

7 BNP-JCD men held in Sylhet

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Police detained seven BNP and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal men from "in front of" Sylhet BNP President Abul Kaher Shamim's house at Jatapur following a "clash between police and BNP men" yesterday evening.

A group of BNP-JCD men were gathering in front of Shamim's house. Policemen on patrol in an auto-rickshaw went there and the BNP-JCD men attacked police, claimed Mosarraf Hossain, officer-in-charge of Kotwali Police Station.

"To control the situation, police opened fire and detained them," he said adding, "We have reason to believe that they might have gathered there to plan some anti-government activities." Police recovered three motorbikes and three passports from the spot.

The OC confirmed the detention of Ekhlashur Rahman Munna, former organising secretary of Sylhet district JCD. He said identities of the others detained would be disclosed after their interrogation.

Shamim claimed that there was no attack on police in front of his house, rather police raided his house to harass the party leaders and activists.

Nasim Hossain, president of Sylhet metro BNP, said police were oppressing BNP leaders and activists by filing fake cases and arresting them without any reason.

Admit Khaleda

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If Khaleda wants, the hospital will provide her with treatment.

The five-member medical board examined Khaleda inside the Old Dhaka Central Jail on Saturday and submitted its report to the BSMMU director yesterday. The report was also sent to the prisons directorate.

The board was formed after Khaleda on September 5 refused to appear before a court for hearing, saying she was ill.

The prison and BSMMU authorities in June took preparations for her treatment at the hospital, but Khaleda said she would only be treated at United Hospital.

Authorities said taking her to a private hospital would violate the jail code and suggested that she took treatment at Combined Military Hospital, Dhaka. She refused that as well.

The BSMMU director yesterday said Khaleda's illnesses did not develop after she was jailed. She has been suffering from the ailments long before.

Meanwhile, BNP standing committee member Khandakar Mosharrif Hossain said it would not be possible to ensure proper treatment of Khaleda under "pro-ruling party doctors".

"We are unhappy about the medical board. We do not think our leader would get proper treatment.... We cannot trust them," he told a press conference at the party's Nayapaltna office.

He also reiterated the party's demand for a new medical board that would include Khaleda's personal physicians.

"We got frustrated when the medical board was formed with only government physicians."

On September 9, a 10-member BNP delegation led by its Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir met Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan and made the same demand.

The home minister then said her personal physicians would be included.

Seeing double?

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are pictured happily sharing their hammock-cot.

But as the four-month-old youngsters will find out, looking just like your brother or sister is far from out of the ordinary where they live.

According to local legend the growing number of twins on the Alabat began generations ago.

Now there are 78 pairs of non-identical twins and 22 pairs of identical twins – including one pair of conjoined twins. Many of siblings continue to dress the same as each other into adulthood.

The oldest surviving pair are 86-year-old grandmothers Eudisia and Antonia Meras, who are now both widows.

Antonia, who got married when she was just 19, recounted how her husband quickly learned to tell the identical twins apart.

"In the initial days my husband would often mistake Eudisia for me," she revealed. "There were some embarrassing moments when my husband made amorous overtures to my sister thinking that it was me."

"I then showed him that I have a mole on my nose while my sister does not have one. That solved the problem once and for all."

Her sister Eudisia revealed she does have a mole, but it is on her lips – which she claims makes her chatty.

"See, I have a mole on my lower lip that's why I am very talkative," she said. "In our lifetime, we notice that there are twins like us all over the island."



Vehicles move as a thick cloud of dust and smoke reduces visibility in Dholaipar area of the capital. The photo was taken yesterday afternoon.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Pollution the killer

FROM PAGE 1

Air pollution in South Asian countries is the highest in the world with fine particulate matter measuring 2.5 microgram both outdoor and indoor. This is by far the most leading environmental risk in Bangladesh, causing about 21 percent of all deaths in the country, according to the report.

Nearly one million people in Bangladesh, mostly poor, are at risk of lead contamination, which can lead to IQ loss and neurological damage, especially for children, and can increase the risk of miscarriage and stillbirth among pregnant women, the report cited.

In greater Dhaka, the sites contaminated by heavy metals are mostly in poorer neighbourhoods.

The report focuses on three areas: cost of environmental degradation; clean and resilient cities; and institutions for clean industrial growth.

Based on data gathered from 11 air quality monitoring stations in eight urban areas, concentration of 2.5 microgram particulate matter from 2013 to 2015 was estimated five times the Bangladesh standard and eight times the World Health Organisation standard.

Household air pollution disproportionately affects women and young children, who spend most of the time inside houses. Pregnant women are especially vulnerable to this hazard.

"Bangladesh pays a high price for environment degradation and pollution in its urban areas. This puts its strong growth at risk," said Rajashree Paralkar, acting WB country director for Bangladesh.

Addressing the programme, Anisul Islam Mahmud, minister for environment, forest and climate change, said 58 percent of air pollution are caused by illegal brick kilns, 10 percent by vehicles, 20 percent by construction activities, and the rest by various other factors, including industries.

Anisul said his ministry is working on a new law likely to be passed during this government's tenure.

Kseniya Lvovsky, WB practice manager for environmental and natural resources, said environmental conservation is doable if there are strong will and planned urbanisation.

According to the WB report, parts of Dhaka city are more susceptible to flood inundation due to filling-up of wetlands and construction of high-rises on sand-filled areas.

Unplanned urbanisation is also taking a toll on smaller cities as well as

ENVIRONMENT IN DANGER

➤ Country's 75% wetlands, canals narrowed by encroachments in last 40 years

➤ 41% flood flow zones, 21% water retention areas in Dhaka filled up during 2010-16

➤ Solid waste generation multiplied with growing urban population

➤ Due to lack of waste disposal system, wetlands and canals turned into dumping grounds

➤ Urban floods cause significant damage to public health with infectious diseases, damage to properties, infrastructures and livelihoods

RECOMMENDATIONS

➤ Institutional reforms for urban governance

➤ Revision of Environment Conservation Rules

➤ Improving transparency of environmental clearance process

➤ Holding environment officials accountable

➤ Making environmental information public

towns like Pabna. Since 1990, Pabna lost half of its wetlands, and its lifeline, the Ichamati river, is dying.

ECONOMIC LOSS

The economic cost of the deaths and disability in terms of labour output has been estimated at \$1.4 billion in all urban areas of Bangladesh and at 310 million in Dhaka city alone, equivalent to 0.6 percent and 0.1 percent of the country's GDP in 2015.

Given the growing environmental challenges that Bangladeshi cities face, the WB analyses the impacts and causes of pollution levels and degradation of natural resources in Dhaka and other rapidly growing cities.

Over the past three decades, Bangladesh has experienced dramatic increase in pollution linked to urbanisation. Rapid growth of readymade garment industry and increase in urban population from less than 40 million in 2006 to more than 55 million in 2015 had been key factors in exposing the growing urban population to environmental

hazards.

CANCER RISK

Workers in the country's industrial establishments, including micro, small, and medium facilities that use harmful materials as inputs, face the risk of cancer, chronic respiratory disease, and other health impacts due to the lack of mitigation practices, including the use of personal protective equipment.

The WB report mentioned that occupational pollutants such as asbestos, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and silica are used as industrial inputs. The other pollutants include sulfuric acid, trichloroethylene, arsenic, benzene, beryllium, cadmium, chromium, diesel exhaust, formaldehyde, and nickel in the form of gases and asthmagens.

WOMEN IMPACTED

Women and girls bear a disproportionate burden of limited access to clean and safe water. Water pollution and water scarcity affect women's health, nutrition, workload, and, consequently, their opportunities to overcome poverty.

Poor sanitation, lack of safe water supply and arsenic contamination in groundwater lead to diarrhoeal and other diseases causing deaths.

Urbanisation and industrialisation have increased the amount of waste generation. Without proper collection and disposal, solid waste clogs channels, leading to urban floods. Unsafe recycling of hazardous waste such as used lead-acid batteries poses a growing public health hazard.

megacity in the world, has seen its population rise by about three times from 6.8 million to 18.2 million over the past quarter of a century, the report cited.

Continued unplanned urbanisation, filling-up of wetlands and rivers, and shrinking of a canal network across the city has exacerbated urban flooding and contributed to various environmental problems.

Flooded roads contribute to traffic congestion and health hazards from the spread of vector-borne diseases.

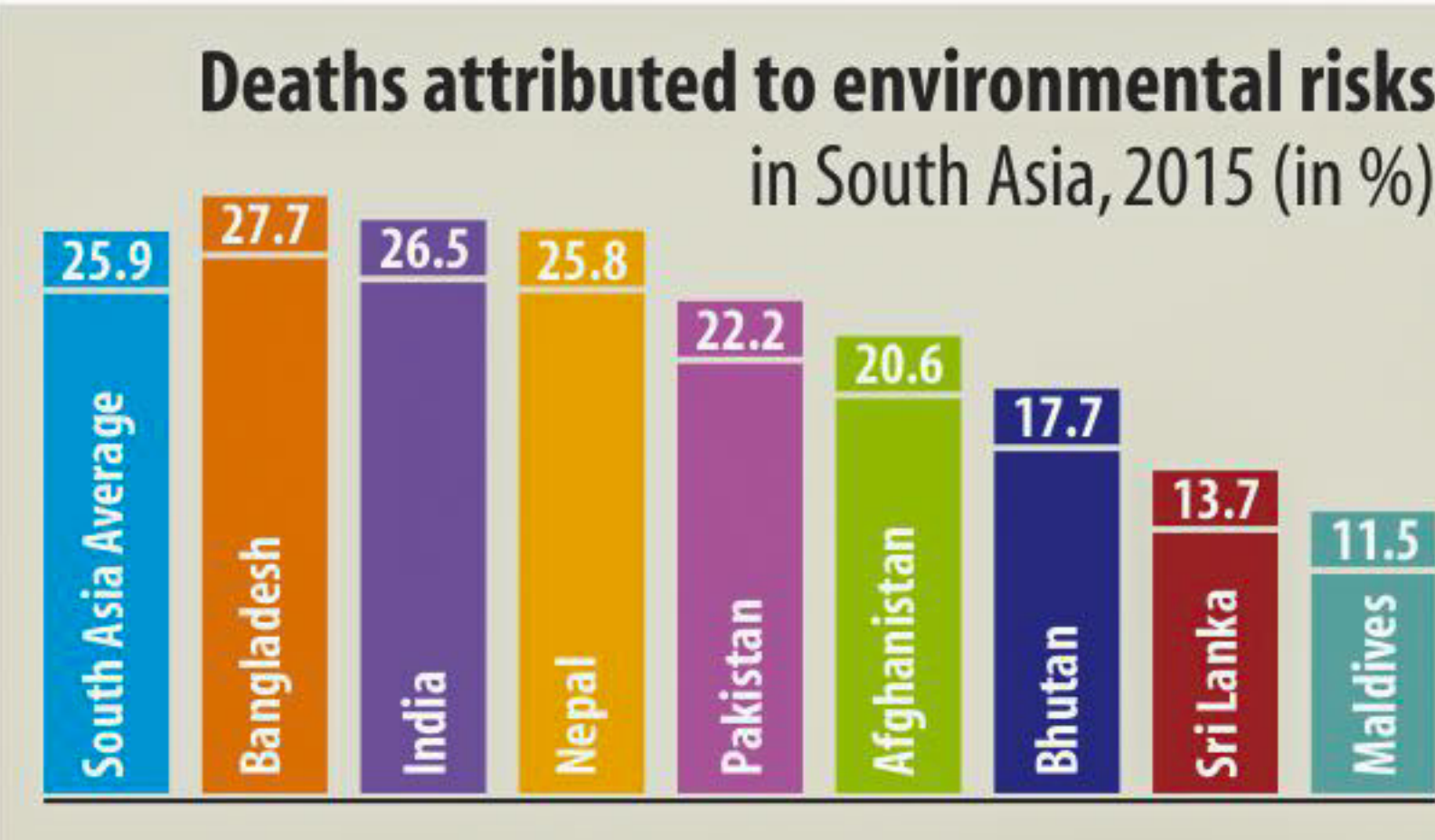
Dhaka's Detailed Area Plan identified and recommended protection of 30,252 hectares of flood flow zones and 2,240 hectares of water retention areas to reduce the risk of flooding.

