



A transformer being installed at the Central Effluent Treatment Plant of Savar's Tannery Industrial Estate. Pumps of ETP still under covers on a platform, top middle. The pipe network for the ETP not yet complete, bottom. Effluent being dumped into the Dhaleshwari river, top right.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Tannery shifting delayed again

FROM PAGE 1

said the government would prevent tanners from transporting raw hides to Hazaribagh after January 31.

All the factories would have to be shifted to the tannery estate by March 31, the secretary said after a meeting with Bangladesh Tanners Association, and Bangladesh Finished Leather, Leather Goods and Footwear Exporters Association.

Of the 154 industrial plots at the estate, only 37 are now being used by the same number of tanners to process raw hides, while the rest have seen little progress in the construction of industrial units.

Visiting the Savar tannery estate yesterday, this correspondent found that construction of the Central Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP) is yet to be completed.

The CETP has not yet got electricity connection, and the installation of pipes connecting one tank of the CETP

to another awaits completion.

Workers hired by the contractors for the plant were seen working in full swing to complete the remaining part of the CETP.

Abdul Qaiyum, project director of the tannery estate, claimed that they have made all the preparations and are now waiting for more tanners to come to Savar and start work.

"We need around 10,000 cubic feet of waste to make the CETP functional. But we are getting around 3,000 cubic feet. We need 40 more industrial units to generate waste for making our CETP fully functional," Qaiyum told The Daily Star.

Project Consultant Prof Delowar Hossain said the CETP has four modules and eight sections. Construction of three modules -- A1, A2 and A3 -- is complete, and that of A4 would be completed this month.

"We sat with the contractors today, and they assured us that they would

finish the construction work by January 17," said Delowar, professor at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology.

He said experts from BUET were unwilling to accept some metal pipes brought from abroad for connecting treated water with the disinfection unit at the CETP as those were not up to standard.

"Those pipes are still lying at the Chittagong port. We don't want those sub-standard pipes," he said.

Though construction of the CETP still awaits completion, the authorities have been conducting its test run since November last year, using generators.

Locals allege that the air around the CETP gets heavy with foul stench whenever test run is conducted.

Asked whether untreated waste was dumped into the Dhaleshwari river next to the site, Prof Delowar said he had requested the officials concerned not to dump untreated water into the

river, and to channel it to a pond dug at the estate.

However, this correspondent found yesterday that untreated water from the CETP was flowing into the Dhaleshwari through two pipes. Some of the liquid and solid waste was being dumped into a large pond inside the estate.

At the entrance of the estate, locals pasted posters on the estate's boundary wall which read "We will not let anyone pollute our Dhaleshwari like the Buriganga".

Mamtaz Begum, who lives in nearby Jhauchar village, said they used to take bath in the river and use the water for household purposes. But they stopped using the river water since the authorities started dumping liquid waste into it two months ago.

"People used to catch fish in the river... We now find dead fish floating in the river," said the 55-year-old woman, who was grazing cattle on the river bank.

Delays result in cases piling up

FROM PAGE 16

Justice SK Sinha added it was impossible for only 1,268 lower court judges to dispose of more than 27 lakh pending cases, as new cases are being filed every day.

"For this relevant reason, appointments should be made quickly in the vacant posts of lower court judges. Recruitment of lower court judges is delayed as the law ministry does not give requisition to that end in time.

"I firmly believe the difference between the rates of filing and disposal of cases would reduce if the existing number of judges doubled," the chief

justice observed.

Asked about the chief justice's statement on appointing new judges to the HC, Law Minister Anisul Huq on December 29 refused to make any comment.

The ministry has meanwhile asked the Bangladesh Judicial Service Commission to select candidates through holding relevant tests for appointing 150 new judges for the lower courts.

BJS Secretary Paresh Chandra Sharma told The Daily Star on December 28 that the commission would start the process for selecting 150 candidates through holding tests,

as per the ministry's requisition. He said viva voce of 567 candidates, who were selected in a written examination, was going on.

The ongoing viva voce would be completed on January 23, he said.

According to a latest SC study, 414,035 cases were pending with the HC as of September 30, 2016. It settled 8,449 cases from July 1 to September 30, 2016.

Earlier, the HC disposed of 37,753 cases from January 1 to December 31, 2015, and the number of pending cases stood at 394,225 then, said another SC study.

