

WORLD WATER DAY

The politics and pollution of our rivers



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Humanity's effort to organise society while surrounded by moving water led to the creation of institutions, which tied people together in mutual dependence in their attempt to deal with the environment. Water is the ultimate public good, as it is a moving, formless substance that defies private ownership – being hard to contain and requiring collective management.

If we look back at the transformation of the Bengal delta into a human habitat, it is nothing but the development of a water management system and adaptation to floods and the climate. The identity of "Bangalee" or "Bongo" is tied to Bengal's history of culture, economy, and communication system that developed with the ecological management of water.

The power of the modern state and the force of industrial capitalism have radically transformed our landscape. Its success has been so complete that it has made society's relationship with water invisible. Bangladesh's political commitments and existing development paradigm are also the active successors of its colonial legacy of development for the urban elite.

Land use and urban agglomeration have resulted in significant deterioration of natural resources, especially forest and water bodies. The current notion of development in Bangladesh, focusing on quantitative growth-based economy, has led to industrialisation in and around Dhaka, Savar, Gazipur, Narsingdi,

Chattoogram, and Khulna, originally in an unplanned way.

At first, the locals were amazed to see factories and infrastructures in their localities. Initially, it gave them some employment and trade opportunities. But gradually, farmers, fishermen and others who had been living their lives based on wetlands, forests, and agriculture lost control of their community-managed ecology.

Farmers lost their ecological sovereignty to cultivate crops due to industrial pollution on their land. Fishermen lost their livelihoods because there are no fish and aquatic biodiversity left during the lean season. A recent study by the River and Delta Research Centre (RDRC) shows that along just 66 kilometres of the Turag River, there are more than 33 fishermen villages. Approximately 30,000 families are involuntarily unemployed for six months during the lean season, because the water gets so polluted that no aquatic species can exist in the river. They have been marginalised by the industrial elite, and the fisheries ministry has no data about them. Loss of farmland and floodplains along the river tells of more sad stories.

Bangladesh is a signatory to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). But it will never be able to achieve most of the SDG targets without addressing the mass pollution of its environment, especially water.

Water polluted by industrial and agricultural activities contains

many metals (e.g. arsenic, cadmium and mercury) and synthetic organic compounds (e.g. pesticides and polychlorinated biphenyls) that are toxic for people at high concentrations. These pollutants can accumulate in groundwater, contaminate aquifers and cause poisoning. Water with excessive nutrient loading can lead to the eutrophication of water and soil,

and Sewerage Authority (Wasa), city corporations or industrial factories. Only a few households dump their waste into the rivers as they do not have any waste management system facilitated by the city corporations. The reality is quite similar for other rivers.

The geolocation of the polluted rivers also highlights how river pollution, from being confined

mentioned study, we found encroachment by local political elites to be one of the biggest threats to our rivers. Yet, our government officials and agencies are reluctant to take any action against them. Local journalists lack the freedom to write about this encroachment. Local leaders "sell" the rivers to the fishermen. Only the highest bidder gets to fish in a particular portion of the water bodies

is eventually meant to benefit a particular class.

As we can see from this, the control of water is ultimately essential for political power. In essence, whoever controls the water is, at a fundamental level, in control of everything. It is, therefore, not surprising that issues about the ownership, access and control of water create more conflicts around the world than just



Once a sanctuary to local fishes, the Haridaya River in Narsingdi has been turned into a canal by rampant encroachment and pollution.

PHOTO: STAR

The control of water is ultimately essential for political power. It is, therefore, not surprising that issues about the ownership, access and control of water create more conflicts around the world than just about anything else. Because water is so central to every level of human well-being, a society's arrangements of "who owns the water" provide precise reflections of both its internal and external political relations.

threatening aquatic biodiversity. Moreover, newly emerging pollutants like pharmaceuticals and personal care products present in water add more to the pollution of our water resources, with unidentified long-term effects on human health and the ecosystem.

