

OPEN GARBAGE DUMPING

A nuisance for Narsingdi townspeople

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

Regular dumping of waste materials in the open space almost everywhere in Narsingdi municipality is causing serious environment pollution and posing health hazard for the local residents.

Heap of garbage has been piled up in different areas of the municipality in absence of adequate cleanliness drive by the authorities concerned.

While roaming the municipality area, one can see piled up waste materials at the entrance of Narsingdi Municipality Office, adjacent to the New Bus Stand area.

Moreover, huge quantities of poultry waste from several unregistered poultry farms have added to the owes of the town dwellers.

Besides, the municipality dwellers have been living in utter discomfort due to establishment of several poultry farms in residential areas.

The bad odour coming from the poultry waste in badly hampering local environment and public health as well.

Local residents alleged that about 30 poultry farms dump waste materials in at least 18 spots of the municipality, making those places a breeding field for mosquitos.

Huge waste materials have been piled up in New Bus Station area, Dhaka-Sylhet Highway, Old Town Hall area, Aziz Boarding, at least five spots in Narsingdi Boro Bazar area, on the bank of a pond at Narsingdi Govt Women's College, Battola Bazar, Shikka Chattar and even at a vacant filed near the Krishi Bank area, they said.

Narsingdi Municipality, established in 1972, was upgraded to a Grade I category in 1996.

According to the municipality office, currently at least 72 employees, both regular and temporary, engaged by the municipality collect about 35 to 36 tonnes of household wastes from different areas and dumped those in New Bus Station area regularly.

Rafik Mia, a rickshaw puller, said, "We



PHOTO: STAR

have been suffering badly due to the bad odour emitting from the roadside garbage all the time."

Housewife Shilpi Das of Shapla Chattar area, said she requested the authorities concerned on several occasions to remove the pile of garbage from near her house, but nothing has been done so far.

"We are compelled to live in such a worse environment condition as there is no other alternative," Shilpi added.

Another Mahfuza Haque of the area said although she is paying Tk 100 every month, employees of the municipality collect the household waste and dump

those only a few metres from her house.

While talking, another housewife Mahmuda Akter said she was assaulted by Salah Uddin, one of the poultry farm owners, and his men when she lodged a complaint with the municipality office regarding the mindless waste dumping in open space.

On the other hand, the situation is getting more worsen every day due to the outbreak of dengue.

According to Narsingdi Civil Surgeon Office, currently at least 118 dengue patients are undergoing treatment at different hospitals in Narsingdi, while the

number of dengue infected patients are 2,494 since January this year.

Narsingdi Municipality Mayor Mohammad Amzad Hossain Bacchu said about 20 unprotected poultry farms located at different areas of the municipality are polluting the environment.

"Recently we have directed one of the poultry farms to stop its operation within a month," the mayor said, adding that they have installed several garbage bins at different points of the municipality, but those are quite insufficient for thousands of local residents.

US visa curbs will help amp

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including those in the political opposition, who are responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the democratic election process in Bangladesh. But BNP leaders say that it is the ruling party that will be affected by the restrictions.

BNP standing committee member Abdul Moyeen Khan recently said, "The US visa policy indicates that various organs of the government are indulging in irregularities that will ensure that the ruling party rigs the election by hook or by crook."

About the mention of "political opposition" by the state department, Moyeen lightheartedly said this was the most obvious and logical diplomatically balanced jargon used by the US Department of State.

"Everyone knows who the real violators are."

After BNP's sit-in programmes at the entry points to Dhaka on July 29 turned out to be a failure, the

party was struggling to revamp its anti-government movement.

BNP leaders say the visa restrictions have made the ruling party activists, law enforcers, and civil administration officials anxious and created the context for the BNP to intensify the movement.

"The pre-election observation team of the US will visit Bangladesh. So, programmes will be chalked out considering their attitudes too," said a senior leader.

Besides, the demonstrations will pause during the Puja festivals later this month.

The European Union recently said it will not send a fully-fledged election observation mission during the upcoming national polls.

Referring to the July 28 rally in Dhaka, party leaders said the programme gained momentum because of the announcement of the visa policy, and the same thing can happen this time around as the US government has started implementing the restrictions.

