



Even though all the Hazaribagh tanneries were supposed to have relocated to Savar by March 31, it seems business was as usual in a tannery there on Friday. They say they are using the raw materials stockpiled beforehand.

PHOTO: STAR

Actions farcical

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Daily Star yesterday.

The Hazaribagh tanneries release thousands of litres of untreated and toxic liquid waste into the rivers around the capital every day, posing a serious risk to human and animal health, and diminishing the prospects of leather exports.

Of the 60 percent of the industrial waste drained into the rivers, 40 percent comes from the tanneries, according to official estimates.

Considering the health and environmental hazards, the government in 2003 took up a project to relocate the tanneries to Savar.

Thirteen years on, the government has not yet been able to complete installation of the Central Effluent Treatment Plant at the site. The machines for pumping toxic wastewater are yet to be installed.

Nevertheless, police have been deployed at the four entry points to Hazaribagh to prevent rawhide supply to the tanneries.

While the factories are still running on the raw materials stockpiled beforehand, the hide merchants were being affected the most, said Md Mizanur Rahman, treasurer of Bangladesh Tanners' Association (BTA).

Mizanur, also executive director of

Samota Leather Complex Ltd, said the 150 tanneries that got plots at the Savar estate had already invested Tk 800-1,000 crore to move their factories there.

"We are determined to go there. But we have to be given more time," he said, adding that 40-50 tanneries would be ready to start operation in Savar by June.

BTA President Shaheen Ahmed said most Hazaribagh tanners would relocate to Savar by the yearend.

Furthermore, if the hides piled up in Posta are not sold soon, these may cause public nuisance and health hazards.

"The retailers and wholesalers will not be able to preserve the rawhides for long. The skins will rot away," said Mohammad Aziz, a trader in Posta.

Given the situation, the government now, say the traders, should either lift the restrictions or allow them to export rawhides to save their businesses.

Industries Minister Amir Hossain Amu could not be reached for comments while his public relations officer declined to comment on the issue.

However, after a programme in Dhaka yesterday, the minister again said rawhides would not be allowed to enter Hazaribagh.

Unesco report may not be accurate

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government's "unscientific and non-documented" survey reports on the coal-based power plant, and conducting impartial, international and scientific impact assessments on any projects in the area under the supervision of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (Unesco).

The government has planned to set up the 1,320MW power plant, an India-Bangladesh joint venture, at Rampal of Bagerhat, some 14km off the Sundarbans. Besides, local firm Orion Group would build another power plant near the forest, environmentalists said.

Different green organisations have been protesting the moves saying the construction of power plants near the

forest, a Unesco World Heritage Site, would spell disaster for it. The national committee sent a letter to the Unesco headquarters in Paris early last month, requesting the UN body to put the site on its list of World Heritage in Danger.

Sultana Kamal, convener of the committee, said the Unesco team had planned to meet four social movement groups, including the national committee. But the meetings were cancelled.

She alleged that no national-level scientists or experts were appointed to help the Unesco team. Rather, the appointees were political supporters of the government or members from the beneficiary quarters of the project.

"As the activists and experts, who

have long been working for the protection of the Sundarbans, were not given the opportunity to meet the Unesco mission, it's clearly understandable that the mission completed their visit after having statements and explanations from the government only," she said.

"Hence, it won't be surprising if the probable report was incomplete and one-sided," added Sultana, also a former adviser to a caretaker government.

She, however, hoped such a situation would help the mission members to be more cautious about preparing the report.

Prof Anu Mohammad said as the power plant projects have no social and technological acceptability, it is

time to cancel those.

The weakness of the government has become evident in disallowing the mission to meet the environmentalists, said Prof MM Akash.

Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh, said they were not against construction of power plants, but those should not be built hampering people's interest.

Prof Badiul Imam and Prof Shahidul Islam of Dhaka University, among others, spoke at the press conference.

Despite making repeated attempts, The Daily Star could not reach Environment and Forests Minister Anwar Hossain Manju over the phone for his comment.

State to take care of them

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health and the education ministries jointly organised the function at the city's Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

A mother struggles and suffers mostly throughout her life for her disabled kids, said the PM. "It is mainly the mother who looks after children ... but what would happen and where would these children go when their parents won't be there?"

Keeping this in mind, the government is making permanent arrangements for the children with disabilities, she noted.

"If any government in Bangladesh takes an initiative, it is stopped or destroyed with the change of governments," Hasina said, referring to the closure of community clinics by the previous BNP-Jamaat government.

The premier called upon the private sector entrepreneurs to come forward to supplement government efforts for the welfare of the people with special needs.

She asked the authorities concerned to develop software, hardware and websites to suit the needs of the people with disabilities.