Testing the water of 56 rivers gave us some interesting insights into the state of river pollution in the country. For example, in the case of the Buriganga, Turag, Tongi canal and Balu, we found that the biggest polluters are either the Water Supply

to megacities like Dhaka and Chattoogram only two decades ago, has now spread to every town in the country. How did this happen? Is it because of a lack of supervision by the Department of Environment (DoE) and/or other government monitoring inefficiencies? Or is it related to other policy issues?

The government established the National River Conservation Commission (NRCC) about a decade ago. But till date, it has not been able to restore a single river.

While working on our above-

other, marginalised fishermen are not allowed to fish there.

Our study also found that new projects – economic processing zones (EPZs), power plants, etc – were mainly being developed on the riverbanks. These projects initially exclude riverine communities and river-dependent communities. Later, other low-income communities dependent on farmland are excluded from this so-called development. Because the control of water and natural resources is no longer in the hands of the people, their use

about anything else.

And because water is so central to every level of human well-being, a society's arrangements of "who owns the water" provide precise reflections of both its internal and external political relations. In this sense, the ownership and control of water can be seen as fundamental to democracy, and populations who have lost direct representational control over their most essential resource have, in effect, lost their political power to unelected and often unaccountable elites.

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh
Directorate of Posts, Dak Bhaban
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207
www.bdpost.gov.bd
Ref: 14.31.0000.038.23.001.23 Date: 21.03.2023

Notice

52nd International Letter-Writing Competition for Young People-2023

The Universal Postal Union (UPU) organizes letter-writing competition for young people each year with an aim to improve literacy through the art of letter writing. Targeted at children and young people, the annual competition encourages participants to express their creativity and refine their language skills. For the year 2023, the theme of the letter writing competition has been selected by the International Bureau of the UPU as "Imagine you are a super hero and your mission is to make all roads around the world safer for children. Write a letter to someone explaining which super powers you would need to achieve your mission." Bangladesh Post, in consistent with the theme of UPU, is also organizing letter writing competition nationally. Interested enthusiastic young people are invited to participate.

Instructions for the competitor:

- The letter must be in English; hand written; unpublished and must not exceed the limit of 800 words.
- The criteria that would be used to judge the quality of the letters are (i) Structure as a letter; (ii) Adherence to the theme; (iii) Creativity; (iv) Use of language. Writing in any other form except letter would lead to its outright cancellation.
- One side of paper (A4 size, 80 GSM offset paper) should be used and original handwritten manuscript letter must be submitted. Writing on both sides of a paper would not be accepted.
- Each participant is required to write his/her name, class, name of educational institution, address, Telephone/Mobile number and name of parents at the end of the letter.
- Only the letter of the participant securing the first place at the national level competition will be forwarded to the UPU International Bureau (Berne, Switzerland), to be included in the competition at the international level. All letters submitted to the UPU would become the property of the Universal Postal Union.

Required Attachment:

- Participating boys/girls (Students) must be permanent citizens of Bangladesh. Online Birth certificate issued by the concerned authority and the certificate confirming the citizenship must be submitted with the letter.
- His/her age (as on 05-05-2023) must be between 09 to 15 years.
- 5 (five) copies of recent passport size good quality photograph (Lab print) to be attached.

The top three participants according to merit list would be called upon to Directorate of Posts and they would be rewarded. The date and time would be informed in due course.

Prizes:

Sl	Prizes	International Competition	National Competition
1.	First Prize	Special medal (gold), and a certificate, as well as other prizes to commemorate their win (such other prizes to be decided by the UPU). The gold medalist may also be offered a trip to the UPU headquarters in Berne, Switzerland, or an alternative prize to be decided at the sole discretion of the UPU.	Prize Bond worth Taka 5000/- (Five Thousands), an album of postage stamp and a certificate (Less/More). He/She will represent the Bangladesh in the 52nd International Letter-Writing Competition of UPU
2.	Second Prize	Special medal (Silver), and a certificate, as well as other prizes to commemorate their win (such other prizes to be decided by the UPU).	Prize Bond worth Taka 4000/- (Four Thousands), an album of postage stamp and a certificate (Less/More).
3.	Third Prize	Special medal (Bronze), and a certificate, as well as other prizes to commemorate their win (such other prizes to be decided by the UPU).	Prize Bond worth Taka 3000/- (Three Thousands), an album of postage stamp and a certificate (Less/More).
4.	Special Mention	Writers awarded a special mention will also receive a certificate as well as other prizes (such other prizes to be decided by the UPU).	-----

