

Still not too late to save rivers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

If proper initiative is taken setting a long-term plan, it is still possible to save water bodies and rivers in and around the capital, experts told a roundtable yesterday. They said people from all sectors are responsible for polluting the Buriganga, Balu, Shitalakkhya rivers and the water bodies. Despite repeated plea from green activists, little has been done by the government to recover those, they alleged.

Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) Alumni Association in cooperation with the Bangla daily Prothom Alo organised the roundtable at the newspaper's office in the capital.

Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury, a renowned civil engineer and president of Buet alumni, said the quality of water can be turned into usable form by taking effective measures, and there is still time to do that. Prof Mujibur Rahman of civil engineering department of Buet said water quality of the Buriganga river can be improved with a short term plan for one to three years.

But the government must stick to long-term plan for 3-10 years, he added.

Architect Iqbal Habib, also member secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon, said once recovered, the circular waterways in the capital can best be used as a communication medium.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association, said economic analysis is needed to determine the utility of the rivers.

Rajuk Chairman M Bazul Karim Chowdhury said the proper use of land could save rivers from pollution.

Buet Alumni Secretary General Sadiqul Islam Bhuiyan, Prothom Alo Associate Editor Abdul Qayyum, Department of Environment Director Sultan Ahmed, and Buet teachers Prof Ishrat Islam and Prof Abdul Matin, among others, spoke.



Recipients of "Anannya Shirshodosh 2016" award along with guests in the capital's Krishibid Institution auditorium yesterday. Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury handed over the awards to 10 women for their contributions to different sectors in the country. Fortnightly magazine Anannya has been giving the award since 1993.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Eight garment factory officials injured by workers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

Eight officials of a garment factory were injured in an attack by workers agitating for realising their 14-point demand, including congenial work environment and higher production rate and bonus, on the factory premises at Sreepur in Gazipur yesterday.

The injured staff of Crystal Industrial Bangladesh Private Ltd -- Senior Officers Rakibul Islam and Sohe Ahmed, Deputy Production Manager Syed Kabir Production In-charge Moklesur Rahman, Rate Officer Abu Sayeed, Quality Supervisor Rokonzaman, and supervisors Ismail, Zahirul and Azizur Rahman -- were admitted to AK Memorial Hospital at Maona crossing.

The workers first confined all the staff to the factory by locking the main gate from inside. They were freed around 3:00pm after they assured the workers of fulfilling all their

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Turning the tide Low-cost kidney care

10 women receive 'Anannya Shirshodosh 2016' award

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tasmina Aktar had been riding horse since she was six. And by the time she turned nine, she started participating in different competitions.

As she grew up, relatives and neighbours of the 11-year-old daughter of a farmer in a remote village of Naogaon, began to criticise her and urged her father to stop her from riding horse.

But she was so determined that she did not pay heed to the criticism and continued riding -- an unwavering attitude that brought her accolades and fame. In addition, she hit the newspaper headlines for her achievements.

Yesterday, the sixth-grader received the "Anannya Shirshodosh 2016" award from fortnightly magazine Anannya for her uncompromising bravery, adding another feather to her cap.

Like Tasmina, nine other women also received the award for their contributions to different sectors in the country.

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury handed over the awards at a ceremony in the

capital's Krishibid Institution auditorium.

Central Women's University Vice-Chancellor Dr Perween Hasan received the award for contributing to the country's education, while Narayanganj City Corporation Mayor Selina Hayat Ivy was awarded for her contribution in politics, and Bangladesh National Women Football Team forward Sabina Khatun in sports.

Dhaka University Professor Zeba Islam Seraj received the award for her contribution in scientific research, Women with Disabilities Development Foundation Executive Director Ashrafun Nahar Misti in disability rights activism, Surma Zahid in Liberation War research, a Joypurhat-based indigenous women-children organisation founder Bashonti Murmu in indigenous rights activism, actress Saberi Alam in acting, and a craftsman of Magura Nisha Rani Malakar in artistry.

Speaking as the chief guest, the agriculture minister said all women of the country have to be united for their own development.

Footballer Sabina, expressing her feelings, said the award made her feel proud,

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Gonoshasthaya Dialysis Centre to begin operation within a week; to provide free or low-cost dialysis facilities for poor patients

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gonoshasthaya Dialysis Centre (GDC) is going to begin its operation in a week, promising low-cost healthcare to the kidney patients struggling to access services for high cost.

The 100-bed non-profit centre housed at the Gonoshasthaya Nagar Hospital in Dhanmondi is almost ready with equipment and procedures of international standards and trained physicians, nurses and technicians.

"The centre will run round the clock and is able to provide dialysis services to 500 kidney patients a day," said Dr Zafullah Chowdhury, founder of the Gonoshasthaya Kendra (GSK, Peoples Health Centre) and dreamer of the dialysis centre.

The centre will provide free dialysis services to the ultra poor patients, comprising five percent of the total

patients, he said at a familiarisation function of the GDC in the hospital auditorium yesterday.

The charge for each session of dialysis for the poor patients -- 80 percent of the total patients in the GDC -- would be Tk 1,100, while Tk 1,500 for the middle class patients (10-20 percent) and Tk 3,000 for the rich patients, said Dr Mohib Ullah Khondoker, coordinator at the GDC.

