

Karnaphuli

FROM PAGE 20
Karnaphuli estuary in Patenga.

The Hydrographic Survey Chart 1989-90 shows the river's width at Bridgeghat point at 870 metres while the 2009-10 chart puts it at 600 metres. In 1990, its width at the mouth of Chaktai canal was 650 metres that came down to 600 metres last year, the last survey shows.

The river saw heavy siltation under an area of 2.5 square kilometres downstream from the northern bank up to Sadarghat. Its depth also decreased by two to three metres at different points, said officials at the CPA Hydrographic Department.

Shahriar Khaled, member secretary of Karnaphuli River and Environment Committee, said the river has shrunk for lack of maintenance and dredging.

M Habib-Ul-Alam, chief hydrographer of the CPA, however, said the river still has the required navigability for movement of port-bound vessels.

Khademul Bashar, director of the Capital Dredging Project, said the situation would improve a lot after completion of the capital dredging that started this month.

Under the project, dredging would be done in two kilometre area of the river from Sadarghat jetty to some 500 metres off the third Karnaphuli Bridge.

He said the capital dredging would restore the river's depth of four metres for vessel movement through those points where navigability decreased drastically.

The CPA would also remove the illegal structures on river banks as part of the project, he said.

The High Court on August 22, last year directed the director general of the Department of Land Survey and Records, the DG of DoE and the Chittagong deputy commissioner to demarcate the Karnaphuli river's original area, stop encroachment and demolish all illegal structures on the river in six months.

The court directive came following a writ petition filed by the Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh, a non-governmental organisation.

Chittagong Deputy Commissioner Foyez Ahmad said they have almost completed the demarcation of the river area. Eviction drives would start after installation of demarcation pillars.

The administration is keeping a close watch so that no new illegal structure is set up on the river, he said.

As the deadline for executing the HC orders had expired, they appealed to the HC for an extension, said ADC Ismail Hossain.

Dhaka University

FROM PAGE 20

Mall Chatter. DU Vice-Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique led a colourful procession participated by teachers, students, staff, guests and administrators.

Presenting a key-note paper at a discussion at TSC auditorium, University Grants Commission Chairman Prof AK Azad Chowdhury said national development cannot be done without ensuring higher education.

He stressed the need for more budgetary allocation in education and research sectors in this age of globalisation.

The VC said DU since its inception contributed to a great extent to the country's education, culture, politics and economy.

The university also came forward in important movements in the interest of the whole nation, he added.

Among cultural activities, rendition of songs by students of music department and popular band singers rocked the campus. Teachers and students played football separately on the central playground in the afternoon.

Marking the day, a two-day drama festival began at Natmandal yesterday. Meanwhile, biomedical physics and technology department organised a three-day research exhibition that began on Thursday.

AL sees

FROM PAGE 1

Khaleda Zia and the civil society apprehended an inevitable conflict over the issue.

"We still don't think there will be a political conflict since we have two and a half years more left to reach a consensus on the issue," AL presidium member Obaidul Quader said.

Adopting the 15th amendment to the charter, the House has upheld the Supreme Court verdict that voided the caretaker government system, observed the ruling party leaders.

They also brushed aside an allegation of passing the constitution amendment bill hurriedly.

The government is not rigid on any issue, maintained the leaders, which could lead to a confrontation.

"The charter is made for the people and can be changed for them, if needed. It is neither the Quran nor the Bible that can't be modified," Quader told The Daily Star.

If the opposition places a logical formula, we will certainly accept that for the

State of emergency

FROM PAGE 1

Then there was ample scope to extend emergency if the proclamation was made in absence of parliament or parliament got dissolved during the 120 days. In that case, the next parliament would decide within 30 days since its first sitting about continuation of emergency. If the House opted not to extend the period, emergency would cease to operate after expiry of the 30 days.

Thursday's amendment does away with that authority of parliament. The amended provision says if the state of emergency is not revoked by a subsequent proclamation by the president, it shall cease to be in force after 120 days.

If the government wants to continue emergency beyond 120 days, it will have to proclaim it afresh. The latest changes to the charter's emergency provision were brought in line with the recommendations of the parliamentary special committee on constitutional amendment. The special committee made the recommendations in light of the experience during the state of emergency in the past.

The original constitution of 1972 did not provide for proclamation of emergency. The second amendment to the constitution in 1973 empowered the president to proclaim a state of emergency in a part of the country or in the whole country.

The emergency provision says, "If the president is satisfied that a grave emergency exists in which the security or economic life of Bangladesh is threatened by war or external aggression or internal disturbance, he may issue a proclamation of emergency."

