



A RIVER RAVAGED

The pitch-black waters of the Shitalakkhya, right, and its distributary the Balu, left, bear witness to the unscrupulous dumping of untreated effluent from the upstream industrial plants in Narayanganj. Calls for stopping the pollution and potential threat to living organisms have fallen on deaf ears over the years. The photo was taken in Demra last week.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

INT'L DAY OF ACTION FOR RIVERS

100 acres of the Buriganga still occupied



PINAKI ROY

Nearly 100 acres along the two banks of the Buriganga river remain filled up even after installation of boundary pillars.

Most of these encroachment sites are in Kalindi, Zinzira, Shobhadya and Konda, which are on the Keraniganj side of the river.

On the Dhaka side, the filled-up area is in Kutubpur of Kamrangichar, shows a GIS-based survey conducted by River and Delta Research Centre (RDRC), a non-government organisation working on river protection.

From time to time, Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) removed some of the structures built on the encroached land. But the land remains filled up.

Visiting Dhalchar area in Kamrangichar on Saturday, it was seen that the BIWTA pillars were set up without evicting the illegal grabbers.

A local influential named Hazi Md Manir Hossain set up a factory, grabbing a portion of the river in the area. The boundary walls of his house extend more than 10 feet beyond pillar no. 24 in Shrikhanda mouza.

His house is located at Jhauchar, Gudarahat, next to Fatima Orphanage and Lillah boarding.

Adjacent plot owner Abul Hossain also grabbed a portion of the river to build a house that he rented to small readymade garment factories.

Buriganga Pillar no. 23 stands between the boundary pillars of the two plots. The entrance gates of both houses are also inside the river land.

The Daily Star could not contact them for comments.

Conducting a field visit and using Geographic Information System (GIS) in 2020-21, the RDRC also made a map of the Buriganga showing the filled-up area.

They found even after BIWTA's drive against encroachment, 98.75 acres were filled up with sand and mud.

"The quantity of the occupied land must have increased by now as we conducted the survey several months ago," said RDRC Chairman Mohammad Azaz.

He said they did the survey immediately after BIWTA conducted a major drive against encroachers.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Russia strikes near Polish border

Dozens killed as air strikes hit Ukrainian cities; Kyiv braces for pincer move

AGENCIES

Russian air strikes hit a large Ukrainian base near the border with Nato member Poland yesterday, killing 35 people and wounding 134 a local official said, in an escalation of the war to the west of the country as intense fighting was reported elsewhere.

Residents of the capital Kyiv woke again to the sound of air raid sirens and city authorities said they were stockpiling two weeks' worth of essential food items for the 2 million people who have not yet fled from Russian forces attempting to encircle the city.

Ukraine also reported renewed air strikes on an airport in the west, heavy shelling on Chernihiv

northeast of the capital and attacks on the southern town of Mykolayiv, where officials said nine people had been killed.

An American journalist was shot and killed by Russian forces in the town of Irpin, northwest of Kyiv, and another journalist was wounded, the regional police chief said.

Kyiv regional police chief Andriy Nybytov said the dead journalist worked for the New York Times. However, the Times said that the journalist had previously worked for the paper but was not currently working for it. The Times named the journalist as Brent Renaud.

Despite the violence, both sides said they thought progress could be made at bilateral talks

that have been held periodically since Russia invaded on February 24, although they gave no details of what might be agreed.

"Russia is already beginning to talk constructively," Ukrainian negotiator and presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak said in a video posted online. "I think that we will achieve some results literally in a matter of days."

A Russian delegate to talks with Ukraine, Leonid Slutsky, was quoted by RIA news agency as saying they had made significant progress and it was possible the delegations could soon reach draft agreements.

Neither side said what these would cover.

The attack on the Yavoriv

SEE PAGE 2 COL 7

'Haha' react on FB leads to clash, deaths of three

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A haha reaction on a Facebook post has led to a deadly clash in Gazipur, leaving a 17-year-old boy and two others dead and four injured on Saturday night.

Nayeem Hossain, 17, Faruk Mia, 25, and Robin Mia, 20, all residents of Dakkhingao village were stabbed dead.

Police said the clash happened between two groups of young men led by Nayeem and Zahid Hossain, 23, a resident of Char Ali Nagar area.

Locals and police said Zahid's wife recently posted a Tiktok video on Facebook in which she is seen singing a song.

On Friday, Nayeem reacted to the video with "haha". As it rubbed Zahid the wrong way, he collected Nayeem's number and threatened to beat him up over the phone.

Both parties then agreed to settle the matter in person at a certain place, said Jahangir Alam, a member of Shommania Union Parishad.

Around 11:30pm on Saturday, Zahid and Nayeem, both accompanied by their friends, faced off in the Charpara area and soon engaged in a fight.

At one stage, Zahid and his friends stabbed Nayeem and six of his friends. Hearing the commotion, locals

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



People gather in the basement of a local hospital, which was damaged during Ukraine-Russia conflict in the separatist-controlled town of Volnovakha in the Donetsk region, Ukraine. The photo was taken on Saturday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

DEATHS OF 2 KIDS Drug admin looking into Napa syrup samples

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The drug administration has collected samples of a batch of Napa syrup from the market for lab tests.

The move came following the deaths of two siblings -- Yasin Khan, 7, and Morsalin Khan, 5 -- on Thursday night in Durgapur union of Brahmanbaria's Ashuganj upazila.

Family members alleged the children, who were suffering from high fever, died after they were given the medicine, produced by Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd. They said they bought it from a local drug store named "Maa Pharmacy".

They said the children's health deteriorated after they consumed the syrup, and they were rushed to

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3