



PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

The once 27-kilometre wide Kapna river in Sylhet has now become a small stream. Due to lack of dredging, unplanned construction of embankments, rampant encroachment and sand extraction, the river's natural water flow has been severely obstructed. Besides, silt has accumulated so much that even people can cross its width by walking over it. This photo was taken in Jaintapur upazila recently.

## DDT disposal starts finally

Authorities to begin loading ship with 500 tonnes of harmful pesticide today

MOHAMMAD SUMAN

Finally, about 500 tonnes of DDT pesticide, which is extremely harmful to the environment, will be shipped to France to properly dispose of the substance.

The pesticide has been sitting in a warehouse of Chattogram Government Medical Sub-depot (MSD) in Agrabad for 38 years.

Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) is a persistent organic pollutant (POP): a chemical that can have significant negative effects on human health and the environment, according to the World Health Organization. Only a few countries, which include France, have plants to destroy the substance.

Use of DDT has been gradually banned or restricted across the world since the mid 20th century.

The mentioned amount was imported from Pakistan in the beginning of 1985 for Tk 3.59 crore to control malaria in Bangladesh.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) coordinates disposal activities of

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- » 500 tonnes of DDT came from Pakistan in 1985
- » Substandard powder was sent, but supplier didn't take it back
- » Kept in Ctg medical sub-depot for 38 years
- » To be destroyed at a plant in France as per Stockholm convention



## Visionary banker Anwarul Amin no more

STAR REPORT

Anwarul Amin, a renowned banker, passed away early yesterday at his Gulshan residence in Dhaka. He was 88.

He breathed his last around 4:00am, said his family members.

Amin left behind a son, daughter, grandchildren and a host of friends and relatives.

He was buried at Banani graveyard following a namaz-e-janaza at Gulshan Azad mosque after Zohr prayers.

Amin was a well-known banker and chairman of the board of trustees of IMPACT Foundation Bangladesh.

Graduating from Westminster Bank Institute of Banking in England, a 21-year-old Amin returned to East Pakistan in 1955 to start a career with the Muslim Commercial Bank.

Even while working at the National Bank of Pakistan and the Industrial Development Bank of Pakistan, Amin secretly sought to work

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## No way out of the debt trap

Speakers tell discussion on marginalised fishers' plight



PHOTO: STAR

Speakers at the discussion in the capital's The Daily Star Centre yesterday. The Daily Star and Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies organised the event jointly, with support from Manusher Jonno Foundation.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Fishermen across coastal belts fall into a spiraling debt trap due to inadequate cash and other supports during the fishing ban period, speakers at a discussion said yesterday.

Besides, the lack of a regulatory framework on labour rights and supervision has made them highly vulnerable to human rights abuse, they said at the discussion held at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka.

The discussion was jointly organised by The Daily Star and Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS) and supported by Manusher Jonno Foundation.

Rezwanul Haque Azam, senior officer and project coordinator of BILS, presented an assessment of the human rights status among the small-scale artisanal fishing communities in Barguna's Patharghata and Cox's Bazar's Moheshkhali upazilas.

While the absence of a minimum wage, appointment letter, safe and hygienic work environment, accommodation, and treatment have caused immense suffering to the fishing labours, the borrowed money for going to the sea for fishing – known as Dadan – has thrown them into a never-ending debt trap.

The situation turns worst during the 220 days of

fishing ban every year in different phases, according to the assessment.

Besides, the illegal intrusion by Indian fishing boats has been causing immense loss of marine fisheries in the country, thanks to the slack action taken by Bangladesh authorities, said Rezwanul.

Fishers and their families are also exploited in many ways due to illiteracy and lack of skills beyond fishing.

"Being illiterate and unskilled, fishers don't have any work to earn a livelihood during the ban. The government's safety net programme, on the other hand, is very inadequate," said Mizanur Rahman Bahadur, advisor of Cox's Bazar Fishing Boat Labour Union.

Currently, the government provides 80 kilograms of rice and Tk 5,000 for each fisher family.

"Besides, all families are not included in the scheme. Dadan is a very fearful trap, and so there should be specialised loan arrangements for fishers," said SM Jakir Hossain, social welfare secretary of Jatiya Sramik Federation.

