

To save Balu river

Activists to hold event today to draw govt's attention

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Environmental activists yesterday declared a two-day event to draw the attention of government policymakers to protect Balu river from encroachment and pollution.

They disclosed the information, following a press conference organised by Waterkeepers Bangladesh and Barogram-Balu River Coalition, at the capital's Jatiya Press Club.

The two-day event titled "Balu River Festival" will be held today at the capital's Itakhola, Trimohani and Khilgaon.

Speakers said Balu's water has turned pitch black and emits a noxious smell due to dumping of industrial waste. Illegal structures on the river have restricted water flow.

Sharif Jamil, coordinator of Waterkeepers Bangladesh, SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



Toxic water rushes out of an underground pipe, connected to a factory, into Buriganga river. According to Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act, 2010, it is illegal for any factory to dump residual waste and toxic materials into any waterbody. But time and time again, factory owners break this law by finding sneaky ways to dump waste into the river. This photo was taken yesterday in Ispahani Ghat area of Keraniganj.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

ESCAPED MILITANTS

They even got pocket money that day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two militants who were snatched away from court premises by their fellows received pocket money to meet their expenses for the first few days after escaping.

Mehedi Hasan Omi alias Rafi, a member of Ansar Al Islam, handed the money over to the militants when they appeared in court for a hearing on Sunday.

Omi is a charge-sheeted accused along with 19 other operatives of the outfit, including the two fugitive militants Moinul Hasan Shamim alias Samir alias Imran and Abu Siddiq Sohel, in a case filed with Mohammadpur Police Station in 2016.

Omi got out on bail in mid-2017.

But he used to appear in court regularly with other militants. Before going to court for the hearing, Omi took the money with him.

Md Asaduzzaman, chief of Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit, disclosed the findings yesterday while addressing reporters at the media centre of Dhaka Metropolitan Police.

Counterterrorism officials arrested Omi from Jatrabari area on Wednesday and learned these details during primary interrogation.

"Omi being present with other accused played a major role in snatching the two militants [from police custody]," said the CTTC chief.

Asaduzzaman said that they are now trying to verify the source of the money. Yesterday, a Dhaka court granted a seven-day remand for Omi in police custody.

Sources said Omi has provided around Tk 6,000 to 7,000 to each of the militants.

He was involved with activities of banned outfit Hizb-ut Tahrir and was arrested in 2010. He got out on bail in 2011 and then joined Ansar Al Islam (then Ansarullah Bangla Team) in 2013.

Omi was again arrested in 2016 in an anti-terrorism case filed with Mohammadpur Police Station but managed to secure bail within a year.

He then used to maintain close connections with the outfit's top leaders and shared their directives with the arrested accused during hearings, said the CTTC chief.

In this way, Omi shared the plan of freeing the two death-row convicts.

Their target was to also snatch Arafat Rahman but they failed, said CTTC chief Asaduzzaman. Regarding the arrest of two escapees, he said that "efforts are on to arrest them, but their location has not been confirmed yet."

Young, female migrants more prone to extremism

Finds Brac study

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh missions should regularly keep track of migrants abroad, as young and female migrants with a lack of digital literacy are more at risk of being indoctrinated into extremism, according to a new study of Brac.

Besides, financially aggrieved migrants who do not have the skills to keep up with the changing society are also believed to be vulnerable to such zealotry, the study report says.

Brac came up with the findings after the study was conducted on over 400 returnee migrants from April to September this year. The research was carried out in 21 upazilas of five districts that see a lot of migrations, alongside focus group discussions and interviews of key informants.

The returnees worked in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, Singapore and Libya. They returned home between 2017 and 2021. Around 41.4 percent of the respondents worked in the informal sector in the host countries.

Findings of the report "Radicalisation and International Migration: Perception of Realities from Bangladesh's Perspective" was shared during a dissemination workshop yesterday at the capital's Brac Centre Inn.

The returnees worked in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman,

Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, Singapore and Libya. They returned home between 2017 and 2021.

Since migrant workers have insufficient knowledge about the radicalisation process, this can be a potential source for recruiting militants, says the report.

It also mentioned that grievance

involvement of local and diaspora communities can be a catalyst to strengthen resilience against extremism.

It says 41.4 percent of the respondents worked in the informal sector in the host countries.

The report recommends that aspirant migrants should have a clear understanding of the

REASONS BEHIND
RADICALISATION

» Lack of digital literacy

» Insufficient knowledge on radicalisation process

» Grievances of being undocumented

» Lack of institutional support

RECOMMENDATIONS

» Media's participation in raising awareness

» Involvement of local, diaspora communities

» Understanding laws, culture of destination country

and bleak situations in the lives of undocumented migrants work as a catalyst for getting involved in extremism.

Prof Shahab Enam Khan of Jahangirnagar University's international relations department, who was commissioned to conduct the study, said the lack of institutional support makes a segment of the migrant community vulnerable to multiple challenges.

These segment can be exploited by various groups, including radical entities, he said.

The study found that 2.3 percent of the respondents even donated a small portion of their earnings to religious groups that have political or violent intentions, he added.

