

Govt busy hiding Sundarbans mess

Alleges Bapa team after spot visit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rather than giving attention to clear the Sundarbans waters of oil properly, the government is busy covering up the negative impacts of the spillage, a team of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon (Bapa) said at Dhaka Reporters Unity yesterday, after a visit to the affected areas.

The seven-member team saw many people hired by Bangladesh Forest Department razing small trees and bushes smeared with oil, said Sharif Jamil, joint secretary of Bapa, who led the group on December 16.

"We never thought that the government would take the incident so lightly....Now oil is everywhere," he said. "We did not see any bird and live aquatic animals including dolphin during our visit along 25km through the forest."

An oil tanker sank in the Shela river of the forest near Mongla Port on December 9, spilling above 3.50 lakh litres of furnace oil. The spillage has now spread along over 70km.

The team recommended that the government declare it as a disaster, deploy armed forces to collect oil, permanently ban the movement of commercial vessels through the forest, and restore the previous Khasiakhali route.

It also urged the government to back away from the proposed Rampal and Orion electricity plant projects near the forest and stop leasing out Sundarbans land.

"We want development, we want electricity, we want to see Bangladesh as a middle-income country, but not at the

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Bangladesh Students Union demands punishment for the people responsible for the Sundarbans oil spillage and proper steps to save the biodiversity of the forest soon, from a human chain at the capital's Shahbagh yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Condemnations against attack on Pak school keep pouring in

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent citizens in a statement yesterday condemned the attack by Taliban gunmen on a school in Peshawar in Pakistan that left 142 people, including 132 children, dead on Tuesday.

This inhuman act was a disaster for the whole world, not only Pakistan, read the statement of Bangladesh Rukhe Darao, a platform of progressive and pro-liberation forces.

In the name of religion, the fanatic group did not hesitate to kill innocent children to establish medieval beliefs, it added.

Professor Emeritus Anisuzzaman, Syed Shamsul Haq, Ajoy Roy, Kamal Lohani, Sultana Kamal, Rasheda K Chowdhury, Abed Khan, Ziauddin Tariq Ali, Ramendu Majumdar, Rana Dasgupta and MM Akash sent the statement signed by Dr Sarwar Ali, one of the platform's conveners.

All over the world, people from all walks of life should unite to prevent unbridled religious fanatic groups from committing such heinous crimes, the statement added.

Court summons Fakhru for calling Hasina 'killer'

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday asked BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir to appear before it on January 22 next year in a defamation case filed against him for terming Awami League a "killer party" and its chief Sheikh Hasina a "killer".

Metropolitan Magistrate Amit Kumar Dey passed the order after Paltan police submitted an investigation report to it on Monday, citing that the allegation was found true, and recommending that Fakhru should be tried for the remarks, said court sources.

Nur-e-Alam Siddique, vice president of Awami Matsyajibi League, filed the case with Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court on September 1. Later, the court asked cops to probe the allegation.

Fakhru made the comments on August 24, three days after Hasina alleged that BNP chief Khaleda Zia and her son Tarique Rahman were involved in the grenade attack on an AL rally in the capital on August 21, 2004. The attack had killed 24 AL leaders and activists, while Hasina, then opposition leader, narrowly escaped death.

Land key to protection of all other rights in CHT

NHRC boss Mizanur Rahman tells nat'l seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

If the government establishes the indigenous people's right to land in Chittagong Hill Tracts, other rights will be defended automatically, National Human Rights Commission Chairman Dr Mizanur Rahman said yesterday, laying emphasis on the full implementation of the 1997 peace accord in the shortest possible time.

He said the country could not make progress without the advancement of the Adivasis.

Mizanur called for reserving parliamentary seats for indigenous people, wherein only the indigenous communities will vote to pick their lawmakers. This will be a good step towards ensuring their rights and dignity, he told a seminar titled "Progression Status of Universal Periodic Review

(UPR) Recommendations to Bangladesh: Indigenous Peoples' Perspective" at the capital's Cirdap.

Kapaeeng Foundation and ActionAid Bangladesh jointly organised it.

A roadmap is necessary to fully execute the CHT accord and thus avoid future unrest there, viewed Rana Dasgupta, general secretary of

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ATTACK ON ADIVASIS IN RANGAMATI CHTC for probing govt agencies

MJF demands compensation for victims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Condemning Tuesday's attack on the indigenous people in Naniarchar upazila of Rangamati, the International Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission (CHTC) yesterday called for a judicial inquiry into the role of the local civil administration, law enforcement agencies, and the army in the hills.

"The CHTC is disturbed by repeated attacks," it said in a statement, expressing shock that "the arson attacks occurred in the presence and with the active participation of some army officials".

The incident came a day after a 14-year-old Marma girl was "raped and killed by Bangalees", said the statement signed by CHTC co-chairs Sultana Kamal, Eric Avebury and Elsa Stamatopoulou.

Bangalee settlers torched and vandalised 61 houses, shops and a Buddhist temple in Naniarchar after accusing Adivasis of destroying the pineapple gardens of Bangalees. However, it was alleged that Bangalees sowed the pineapple seedlings on the indigenous people's land.

In another statement, Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) and its associate organisations demanded that the

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JUBO DAL MAN KILLING

Top criminal Emon planner

Claims Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Top listed criminal Sanjidul Islam Emon was the mastermind behind the killing of former ward level leader of Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal Afzal Hossain Sattar alias Gal Kata Sattar from the jail over establishing supremacy on tannery business in the capital's Hazaribagh, claimed Rab at a press briefing yesterday.

Emon plotted the murder with his close associates Ibharim Khalil alias Bulu and Masud Hasan whose elder brother was killed allegedly by Sattar in 1996, said Lt Col SM Masud Rana, commanding officer of Rab-2, quoting Masud who was arrested yesterday.

He said their hired goon Goni along with Masud

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Guests, faculties and students at the 16th convocation of Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) on its Bashundhara campus in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

Nahid again promises action against illegal pvt universities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The authorities will take legal action against private universities which are not following government rules and regulations, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said yesterday.

Just putting extra pressure on such private universities, which are still operating illegal campuses, and conducting irregularities

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কমার্শিয়াল স্পেস বিক্রয়

উত্তরা সোনারগাঁও জনপদ ১০০ ফুট রোডের উপর জমজম টাওয়ারের বিপরীতে অটোবিশিষ্ট শো-রুমের উপরে ২২০০ স্কয়ারফিটের ৩টি ফ্লোর বিক্রি করা হবে।

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