

Lax monitoring lets industrial waste pollute waterbodies

MIRZA SHAKIL, *Tangail*

Discharge of untreated and potentially hazardous industrial waste from dyeing and printing units of mills and factories in Tangail has long been indiscriminately polluting the rivers and other waterbodies across the district amid lax monitoring by the authorities concerned.

Lives and livelihoods of local people, as well as the aquatic biodiversity have been severely affected adversely due to pollution of these waterbodies over the years.

According to sources at the Department of Environment in Tangail, there are more than 15 mills and factories in Mirzapur upazila alone, including Gorai Industrial Area, as well as two mills in BSCIC Industrial area and adjacent Khudirampur under Sadar upazila.

The mills and factories have Effluent Treatment Plants (ETPs), the sources said.

During a recent visit, this correspondent saw that the water of Sohagpara and Pakulla canals in Mirzapur upazila has turned pitch black due to pollution caused by discharge of untreated waste from the adjacent mills and factories.

Locals alleged that most of the industries have yet to install ETPs following rules and as per capacity, while those that have ETPs installed keep those non-operational to minimize costs. As such, all these mills and factories

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PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Locals catch crabs from Dhaki River near the Sundarbans. Many residents of villages near the mangrove forest rely on catching fish and crabs to make a living. During low tide, they catch crabs, with an average daily catch of 5-7kg. Depending on size, they sell each kilogramme for Tk 200-800 in the local market. The photo was taken from Dakop upazila, Khulna yesterday.

ACC sues Inu, SK Sur Starts probe against Sheikh Selim

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

ACC has filed separate cases against former information minister Hasanul Haque Inu and his wife and former lawmaker Afroza Haque, former deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank Sitangshu Kumar Sur Chowdhury, his wife Suparna Sur Chowdhury and daughter Nandita Sur Chowdhury.

The anti-graft body also launched an investigation against former health minister Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim over allegations of taking 10-15 percent commissions from contractors in different projects across the country. ACC Director General Akhtar Hossain confirmed the developments at the commission's headquarters in Dhaka's Segunbagicha yesterday.

Inu and Afroza were accused of acquiring illegal wealth worth Tk 4.84 crore and Tk 1.50 crore respectively. Additionally, Inu allegedly conducted suspicious transactions worth Tk 11.88 crore from his four bank accounts.

ACC also filed three separate cases against SK Sur, his wife and daughter over abusing power, acquiring wealth illegally and conducting suspicious bank transactions.

Turning rodents into revenue

Homemaker finds success in albino rat farming

JAHID HASAN, *Shariatpur*

Laboni Akter, a resident of Dhaka's Khilgaon, after completing her post-graduation in Zoology from Khilgaon Model College, sought a unique venture to achieve financial solvency.

For around a year, she has been raising albino rats of a foreign breed in Tulashar village of Shariatpur Sadar upazila.

When asked what motivated her to set up a farm of albino rats, which is reportedly the first of its kind in the country, Laboni said these rats are essential for research purposes.

"Different laboratories and university students require foreign albino rats for research, which are not easily available in Bangladesh. As a zoology graduate, I knew it is relatively easy to breed and rear rats.



So, this sparked the idea of starting a rat farm," she explained.

A homemaker and mother of two, Laboni launched her farm in July 2024 with an initial investment of Tk 1,500 in Shariatpur, from where her husband Md Rakib hailed.

Her husband provided her the initial investment and purchased four Swiss albino rats, a popular breed from Switzerland, for Tk



1,000 and two cages for Tk 500.

Even though she had no formal training in rat farming, Laboni began learning on her own from Google and YouTube about how to ensure the ideal environment, provide the right diet, and treat illnesses for the rats.

By October, the rats had their first litter of ten babies. Currently, she has 40 parent rats that produce about 200 babies every month, which she primarily sells to laboratories and other farms.

At present, her farm has around 350 rats, including parent stock and litter.

She sells 200 baby rats at Tk 100 each monthly, generating around Tk 20,000, making a net

profit of Tk 15,000 per month.

