

Five hurt as BRTC bus hits auto-rickshaw

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five people were injured as a BRTC bus hit an auto-rickshaw in the capital's Motijheel area yesterday morning.

The injured -- Rasheda Begum (50), her daughter Lima Akhter (20), Lima's son Jisan (5), Lima's cousin Khadija Akhter (22), and auto rickshaw driver Rajib (37) -- were taken to the emergency ward of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

The driver was in critical condition, Inspector Md Bachchu Mia, in-charge of DMCH Police Outpost, told The Daily Star.

The incident happened around 11:30am at Dilkusha Bakchatar.

The family was on their way to Keraniganj from Kamalapur Railway Station, Lima said.

Man hurt in Gazipur filling-station blast dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man who was burned in the explosion at a CNG filling station in Gazipur died yesterday.

The incident occurred on Thursday.

Atiqul Islam Mithu (25) died around 8:00am at the capital's Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic Surgery.

Four others who were injured are undergoing treatment at the hospital, Medical Officer Dr Shuvo Debnath confirmed to The Daily Star.

The injured are Anwarul Islam (27), Al Amin (25), Sirajul Islam Tutul (25), and Parvez (33).

Mithu's elder brother Md Emon said Mithu, hailing from Moulvibazar, lived in Gazipur with his wife and son. He worked as an engineer at a CNG station.

Anwarul Islam told The Daily Star, "Al Amin and I do welding work in Gachha area. I went to Haji Wahid Filling Station in Barabari area with a diesel-run covered van. The van had around 150 empty cylinders."

"There was an explosion right before we started putting gas in the cylinders," he said.

GRAFT CASE

Court sets Oct 17 to decide on charges against Zubaida

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court will decide on October 17 whether to accept the charges against Zubaida Rahman, wife of BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman, in a graft case.

Judge Md Asaduzzaman of Dhaka Metropolitan Senior Special Judge's Court on Thursday set the date after scrutinising case dockets and other relevant documents, said court sources.

The HC on June 25 declared Tarique and Zubaida as "fugitives" and rejected their writ petitions challenging the filing and initiation of a Tk 4.82-crore graft case.

The HC also withdrew the stay order on the case filed during the caretaker government in 2007 and directed the lower court concerned to complete the trial proceedings as early as possible.

The Chief Metropolitan

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PRAYER TIMING

OCTOBER 15

Fazr Zohr Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 4:45 12:45 4:15 5:45 7:15

JAMAAT 5:20 1:15 4:30 5:50 7:45

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



The Bhairab river -- one of the major waterbodies of the country -- struggles to survive due to mindless dumping of waste, rampant river-grabbing by influential persons and reluctance of authorities to take appropriate steps. There are about 350 industrial units built around the river, whose waste falls directly into the waterbody.

PHOTO: STAR

Bhairab struggles for survival

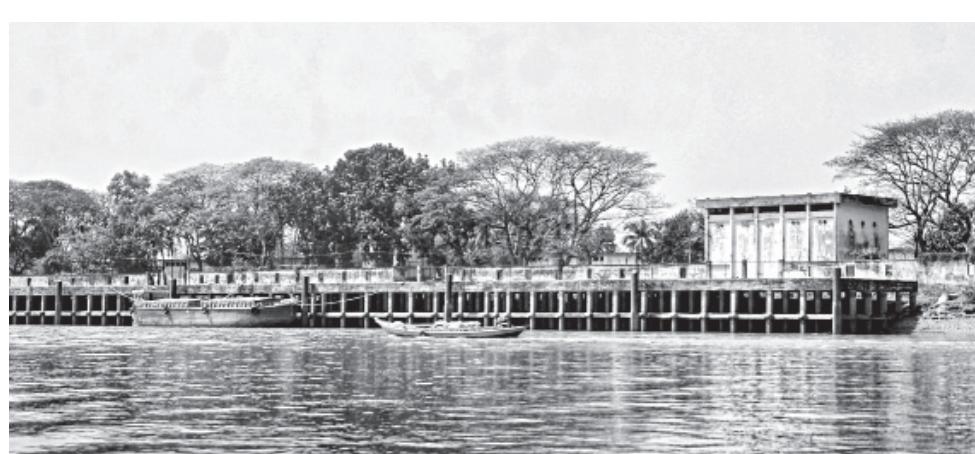
The once mighty river now in its deathbed due to encroachment, pollution

DIPANKAR ROY, Khulna

Due to the mindless dumping of waste, rampant river grabbing by influential persons and reluctance of authorities to take appropriate steps, Bhairab river -- one of the major waterbodies of the country -- continues to suffer.

