24 Pages Price: Tk 12.00

WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY?

City polls could offer some ray of hope in this political situation

PAGE 6

Chaitra 8, 1421 BS | Jamadiul Awal 30, 1436 Hijri

'DRAUPADI' IN DHAKA

India theatre troupe Kalakshetra Manipur stages its acclaimed play at Shilpakala

PAGE 11

Your Right to Know

IT'S NOT ISIS

Rather, Gen Petraeus says, Shia militias are the biggest long-term threat to Iraq

PAGE 15

Precious yet we pollute

Water of over 300 rivers stinks with industrial, human waste

TAWFIQUE ALI

Natural sources of fresh water, especially rivers, are becoming highly contaminated with industrial effluents and human waste, causing serious hazards to public health and ecological system, warn experts.

The rivers around the capital in particular are polluted due to mindless dumping of untreated waste and effluents that contain heavy metals and residues of toxic chemical, they observe.

"As a natural resource, sweet water is as valuable as minerals like coal and natural gas," Hasin Jahan, policy advocacy director of WaterAid Bangladesh, told The Daily Star.

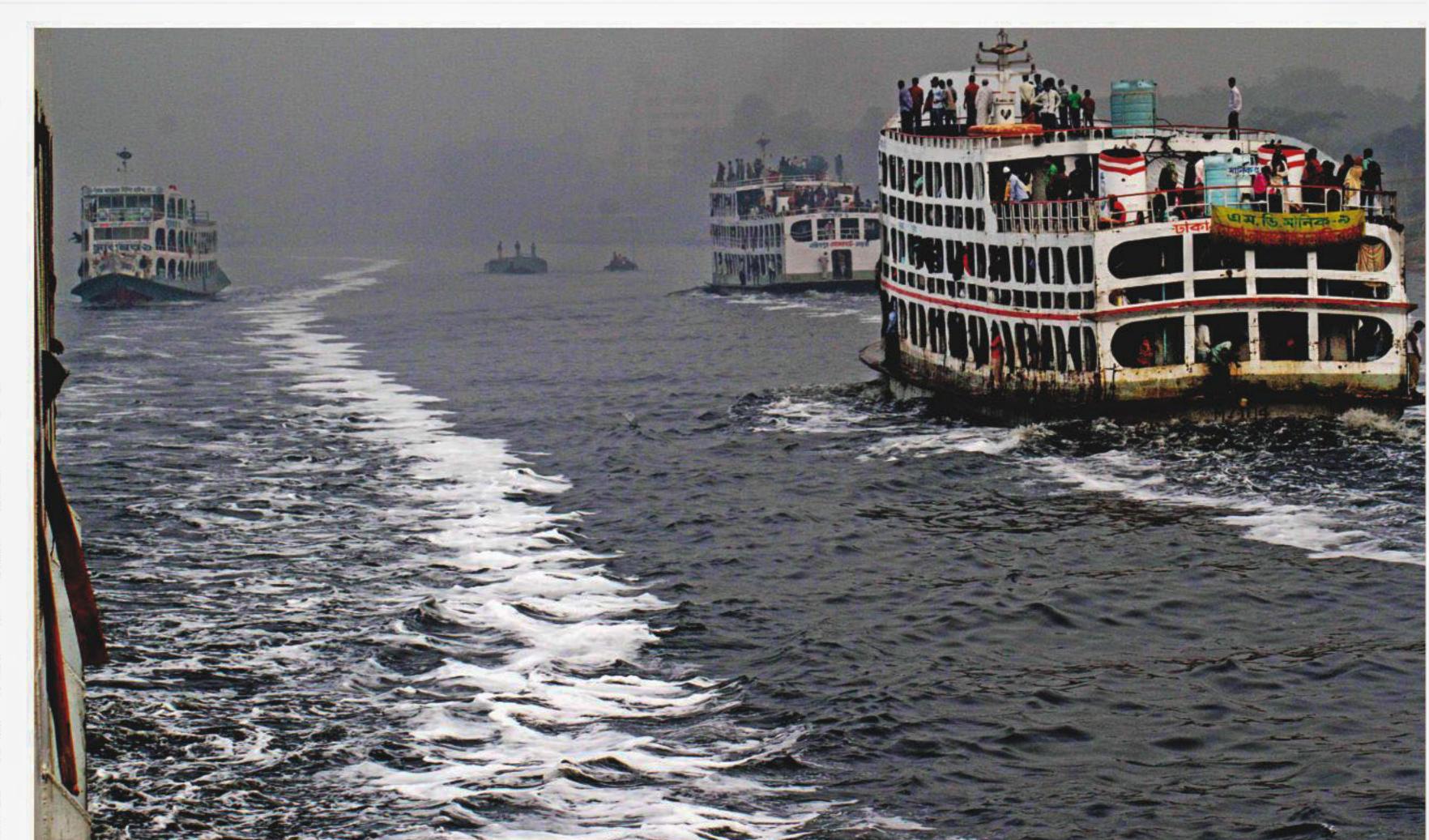
"The rivers, the prime sources of sweet water, are being contaminated heavily with lethal effluents," she observed.

Besides, rainwater, the purest form of natural water, is callously wasted by letting it run off and merge with polluted rivers in the absence of a harvesting system, she said.

Of the 80,000 tonnes of human waste generated a day in the country, at best two percent (1,600 tonnes) is treated at Pagla treatment plant near the capital, and the rest eventually ends up in rivers, said Hasin.

Most industries in and around the capital release untreated effluents directly into the Buriganga, Shitalakhya, Balu and Turag rivers, taking advantage of the authorities' lax attitude towards enforcing environmental laws and regulations, she added.

