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MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The challenging role of private universities in building human assets

Vol. XXVI No. 287

SEE SPECIAL

ASSANGE PREDICTS

'Trump won't be permitted to win' Tuesday's election

PAGE 8

MON BANDHIBI KEMONE

Rediscover Sahana Bajpaie through this upcoming album

Over the years, The Daily Star has repeatedly and tirelessly raised its voice against the slow but certain death of the rivers around Dhaka due to encroachment, dumping of pollutants and lack of dredging. The government, parliament and judiciary also responded to our concerns, taking many an initiative in the last seven years. But nothing could stop this systematic destruction of four rivers -- Turag, Buriganga, Balu and Shitalakhya -- the lifelines of the capital. Powerful, rich and ruthless, these river-gobblers have no difficulty manoeuv-

ring the legal system and the land administration, and "managing" law enforcement agencies. They remain unstoppable with the Turag fast approaching to be history. In this report, Tawfiq Ali details the persistent neglect of our river custodian in clearing four major encroachments that are seen as the cause of Turag's imminent demise.

Time to declare Turag dead

River-grabbers appear mightier than govt, judiciary; all steps go in vain

TAWFIQUE ALI

In the end, nobody would save the Turag river. Left at the mercy of ruthless land grabbers who continue to ravage one of Dhaka's lifelines, the river is only a shadow of its once mighty self.

"We are dismayed by the slow death of the river. It, in our childhood, used to be a mighty river and we fondly called it the Kahar Daria," said Hafizul Islam, an elderly farmer with ancestral homestead in Machhimpur mouja of Tongi.

Today, with unbridled grabbing of the river foreshore by "land claimants," the river is barely surviving. It has become a lean flow like a drainage ditch, he lamented.

Fresh water, fish resource, marine ecology and pan-

oramic waterfront of the river are all gone with encroachments, industrial pollution and random structures, said Shafia Begum who works in an NGO. She commutes regularly to the city from Ashulia along the bank of the Turag. Even three decades ago, the river had all its splendour,

vitality, serene beauty and wide navigability, says Shafia, who was born in Savar. "The number of grabbers multiplied only over the last half a decade.

"The river grabbers are powerful and rich, and apparently mighty," she added, "the grabbing has been indiscriminate and appears unstoppable."

Abdur Razzaq, a fish wholesaler and inhabitant of Abdullahpur, said the river has been killed over the past decade, "...while we have seen feeble attempts in the name of saving it."

During several visits in the past few weeks, this correspondent saw the earth filling of the river's foreshores, the part of a shore between high- and low-water marks. Not only existing river grabbers, but also scores of fresh "land claimants" were busy with their work.

The areas grabbed some half a decade ago now stand covered with plants, trees and structures.

This Daily Star correspondent, since April 2011, has been

following the destruction of the river. River laws and repeated High Court orders fell flat, it appears. Half a dozen SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

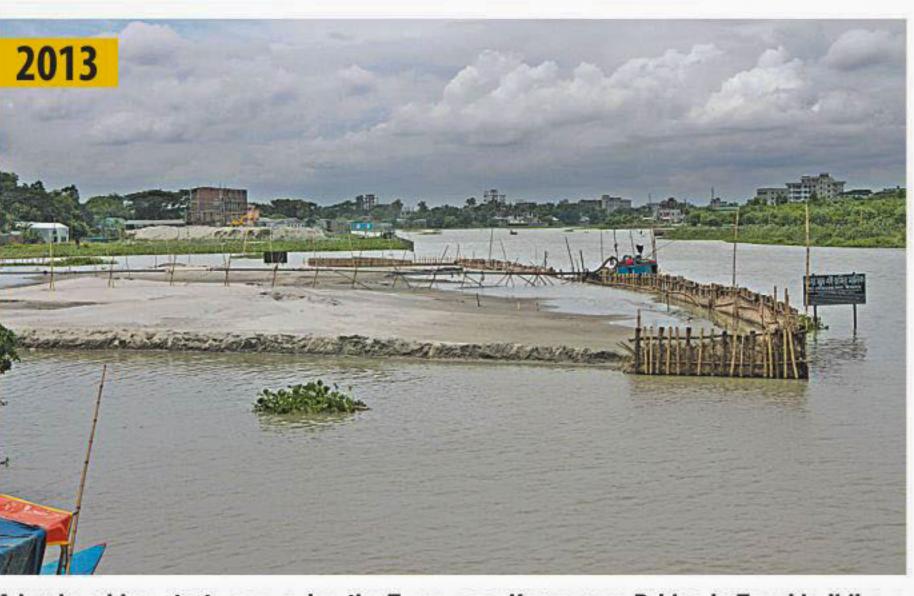
SCAN THIS QR CODE







Shrubs and trees are planted on "a piece of land" on the occupied Turag hiding an earth-moving equipment near Kamarpara Bridge in Tongi.



A land grabber starts occupying the Turag near Kamarpara Bridge in Tongi building a fence and dumping sand with dredgers.



The land grabber almost finishes building a wall on the Turag near Kamarpara Bridge in Tongi.



Columns for a wall are being built on the newly made ground on the Turag near Kamarpara Bridge in Tongi. PHOTOS: SK ENAMUL HAQ

How it all works

ROBIN GAZI

The assumption that you vote for a presidential candidate and the candidate with most votes wins does not necessarily work in the case of US presidential elections. Former vice-president Al Gore is a case in

Gore had beaten George W Bush by 5,43,895 votes in 2000 elections but he had lost Florida just by 537 votes, which was a tumultuous time in the US election history.