With the introduction of the emergency provision in the constitution, the government also gained the power to suspend the operation of some fundamental rights including freedom of movement, freedom of association, freedom of thought and conscience and of speech, freedom of professions or occupation, and rights to property.

During emergency period, none is allowed to file any case with the court challenging the validity of emergency and suspension of fundamental rights.

Soon after the second amendment, the then president Mohammad Mohammadullah issued a proclamation of emergency in December 1974, and suspended many fundamental rights of citizens, on advice of the then prime minister Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The emergency was lifted

sake of democracy and to ensure all parties join the next polls, he added.

Asked what would happen if BNP boycotts polls under the AL-led government, he said there will be nothing one-sided in the next election. AL believes in a consensus on adopting a system to hold a free and fair election.

"If they [BNP] want an understanding to avoid conflicts, they must respond to our call for dialogue," maintained Quader.

People would not respond to BNP's call for an agitation, said Matia Chowdhury, AL presidium member and agriculture minister.

Referring to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's call to BNP for joining parliament to discuss the matter, she said they were not rigid on any issue. But BNP will have to participate in a dialogue minding the caretaker government system is not there anymore.

Suranjit Sengupta, a member of the AL advisory council, insisted there would certainly be no scope for any confrontation over the issue.

Timely move

FROM PAGE 1

The year 2007 was the deadliest in recent times. A massive landslide following a heavy rain on June 11 claimed some 132 lives. All were buried under mud when they were asleep in homes around the hills in K a i c h c h a g h o n a , Leubagan, Matijhorna and Kusumbagh areas.

The next year, 11 people were killed in the landslide in the Tanki Pahar hill.

Following the 2007 tragedy, the then caretaker government formed two committees to probe the disaster.

In the reports submitted on June 24 the same year, the committees identified 28 reasons for landslide in the hills. They also recommended 36 measures, including shifting of the people from the terrace of the hills, to avoid further loss of lives.

Five years on, most of the recommendations have yet to be implemented. People still live in homes built on the terrace of the hills.

Asked about yesterday's landslide that killed at least 15 people, Chittagong Mayor Manjur Alam said the administration was prepared to face the problem.

"We always alert the people through publicities and campaigns to leave the terraces of hills but they do not listen to us," he said.

Those killed yesterday were evicted a few days ago but returned to their homes, he added.

However, Sirajul Huq Khan, divisional commissioner of Chittagong, said the administration should have taken precautionary measures from the beginning of summer, and not from the beginning of the rains, to avoid the tragedy.

On rehabilitation, Munir Chowdhury, director (enforcement) of the environment department, said government Khas land and unused land of Bangladesh Railway and Chittagong Port can be used for that.

But Sirajul Huq says eviction and rehabilitation of the people living in and around the hills is a political decision.

The district administration also does not have sufficient equipment for the eviction drive.

There is another problem, Sirajul says, "The number of floating people in Chittagong is increasing by the day. Many of them are building homes by the hills making the rehabilitation more complex."

Manmohan's

FROM PAGE 20

Jamiat-ul-Islami [sic] and they are very anti-Indian, and they were in the clutches, many times, of the ISI.

"The political landscape in Bangladesh can change at any time. We do not know what these terrorist elements, who have a hold on the Jamiat-e-Islami [sic] elements in Bangladesh, can be up to."

Matia said, the Indian Prime Minister's Office and their foreign ministry could explain the whole thing better as Bangladesh government has no detail about the comment except for the reports in the media.

In reply to a query, she said it is usual to ask for an explanation about the statement of the Indian PM but the Bangladesh foreign minister is not in the country right now.

Meanwhile, India's former high commissioner in Dhaka Veena Sikri was more forthright about Manmohan's remarks.

"I don't think it is proper to describe people of another country in this manner," she said while contextualising BNP's stand.

On Manmohan's assertion that a quarter of the Bangladeshi population swear by Jamiat [sic], Sikri also wondered about source of the figure.

"One third of the votes go to the BNP and an equal number to the Awami League. Of the remaining 33 percent, most of it is floating votes that look at issues independently. I don't think you can say that 25 percent people are anti-Indian. Does it mean most of BNP's voters feel that way? One can't categorise in this manner just as one can't do the same with the people of Pakistan. Regimes and institutions can be characterised like this, not the people."

Passengers made victim

FROM PAGE 20

a fault of a staff.

On their return to Dhaka, one of the victims Tanzeen Bristy filed a general diary with Airport Police Station on Thursday, where she described their seven-hour ordeal of harassment in the hands of Eithad staffs.

Bristy, a Canadian citizen, and her mother a permanent resident of that country who did not want to be named, left Shahjalal International Airport by an Eithad flight (EY 141) for Toronto at 5:25am on June 28.