Also, the centre has a plan to begin kidney transplantation from 2018.

He said this is the first time any dialysis centre in the country has an attached intensive care unit and a separate ward for the patients of infectious diseases.

The centre is equipped with air-cooling system, WIFI facility, audio-video devices to keep the patients comfortable, he added.

"Everybody -- rich or poor -- would get the same quality service," Dr

Mohib said.

The dialysis centre comes into operation at a time when average dialysis charge in any private hospital is at least Tk 3,000 for a four-hour session. A kidney patient needs two to three such sessions every week.

Besides, kidney patients need blood tests and erythropoietin injections, which in total require monthly Tk 40,000 to Tk 1 lakh, which is quite impossible for most patients to bear.

According to official estimates, there are 1.5 crore to 2 crore chronic kidney patients in Bangladesh, and after several years they face kidney failures. They then need either dialysis or kidney transplantation.

Failing to have kidney transplantation or continue dialysis, an estimated 40,000 kidney patients die every year in the country.

"We want to ensure affordability of

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Oil floats on water after being spilled into the Bay of Bengal at a shipbreaking yard at Sitakunda in Chittagong. Burnt oil thrown into the water during dismantling ships can pose a serious threat to the environment. Though dumping of oil in the sea is prohibited, many of the shipbreaking yards in the area continue to do so. The photo was taken recently.

OIL AT SEA Dangers of shipbreaking fading in

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg

Dumping oil in the sea is prohibited as per the environmental act, but many of the shipbreaking yards in Sitakunda upazila of Chittagong do not follow the rule while dismantling ships.

As a result, the brunt oil, which is being thrown into the Bay of Bengal from the dismantled ships, is posing a serious threat to the environment.

According to sources, more than a hundred shipbreaking yards have mushroomed in the upazila over the last 20 years. Of them, around 50 to 60 yards are active at present.

Azhar-ul-Islam, inspector of the Department of Environment (DoE), Chittagong, said according to the oil management guideline of the environmental act, the authorities of the shipbreaking yards will have to remove the oil from the dismantled ships in a way that it does not harm the environment.

"Nevertheless it is a reality that in many yards oil is being thrown into the water during dismantling the ships or while being poured into barrels before delivering them to other ships," he said.

"I am the lone inspector for the whole district, so it is not possible for me to visit all

the yards regularly. Besides, there is a shortage of manpower in DoE," he further said.

Recently, this correspondent managed to collect some photographs taken at a yard in Sonaichhari union of the upazila. In the photographs it was seen that oil dumped from ships was floating on the water, and at some spots, oil was found on the sand near the water.

Some of the workers seeking anonymity at the shipbreaking yards admitted that they throw oil in the water regularly.

Contacted, President of Bangladesh Ship Breakers' Association Abu Taher said, "In most of the yards oil is delivered through lighter vessels from one ship to another, and there is no question of dumping oil into the sea or at yards as this work is done very carefully."

When this correspondent told him that he had seen oil floating on the water and had some photographs of oil spillage at a yard, Taher said it could be a "rare incident".

"Oil is stored in barrels or drums in few yards and leakage of oil might have happened during the process," he said, adding, "We are trying to bring all the yards under the modern system of oil management."

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Participation of differently-abled youths in IT sector a must

Says Prof Jamilur Reza

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The participation of differently-abled youths in information and technology (IT) sector is necessary to take the country ahead, said noted civil engineer Prof Jamilur Reza Choudhury yesterday at a national IT competition for youths with disabilities.

The competition was jointly organised for the second time by Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC) with the help of Centre for Services and Information on Disability (CSID) and the University of Asia Pacific (UAP) on the university campus in the capital.

Youths are the driving force of the country and a portion of them is differently-abled, he said.

To gain the momentum in development, differently-abled youths also need to be

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Plug law loopholes to stop sexual harassment

BILIA symposium told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The loopholes in respective laws have to be plugged in a bid to stop sexual harassment against women, demanded speakers at a symposium yesterday.

Such shortcomings in the laws often create an opportunity for offenders to escape punishment, they said.

The Bangladesh Institute of Law and International Affairs (BILIA) organised the symposium titled, "Preventing Street Harassment of Women through Major Crime Prevention Strategies" in its auditorium at the capital's Dhanmondi.

Muntasir Mahmud Rahman, a lawyer of the Supreme Court, said the issue of sexual harassment against women through gesture should be included again in the existing Women and Children Repression

Prevention Act. A new law can be formulated in this regard, he added.

"If a woman is harassed by someone's indecent gesture, it becomes hard for the victim to prove that," he said, adding that psychological harassment against women is not considered in the law.

About harassment at educational institutions and workplaces, Wahida Idris, director of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association, emphasised proper function of the committees concerned to stop it.

Neelima Akhter, assistant professor of Dhaka University, stressed specific law against such harassment at educational institutions and workplaces.

Khandakar Kohinur Akter, lecturer of Bangladesh Open University, said there should be a safety plan so that women can

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নাম ফলক মেইন বস (বাড়ীর ঠিকানা) আকাশ খোলা টেরেস

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