Bush winning Florida was all that mattered since the US president is elected by electoral votes of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, not by the popular

Each of the 50 states has electoral votes equal to the number of representatives it has in the senate and congress, which depends on the population of a state and its areas. Big states have more representatives ie California has 55 electoral votes.

With the exception of Nebraska and Maine, if a candidate wins a state, he or she gets all the electoral votes the state has. This makes it imperative for a candidate to win states rather than getting the most number of votes.

With 538 electoral votes on offer, a candidate needs half of this plus one, 270, to start choosing the drapes for the White House.

Traditionally, democrats have an "easier" shot at getting to 270 since a number states with large number of electoral votes on offer usually stick to the blue team ie California, 55, and New York, 29.

Texas, 38, along with some smaller states like Oklahoma, 7, Alabama, 9, Kentucky, 8, usually go red.

What a candidate needs to do is sure up his or her base states and campaign in states that could go either way, usually called battleground states or swing states.

For example, Ohio, 18, went for the president every time since 1960. Florida, 29, too did the same but missed out on one occasion.

ELECTORAL MAP -- PAGE 8

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Hope or danger?

: World waits to see which way America swings as Trump closing gaps in race with Hillary

· AFP, Cleveland

Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump brandished starkly · different visions of America as they headed into a fierce final weekend of campaigning yesterday, one celebrat-

 ing hope as the other bashed corruption. Trump portrayed Clinton as a product of a venal and incompetent establishment, while Clinton headlined an optimistic concert spectacular featur-

ing superstar singer Beyonce. Forecasts still give the 69-year-old Democrat an edge over the 70-year-old Republican property mogul ahead of Tuesday's vote.

But Trump has been buoyed by signs that he is closing the gap in the key · swing states that will decide who secures an electoral college win. · MORE ON PAGE 8 SEE PAGE 2 COL



US Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton and artist Beyoncé at a campaign concert in Cleveland, Ohio on Friday. PHOTO: REUTERS

ATTACK, again in B'baria

Outrage continues; 33 held; idol found in mosque

RASHIDUL HASAN and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

BNP RALLY

give the

go-ahead

Khaleda says govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

'fears BNP, its rally'

Dhaka Metropolitan Police will decide on whether to

permit the BNP to hold a

rally in front of the party's

after assessing the situation

Nayapaltan headquarters

"We have not yet

from the BNP seeking

at Nayapaltan. We will

received any application

permission to hold a rally

decide on the matter con-

sidering the situation and

ing such an application,"

DMP Commissioner

security aspects after receiv-

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

in hand.

DMP yet to

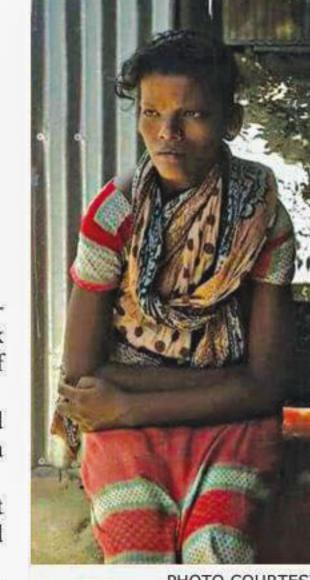
Despite heavy presence of law enforcers, a fresh arson attack on a Hindu house took place in Nasirnagar of Brahmanbaria yesterday. Two platoons of BGB, more than 500 policemen and

plainclothes detectives have been deployed in the upazila after the October 30 atrocities on Hindus. And a Rab camp with at least 30 personnel has been set

up there, Nasirnagar UNO Choudhury Muazzem Ahmed told The Daily Star. Yet the arson attack could not be averted yesterday. The

incident follows torching of five Hindu homes early Friday, SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

PROTESTS KEEP POURING IN ACROSS COUNTRY -- PAGE 3



PROTIK DATTA

Moushumi Sutradhar in

PHOTO COURTESY

gious zealots had assaulted a 14-year-old hearing and speech-impaired girl while rampaging through Hindu homes and temples in Brahmanbaria's Nasirnagar last week. The attackers slapped Moushumi Sutradhar, verbally abused her and took away her gold earrings, leaving her in shock, said her father Falan Sutradhar, a

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

Challenged

girl also not

Despite repeated pleas from

her family to spare her, reli-

spared

RASHIDUL HASAN

her home.

Paediatric pioneer passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Country's internationally famed paediatrician National Professor MR Khan passed away at the age of 88 at a city hospital yesterday.

The preeminent child specialist breathed his last at 4:25pm at Central Hospital, the hospital authorities confirmed.



Prof Khan, well known for his pioneering role in introducing vaccines against diseases having high fatalities on children, and for founding many health service institutions, had been suffering from several old-age complications lately and undergoing treatment at the intensive care unit of the hospital. He would be laid to rest today by the grave of his wife in

Satkhira, where he was born on August 1, 1928, as Mohammad Rafi Khan. His wife, Anwara Khan, died in 2012. Prof Khan, recipient of Ekushey Padak and

Independence Award in addition to numerous other awards, is survived by his only daughter Dr Mandy Karim. SEE PAGE 10 COL 2

MAHBUBUL ALAM HANIF AT A PRESS CONFERENCE



Sayedul Hoque] can make

such an unacceptable and

illogical statement. We will

certainly take organisational

and other actions if anyone

submits evidence to us in

this regard." AL JOINT GENERAL SECRETARY