They had a stop over at Abu Dhabi International Airport, where at the check-in counter the clerk stamped Bristy's boarding pass, but forgot to stamp her mother's, which they also did not notice.

When they went to the gate of the aircraft after waiting in a queue for almost an hour, the Eithad staff there asked her mother to get her boarding pass stamped.

Bristy told the staff that they should arrange for her mother's boarding pass to be stamped since it was his colleague's fault to begin with, and she and her mother did not want to return to the back of the line for the airline's own fault.

"I told him that this was their mistake and also requested him to get it stamped for me, since the

queue was very long," Bristy told The Daily Star on Thursday.

"Then the Eithad staff started to shout at me and threatened me that he would off-load us from the plane, if I did not listen to him," she added.

She also alleged that a staff yelled at her and tried to seize her mother's passport.

Bristy's mother said, "The staff supervisor said he did not like our attitude and would not let us get on board."

She said he then threatened them saying they would be handed over to police if they did not abide by his orders.

"They forced us to miss the flight, and then forced us to buy return tickets to Dhaka," Bristy said.

She also said, "We had to return to Bangladesh because at one point we were worried about our physical safety if we kept arguing with the rude Eithad staff, as they were taking us from place to place where we did not feel safe at all."

They were not even allowing the two women to make phone calls. A man who claimed himself to be a CID officer took them to a room where six to seven men in uniforms and some other men in civilian clothes kept them confined for about an hour.

Finally after much request they were allowed to

make a phone call to Bangladesh. And their family contacted the Bangladesh embassy and the Canadian High Commission in Abu Dhabi.

"With the assistance of Bangladesh Embassy we returned to Bangladesh on flight EY 258," Bristy said.

When The Daily Star contacted Country Manager of Eithad Ashraf Kabir yesterday, he said he received a verbal complaint from the victims about the incident, and once he gets a written complaint he will send that to proper Eithad authorities. He also said after an investigation it will be known what actually happened, and what measures Eithad will take.

A complaint about Eithad's bad service was also raised by another Bangladesh born Canadian citizen Showkat Alam Khan.

Alam arrived in the country on April 11 by a flight of the airline from Canada, but one of his luggage that contained video and still cameras and rare family photographs, went missing.

Alam lodged a complaint with the airline authorities in Dhaka, but his luggage is yet to be recovered.

Asked, Ashraf Kabir said if the luggage is not found, they will come to a settlement as per International Air Transport Association rules.

newly formed Dhaka city committee and front organisation leaders in her office recently.

A senior leader said they had not yet discussed agitation programmes at the party forum. "A few protest programmes including hartal will be enforced soon but ultimately we will organise our party and people across the country before going for any tougher movement," he added wishing anonymity.

He referred to Khaleda's speech on Thursday where she also hinted at a long-term movement by urging all to be united, active and vocal against the government.

Party insiders said BNP chairperson is not happy about the performance of the party and its front body leaders during the last hartal programmes. She has expressed resentment at a meeting with the leaders of

12 workers

FROM PAGE 20

College Hospital (DMCH) for treatment.

Around three hundred workers gathered in the dining room on the ground floor of the eight-storey factory at about 1:00pm for lunch, said Rina, an injured worker undergoing treatment at DMCH.

All of a sudden, the tube lights inside the room started making sparks that caused panic among the workers.

As the spark continued the scared workers rushed towards the doors to hurriedly get out of the building. During the rush, some female workers were trampled underfoot, she said.

Shaheen Khan, a supervisor of the factory, said no fire broke out in the building except sparks from tube-lights at the dining room.

Workers on other floors of the factory did not get panicked as they could not know what was happening at the ground floor, he added.

Bangladeshi

FROM PAGE 20

In Sabah, 700 kilometres south of Tripoli, he said.

The robbers went to Montu's rented residence after looting the house of a neighbouring Nigerian family at the dead of night.

They knocked at the gate of the residence and asked Montu to open its door. Ignoring their call, Montu entered into a room to call the house-owner.

Shahid, in the meantime, responded to the robbers' call, saying they are Bangladeshis and there is nothing in the house that could be looted, Kibria said quoting Montu.

The armed bandits fired through the steel door of the gate hitting Shahid's leg. After the gang left the scene, he was rushed to a local hospital where he succumbed to his injury.

"Excessive bleeding might have caused the death," Kibria said adding "We will get the medical report on Sunday."

The Bangladesh embassy in Tripoli was arranging repatriation of Shahid's corpse.

"We have contacted his family in Moulvibazar and they asked us to send the dead body," the first secretary said.