Where is your 48hr ultimatum?

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we will break the hands of those who will try to attack people."

Addressing the event, Matia Chowdhury, deputy leader of the House and also AL presidium member, said, "Today, when farmers across the country are happy, the BNP is upset. They are trying to mislead people."

She also urged the Krishak League activists to be on guard against the BNP's conspiracy.

Abdur Razzaque, agriculture minister and also AL presidium member, said, "The BNP is threatening to occupy Dhaka and paralyse the country. We will have to be on the streets and turn their dream into a nightmare."

Among others, AL joint general secretaries Mahbubul Alam Hanif, AFM Bahauddin Nasim, organising secretaries SM Kamal Hossain, Mirza Azam, and Krishak League President Samir Chanda spoke at the event.

Editors' council's concern and US ambassador's clarification

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commitment to staunchly defend press freedom and the "right of journalists and media outlets to exercise their right to freedom of expression".

"That includes views critical of any government, including the United States. In fact, we welcome public reflection on any element of our policy," he said.

Ambassador Haas said this in reply to a letter by Mr Mahfuz Anam, president of Editors' Council, Bangladesh, seeking clarification of the ambassador's remarks during a recent interview with Channel 24 that media may also come under the purview of US visa policy.

"We are applying the policy in a balanced way against anyone regardless of whether they are pro-government, whether they are in the opposition, or whether they are law enforcement, whether they are in the judiciary, whether it's the media," said Peter Haas during the interview aired on September 24.

On May 24 this year, the US announced the visa policy for Bangladesh and on September 22, it was declared that steps were taken to impose visa restrictions on Bangladeshi individuals responsible for, or complicit in, undermining

the democratic election process in Bangladesh.

In the letter to Peter Haas on September 27, Mahfuz Anam said he was writing because some questions have arisen in his mind and in the minds of members of the Editors' Council regarding the aforementioned comment on visa restrictions on media.

"Frankly, this remark has created confusion among us and hence our request for a clarification," wrote Anam in his email.

He said given the fact that the US government and the ambassador personally have always been steadfast advocates of free and independent media, the remark has perturbed them.

Referring to the US ambassador's statement that visa restriction "is not based on anything else but their actions", Anam pointed out that media's "action" is writing or broadcasting and asked if visa restriction will be based on what a journalist writes or broadcasts.

"If so, then doesn't it come under 'freedom of expression' and 'freedom of press'? How will it be used in case of media? What are the factors being considered?" he asked in his letter.

Mr Anam also said that the First Amendment of the US Constitution

has always acted as a source of inspiration and emulation for him personally and for media in Bangladesh. In that case, how the First Amendment values are reflected in implementing the visa policy when used against the media.

In response, Peter Haas wrote the US will continue to support the freedom of the press and also speak out against, and apply US visa policy to those who seek to undermine the democratic election process in Bangladesh.

Referring to Secretary of State Antony Blinken, he said the holding of free and fair elections is the responsibility of everyone -- voters, political parties, the government, the security forces, civil society, and the media.

"Equally as important, each of these institutions must be allowed to play their respective roles in the democratic election process," Haas said.

Haas said Secretary Blinken's statement was clear that the policy applies to "any Bangladeshi individual, believed to be responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the democratic election process in Bangladesh".

This includes anyone who takes measures to prevent the media from disseminating their views, he added.

PM lying about Khaleda's cases

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Nagorik Oikya Convener Mahmudur Rahman Manna said, "While our day labourers starve due to daily increases in commodity prices, the prime minister is in Virginia having dinner at her son's house. Joy bought 30 acres of land in Virginia. If we come to power, we will not spare these looters."

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President ASM Abdur Rab said that as the government has failed to control commodity prices, they have no right to remain in power.

"They have smuggled money out and looted banks. If they get caught, we won't be able to protect them from the people," he said.

'What was my son's fault?'

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Yunus reiterated that his nephew was not involved in politics.

Meanwhile, four people were arrested in connection with Ruman's killing.

Although police did not disclose their names, local BNP sources claimed all the arrestees were activists of their party.

