

IS THIS REALLY A CITY?



Pedestrians and vehicles go over knee-deep reddish water -- a mix of raw sewage and toxic chemical -- that remains stagnant almost all year long on AK Ali Road in East Jurain in the capital. Following a heavy shower, the area even goes under knee-deep water. Locals said a long overdue repair work of the road's drainage and sewerage system is one of the reasons for the stagnation. Long term exposure to the sewage and toxic chemical, dumped by a local textile dyeing factory, might have a negative impact on the health of residents in the area. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Institutions weakened by all govts

Ex-CEC Huda tells TIB dialogue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Successive governments have all contributed their bit to weaken the country's institutions, former chief election commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda said yesterday.

All the movements in the country are basically election-centric, said Huda, adding, "Once a political party assumes the office, it starts taking various initiatives to weaken the institutions."

"For many reasons, people have a perception that Pakistan is a failed state, but some of its institutions, particularly the judiciary, anti-corruption body and bureaucracy perform better than us because of less interference. Even in some cases, Nepal is also performing better than us," said Dr Huda.

The former bureaucrat made the remarks at a dialogue on "SDG 16 and good governance: government, mass media and citizens" organised by Transparency International Bangladesh at its office in the capital.

Recently, Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha also said the rule of law has not been fully established in Bangladesh, which the neighbouring countries have succeeded in doing.

Criticising the government's move to introduce 15 percent vat, Huda said, "I do not find any reason behind the decision of imposing 15 percent vat. The existing vat should be collected efficiently. Through the 15-percent vat system, the honest tax payers would be penalised."

Checks and balances are needed in the society, Huda said, adding, "If there is no transparency and accountability, it would not be possible to achieve the targets of SDGs."

Rizwan-ul-Alam, director (outreach and communication) of TIB, presented the keynote paper identifying problems and prospects of the media in Bangladesh.

Then the floor was opened for discussion where discussants

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BNP ready for polls, if...

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said the party is always ready to participate in the next general election if there is an "election-time supportive" government and "favourable environment".

"BNP has 900 prospective candidates in the 300 constituencies," Fakhrul told reporters after placing wreaths at the grave of late president Ziaur Rahman at the city's Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

Along with the party's other leaders and activists, Fakhrul went there marking the 28th anniversary of Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal.

Asked whether BNP has started selecting the prospective candidates, Fakhrul said BNP is an "election-oriented" party.

Fakhrul said the government has shrunk the space for democracy as it understood that they have been isolated from people.

"The government is trying to establish a one-party rule in the country. A free and fair election will prove that people are not with Awami League," he added.

Set priority on playgrounds, drainage for Old Dhaka

Locals urge Rajuk at discussion on new DAP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Locals and public representatives of several wards of Chawkbazar area in Old Dhaka yesterday urged Rajuk to include playgrounds and adopt systems to manage solid and liquid waste in the area under the upcoming 20-year detailed area plan (DAP) for Dhaka city.

Absence of open spaces and playgrounds in the area might have a negative impact on the mental health of local children and youth in the long run, they feared while speaking at a public discussion on the proposed new DAP. Rajuk (Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripkha) organised the programme on Haranath Ghosh Road of Chawkbazar.

Sohrab-uz-Zaman, a resident of the area, said the playgrounds they used to play in are now encroached upon by different vested quarters.

"We grew up playing in these open grounds." But now, without any place to go, "the children's mental development are at stake as they are confined within four walls of their rooms and hooked on video games," said Nazimuddin, another local, who is also general secretary of Ward 31 unit of Awami League.

A number of the locals present at the discussion complained that even though they make their share of payments and taxes to the Dhaka Wasa (Water and Sewerage Authority) and the city corporation, both the organisations ignore their responsibilities by only blaming each other.

The area badly needs proper maintenance of its sewerage and drainage system as well as installing of designated transfer stations for solid waste management, they also said.

Their neighbourhoods get submerged under knee-deep water even after

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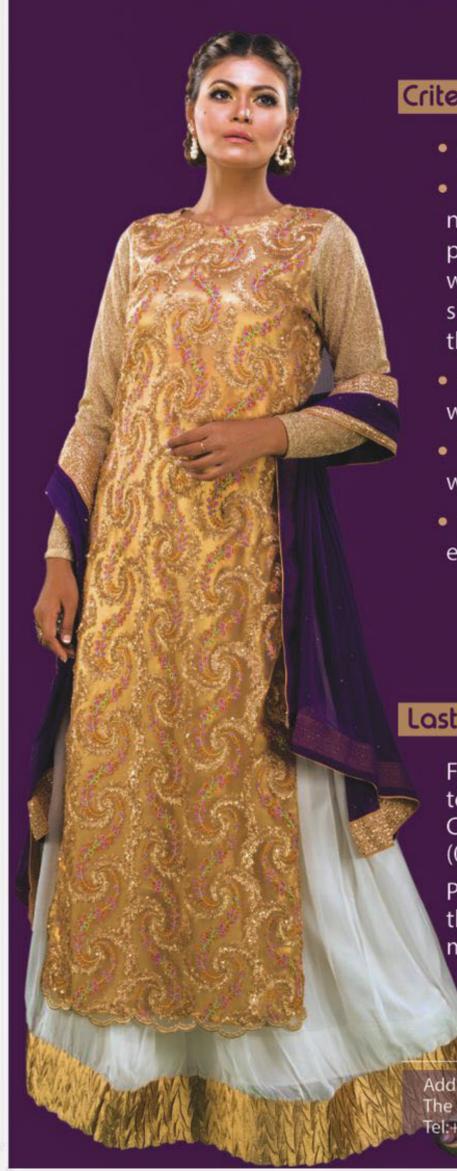
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OBITUARY



إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ

Md. Akbar Hossain (Dara), son of Late Sheikh Abul Hossain, Chairman of Nawab Abdull Malek Jutemills BD Ltd. and Associated Engineers & Drillers Ltd., passed away Sunday morning, April 30th, 2017.

He was buried in the Banani graveyard the same day. His Qul Khani will be held on Friday 5th May Ba'ad Asr at his Gulshan residence. We welcome all of his friends and family to join us in commemorating his life.

He leaves behind his colleagues, grieving brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews, and his family: Shameem Hossain, Bushra Hossain, Rasil Haque, Naureen Chowdhury, and Saad Z Hossain.

Journalist Razu on remand in another case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ahmed Razu, a journalist of an online news portal, was placed on a fresh one-day remand in an extortion case yesterday.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Mahmudul Hasan granted the remand prayer sought by police.

An official of Walton Group filed the extortion case against Razu, executive editor of Natunsomay.com, and the news portal's editor Shawgat Hossain Bablu with Paltan Police Station, said Officer-in-Charge Rafiqul Islam.

Earlier, Razu was taken on a one-day remand in another case under Section 57 of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act.

TM Abdullah Al Fuad, assistant director of Walton Group's law wing, filed the

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RIGHT HERE WAITING FOR YOU.

RICHARD MARX / LIVE IN DHAKA May 16, 2017