However, it may take some time as the body has to be sent home either via Tunisia or Malta due to the no-fly zone over Libya, he said.

Around 37,000 Bangladeshis returned home from Libya since the crisis began.

City to get

FROM PAGE 20

accommodate the ever-increasing city students.

Every year, students in their thousands compete for admission against a limited number of seats in these institutions.

The project is expected to end in June 2014. The government has already acquired land for nine schools and six colleges, and the land acquisition process for the remaining ones is going on, said the ministry officials.

"This project will create the opportunity for city students to study in standard educational institutions since government institutions are considered standard ones," Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid told The Daily Star yesterday.

Dhaka city is expanding day by day with new localities emerging, but the number of quality educational institutions did not increase, he added.

Each institution under the project will have a four-storey academic building, 10 classrooms of 50-student capacity, laboratory, library, one room for headmaster or principal, one for assistant headmaster or vice principal, an office room, separate common rooms for boys and girls, and an auditorium.

Besides, every institution will have a Shaheed Minar.

The schools and colleges will run double shifts, and the government will provide all necessary furniture, books, computers, digital boards, and sports items.

At the foundation-laying ceremony, the education minister, lawmaker Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh and Education Secretary Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury will be present.

BNP wants

FROM PAGE 1

constitution amendment. The BNP allies will also observe agitation programmes simultaneously.

Party insiders said the BNP high command is planning to forge a movement gradually but first, they are to assess what the government is trying to achieve by annulling the caretaker government (CTG) system.

"There is still two and a half years before the next general elections. As we continue the agitation, a situation will be created by this time which will force the government to backtrack from holding the next election under a political government," said a member of the party's national standing committee.

Asked about their agitation strategy, another stand-

ing committee member Khandaker Mosharruf Hossain said, "The government has forced us to go for a movement by scrapping the CTG system and we will force them to bow to our demands by waging a movement step by step."

BNP leaders hinted that the objective of their long-term movement is to compel the government to hold the next general election under a caretaker government or any similar alternative system. They, however, reiterated that the party will not participate in the election under a political government.

Party insiders said BNP chairperson is not happy about the performance of the party and its front body leaders during the last hartal programmes. She has expressed resentment at a meeting with the leaders of

Landslide, wall collapse

FROM PAGE 1

May 70-foot-long portion collapsed yesterday.

Four units of Fire Service and Civil Defence ran to the site in the morning to start rescue operation. Army engineering and medical corps joined them around 12:00noon.

By 4:00pm, eight bodies were recovered from under the rubble and mud.

Of them, five were identified as Rehana Begum, 35, her three daughters Sharmin, 20, Fatema, 8, and Tanjina, 2, and only son Azad, 10. Rehana's husband Bachchu Mia confirmed the report.

The other three are Amjad, 40, his wife Razia Begum, 27, and daughter Sharmin, 12.

A person named Anwar Hossain was pulled alive and sent to Chittagong Medical College and Hospital.

Around 6:00pm, rescuers found bodies of Shafiul, 35, his wife Minu Akter, 30, daughter Sonia, 10, and son Minhaz, 6.

The team pulled two bodies identified as Sajjad and his sister Shaheda around 10:00pm. They along with their mother Hosne Ara were earlier reported missing.

Another two, identified as Shahnur, 18, and her mother Razia, were found early hours of today.

Fate of four missing persons -- Selim, his wife Fatema and her two children Sagor and Shirin -- were unknown.

The rescue operation continued today around 2:00am.

Locals said city corporation representatives led by

(general) Ehsane Elahi was formed and given five days to submit a report.

Representatives from Bangladesh Railway, Chittagong City Corporation, police and Public Works Department are also on the committee.

Meanwhile, in the port city several low-lying areas including Muradpur, Sholoshahar, Bakalia, Chawkbazar, Kapashgola, Agrabad CDA residential area and parts of Halishahar were submerged following downpour in last three days.

Jamaat

FROM PAGE 20

Manmohan Singh warned against the designs of rightwing groups like Jamaat-e-Islami and stressed that it was in the clutches of Pakistan's spy agency ISI, said a report of Indo-Asian News Service (IANS) on June 30.

"But we must reckon that at least 25 percent of the population of Bangladesh swear by the Jamiat-ul-Islami and they are very anti-Indian, and they are in the clutches, many times, of the ISI," Singh said.

Jamaat in its statement said the party believes in the principle of having a good relationship with India maintaining Bangladesh's independence, sovereignty and interests.

Indian intelligence agency confused Singh with misinformation, the statement said.

It also hoped that Singh would refrain from making wholesale remarks on Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami.