

Poisoning the Dhaleshwari

Quality of water degrading due to waste disposal; CETP at Savar tannery estate still not fully operational

PINAKI ROY

After the Buriganga, the tannery industry is now polluting the Dhaleshwari river, as the central effluent treatment plant (CETP) for treating liquid waste and hazardous chemicals is yet to be fully operational.

For the last nine months, Chinese company Jiangsu Lingzhi Environmental Protection Co Ltd, which built the CETP, is running the plant on a trial basis.

For maximum results, the plant should run round the clock. But the company shuts it down during power cuts, which are common in Savar where the tannery estate is located. Also, the company does not supply all the necessary chemicals to treat the waste

and other harmful substances, officials said.

As a result, contaminated waste water mixed with high level of chromium and salt is flowing into the Dhaleshwari from the CETP. Additionally, the company is allegedly releasing part of the untreated waste water directly into the river through a bypass pipeline, threatening the survival of various aquatic resources.

In April 2016, before the CETP started discharging the waste water into the 160km river that merges with Shitalakkhya in Narayanganj, the level of dissolved oxygen in its water was 4.8mg per litre. But in June this year, it came down to zero near the discharging point, meaning no aquatic life

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Wastewater from Savar Tannery Industrial Estate being dumped into the Dhaleshwari river through a pipe as the Tk 1,000-crore central effluent treatment plant (CETP) set up inside the tannery hub is still not running round the clock. The photo was taken in Hemayetpur on the outskirts of the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Textbook festival awaits children

35cr books ready for distribution on first day of new year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Primary and secondary students are set to get new textbooks on the first day of 2018 as the government has taken all preparations to distribute more than 35 crore copies of free books.

Like the previous eight years, the government will celebrate the first day of the new year as the "Textbook Festival Day" across the country by presenting the New Year gift to over 4.42 crore students from pre-primary to secondary levels.

With two days to go before the start of the celebration, almost hundred percent textbooks have already been distributed to respective education institutions, according to officials of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board

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28 foreign-aided projects see slow implementation

Finds ERD review; funding of some projects yet to be confirmed

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The implementation of at least half a dozen foreign-aided projects involving more than Tk 6,000 crore has become uncertain as those were included in the current fiscal year's Annual Development Programme without loan confirmation.

The Economic Relations Division (ERD) has found that many foreign-funded projects of several ministries --

especially railways and power -- could not spend their allocated funds mainly because loan agreements were not signed with the development partners.

The other reasons behind the non-utilisation of foreign aid include disputes over bidding, and delay in appointing project consultants and in removing high-voltage power lines in project areas, said an ERD report prepared early this month.

The ERD told the ministries and

divisions concerned that if a loan agreement is not signed in any project in a specific fiscal year, no foreign aid will be allocated for the project in that year.

In November, the ERD reviewed progress in the implementation of 63 ongoing foreign-funded projects -- each having aid allocation of Tk 200 crore or more. They involve a total of Tk 45,442 crore.

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Church attack kills 9 in Cairo

AFP, Cairo

A gunman opened fire on a church south of Cairo yesterday, killing at least nine people in the latest apparent jihadist attack on the country's Christian minority.

Health ministry spokesman Khaled Megahed told state television that the gunman was shot dead after killing nine people and wounding others, including a police officer.

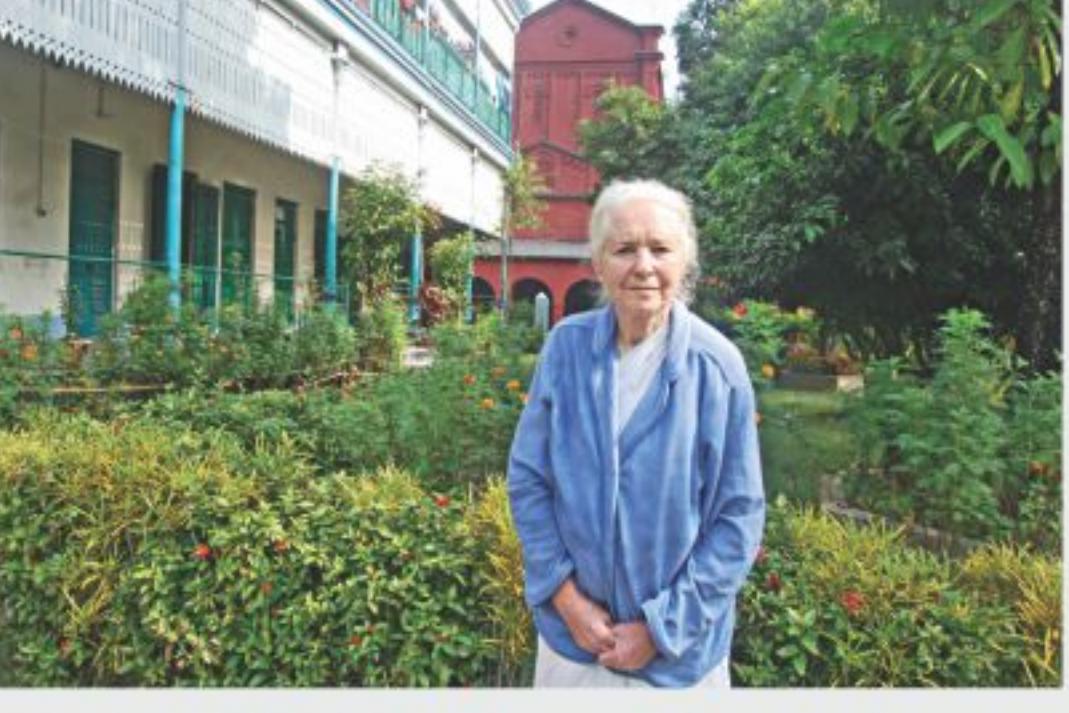
But the interior ministry said in a statement that the assailant, a wanted jihadist implicated in attacks on police, had been wounded and arrested.

The jihadist had been armed with an assault rifle, 150 rounds of ammunition and a bomb he intended to set off at the church, the ministry said.

The ministry said he killed two people when he opened

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A Briton with a BANGLADESHI HEART



M. JAHRIUL ISLAM JEWEL with ANDREW EAGLE

In 1960, British citizen and graduate Lucy Helen Frances Holt left the land of her birth and travelled to then East Pakistan to pursue humanitarian work as a Catholic Sister. Little could she have realised that, through war and peace, it's where she would stay.

"I worked as an orderly at the Fatema Hospital in Jessore during the Liberation War," she says. "Though I was not a doctor I treated many patients because the number of doctors was quite insufficient to attend to

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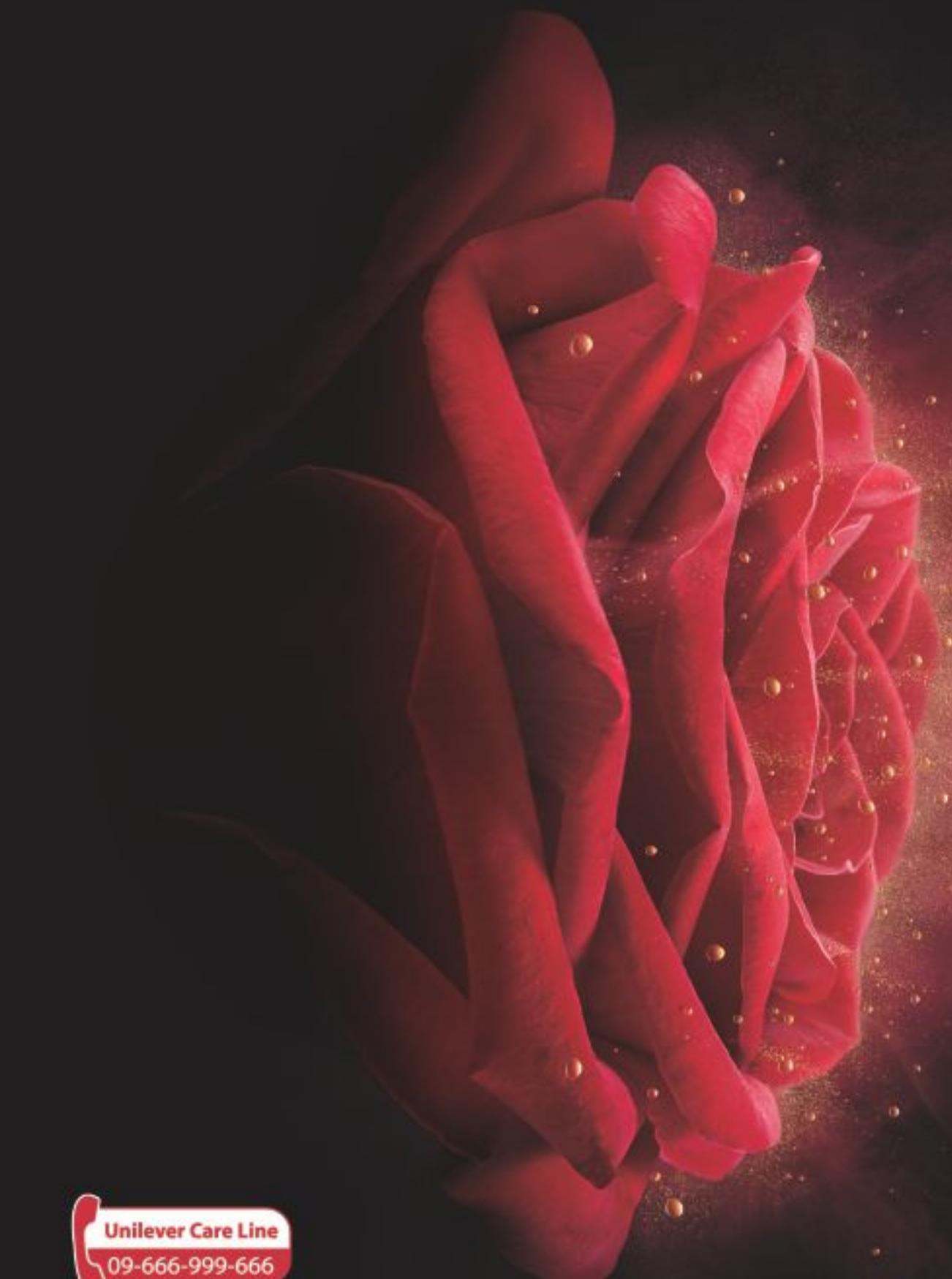
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