

MAKING A DIFFERENCE
The challenging role of private universities in building human assets
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
PAGE 9



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 manoeuvring 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

TAWFIQ 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 panoramic 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



2016 Shrubbery and trees are planted on "a piece of land" on the occupied Turag hiding an earth-moving equipment near Kamarpara Bridge in Tongi.



2015 The land grabber almost finishes building a wall on the Turag near Kamarpara Bridge in Tongi.



2013 A land grabber starts occupying the Turag near Kamarpara Bridge in Tongi building a fence and dumping sand with dredgers.



2014 Columns for a wall are being built on the newly made ground on the Turag near Kamarpara Bridge in Tongi.

PHOTOS: SK ENAMUL HAQ

SCAN THIS QR CODE TO WATCH VIDEO



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 point.

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 vote.

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 this 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.

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 celebrating 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 featuring 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 1



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

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 Muazem Ahmed told *The Daily Star*.

Yet the arson attack could not be averted yesterday. The incident follows torching of five Hindu homes early Friday,

PROTESTS KEEP POURING IN ACROSS COUNTRY -- PAGE 3

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5



PHOTO COURTESY: PROTIK DATTA
Moushumi Sutradhar in her home.

Challenged girl also not spared

RASHIDUL HASAN

Despite repeated pleas from her family to spare her, religious 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

BNP RALLY DMP yet to give the go-ahead

Khaleda says govt 'fears BNP, its rally'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Metropolitan Police will decide on whether to permit the BNP to hold a rally in front of the party's Nayapaltn headquarters after assessing the situation in hand.

"We have not yet received any application from the BNP seeking permission to hold a rally at Nayapaltn. We will decide on the matter considering the situation and security aspects after receiving such an application," DMP Commissioner

SEE PAGE 2 COL 6

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 Sathkira, 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.



Prof MR Khan



"It's unbelievable that a person like him [Minister 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 MAHBUBUL ALAM HANIF AT A PRESS CONFERENCE

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2