

Protecting nature key to a healthy Dhaka

Says architect at icddr,b discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Water bodies, canals, agricultural land, and wetlands in Dhaka are being increasingly encroached upon and filled to create plots, harming the environment, according to Kazi Khalid Ashraf, director general of the Bengal Institute for Architecture, Landscapes, and Settlement.

Speaking at an event, marking the 64th anniversary of icddr,b, at Sasakawa Auditorium in Mohakhali, Ashraf criticised the practice of filling water bodies in the name of development. He proposed that to build a healthy city, architectural design and planning must integrate nature.

Ashraf said infrastructure should not only be functional, but should also serve as a tool for healing. "Buildings should be designed in a way that preserves nature,"

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Discussants at a roundtable titled "Strengthening NHRC: Towards an Independent and Credible Oversight Body", jointly organised by UNDP and The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre in Dhaka yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

NHRC must be free from political, state influence

Experts propose major reforms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Human Rights Commission should be independent and people-centric, said speakers at a roundtable yesterday.

The commission must take a decentralised approach to effectively address human rights violations, they added.

They also recommended strengthening the commission's investigative powers, improving its structural capacity, and ensuring its independence from political and bureaucratic influence.

The remarks were made at an event, titled "Strengthening NHRC: Towards an Independent and Credible Oversight Body", jointly organised by UNDP and The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre.

Supreme Court lawyer Jyotirmoy Barua highlighted significant challenges in the practical implementation of the National Human Rights Commission Act, 2009, despite its provision of statutory independence.

He noted flaws in the appointment process, where the President, guided by a government-influenced Selection Committee, appoints NHRC members.

He also pointed out funding issues, with 75 percent of NHRC's budget reliant on donors, compromising its autonomy.

Dhaka University Law Professor Sheikh Hafizur Rahman (Karzon) said NHRC was established more as a formality than with a meaningful goal.

A toothless commission, with no executive power will remain ineffective, merely existing as a symbolic body with no real impact.

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'16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM' Make justice more accessible for victims Say speakers at MJF event on gender-based violence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Access to justice should be easier when it comes to any sort of gender-based violence (GBV). Police and the judiciary must actively work to prevent violence against women, said speakers at a discussion yesterday.

They made the remarks at an event, titled "Towards Beijing +30: UNiTE to End Violence against Women and Girls", organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) at its auditorium in the capital, observing "16 days of activism against Gender-based Violence 2024".



Women with physical disabilities, members of the hijra community, and young women from various professions shared their struggles and stories at the event.

Mohammad Al Mamun, director of National Legal Aid and Services Organisation, said, "The number of women seeking legal aid is increasing yearly. If the judiciary and judges work to prevent GBV and more punitive measures are taken, it will help."

Gitanjali Singh, representative of UN Women, said, "Although we survived the pandemic, we haven't been able to eliminate the pandemic of violence against women. Every 10 minutes, a woman is killed by her partner somewhere in the world. Bangladesh has laws

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Dengue cases surge past 90,000

Experts worry over prolonged season

REASONS FOR DENGUE SURGE	SOLUTIONS TO CONTROL DENGUE
Ineffective mosquito control	Early preventive measures
Unfavourable weather conditions	Proactive case identification
Lack of early intervention	Nationwide tracking system
Inadequate public awareness	Awareness campaigns
Insufficient surveillance	District-level surveillance

HELEMUL ALAM

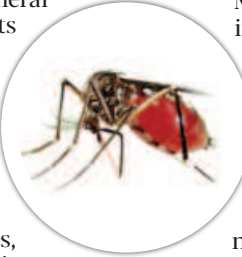
With 837 new dengue cases reported yesterday, the total number of cases this year has surged past 90,000.

This is an alarming rise as the year enters November, a time when cases typically start to decline.

The Directorate General of Health Services reports 482 deaths, with the total number of dengue cases reaching 90,440 as of yesterday.

Experts are attributing the prolonged dengue season to ineffective mosquito control measures, favourable weather conditions for mosquito breeding, and the failure to implement preventive actions during the lean period earlier in the year.

Entomologist Manzur Chowdhury pointed out that the unusual combination of high



humidity and warm temperatures in November has created ideal breeding conditions for Aedes mosquitoes. "This level of dengue transmission in November is uncommon, as cases usually decrease at this time. Warmer temperatures have allowed mosquito populations to thrive," he said.

Manzur stressed that early intervention could have limited the spread. "If authorities had acted during the lean period from January to March, the outbreak could have been controlled," he said.

He also highlighted the need for more comprehensive measures beyond mosquito control. "Authorities focus on killing mosquitoes, but we also need to prevent the virus from spreading through human movement," Manzur said.

Manzur cited Kolkata's approach in

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ABRAR MURDER HC starts hearing of death reference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday started hearing on the death reference and appeals in the Abrar Fahad murder case.

On October 7, 2019, Abrar, a second-year student of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), was beaten to death by a group of Buet unit Chhatra League activists in a dormitory.

A Dhaka court on December 8, 2021, sentenced 20 Buet students to death for their direct involvement in the murder.

The court also sentenced five other Buet students to life imprisonment in the case. The documents of the case reached the HC on January 6, 2022, as death reference to examine the lower court's verdict.

Yesterday, the HC bench of Justice AKM Asaduzzaman and Justice Syed Enayet Hossain began the hearing with Deputy Attorney Generals Md Jashim Sarker and Md Rasel Ahammad placing from the first information report and charge sheet of the case.

The bench also fixed next Thursday for further hearing of the case.

'Consider me as an adviser from Rangpur'

CA tells Abu Sayed's family



PHOTO: BSS

BSS, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Prof Yunus yesterday said he considered himself a son of Rangpur as he was moved by the bravery and sacrifice of July uprising martyr Abu Sayed.

"Consider me as an adviser from Rangpur," said Prof Yunus while welcoming the family members of Abu Sayed at his office in Tajgaon, Dhaka.

The chief adviser handed over the certificate of the Shahid Abu Sayed Foundation to the family members of martyr Abu Sayed during a brief ceremony on the day.

Mokbul Hossain, the father of Abu Sayed, received the certificate.

Md Liton Mia, a nephew of Abu Sayed, was also present on the occasion. The chief adviser enquired about the health condition of Abu Sayed's parents and assured them of all support from the government.

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