Noimul Ahsan Jewel, general secretary of Jatiya Sramik Jote Bangladesh, said, "Indian fishermen continue fishing during the ban in Bangladesh. They

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MILITANTS' ESCAPE

## 'Key planner' took shelter in 3 Dhaka houses

Say law enforcers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The key coordinator behind the two militants' snatching from police custody had taken shelter in three different areas of the capital to evade law enforcers, claim law enforcers.

Coordinator Edi Amin, also an operative of Ansar Al Islam, is now on four-day police remand.

Amin, who directly assisted the snatching, surrendered at a Dhaka court on November 27.

The Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit yesterday claimed to have obtained the findings after interrogating Amin.

CTTC officials said Amin first took shelter in the house of his sister, Khodeza Akhter Lipi, in Khilgaon area on November 22.

Then he went to Bijoyagar area on November 23 and stayed at the house of his father-in-law, Md Nasir Miah Faruq, till November 24.

And finally, he went to Basabo area on the morning of November 25 and took shelter in the house of one Tanvir Hossain till November 26.

On charge of giving shelter to Amin, police arrested the three on Monday, said a CTTC high official involved with the investigation.

All the arrestees were aware that Amin was

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MEDIA, GENDER EQUALITY

## We need more women at the helm: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Educators, journalists and rights activists at a seminar yesterday called for ensuring gender equality in different media houses in Bangladesh.

They also insisted on increasing the number of women in decision-making positions in newsrooms.

Speakers made the remarks at a seminar titled "Bangladesh Media Landscape and Gender Equality", organised at University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) auditorium in Dhaka.

The Embassy of Sweden and the Embassy of Netherlands organised the seminar, marking "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence", an annual international campaign, in partnership with Management and Resources Development Initiative (MRDI) and ULAB.

At the event, Sweden's Fojo Media Institute and MRDI presented a report on gender representation in news media, after monitoring contents published by 10 media outlets – five newspapers, two online portals and three television channels – in seven days (November 7-15).

The team found that the presence of women in different media outlets is only 14 percent. In terms of women's portrayal, most were portrayed as weaker and more vulnerable than men. Besides, derogatory words were also used to refer to women.

The report also showed some media outlets frequently published the identity of women, whether a victim or accused, without prior evidence.

The study also found only 8 percent of the special reports (bylines) were written by women during that specific week.

Speaking at a panel discussion, Dr Gitiara Nasreen, a professor of journalism at Dhaka University, said, "We have to understand the obstacles first and ensure equality for women."

Executive Director of Manusher Jonno Foundation Shaheen Anam said, "If we can change

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## To honour the women who have excelled

Star, bti to hold 'Stellar Women Awards'

STAR REPORT

To recognise the special contributions of emerging, young and promising women from different walks of life, bti and The Daily Star are jointly organising the "Stellar Women Awards".

A press conference for "Stellar Women Awards" was held yesterday at bti's head office in the capital, said a press release.

FR Khan, managing director of bti, various officials of the two organisations, and journalists were present at the event.

The two organisations will award one woman each month in 12 different categories.

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PHOTO: STAR

Representatives of The Daily Star and bti at the press conference for "Stellar Women Awards".

## Dengue cases ease up at last

Experts urge city corporations for stricter measures next year

HELEMUL ALAM

As the number of dengue cases has started to reduce since mid-November, experts urged the city corporations to take comprehensive plans to control Aedes mosquitoes throughout the year.

Meanwhile, with the death of three dengue patients yesterday, the total number of deaths rose to 250.

Entomologist GM Saifur Rahman of National University, Bangladesh, said though it is November, dengue cases are still there and the trend will continue.

"It means the virus is still there. To destroy the dengue virus, killing adult mosquitoes is very important. If a single mosquito carrying the virus is alive, the chance of more infections persists," he said.

Saifur said the breeding clusters – which the authorities concerned have already identified – will have to be monitored and the drive to curb the mosquitoes should be continued for the next month.

Stressing the need for involving people in the anti-mosquito drive, Saifur said the authorities will have to involve the public so that they can be trained and participate in the source reduction activities.

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