTO: BNP

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