



## Pollution killing Karnaphuli plants

81 species in danger of going extinct, finds study

SIFAYET ULLAH

As many as 81 species of plants on Karnaphuli riverbanks are in danger of going extinct over the next few decades due to the dumping of industrial wastes and other forms of pollution. Another 61 species of plants will become endangered if no action is taken to prevent pollution, revealed a study titled "Floristic

Chittagong University, and his team presented their research findings at a seminar at Chattogram Press Club recently.

The study was carried out in collaboration with port city-based environmental organisation Effective Creation on Human Opinion (ECHO).

The researchers conducted a field survey from January to August to identify the species of riverside plants and sources of pollution.

According to the study, the river is being polluted from 89 sources, which includes 53 industries.

The study found that there are 528 species of plants on the Karnaphuli riverbank. Of them, 144 are large trees, 69 shrubs, 58 vines, 244 ferns and 13 parasitic plants.

The research team also found the movement of dolphins at 64 places in Karnaphuli river, which is also being disrupted due to unabated pollution.

Omar Farooq said, "Waste is being dumped directly into the river from seven industrial factories situated on both banks. We have collected waste samples and analysed them in our labs, following which we found the presence of toxic chemicals."

Besides, more than 22,000 tonnes of wastes are being generated at Chattogram every day, most of which flow into Karnaphuli river through different canals and drains due to poor drainage system.

Also, over 4,000 ships and 10,000 registered

and unregistered vessels ply the river every month, contributing to the river pollution by emitting harmful gas and dumping wastes.

Dr Idrish Ali, professor of chemistry department of Govt Haji Mohammad Mohsin College, said, "To save the 528 recognised plant species, there's no alternatives to stopping pollution."

The Department of Environment (DoE) in Chattogram has also conducted several surveys on the Karnaphuli recently.

According to a DoE report, 35 out of 140 species of fish can no longer be found there because of pollution.

Mofidul Alam, director of DoE, Chattogram, said, "We have instructed industries operating by the Karnaphuli to set up Effluent Treatment Plants for waste management."

Just like the Buriganga in Dhaka, encroachment of the river goes hand in hand with the pollution level in the Karnaphuli.

Chattogram District Administration made a list of 2,112 grabbers along a 40km stretch of the river from Kalurghat to Patenga, following a 2010 HC order.

Since 2016, the court has issued several directives at different times ordering the district administration, Chattogram Port Authority (CPA) and Chattogram Development Authority (CDA) to remove illegal structures from the riverbanks.

Till date, none of the authorities have fully complied with the court orders.

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status and impacts of anthropological activities towards degradation of the Karnaphuli river and surrounding areas".

Mohammad Omar Farooq Russel, associate professor of Department of Botany at

## A father's fight against noise pollution

MOHAMMAD SUMAN

Since last July, entrepreneur Sujan Barua, a father of two, has been campaigning against noise pollution in different areas of Chattogram.

He has arranged as many as 23 programmes during this time, which include awareness campaigns, sit-in protests and hunger strikes.

His two children – SSC candidate Abhishek Barua and seventh grader daughter Chandrima Barua – have occasionally accompanied him during these times.

On August 17, Sujan tried to attract the attention of drivers by walking 10 kilometers with his son from the Chandgaon residential area to Agrabad.

Besides, various programmes have been conducted to make drivers aware in New Market, GEC, Muradpur, Bahaddarhat, Dewanhat, Chowkbazar, Gate No-2, Tigerpass and other important areas of the port city.

Recently, he staged a hunger strike for 21 hours at a stretch, from October 4 to October 6.

But a lone protestor can only carry on for so long. Sujan has been suffering from different diseases, including a severe cold since breaking the hunger strike.

"I have become severely ill since the hunger strike. If the relevant authorities don't show any goodwill on tackling noise pollution, I'll go on hunger strike till death in the future," he told this correspondent.

He said he is trying to make drivers aware about the negative impacts of noise pollution on the future generation.

Sujan lamented that no one cared about his demands initially, but slowly some are relating to his cause and expressing their support.

But the government departments concerned who are supposed to keep noise pollution under control are still indifferent towards his demands, he continued.

Sujan believes the strict implementations of the existing laws can prevent noise pollution in the country.



## Children to get LALDIGHI BACK

The historic field reopens this month after two years

ARUN BIKASH DEY

Even though the historic Laldighi Maidan was renovated over a year ago, the ground hasn't been officially reopened, depriving children of a place to play.

The Education Engineering Department (EED) implemented the Tk 4 crore project, which started on February 2020 and was completed last year, said officials.