The courts across the country dis-

posed of 3.25 lakh cases from July 1 to September 30, 2016, but 3.47 lakh new cases were filed during that time.

After the disposals of cases, 31,39,275 cases were pending with courts across the country, including the Appellate and the HC divisions, as of September 30, 2016, according to the SC study published in October last year.

The number of cases pending with the Appellate Division was 13,119 as of September 30.

The Appellate Division disposed of 2,368 cases and the lower courts settled 314,334 cases between July 1 and September 30.

Children get their new books

FROM PAGE 16

Receiving free books, Abir Ahmed, a class-VIII student of Government Laboratory School in the capital's Dhanmondi, said, "We got gifts from our parents on New Year's occasion. But getting the books on the very first day at school is the best gift."

This year, 36.21 crore copies of textbooks will be given to 4.26 crore students of pre-primary, primary, secondary and technical education schools and ebtadai and dakhil madrasas, according to a government estimate.

There were reports that textbooks didn't reach schools in some parts of the country. Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid inaugurated the textbooks festival at Azimpur Government Girls School and College in Dhaka around 9:30am by releasing balloons and handing over books.

The premises put on a colourful look. Students from 31 schools sat before a podium wrapped with red and green cloths. They held festoons and balloons in one hand and textbooks in the other. Many parents and teachers also joined the festival.

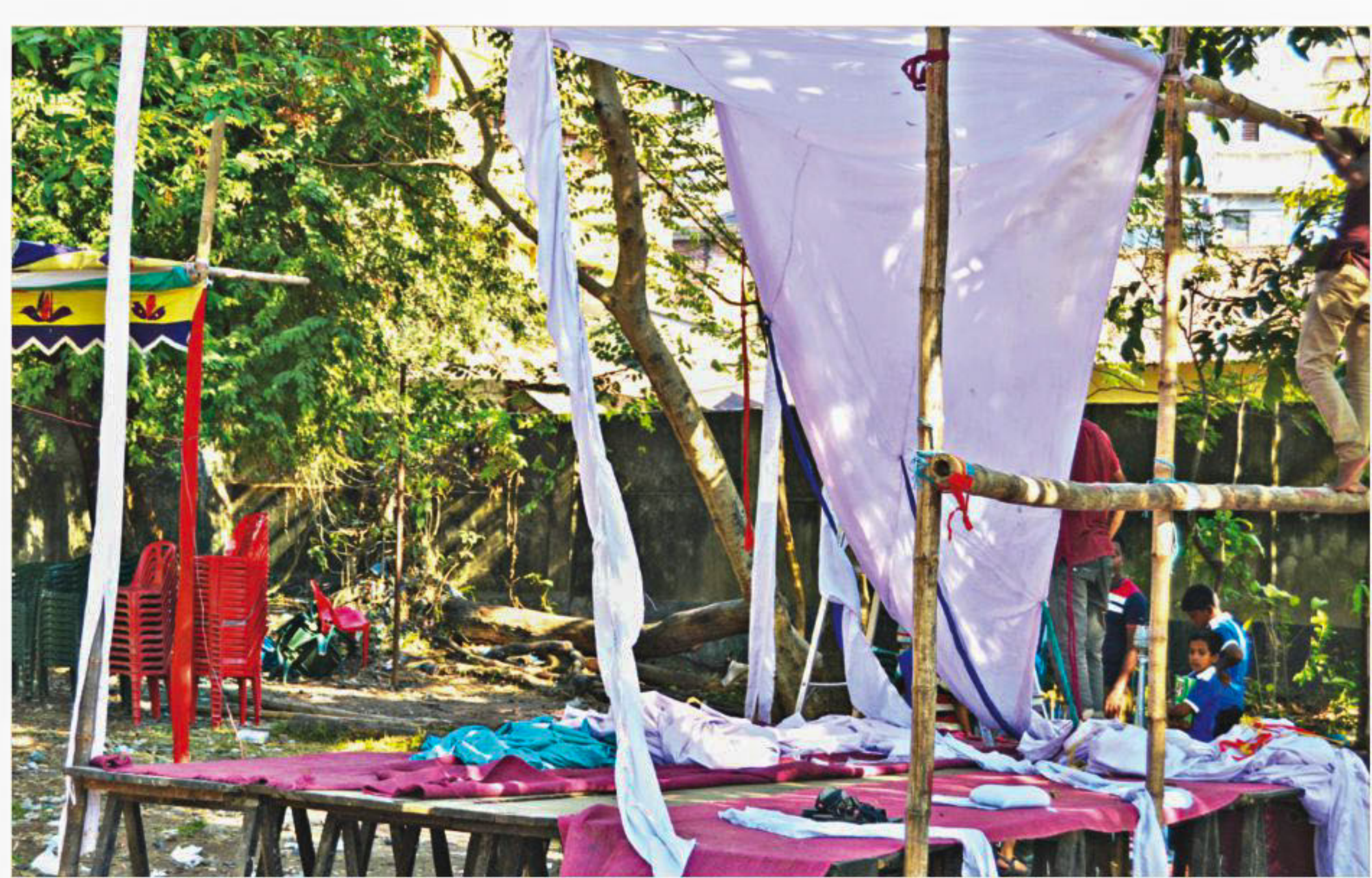
A student of the Azimpur Government school, Sumaiya Alam said the joy of reading new textbooks was different.