But in just eight years since 2010, 41 percent of flood flow zones and 21 percent of water retention areas have been converted, raised, and used for other purposes, including settlements, industries and brick kilns.

At least 100 hectares of four rivers around Dhaka city -- Buriganga, Balu, Turag and Shitalakkhya -- have been encroached upon to make way for various commercial and residential settlements.

WAYS OUT

To put Bangladesh on a greener growth trajectory, the WB recommended that the government strengthen policies and institutions, and enforce environmental standards with a shift to cleaner technologies to contain the increasing air, water and



An estimated 22,000 workers in Bangladesh's ship-breaking industry are exposed to increased levels of asbestos, polychlorinated biphenyls, cadmium, lead, and mercury in the naval and merchant ships they dismantle.

DISAPPEARING WETLANDS, RIVERS

Dhaka, ranked as the ninth largest

soil pollution as well as industrial pollution.

Bangladesh had its first-ever legal framework "National Environment Policy" on governing environmental conservation in 1992. Since then, more than 25 laws, policies, guidelines, and regulations have been formulated to regulate the environmental footprint.

Father's son, mother's pride

FROM PAGE 1

whenever he bats. Then I started watching the game again later on and saw him coming out to bat, even though a few minutes ago I had seen him sitting with his arm in a sling," an emotional Nusrat told The Daily Star yesterday.

"What he did yesterday [Saturday] is unbelievable and I never imagined that he would return to bat like that. He has been strong and brave since childhood but I was restless and started praying again. I was very scared when he went out to bat with a fractured hand. Only a mother will be able to realise what I went through in that moment."

The mother of two Test cricketers, Tamim and Nafees Iqbal, Nusrat became quite emotional as she

described the situation, adding that everyone in the family shed tears after seeing what her son did.

"Everyone who was watching the game in our house had tears in their eyes and they were all emotional. We felt so proud that our boy was such a patriot that he didn't even bother about his well-being. I called him when they were returning to the hotel after the game and as usual he said to me, 'Ammu I am fine. Nothing happened to me so don't worry'. He never wants me to get worried in any situation," Nusrat continued.

"I would request everybody to pray for my son so that he will never get injured again and serve the nation in the future. Normally I fast every Thursday and Monday but I will fast

tomorrow [today] as well. He has made us proud," Nusrat added with her voice breaking as she struggled to hold back tears.

Nafees, a proud elder brother, was also emotional while describing the moment and said Tamim's courage reminded him of his late father, Iqbal Khan.

"I was really upset as I saw Bangladesh lose nine wickets, but all of a sudden I heard the commentators say that Tamim was going to bat. I was taken aback and immediately texted someone in Dubai but he didn't reply. And when I saw Tamim at the crease with a glove on his broken hand, I was shocked. The way he defended the ball with a single hand despite a fresh injury was remarkable and at the same time he was also motivating

Mushfiqur Rahim. I spoke to him after the game and all I wanted to know was how he was doing," Nafees told The Daily Star.

"I kept watching the video the whole day. Let me tell you a small story as I am remembering my father today and I am very emotional. My father was also like that. When he died, I was 15 and Tamim was around 11 years old. One of my father's legs was amputated for treatment near his last days and he had an artificial leg. I remember I had a first class game in Comilla nine days before my father passed away. He was a 49-year-old heart patient but still he came to watch his son's game. After seeing Tamim yesterday, I honestly remembered my father so vividly and felt that this boy is truly his father's son."

Woman tied up, tortured over land dispute

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

A woman was tied to a tree and abused verbally and physically by two men at Bharukhali village in the district on Saturday.