"My first buyer was a snake breeder from Narayanganj. I sold 20 baby rats at Tk 50 each," Laboni said.

However, since she has been selling the rats through middlemen, it reduces her profit. These middlemen buy the rats from her at Tk 100 each and later sell those for Tk 200-250 each to the laboratories.

Laboni aspires to expand her farm by establishing direct contracts with research laboratories and universities to eliminate middlemen and sell at fair prices.

She also wants to encourage more women in Shariatpur to engage in different



entrepreneurial ventures with minimal investment and achieve financial solvency.

Laboni believes that if she could have training on rat farming, alongside support and dedicated land, it could help her expand her venture and create employment opportunities for other women.

"My husband and mother-in-law have been my biggest support in this journey," she said.

Contacted, Ilora Yasmin, upazila nirbahi officer of Shariatpur Sadar upazila, lauded Laboni's initiative.

"Her initiative is undoubtedly remarkable. If Laboni approaches us, we will provide her with all possible support," she said.

ITALIAN VISA CRISIS Victims demand CA's intervention

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Victims of the ongoing Italian visa crisis have sought intervention of Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus to resolve the crisis.

They have warned that if the issue is not resolved soon, expatriates will announce a remittance shutdown and initiate an indefinite sit-in protest.

They have also declared a 15-day ultimatum in this regard.

The Italian visa applicants made these demands at a press conference at Jatiya Press Club yesterday.

Riaz Hossain, a visa applicant, said that visas have been stuck without any resolution since August 2023.

"The embassy is haphazardly delivering visas. We seek a peaceful solution. We have spoken with the expatriate community in Bangladesh, and they are willing to support us during this difficult time."

They demanded that the CA must invite the Italian ambassador for discussions and request that the embassy immediately process visas from 2023 onwards within a month, proper work permit visas should be issued while fake visas must be cancelled, and the Italian ambassador must also confirm this.

They said if the envoy expresses an inability to resolve the issue, a government delegation must visit Italy to discuss with the Italian prime minister and foreign minister to find a diplomatic solution.

Five sent to jail

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In Noakhali, a 55-year old man was sent to jail for raping his daughter-in-law at Companyganj upazila on March 13.

The victim filed a case yesterday and police arrested the accused on the same night, said Gazi Muhammad Fouzul Azim, OC of Companyganj Police Station.

In Narsingdi, one Azad Miah, 55, of Belabo upazila, was arrested in a case filed for raping a 30-year-old RMG worker on Friday, said Nasir Uddin, inspector (investigation) of Belabo Police Station.

In Lalmonirhat, Meher Ali, 55, from Sadar upazila, was sent to jail on charges of attempting to rape a

third grader, said police.

In Patuakhali, mother of a 10th-grader girl demanded immediate arrest of a group of stalkers, who harassed the girl and beat her brother on March 10, at a press conference.

MAN ACCUSED OF RAPING NIECE

In Lalmonirhat, a 5-year-old girl was allegedly raped by one of her uncles in Hatibandha upazila yesterday, said police.

Hatibandha Police Station OC Mahmudun Nabi said they are trying to arrest the accused.

The girl was undergoing treatment, said doctors.

[Our correspondents from respective districts contributed to this report]

Four more parties

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Earlier, by March 13, seven political parties had submitted their feedback, while 16 political parties have requested additional time to submit their responses.

Meanwhile, 11 political parties have yet to contact the commission regarding their feedback.

The reform proposals in question stem from the Constitutional

Reform Commission, Public Administration Reform Commission, Electoral System Reform Commission, Judicial Reform Commission,

and Anti-Corruption Commission Reform Commission.

These proposals were compiled into spreadsheets and sent to 38 political parties with a request to submit their feedback.

The National Consensus Commission was formed under the leadership of the Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus.

The commission officially began its operations on February 15 and has since been engaging with political parties to gather opinions on the proposed reforms.



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Graduation & Post-Graduation or Equivalents	CGPA 3.25 out of 4.00 and CGPA 4.00 out of 5.00/First Class.	CGPA 3.00 out of 4.00 and CGPA 4.00 out of 5.00/First Class

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