Prof Mujibur Rahman of Bangladesh University of Engineering and SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



Smog covers the sky over the dark murky water of the Buriganga river in the capital. The water is so polluted that launches plying the river leave a trail of foam and the stench of the water is unbearable. Today is World Water Day.

PHOTO:

ANISUR RAHMAN

Participation in Dhaka, Ctg Polls

BNP waits for Khaleda's nod

RASHIDUL HASAN

BNP leaders and activists are now waiting to get the final nod from party chief Khaleda Zia on endorsing party candidates for elections to the country's three key city corporations.

A number of BNP leaders yesterday told The Daily Star that after consulting with party policymakers, well-wishers and pro-BNP intellectuals, the BNP chairperson is now positive on backing party candidates for the polls to Dhaka North, Dhaka South and Chittagong city corporations to be held ingparty "a free ride" in the elections.

on April 28.

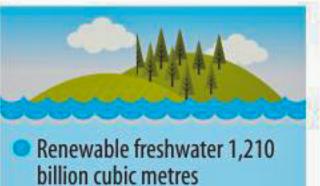
"The chairperson thinks participating in the city polls will be part of our ongoing movement. She also could read sentiments of the party leaders and activists, many of whom are in favour of contesting the elections," Lt Gen (retd) Mahbubur Rahman told this paper.

The BNP standing committee member thinks that the party might lose its dominance in the country's two largest cities --Dhaka and Chittagong -- if it gives the rul-

Once Khaleda formally gives the goahead, BNP leaders will sit with the Election Commission to discuss a range of issues, including ways to make the elections free and fair and arrest of opposition leaders on political grounds, he said.

"How will our men carry out campaigns when many of them are either behind bars or on the run to avoid police harassment? We will have to raise these issues to the Election Commission," said the former army chief.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



- Groundwater 21 billion
- cubic metres
- 98% of drinking water, 80% of irrigation water in dry season come from groundwater
- 97% people had access to drinking water in early 90s
- Present national water coverage 86%
- 20 million people at risk of arsenic contamination

WORLD WATER DAY TODAY

Call for saving groundwater

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Despite being the world's largest delta having an estimated 1,210 billion cubic metres of fresh water, the country depends mostly on groundwater for drinking and dry season irrigation in the absence of a sustainable water use plan.

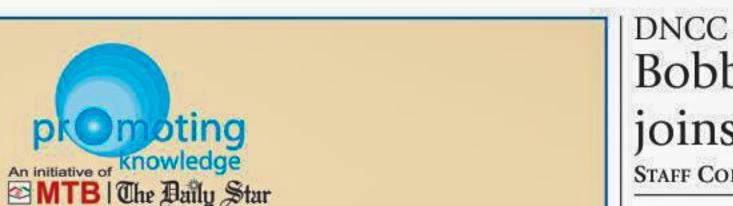
About 98 percent of drinking water and 80 percent of dry season irrigation water comes from the 21 billion cubic metres of groundwater reserve.

This was stated by Anwar Zahid, deputy director of Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB), at a press conference yesterday on the eve of SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



In excruciating pain, one of the nine victims of an arson attack on a truck in Magura sits on the floor of Magura Sadar Hospital as medicine is applied to his burn injuries yesterday. The photo has intentionally been blurred to cover the ghastly wounds.

рното: STAR



Take Part in the competition and win one-year subscription of The Daily Star FREE!! For the fourth consecutive year, Mutual Trust Bank Ltd.(MTB) and The Daily Star will jointly distribute1,000 complimentary copies of The Daily Star for a year to the residential students of the University of Dhaka. Interested students are requested to go through the details below to win FREE subscription of The Daily Star for one year.

Application forms will be available at a Desk set up at every Hall gate from March 24 - March 25, 2015 You may collect the application forms from the respective Halls and drop the filled-up form into the box placed at every Hall gate.

> The last date for taking part in the competition is March 25, 2015 Winners will be notified via The Daily Star newspaper or through e-mail by March 29, 2015 For any queries, please contact The Daily Star Circulation Dept: Cell 01711623906

DNCC MAYOR POLLS Bobby Hajjaj joins the race STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bobby Hajjaj, special adviser to Jatiya Party

Chairman HM Ershad, yesterday declared his mayoral candidacy for the upcoming Dhaka North

City Corporation polls. His announcement came despite the party's SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

9 hurt in Magura arson

Injured freedom fighter dies a day after Feni bomb attack; BNP calls fresh 72-hour hartal for 'Salauddin's release'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Yusuf Khan, who fought for the country's independence in his youth, lost his battle for life yesterday, a day after he suffered burns in a petrol bomb attack in Daganbhuiyan of Feni.

He breathed his last at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital around 9:30pm. Meanwhile, nine people suffered severe burns in yet another petrol bomb attack on a truck in Magura yesterday.

The incident took place on the Magura-Jessore highway around 7:45pm, hours after the BNP-led 20-party alliance announced a fresh spell of 72-hour countrywide hartal from today.

Criminals hurled two petrol bombs at the Magura-bound truck from Moghirdal SEE PAGE 8 COL 2

SHAJAHAN KHAN AT A PROGRAMME IN CHITTAGONG



Today is World Water Day 2015 On this occasion Pureit brings you



22-28 March Dhaka & Chittagong (9 am - 6 pm)

- Dhanmondi-8, Rabindra Shorobor
- Uttara, Sector-7, Road-16, Rabindra Shoroni
- Gulshan-2, DCC Market
- Mirpur-14, Police Fari Field, Bou Bazar
- Chittagong, Muslim Hall
- Chittagong Shopping Complex, 2 no. Gate
- Narayanganj, Chashara, Infront of Zia Hall (22-24, 27-28 March)

For more information, call Unilever Careline: 09613 105105



For more detail visit

F Pureit.Bangladesh



Everyday from 9 AM to 8 PM