Prof Shahab emphasised the media's role in raising awareness to prevent extremism.

The report says alongside Bangladesh missions, the

destination country's regulations, laws and culture before going abroad.

Brac Migration Programme Head Shariful Hasan said no migrant should fall victim to radicalisation or extremism and tarnish the country's image.

Monirul Islam, additional inspector general of police and chief of Special Branch, who spoke at the workshop as chief guest, said police is more than capable to neutralise any threat of extremism.

"Bangladesh Police is working relentlessly to keep the country safe," he said.

Zohora Monsor, deputy director (admin) of Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training, said the focus should be put on preventing unauthorised remittance-sending channels to curb the financing of extremist causes.

'Committed to working together'

Says Momen on Indian Ocean Rim Association meeting

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-three members of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) have agreed to work together to work for a free, open and secure Indian Ocean region, which currently faces many challenges, including the competition of control, illegal fishing and piracy.

"We have committed to work together to prevent these threats and promote initiatives to harness the resources," said Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen.

He briefed the outcomes of the two-day IORA Council of Ministers meeting at the capital's Hotel InterContinental yesterday.

Momen said the temperature of the Indian Ocean has already increased, and pollution level is rising.

The Indo-Pacific region has become a global focus of the world powers, especially the US and China. The US has launched an Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, while China launched Belt and Road Initiative. Australia, India, Japan, and the US are part of a strategic security dialogue.

IORA, established in 1995, is an international organisation of 23 states bordering the Indian Ocean and 10 dialogue partners.

"Despite potential for trade and investment, the IORA market isn't fully explored by its member states," Momen said.

"Strengthening economic relations among IORA member states through regional trade agreement and the elimination of intra IORA trade and investment barriers are now more important than ever," he added.

HSC QUESTIONS

Edu boards punish 10 teachers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Education board authorities have punished 10 teachers who prepared and scrutinised the HSC questions that created controversy over communal issues and belittled a renowned writer.

The five teachers, who prepared and scrutinised Bangla first paper questions of HSC exams that hurt the religious sentiments of Hindus, will not be allowed to take part in any activities related to public exams anymore.

Jashore Education Board took the decision after its probe committee found that the teachers violated the government guidelines while making the question paper, the board's Exam Controller Madhab Chandra Rudro said yesterday.

The five teachers are Assistant Professor Prashanta Kumar Pal of Dr Saiful Islam Degree College; Associate Professor Syed Tajuddin Shaon of Narail Government Victoria College; Associate Professor Shahiqur Rahman of Satkhira Government Mahila College; Assistant Professor

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Hand over historic Theatre Road house to Bangladesh

Liberation War affairs minister requests India

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Huq has requested Indian High Commissioner Pranay Verma to hand over the house on 8 Theatre Road of Kolkata, the headquarters of Mujibnagar Government, to Bangladesh.

He made the request at a meeting with the envoy at the Liberation War ministry, read a press release.

The Mujibnagar Government, formed on April 10, 1971, was set up in Kolkata, from where the government ran activities for the country's Liberation War.

Besides, Mozammel said the government will build a memorial monument in Brahmanbaria's Ashuganj to pay tribute to the members of Indian allied force who gave their lives for the cause of the Liberation War.

Verma said the monument's construction will strengthen the relationship between Bangladesh and India.

Conference of Pro-AL doctors' association today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The fifth national conference of pro-Awami League Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad (Swachip) will be held today after seven years at the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will attend the council as chief guest.

The last and fourth council of Swachip was held on November 13, 2015. As per the organisation's charter, the council is supposed to be held after every five years, but its leaders said they could not organise it in time due to the pandemic.

Also, a preparatory committee was formed, keeping former VC of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Prof Kanak Kanti Barua and its dean Mohammad Hossain as member secretaries, to make the conference successful, said sources.

Swachip Secretary General MA Aziz said, "We are expecting the presence of 30,000 to 35,000 doctors from across the country."



Dengue death toll **241**

Total number of patients **54,924**

2,022 still undergoing treatment

Number of recovered patients **52,661**

519 more hospitalised yesterday

SOURCE: DGHS

PRAYER
TIMING

NOVEMBER 25

Fazr Juma Asr Maghrib Esha

AZAN 5-10 12-30 3-45 5-19 7-00

JAMAAAT 5-45 1-15 4-00 5-22 7-30

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION



To avoid going all the way and take a U-turn to get to the other side, a van-puller decides to go the wrong way on a busy road, putting the students inside the vehicle in danger. This photo was taken in Shyamoli area yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Air Asia CEO to launch Dhaka-Bangkok route

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Air Asia Aviation Group Chief Executive Officer Santisuk Klongchaiya is scheduled to visit Dhaka to inaugurate operations of its subsidiary, Thai AirAsia, on Dhaka-Bangkok route from Friday.

The maiden flight carrying Klongchaiya and other passengers was scheduled to land at Dhaka airport from Don Mueang Airport in Bangkok at 12:05am on Friday, said a release.

Klongchaiya will attend a press conference at a city hotel today morning to formally launch the



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