Saleha Khatun, 50, had been fighting for her land for a long time with her neighbour Abdar Rahman Gazi, even though there are documents proving that it belongs to Saleha, said her brother, Md Shahadat Hossain.

Abdar and his relatives, due to the dispute, had been spreading obscene rumours about her for quite some time.

Mother of one, Saleha lives alone with her son next to her father's house in the village, he said, adding that her husband does not live there.

Around 3:30pm on Saturday, Saleha returned to her home from visiting a relative in the hospital and found Abdar putting up a boundary fence around her land, said Saleha's son Shariful Islam, 30.

When Saleha opposed, Abdar began physically assaulting her. Realising that there was no one else in her house at that time, Abdar and his brother Mojibur then tied her with a rope and began shouting obscene words at her. They then took off her scarf and tied her to a tree with it and began beating her mercilessly, he added.

Shariful was not home when Saleha was being beaten, but he came back to see his mother tied to a tree, while the two men continued putting up the boundary fence.

"I was too afraid to untie her, thinking they would do something worse if I went to save her," he said.

After receiving information from witnesses three hours into the incident, police reached the spot and rescued the tortured woman. But by that time, Abdar and Mojibur had left, he added.

Mustafizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Satkhira Sadar Police Station, said they had rescued and freed Saleha.

Shariful filed a case against five

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Editors reject

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and 43 of the Draft Act that pose serious threats to freedom of expression and media operation.

However, we welcome the inclusion of the Right to Information Act (RTI) under section 3, but we express our concern at the inclusion of the colonial era Official Secrets Act that is in clear contradiction with the RTI.

WE RECALL that we had a meeting with the Honourable Law Minister in the presence of the Honourable ICT Minister during which both ministers assured us of taking measures to mitigate our concerns.

WE ALSO RECALL with gratitude that the aforementioned JS Standing Committee met with the representatives of the Editors' Council, BFUJ and ATCO over two sittings during which we showed how the draft law stifles media freedom, a prerequisite for any democracy. The JS committee was supposed to meet with us once more before finalising its report but the meeting never took place.

The Sampadak Parishad is forced to reject the JS body report and the draft Digital Security Act because:

a) It is opposed to the guarantees of freedom of expression and freedom of the press by the Constitution in Articles 39(2) A and B;

b) It is opposed to the idea of freedom of thoughts and independence of media as enshrined in the spirit of our Liberation War;

c) It is opposed to the basic practice of democracy that Bangladesh has always fought and stood for;

d) It is opposed to the fundamental principles of journalism and freedom of the media that journalists in Bangladesh have struggled for.

In conclusion, we sincerely urge parliament, which is the House of the People and the repository of peoples' aspiration for all sorts of freedoms, not to pass this draft Digital Security Act which will gravely affect journalistic freedoms and seriously curtail democracy in Bangladesh.

The statement was issued by Reazuddin Ahmed, Founding Editor, News Today; Matiur Rahman Chowdhury, Editor, Manabzamin; Matiur Rahman, Editor, Prothom Alo; Nurul Kabir, Editor, New Age; Mahfuz Anam, Editor, The Daily Star; Shyamal Dutta, Editor, Bhorer Kagoj; Imdadul Haq Milan, Editor, Kaler Kantho; Naem Nizam, Editor, Bangladesh Pratidin; Alamgir Mohiuddin, Editor, Naya Diganta; AMM Bahauddin, Editor, Daily Inqilab; MA Malek, Editor, Dainik Azadi; Md Mozammel Haque, Editor, Karatoa; M Shamsur Rahman, Editor, The Independent; Khandaker Muniruzzaman, Acting Editor, Sangbad; Saiful Alam, Acting Editor, Jugantor; Dewan Hanif Mahmud, Editor, Bonik Barta; Zafar Sobhan, Editor, Dhaka Tribune; Mustafiz Shafi, Acting Editor, Samakal; and Shahiduzzaman Khan, Acting Editor, Financial Express.