Both sides of the river's 37-km stretch -- from Rupsha ghat of Khulna city to Nowapara Bazar ghat of Jashore's Avaynagar -- have fallen victim to encroachers, who are turning the river into a canal and reducing its navigability.

These grabbers have built business establishments, factories, jute mills and



There are many government and private institutions that depend on Bhairab for their shipments. Khulna Shipyard, BNS Titumir (Bangladesh Navy), BIWTA ghat, Forest ghat, Khulna Newsprint Mills, Khulna Hardboard Mills, nine state-owned jute mills, four power plants, three state-owned oil depots, and over 200 private jute mills have been built on the banks of Bhairab following due procedures.

Besides, near the Khulna Boro Bazar, over 250 toilets have been set up by the river.

Paran Saha (76), a hardware trader of

employee of Digholia upazila, said over 40 private jute industries throw their waste into Bhairab. Many owners have also built structures on the riverbed.

Every day, over 300 cargo vessels carry goods and oil from Jashore's Nowapara to different parts of the country along the river. On their way, they pollute the river by dumping waste and discharging chemicals, said locals and green activists.

Ismail Morol, a trader in Nowapara Stone Ghat, said the planned dredging in Nowapara river port area did not bear any fruit due to mindless waste dumping.

Prof Dilip Kumar Datta of Khulna University's environmental science department, who conducted a study on the quality of Bhairab's water, said, "Once the 160-km Bhairab used to be rich with aquatic life. However, industrialisation, unplanned urbanisation, increasing population, and dumping of waste are deteriorating its water quality."

"It seems like we are adamant to kill our rivers. At least 20 large drains of Khulna City Corporation directly discharge liquid waste into Bhairab," he added.

Contacted, Ashraf Hossain, joint director of Khulna BIWTA, said, "We have already identified 1,274 structures from Labonchhara area of the city to BIWTA ghat area and submitted the list to the administration and mayor."

"First, the district administration will file

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ISSUES

Rampant encroachment
Mindless waste dumping
Authorities' indifference

RECOMMENDATIONS

Integrated efforts
Eviction drives
Strict measures

Khulna Baro Bazar, said, "Authorities like WDB, BIWTA, city corporation, Khulna district administration and police are not sincere enough to protect the river from polluters and grabbers."

Moufarsher Alam Lenin, a private jute

depots, chemical industries, jetties, tanneries, and sand and coal selling centres by the rivers.

There are about 350 industrial units in the region. Among them, 230, including 54 jute mills, four power plants, soybean mills, 22 shrimp processing units and cement factories, are on the riverbank.

The waste generated from these establishments is discharged directly into the river.

Industrial units at Rupsha, Khalishpur, Daulatpur, Shiroimoni BSCIC in Khulna, Rajhat, and Nowapara of Jashore are posing a serious threat to the river's existence.

During a recent visit to both sides of the river -- from Custom ghat to Nowapara Bazar -- this correspondent saw at least 500 establishments there.

There were also some jetties set up in the river, reducing its navigability. Grabbers also installed cranes there to facilitate loading and unloading of goods from cargo vessels.

Khulna Baro Bazar, said, "Authorities like WDB, BIWTA, city corporation, Khulna district administration and police are not sincere enough to protect the river from polluters and grabbers."

Moufarsher Alam Lenin, a private jute

of local and foreign fruits trees. This year, most of the trees bore fruits.

There are 36 varieties of mango, six varieties of orange, three varieties of guava, apple, pear, jujube, Thai grapefruit and many more.