Hasina also put emphasis on providing special care to the children with autism and related disorders. The children with autism could be turned into a "valuable asset" if they were given special care, she noted.

People with disabilities have brought success for the country in various fields, mentioned the PM. "The specially-abled players have brightened the country's image by winning gold medals in Paralympics and Special Olympics."

Elaborating various efforts made by

her government for the welfare of the autistic children, she said Bangladesh earned independence under the charismatic leadership of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The country's constitution has ensured equal rights, dignity and social justice for all its citizens, the PM added.

Keeping this in mind, the government is working to allow the latent talents of the differently-abled and autistic children flourish, she told her audience.

She lauded her daughter, eminent child psychologist Saima Wazed Hossain, for creating global awareness about autism and other physical and mental disabilities.

She said various services are being provided free of cost to autistic children and people with special needs from the Autism Resource Centre and a school has been set up on the campus

of the National Disability Development Foundation in the city's Mirpur.

The PM further noted that the education ministry is setting up an academy for autism and neurodevelopment disorders aimed at bringing the autistic children in the mainstream of society.

She hoped that such an initiative would create opportunities of expanding inclusive educational activities for the disabled, including autistic children.

Health Minister Mohammad Nasim and Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Welfare Ministry Mozammel Hossain were present at the programme.

Later, the PM witnessed a colourful cultural function performed by some physically challenged children.

Trials stumble on outdated laws

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He also pointed out that the "obsolete mentality, the mentality of police officers" were not fit for conducting a proper investigation in the case.

The CJ was addressing the launching of two books -- "Bangladesh Ainer Sangskar o Ain Commission" and "Selected Writings on International Law, Constitutional Law and Human Rights" -- by Law Commission member Prof M Shah Alam at Dhaka University's Senate Building.

The chief justice criticised lawmakers for their "lack of interest" in laws. "The biggest thing about our lawmak-

ers is their ignorance about laws."

Mentioning that he himself is ignorant about some issues, he said lawmakers showed little interest in studying and concentrating on laws.

New laws and constitutional amendments are not discussed in parliament, he said, adding: "When we bring the parliamentary debates for a better understanding of the act, we find nothing [in the debate]."

Talking about the trial process in general, he said, trials are now being conducted with the help of different government circulars. This creates additional pressures on the judiciary

and results in discrimination.

About the massive backlog of cases and the lengthy legal procedures, he said, "Nobody is getting justice. In my knowledge, the second, third generation of the person who goes to court, may get the result [verdict]. Is this justice? This is mockery, I feel."

A total reform of the system is needed to reduce the backlog of cases and people's harassment in court.

Replying to a comment by Prof Abul Barkat about the judiciary, the chief justice said irregularities were taking place in every nook and cranny in the country where the judiciary was not

from a different island.

"The judges of this country are our children. The lawyers of this country are part of the society."

So, in no way it can be expected that all the people in the judiciary are angels, he said, adding that some irregularities could be found in 5-10 percent cases.

Speaking at the programme, National Human Rights Commission Chairman Prof Mizanur Rahman criticised the Election Commission for not using its executive power to prevent polls-time violence, which killed at least 31 people in the two phases.

CONTEMPT OF COURT

2 ministers pay fine

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two ministers, who had been convicted of contempt of court for making derogatory comments about Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha, have paid the fine as directed by the Supreme Court.

On March 27, the apex court fined Food Minister Qamrul Islam and Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Huq Tk 50,000 each for the offence and ordered the ministers to pay the money to charity organisations Islamia Eye Hospital and National Liver Foundation of Bangladesh within seven days.

Syed Mumun Mahbub, a counsel for Qamrul, told The Daily Star that his client had paid Tk 25,000 to Islamia Eye Hospital and Tk 25,000 to National Liver Foundation of Bangladesh on Thursday and submitted relevant documents to the registrar of the court.

He said they would decide about filing a petition seeking review of the SC judgment that penalised his client after receiving the certified copy of the verdict.

Sources at the court said Mozammel Huq also paid the fine to the institutions.

This is the first time the SC sentenced two incumbent ministers for contempt. Following the judgment, various quarters called on the two ministers to resign on ethical grounds, although legal experts were divided on

whether they could hold office after such a conviction.

A day after the judgment, the ministers attended regular cabinet meetings and Law Minister Anisul Huq said the ministers had neither violated the constitution nor broken their oaths of office.

"So there is no obligation for them to resign as there were no violations of the constitution," he told reporters after the weekly cabinet meeting.

Money looted from temple in N'ganj

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified criminals looted money breaking into the donation box of a temple at Arahazur upazila in Narayanganj early yesterday.