Preferring anonymity, an EED official said although the renovation work was completed over a year ago, the ground wasn't officially inaugurated.

The project was themed after the country's most historic moments, including, anti-British movement, Language Movement, six-point demand movement, mass uprising of 1969 and the Liberation War.

Although the ground is known as Laldighi Maidan, the field officially belongs to

Government Muslim High School, Chattogram. The school's students and children of Laldighi and adjacent areas use this ground for recreation.

While visiting the ground last week, this correspondent saw four sides of the ground covered with corrugated tins.

"For two years, we could not play here," said Hasan Al Baker, a ninth grader of KC Dey Road area.

"Many rallies during the Liberation War were held in Laldighi. It's also a place where Bangabandhu addressed rallies," said seventy-year-old Tapos Mitra.

"I'm glad that the government took the initiative to renovate this ground. However, I also think that the ground should be open to the children soon," he said.

To commemorate the declaration of six-point demand by Bangabandhu, a stage, named "Chhoy Dafa Mancha" has been

built on the ground.

There are also 18 terracotta artworks depicting historic moments that the country witnessed. There are also many portraits of historical figures, and a temporary Shaheed Minar.

Besides, there's also a sitting arrangement, walkway and a park zone for children.

Contacted, Pradip Kumar Sarkar, EED executive engineer, Chattogram, said 36 benches have been set up on the ground along with a 368 metre walkway.

Asked when the ground would be inaugurated, Pradip said, "Higher officials may know about the exact date."

Contacted, Mohibul Hasan Chowdhury Nowfel, deputy minister for education, said the prime minister is scheduled to inaugurate the field on October 17. "It was scheduled to be opened on October 2, but we didn't receive a confirmation," he said.

## Good news for Ctg commuters

Railway mulls resuming Chattogram-Dohazari train services after 2-year suspension

SIFAYET ULLAH

Train services between Chattogram and Dohazari will resume next month amid widespread demands of commuters following two years of Covid induced closure.

Earlier, two pairs of local trains used to ply the route.

But during the pandemic, the railway authorities cancelled the train services.

According to data from the Passenger Welfare Council, at least 10,000 commuters use this route every day.

There are 12 stations under the route and train used to be the preferable mode of transportation for lower income people of the area.

Besides, Dohazari to Cox's Bazar rail line will be completed in 2023. Railway will operate



Chattogram-Cox's Bazar train after that, the officials added.

Abdul Monaf, a resident of Dohazari, said, "We demand immediate resumption of train services on the Chattogram-Dohazari route."

Kamal Uddin, general secretary of Train Passenger Welfare Council, said as passengers are suffering due to the suspension, they drew the attention of the railway authorities in this regard recently.

Contacted, Jahangir Hossain, general manager of railway (eastern zone) said they want to resume train services on this route from next month.

Mohammed Borhan Uddin, chief mechanical engineer of railway (eastern zone) said engines for this route have already been allocated.

"Coaches will also be allotted soon. Currently, we are trying to launch a pair of trains on this route," he said.

## First river resource centre launched

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first river-based resource centre of Bangladesh was inaugurated on Sunday at the bank of Halda river in Chattogram.

Kabir bin Anwar, senior secretary of the Ministry of Water Resources, inaugurated the centre.

Among others, Chattogram University Zoology Department head Prof Md Manjurul Kibria and Hathazari Upazila Executive Officer Shahidul Alam were present at the event.

The resource centre was constructed by Bangladesh Army and Water Development Board.

Prof Kibria said this resource centre has a pond for local egg collectors and a hatchery for hatching eggs. Besides, there will be a river museum, which will focus on the biodiversity and heritage of the Halda.

## CESC becomes inter cantonment debate champions



CITY DESK

Triumphing over 70 institutions across the country, Cantonment English School and College of Chattogram (CESC) has become the champions (College category) of the "Inter Cantonment English Medium Schools & Colleges Parliamentary Debate Competition 2022".

The team of Md Mufrad Chowdhury, Zubair Zabir and Fuad Al Fayaz defeated Shaheed Bir Uttam Lt Anwar Girls' College at the premises of Bangladesh International School on September 29, on their way to glory.

Besides, Tahmid Abeer and Shifatul Hayat also were a part of the champion team as extras.

Lt Col Tanvir Hossain, principal of CESC, said, "Our students from CESC debate club have made us proud by becoming the champions."

Md Mainul Quader, vice principal of the college, echoed the same.

Md Fazlul Karim was the mentor teacher of the champions, and Md Nazim Ullah Chowdhury was in charge of the debate club.