Conditions:

- The words 52nd International Letter-Writing Competition for Young People-2023 should be written on top of the envelope.
- Any letter received after the below mentioned deadline and sent through any service other than the registered/GEP services of the Bangladesh Post would not be considered for this competition.
- Further information regarding this may be collected from www.upu.int/en/ilwc
- The complete letter must reach to Md. Zakir Hasan Nur, Director (UPU Affairs), Directorate of Posts, Dak Bhaban (Room-1002), Agargaon, Dhaka-1207 no later than 10/04/2023.

Md. Zakir Hasan Nur
Director (UPU Affairs) (CC)
Phone: 58160762

GD-523

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GAZIPUR.**

LOCAL/INTERNATIONAL e-TENDER.

Electronic tenders (e-tenders) are hereby invited from the competent Local/International manufacturers/suppliers for supply of the materials for SPCBL as per schedule described underneath. Tender documents showing terms and conditions with specification will be available at url: (<https://spcbltender.bb.org.bd>). It is to mention here that this is online tender(s) where only e-Tender will be accepted. No hard copy will be accepted except price of e-tender schedule and earnest money. To submit e-Tender, bidders need to register on e-Tender (<https://spcbltender.bb.org.bd>). For more details please contact cell: 880-1534002184. Necessary information is given below:

SL No.	Names of Items.	Nature of e-Tenders	Date of Publish	Last Date & time for Submission of e-Tender	Date & time for Opening of e-tender	Value/set of e-Tender Schedule (non-refundable)
01.	SUPPLY OF 1,20,220 REAMS (IN SHEET FORM) or 2,254.125 METRIC TONS (IN REEL FORM) CIGARETTE TAX LABEL PAPER AGAINST FRAMEWORK CONTRACT.	Local/International	22/03/2023	26/04/2023 upto 11.00 AM	26/04/2023 at 11.15 AM	Tk. 5000.00
02.	SUPPLY & INCORPORATION OF 22,924.86 MILLION PCS SECURITY FEATURED FOIL BY THERMAL TRANSFER PROCESS FOR THE CIGARETTE STAMP AND BAND ON TURN-KEY BASIS AGAINST FRAMEWORK CONTRACT.	International	22/03/2023	26/04/2023 upto 11.00 AM	26/04/2023 at 11.15 AM	Tk. 5000.00

Bidder may collect e-tender schedule from the aforementioned website. Earnest money @ 3% (three percent) of the total quoted price (as instructed in the related tender schedule) shall have to be submitted in the form of Bank Draft/Pay Order/Irrevocable Bank Guarantee from any scheduled bank in Bangladesh in favour of The Managing Director, The Security Printing Corporation (Bangladesh) Ltd., Gazipur alongwith the price of e-Tender schedule in the form of a separate Pay-Order/DD in the tender box kept at SPCBL's office in Gazipur on or before the scheduled deadline for submission of e-Tender. In the case of international tender, Irrevocable Bank Guarantee may also be given as earnest money from any international commercial bank abroad with a counter guarantee from any scheduled bank in Bangladesh. e-Tender (s) without earnest money and price for procurement of e-tender schedule shall not be acceptable. The e-Tender shall have to be submitted as per e-Tender guidelines mentioned at the above website. Offer(s) will be opened as per schedule mentioned above in presence of the tenderer(s) or their local agent(s) if any. 01 (one) e-Tender schedule is applicable only for one supplier/manufacturer for submitting one offer against each item alongwith earnest money and price of e-Tender schedule. The authority reserves the right to reject or accept any e-Tender(s) without assigning any reason whatsoever. Submission of e-tender after the specified time shall not be acceptable under any circumstances.

(Rashid Ahmed)
General Manager (Foreign Purchase)
Phone: 88-02-9205103.

GD- 519