A group of four to five men armed with sharp weapons entered the temple in Ulukandi area around 4:00am and fled with the money after threatening the priest, said Shakhawat Hossain, officer-in-charge of Arahazur police station.

He said they were trying to arrest the culprits.

It could not be known how much money the donation box had in it.

In a similar incident, money was looted from another temple at Demra in Dhaka on March 29.

Resurgent sides

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redemption by outmuscling a West Indies team who are themselves a team reborn.

Inspired by the ultimate game changer Chris Gayle, the men from the Caribbean are hoping to go home with the shortest format's biggest prize on the same day that their women are also gunning for glory at Kolkata's iconic Eden Gardens stadium against Australia in an earlier final.

Gayle will be looking to become the first player to crack a century of sixes in T20 internationals, having already smashed a record 98 -- 11 of them in the current tournament.

England meanwhile will hope to add to their tally of 34 sixes in the tournament, more than any other team, underlining their transformation into the game's great entertainers.

Jason Roy, one of the stars of the new-look England, promised they would come at their opponents "with all guns blazing" and continue in the same aggressive vein that has confounded their old conservative reputation.

"It's going to be an incredible experience but we are going to play our natural way and the brand of cricket we have have been playing for the last year or so," said Roy after smacking 78 in just 44 balls in the first semifinal against New Zealand.

England won the 2010 World T20 but they failed to build on that triumph and were widely ridiculed for their demise in 2015 when they lost to every major side in the World Cup.

That embarrassment came a year after their meek exit from the last World T20 in Bangladesh which included a defeat to the Netherlands.

But pundits have been showering praise on Morgan's team in India, with former skipper Nasser Hussain among those won over by "a side who don't fear anyone".

The criticism heaped on England would have sounded familiar to a West Indies team which has had to put up

with brickbats from stars of their heyday in the 1980s when the likes of Viv Richards and Malcolm Marshall ruled the world.

But while the Test team is a shadow of its former self, the West Indies' limited overs side has been a formidable unit for some time and won the 2012 World T20 in Sri Lanka.

Gayle, ridiculed for a clumsy bid to chat up an Australian TV reporter in January, has long been their dangerman.

But the 36-year-old, who could be playing in his last major tournament, has failed to notch up a decent score in his last two innings after earlier setting the competition alight with an unbeaten century against England.

Unsung sluggers such as Lendl Simmons, Jonathan Charles and Andre Russell have instead come to the party, with India's spin bowlers the latest to be carted around the park in Thursday's second semi-final.

"England will certainly be aware that it is certainly not a one-man show in this team," Simmons said afterwards.

Following their early setback against the Windies, England gave themselves a major confidence injection by chasing down a record 230 target against South Africa in their next game.

And after sometimes nervy wins against Afghanistan and holders Sri Lanka, England halted the previously unbeaten New Zealand juggernaut in its tracks in New Delhi.

Joe Root, who has scored 195 runs in five matches, has been the pick of their batsmen.

But England have also relied heavily on all-rounder Ben Stokes whose near-perfect death bowling has taken them over the line in crunch ties.

The West Indies have also shown their metal at the death, with Simmons and Russell completing their chase in Mumbai with two balls to spare, reaching their total with a six.



Jewel

Bhutto

Nayan

Six transport leaders

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The three accused are employees of the bus in which the woman was violated on Tangail-Mymensingh highway in Madhupur upazila. She was on her way home in Gazipur from one of her relative's house in Dhanbari area, he said.

The "criminals" are driver Habibur Rahman Nayan, trip supervisor Rezaul Karim Jewel, and driver's aide Abdul Khalek Bhutto. They have been arrested at different places in Dhanbari upazila.

According to the case statement, the trio gang-raped the victim after the bus started for Gazipur around 6:00am on Friday. There were no other passengers in the vehicle.

The six other accused are vice-presidents of Tangail District Road Transport Workers' Union Ilias Hossain and Selim Uddin, its joint secretary Lavlu Mia, organising secretary Jalal Uddin Jalu, publicity secre-

tary Selim Military, and former organising secretary Abdul Latif.

Yesterday, a Tangail court placed Habibur and Rezaul on three-day remands each in response to a five-day remand plea, said Dhanbari Police Station Inspector (investigation) Khan Hasan Mostafa, also the investigation officer of the case.

The other "rapist", Khalek, gave his confessional statement before the same court. Senior Judicial Magistrate Luna Ferdousi also recorded the victim's account, he said.

Police said they seized the bus and were trying to arrest the other six accused "who had tried to cover up the incident through an arbitration".

Gynaecologist Rehana Parvin of Tangail Medical College Hospital said they found evidence of rape after the victim underwent several medical tests.

"I have already submitted the report," she said.