

Petition filed to stay Dhaka city corp polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A writ petition has been filed with the High Court seeking stay the election of two Dhaka city corporations scheduled to be held on April 28.

The petitioner said the election schedule for the DCCs are illegal since it was announced what it said under the "illegal" amended act.

In the writ, the petitioner challenged the legality of the Local Government (City Corporation) (Amendment) Act, 2011 on which the Dhaka city corporation was divided into North and South because the related provision (section 3) of the Local Government (City Corporation) Act, 2009 that sets the Dhaka city corporation as a unitary body, was not changed.

The petitioner, Eunus Ali Akond, a Supreme Court lawyer, has also challenged the provisions of security money and purchasing voter lists by the candidates. The petitioner prayed to the court to issue a rule upon the government and the election commission to explain why the relevant rules and the amended act, for holding the elections to

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Regional climate change talks begin in Khulna tomorrow

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will host a three-day regional consultation of the "Nansen Initiative" on climate change, disasters, and human mobility in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region, beginning tomorrow in Khulna.

Representatives from 16 countries of the region, experts from all over the world, and a host of international organisations, NGOs, civil society and academic institutions are expected to take part.

Announcing the programme at a press conference in the capital yesterday, Foreign Secretary Md Shahidul Haque said the 5th Nansen Initiative's consultation would provide an opportunity for South Asian countries to share experience, discuss challenges and identify good practices related to human mobility in the context of climate change.

He informed that the participants would also visit the cyclone Aila affected area in Dacope upazila of Khulna to see the living conditions of the displaced people.

Nansen Initiative was

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JU environmental sciences dept demands transfer to new building

JU CORRESPONDENT

Teachers and students of the environmental sciences department of Jahangirnagar University yesterday demanded that the authorities shift their department to a newly constructed building, a move they claimed was supposed to take place a year ago.

Several hundred teachers and students of the department brought out a silent procession on the campus and handed over a memorandum to Vice Chancellor Prof Farzana Islam in this regard.

At a press conference later, Prof Khabir Uddin of the department said the university authorities decided in 2002 that a new building would be constructed for three departments – computer science and engineering, geological science and environmental sciences.

The authorities in 2012 finalised that as soon as the construction works of the building finished, the departments would be moved there.

However, the work was completed early 2014 but the environmental sciences

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A combination of white and red is a quick reminder that Pahela Baishakh, the first day of Bangla New Year and Banglaeas' largest cultural festival, is around the corner. With people from all walks of life preparing to celebrate it on April 14, small traders get their occasional businesses rolling, like the man here on the capital's Gulshan Avenue, who is trying to sell a children's sari to a rickshaw-puller yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

High-rise in Sonai River to encourage grabbing

Greens tell Bapa press conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The recent decision of a national taskforce allowing construction of a high-rise in the Sonai River at Habiganj's Madhabpur upazila will encourage river grabbers, environmental activists said yesterday.

"The 10-storey Future Park has been created right inside the river. There will be many flats in it with a lot of light and air for the rich to enjoy but a river will die," said Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed, president of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa).

A venture of Saiham Group, owned by three siblings including Syed Md

Qaisar, a convicted war criminal, the building would have 124 flats, 802 shops, and 13 office units.

Bapa, a movement by environmental rights activists, yesterday organised a press conference in Dhaka Reporters Unity, demanding immediate cancellation of the taskforce's decision and demolition of Saiham Future Complex, by taking the river related laws into consideration.

Citing the port rules 1966, land management directives 1991, wetland conservation act 2000, and water act 2013, Bapa stated that even if the river flowed over privately owned land, filling it and or building any structure

there would be against the law and the interest of the state.

In a slideshow presentation, Joint Secretary of Bapa Sharif Jamil showed how Sonai had been slowly filled and grabbed since 2003, and the high-rise was being built.

He said that because of the building, the river flow was blocked in violation of law, and posed threat for a nearby bridge on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway during monsoon.

The construction work was stalled in April last year, and a decision to ask the law ministry to take necessary steps to remove all structures from the river

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A photo of the under-construction Saiham Future Complex at Madhabpur upazila in Habiganj taken during the last rainy season. Though the owner claims the building is being constructed far from the river Sonai, this photo says something else. The shipping ministry imposed a ban on the construction on allegation that the structure was obstructing the river flow.