Monirul Islam, assistant superintendent of police (Mirsharai circle) in Chattogram, said Ruman's mother Khaleda filed a case with Joranganj Police Station yesterday afternoon, mentioning the names of 15 people, including Chattogram North District BNP Joint Convener Nurul Amin, and some 60 unnamed people.

"Police arrested four of the named accused. However, prime accused Nurul Amin is absconding."

Though family members and police said Ruman was just a bystander, both upazila BNP and AL activists claimed he was "their supporter" and blamed each other for his death.

Jahangir Kabir, president of Mirsharai AL, said Ruman was one of their men and blamed BNP for his death.

Meanwhile, Chhatra League issued a press release last night saying Ruman was a member of No.9 Osmanpur union BCL. They urged the law enforcement agencies to immediately arrest the "BNP men" involved in the killing.

Jahangir said, "BNP men, without any provocation, attacked Awami League and Chhatra League activists who were in the bazar ... They hit the boy [Ruman] in the head and drowned him in the pond."

Hospital runs without inpatient service

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

The 50-bed Tarakanda Upazila Health Complex, which started its journey nearly two years ago, is yet to start providing inpatient service, causing immense sufferings to treatment seekers.

Since its establishment in February 2022, the hospital has been providing only outpatient service to several hundred patients, mostly poor, coming from different areas of the upazila.

On an average, about 500 patients visit the hospital's outdoor every day, but most of them cannot even avail any diagnosis facilities except ECG, Tarakanda Upazila Health and Family Planning Officer (UHFO) Dr Mahbubul Alam said.

As the hospital has no necessary equipment and technicians for other tests, patients are being advised to conduct the tests from outside.

As a result, several diagnostic centres have been established near the health complex.

During a recent visit to the hospital this correspondent saw several brokers, engaged by the diagnostic centres, and representative of different pharmaceutical companies were roaming at the hospital premises during the rush hours.

Out of the eight posts of doctors, only four including three medical officers and a residential medical officer (RMO) have been running the hospital at present.

Though the hospital has five nurses, three of them are currently on maternity leave.

Mentionable, the 50-bed hospital has so far received 40 beds from the authorities concerned.

According to the hospital sources, the vacant posts of four consultants -- gynaecologist, anaesthetist, surgeon and medicine -- have been badly hampering the health services.

The hospital got an allocation of Tk 32 lakh in the last fiscal year, but it was not sufficient to manage such huge pressure of outdoor patients, UHFO said.

Anwar Hossain, a rickshaw puller from Taaldighi village, said despite have a government hospital they have to depend on private clinics for treatment.

As there is no diagnosis and X-ray facility at the health complex, patients especially pregnant women have to go to the district hospital, which requires extra money and time, schoolteacher Anamul Haque said.

Mymensingh Civil Surgeon Dr Nazrul Islam said hundreds of treatment seekers, mostly belonging to ultra-poor families, visit the hospital daily, but they are yet to ensure proper health care for all of them.

Mother holds sit-in for justice

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the sit in.

On July 10 this year, she met the Inspector General of Police to demand justice.

Kazi Eshshanul Kabir, superintendent of police of PBI's Bogura office, said their departmental investigation did not find any evidence that the OC destroyed the video.

"We have already sent the report to the PBI headquarters," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said their investigation into the rape case is ongoing. "We will complete it soon."

Gang leader charged after 27 years

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years of investigations by police, who had been frustrated by an apparent lack of useable evidence, and came two months after they raided his home in Henderson, just outside Las Vegas.

"The presumption is great that he is responsible for the murder of Tupac Shakur, and he will be found guilty of murder with use of a deadly weapon," prosecutor Marc DiGiacomo told a court in Nevada.

Shakur, the best-selling hip-hop artist behind hits such as "California Love," "Changes," and "Dear Mama," was already a huge star in the world of rap when he was gunned down in Las Vegas on September 7, 1996. He was just 25.

He was signed to Death Row Records, an outfit associated at the time with Los Angeles street gang Mob Piru, which had a long-standing beef with the Southside Compton Crips.

The prosecutor said what happened that night had been largely understood by investigators for many years, but they had not had sufficient admissible evidence to advance the case.

That began to change when Davis, reportedly the only person in the car that night still alive, published an autobiography and spoke about the crime for a TV show.