

DHAKA WEDNESDAY JANUARY 19, 2022

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XXXII No. 6

MAGH 5, 1428 BS

www.thedailystar.net

JAMADIUS SANI 15, 1443 HJRI

16 PAGES : Tk 12.00

Painting a river black

A study by Stamford, Jahangirnagar and Waterkeepers Bangladesh shows how dyeing factories pollute the Buriganga

MOSTAFA YOUSUF

The level of pollutants in the Buriganga water samples taken from some dyeing factory effluent release points is much higher than standard levels, found a study.

Three institutions yesterday jointly released the study on the water quality of the river and the impact of dyeing factories on it.

The three are -- Department of Environmental Science of Stamford University, geography and environment department of Jahangirnagar University and Waterkeepers Bangladesh.

The study found that the pH levels in the water were 7.6, 6.7, and 8.5 in pre-monsoon, monsoon and post-monsoon seasons respectively against the standard level of 7.

The Total Suspended Solids in the water were 108, 57, and 195 per litre against the standard level of 10. The Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD) were 190, 227 and 276 mg per litre against the standard level of 4. The Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) were 87, 72, 106 mg per litre while the standard is 0.2 mg per litre, said the study.

Dozens of dyeing factories being operated along the five-kilometre stretch of the Buriganga bank from Postogola bridge to Mary Anderson point now appears to be a big hurdle to decontaminate the water as the government relocated more than 100 tanneries to Savar's Hemayetpur in 2017.

Following a High Court order, the Department of Environment early last year snapped water, power, and gas supply connections to at least 50 factories in Shyampur-Kadamtoli area to force them to set up effluent treatment plants (ETPs).

The HC, however, in mid-2021 restructured the DoE to restore the connections after the setting up of ETPs.

Sharif Jamil, general secretary of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolok (BAPA), said they hoped there would be a positive impact on the water quality as ETPs were supposed to be installed at dyeing factories.

"But this sadly is not the case. The water quality in the Buriganga is

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- Some 80 to 100 dyeing factories in operation
- 60,000 cubic metre effluents being discharged per second into the Buriganga
- 39 pipes release effluents into the river, despite a court ban
- Land shortage hinders CETP installation



Laundry workers washing clothes, including those given for cleaning by hotels, hospitals and clinics, in the heavily polluted Buriganga. For several decades, the river has been victim to various forms of pollution, including those caused by dyeing factories. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

20pc Covid patients are down with Omicron

Finds BSMMU study on 96 samples

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

As much as 20 percent of the Covid-19 patients examined by BSMMU researchers in the month to January 8 were infected with the Omicron variant of the coronavirus, indicating that the highly transmissible variant is fast putting down its roots in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh reported its first confirmed cases of Omicron on December 9 last year, and as of Sunday, the tally stands at 55.

None of those Omicron-infected patients, however,

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Scrap unnecessary projects

PM also asks DCs to go tough on militancy, drug menace

STAR REPORT



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the deputy commissioners to ensure that no development projects that damage the environment and ecological balance are taken up.

"Cancel all the unnecessary projects," she said while presenting

a 24-point directive on the first day of the annual DC Conference yesterday.

For it, the DCs framed 263 proposals, one of which was to form committees at the district level to oversee development projects.

Rejecting the proposal, the government suggested that the DCs carry out supervision as per the law.

The PM inaugurated the conference

as the chief guest, joining virtually from the Ganabhaban, reports BSS.

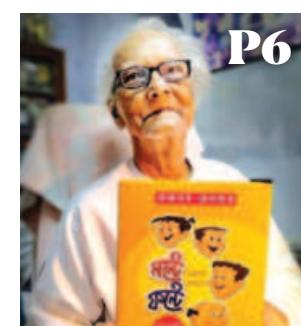
She asked the DCs to discharge their duties with the mindset of serving the people and ensuring welfare of the commoners.

"I call upon you to focus on some issues out of all the huge tasks you are already doing."

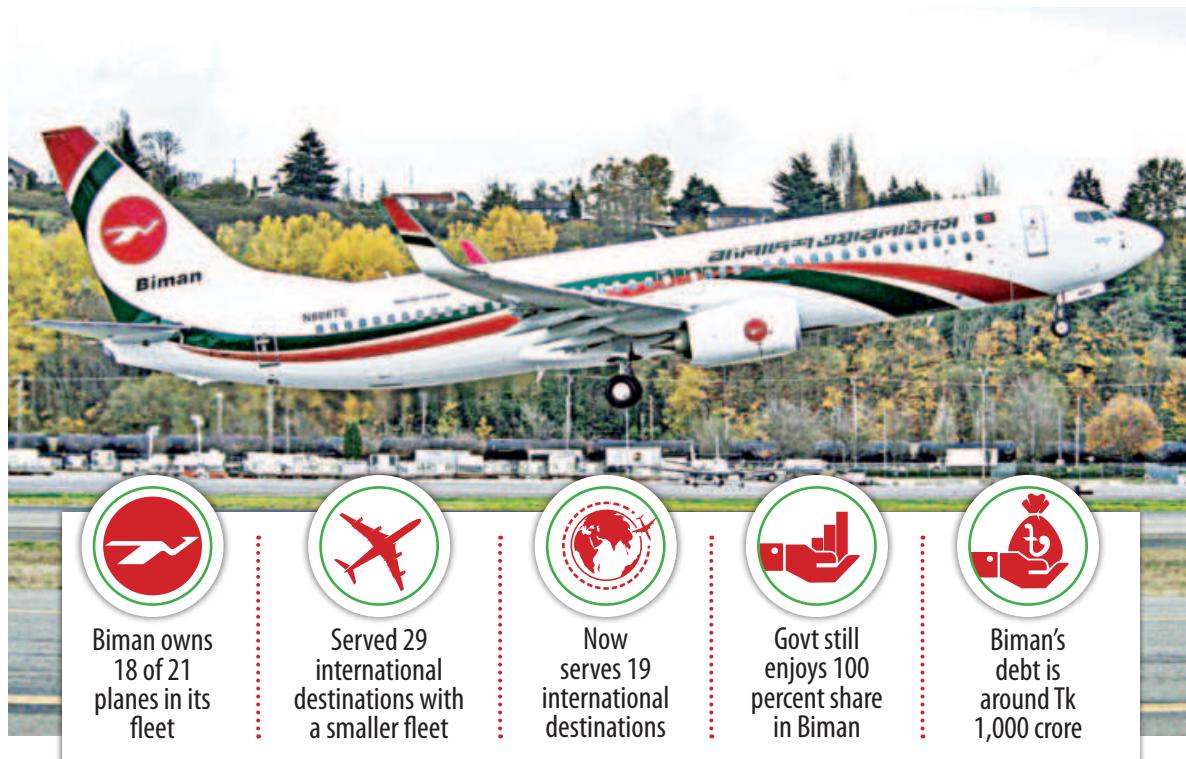
"Public welfare and service-oriented projects would have to be taken up considering the promises that public

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DON'T ABUSE POWER: PRESIDENT -- PAGE 2



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Narayan Debnath and his creations



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Manpower shortage a key crisis



Abu Saleh Mostafa Kamal

RASHIDUL HASAN

The shortages of experts and professionals, including pilots, have left Biman unable to realise the full potential of its modern fleet, said Biman Managing Director and CEO Abu Saleh Mostafa Kamal in an interview with The Daily Star.

Speaking at his office at the Biman headquarters in the capital's Kurmitola, Mostafa said the national carrier lost its market share in different destinations as it could not increase flights to those.

He said Biman had around 4,000 people on its payroll when it operated very few flights daily. Now flights have increased seven to 10

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