FILE PHOTO

River bank erosion could be curbed by forecasts

Say experts

UNB, Dhaka

Damages and losses due to river bank erosion each year in the country could be minimised significantly through disseminating bank erosion forecasts, said experts yesterday.

They were addressing a seminar on "Riverbank Erosion Prediction 2015" organised by the Center for Environmental and Geographic Information Services in the capital's Brac Centre Inn.

CEGIS has developed methods to predict morphological changes, including bank erosion of the Jamuna, Ganges and Padma rivers. The methods are being used since 2004 to predict bank erosion and morphological changes of these rivers.

Noted water expert Prof Dr Ainun Nishat said if the bank erosion forecasts could reach people living on river banks through local administration, it would be a step in the right direction to minimise losses from the erosion.

Criticising the role of Bangladesh Water Development Board, he said the organisation no longer has a good relation with the common people.

Dr Maminul Haque Sarkar, deputy executive director of CEGIS, revealed the bank erosion predictions for 2015 at the seminar through a PowerPoint presentation.

The predictions described the vulnerability of land, settlement, embankment, road, educational institutions, health centres, haat-bazars and government and non-government offices due to bank erosion.

About the adverse consequences of bank erosion, State Minister for Water Resources M Nazrul Islam said the Jamuna devoured about 900 square kilometres of settlement over the last three decades.

"The Jamuna devoured some 1,300 hectares of farmlands during the same period leaving thousands of farmers destitute," he added.

MURDER OF BRTA DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S WIFE IN CAPITAL

Dispute over preferred stockbroker reason

Claims colleague of Sitangshu; daughter showing signs of trauma; police working on other clues; raids Zahirul's office, residence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Discontent growing in the past nine months over not shifting shares he helped purchase to a stockbroker of his liking might have prompted Zahirul Islam Zahir to carry out the brutal hammer attack on BRTA official Sitangshu Shekhar Biswas and his family.

"There might be other reasons, which could be instrumental in the build up of a distance between the two," said one of Sitangshu's close colleagues at Bangladesh

Road Transport Authority's (BRTA) Elenbari office in the capital.

"But sir (Sitangshu) never talked about other issues," he told The Daily Star yesterday requesting anonymity.

The attack at Sitangshu's Mohammadpur residence on Monday night left his wife Krishna Kaberi Biswas, 35, dead while, with similar head injuries, him and his younger daughter Artri, 8, in Metropolitan Hospital's Intensive Care Unit.

Suffering injuries in her left hand, his

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Catch corrupt high-fliers, gain public trust

Eminent persons tell ACC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In order to win people's confidence, the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) must bring to book and ensure punishment for some of the most powerful, high-flying corrupt people by the next year, speakers told a discussion yesterday.

The discussion focused on a paper about fighting corruption through a combination of political commitment and administrative reform, presented by Prof Mohammad Mohabbat Khan, member of the University Grants Commission.

Former chief election commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda said, "You have to earn people's trust and respect by your action. What you say and do, you have to be careful about that."

He added, "You want to work independently, but you are a government agency. You need to free yourself from that status; otherwise you will not be able to meet people's expectations."

The discussion took place at the anti-graft watchdog's

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Security for Hindu victims of Barguna attack demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Condemning the recent attack on Hindus at Taltoli upazila of Barguna, a network of 68 non-government organisations yesterday demanded exemplary punishment for the perpetrators.

In a statement, Samajik Protirodh Committee called upon the administration to put in place "special security arrangements" to ensure safety of the minority community in the area.

Ayesha Khanam, president of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad; Sultana Kamal, executive director of Ain o Salish Kendra; Salma Ali, executive director of Bangladesh National Woman Lawyers

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STAR WEEKEND

in other news...

With a fresh new format, new writers and a new perspective, the *Star Weekend* will have an array of articles for your reading pleasure. This week our spotlight shows the adverse effects and dire consequences that students across the country are facing due to the continuous blockades and strikes. There is an article showing the importance of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in mainstream classrooms, as well as how counselling can help a child progress in life. Our third take on life in Bihari Camps talks about what the camp-dwellers do to make a living, and much more. Don't forget your copy of *Star Weekend*, tomorrow, Friday!