As the government gave the books on the very first day of the academic session, teachers should start teaching right away so that the syllabus can be completed, said a child's father Mahfuzur Rahman.

Several teachers of the school said new books would encourage students to learn.

In his speech, Nahid said the government was working to improve the quality of textbooks and make them easier for children.

"The biggest challenge before us is to improve the quality of education. And we are working on it."



The damaged stage of the Textbook Festival Day at the Durgakumar Govt Primary School in Sylhet after alleged devotees from a nearby mosque attacked the celebrations during its Zohr prayer break.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Meanwhile, Primary and Mass Education Minister Mostafizur Rahman inaugurated the distribution of primary books at the Dhaka University playground with Finance Minister AMA Muhith as the chief guest of the programme.

Advising the students, Muhith said, "Now that you got the books, you seek knowledge and become good human beings. Only then you will be able to contribute to the development of the country."

In a few cases, not all textbooks reached schools.

Class-IX students in most thanas and upazilas of Chittagong district did not get textbooks on maths, business studies, Islamic religion and moral education and Buddhist religion and moral education.

District Education Officer Hosne Ara Begum told The Daily Star those books would reach the schools in a few days.

In 1,518 institutions, 1.35 crore copies of textbooks were distributed among 10.35 lakh students in the district this year, she added.

In Narayanganj and Bandarganj of Rangpur, class-II and -III students didn't get the full set of textbooks at some schools.

DEVOTEES' ATTACK CHILDREN Meanwhile, a group of Muslim devotees attacked Durgakumar Govt Primary School in Sylhet during the textbooks festival around 2:00pm yesterday.

The attack was made during a break for Zohr prayer, forcing the school authorities to stop the programme.

Manjur Ahmed Chowdhury, president of the school management com-

mittee, said the festival's chief guest, former mayor Badar Uddin Ahmed Kamran had left the premises for offering the prayer. A break for the prayer time was announced.

But before the festival's cultural programme could resume, at least 50-60 devotees from Sylhet Collectorate Mosque attacked the school, Manjur said.

Segufta Kaniz Akter, head teacher of the school, said, "We postponed the festival for the prayer but the devotees attacked us, damaged the stage and instruments, which scared the children."

Faisal Mahmud, deputy commissioner (north) of Sylhet Metropolitan Police, said the attack was carried out probably because children were playing music during the break, which angered the devotees.

'Laser walls, smart sensors' on Indo-Bangla border soon

NDTV, Kolkata

Laser walls and smart sensors will be installed at the Indo-Bangla International border in West Bengal to plug the porous riverine and unmanned terrain and keep a tight vigil to check infiltration and terrorism.

"It will be done on an urgent basis so that it becomes operational by the next year," a top Border Security Force (BSF) official told PTI on the condition of anonymity.

According to BSF officials, a pilot project will take off within a few months in the Indo-Bangla riverine border area in West Bengal.

"The pilot project will start in a few months once we get the equipment and other things that are needed. The areas, where lasers and sensors will be placed, have already been identified," another official said.

A team of technical experts will handle a pilot project for deploying technological solutions in riverine areas and the areas that lack fences.