"We are hopeful to get full production next year," he added.

After coming to know about the fruit orchard, people from different areas come to visit to gather knowledge about fruit cultivation.

"I am very impressed after visiting the orchard, as the entrepreneurs have made the highest use of the land," said Amit Halder, one of the shareholders of the project, said a total of eight members are working on the project at different sectors in Dhaka.

Jakir Sheikh, a labourer of the orchard, said work opportunities for many have been created because of the place.

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An orchard born amid the pandemic

KM HABIBUR RAHMAN, Pirojpur



In the middle of the pandemic, a group of entrepreneurs from Pirojpur's Nazirpur upazila were inspired to create an alternative source of income locally, and in that course, nurtured a fruit orchard at Sreerampur village.

The orchard has become popular among locals as there are around 100 varieties of different local and foreign fruit trees there.

Under Green Venture Agro Ltd, they started the journey around one and half years ago.

Amit Halder, one of the shareholders of the project, said a total of eight members are working on the project at different sectors in Dhaka.

After preparing the 3 acre land around a year ago, they planted different varieties



Demanding playgrounds for children's recreation and a child-friendly city, members of Khelaghbar Dhaka South came out with a procession, after inaugurating their conference at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday.

Egg production may see decline

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Experts fear that egg production may see a decline due to rising prices of poultry feed.

Many small farmers are expected to quit the business to prevent incurring a loss, casting a negative impact on the aggregated production of eggs, said Dr Shawkat Ali, professor of poultry science at Bangladesh Agriculture University.

In such a climate, the government yesterday celebrated World Egg Day with the theme "eggs for a better life".

World Egg Day is observed on the second Friday of October each year since 1996.

In Bangladesh, eggs are still the cheapest source of protein compared to other sources. An egg contains 25 g of protein and 13 other essential nutrients. To get the same amount of protein from beef, one has to spend Tk 95, said Shawkat.

Against the annual target of 2,266 crore eggs, 2,335 crore were produced in the last fiscal, with an annual per capita consumption of 136.01.

The government targeted to produce 2,315 crore eggs this fiscal. Till September, 597 crore have been produced.

Although the production saw an increase, the country faces a 32 percent rise in egg price in comparison to last year.

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DR SHAWKAT ALI
Professor of poultry science,
Bangladesh Agriculture University

According to data of Trading Corporation of Bangladesh, the maximum price of an egg was Tk 12.5 yesterday.

The price of two major poultry feed components -- maize and soybean meal -- rose after the Russia-Ukraine war. The price of per kilo of maize shot up to Tk 37 from Tk 20, while per kilo soybean meal is now being sold at Tk 60, as opposed to its previous price of Tk 35.

An egg-laying hen needs about 110 to 115 g of food, which costs Tk 6.6 per day.

"Including vaccination, medicine, depreciation and other costs, the production cost of an egg has currently gone above Tk 11," said Shawkat.

Fisheries and Livestock Minister SM Rezaul Karim requested the authority concerned to check whether unscrupulous traders are manipulating the egg market while addressing a discussion on World Egg Day, organised jointly by the Department of Livestock, World Poultry Science and Bangladesh Poultry Industries Central Council at Krishibid Institution.

"The government will not tolerate price manipulation," he said. "However, we've to remember the high production cost of eggs. We cannot ask people to sell eggs at a price lower than the actual production cost."

Man sent to jail on charge of raping SSC examinee

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

A Moulvibazar court on Thursday sent a man to jail on charge of raping an SSC examinee.

The accused is Masuk Mia (48), a resident of the district's Juri upazila.

Quoting the victim's family members, police said Masuk and the victim are cousins and neighbours. On the night of October 8, the victim was staying at Masuk's residence. At midnight, Masuk forcibly took the girl to his room and raped her.

Masuk has two wives and a daughter, living in the same residence. However, no one came to rescue the victim.

Moreover, he told the victim to stay quiet about the incident and even threatened to kill her if she failed to comply.

She was somehow able to inform her elder brother the next morning, who rescued her afterwards.

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