"The smart sensors will be monitored through a satellite-based signal command system. They will have night and fog operability tools. The mechanism is -- sensor blips and alerts border guards," said the official.

The paramilitary force is using the

Farheen laser wall technology at the Indo-Pakistan border and has reaped benefits through better management of the borders.

BSF DG KK Sharma and other top officials of the force recently toured the Indo-Bangla border area in West Bengal and Tripura.

According to BSF sources, installing laser walls and remote sensors is part of the centre's plan of keeping a tight vigil at the Indo-Bangla border following inputs from intelligence agencies that terrorists and anti-national elements are exploiting the unfenced areas and riverine borders.

"The matter of laser walls and smart sensors in West Bengal was on the back burner. But it came up after the terror attack in Dhaka a few months ago as there were intelligence inputs that terrorists and anti-national elements were exploiting the unfenced areas and riverine borders," said another official.

Of the 4,096 kilometre-long Indo-Bangla border, 2,216.7 is in West Bengal.

The decision to install laser walls in areas where barbed wire fences could not be erected due to the treacherous terrain or marshy riverine topography was taken by the BSF two years ago.

The union home ministry and BSF expedited the installation and

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Terror strikes Turkey again

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Interior Minister Suleyman Soyulu said the attacker had escaped and was now the target of a major manhunt, expressing hope the suspect "would be captured soon".

He added that of 20 victims identified so far, 15 were foreigners and five were Turks. Another 65 people were being treated in hospital.

Many revellers threw themselves into the water in panic. Dogan news agency said the gunman was dressed in a Santa Claus outfit, although this has yet to be confirmed.

Soyulu said the gunman had arrived with a gun concealed underneath an overcoat but subsequently exited the venue wearing a different garment.

No-one has yet claimed responsibility for the bloodshed.

Family Minister Fatma Betul Sayan Kaya indicated there were many Arabs among the wounded. Jordan said three of its nationals were killed while the Tunisian foreign ministry said two Tunisians lost their lives.

An Israeli woman was killed and another injured, Israel's foreign ministry said.

Istanbul governor Vasip Sahin said at the scene on the shores of the Bosphorus that the attacker "targeted innocent people who had only come here to celebrate the New Year and have fun".

Television pictures showed partygoers -- including men in suits and women in cocktail dresses -- emerging from the nightclub in a state of shock.

Erdogan said in a statement that with such attacks, "they are working to destroy our country's morale and create chaos".

Turkey would deploy every means to fight "terror organisations" and the countries supporting them, Erdogan said, without giving details on which groups or nations he was referring to.

The attack evoked memories of the November 2015 carnage in Paris when Islamic State jihadists went on a gun and bombing rampage on nightspots in the French capital, killing 130 people including 90 at the Bataclan concert hall.

From Sydney to Paris, Rio to London, security had been boosted over fears that the New Year festivities could present a target for violent extremists.

In Istanbul, at least 17,000 police officers had been deployed and some, as is customary in Turkey, dressed themselves as Santa Claus as cover, according to television reports.

Turkey in 2016 saw more attacks than any other year in the history of the country.

On December 10, 44 people were killed in a double bombing in Istanbul after a football match hosted by top side Besiktas, an attack claimed by the Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (TAK), seen as a radical offshoot of the outlawed PKK rebel group.

In June, 47 people were killed in a triple suicide bombing and gun attack at Istanbul's Ataturk airport, with authorities blaming IS.

Mainly Muslim Turkey's religious affairs agency Diyanet condemned the attack, saying the fact it took place in a nightclub "was no different to it being in a market or place of worship".

"It's hard to imagine a crime more cynical than the killing of civilians during a New Year's celebration," Russian President Vladimir Putin said in a condolence message to Erdogan.

Two weeks ago, an off-duty policeman assassinated Russia's ambassador to Turkey in an Ankara art gallery.

The United States and France voiced outrage at yesterday's attack and said they stood alongside their Nato ally in its fight against terror.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel condemned "an inhumane, sneaky attack on people who wanted to celebrate" while Pope Francis condemned the shooting in his New Year message.

The bloodbath came as the Turkish army wages a four-month incursion in Syria to oust IS jihadists and Kurdish militants from the border area, suffering increasing casualties.

Turkey is also spearheading a ceasefire plan with Russia aimed at creating a basis for peace talks to end the near six year civil war.