



BNP leaders and activists offer prayers after placing wreaths at the grave of former president Ziaur Rahman in the capital yesterday, marking his 44th death anniversary. BNP and its various associate bodies have organised programmes over eight days across the country to observe the anniversary of the party founder.

Azharul's acquittal 'a mockery of justice'
Says Gonotantrik Odhikar Committee
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gonotantrik Odhikar Committee, a civic platform, yesterday condemned the acquittal of former Jamaat-e-Islami leader ATM Azharul Islam, calling the Appellate Division's verdict a 'mockery of justice' and a result of political influence over the judiciary.

In a statement issued by its executive committee, the platform questioned how a convicted war criminal -- previously sentenced to death by the International Crimes Tribunal -- could now be declared completely innocent.

"Acquitting a recognised war criminal as entirely

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DRAINAGE DISASTER

Why Dhaka drowns every monsoon

Encroached canals, lost wetlands, outdated drainage systems leave the capital submerged after every rain



HELEMUL ALAM

The poor drainage system of Dhaka was once again exposed during the recent heavy rainfall that inundated large swathes of the city.

Non-stop rain that began on Thursday morning and continued into early Friday submerged numerous areas, including Shantinagar, Kalshi, Mirpur, Shewrapara, Green Road, Neelkhel, various parts of Old Dhaka, Bhashantek, Uttarkhan, and Dakkhan Khan.

According to the Bangladesh Meteorological Department, Dhaka received 196 millimetres of rainfall in the 24 hours beginning at 6:00am on Thursday.

Despite the two Dhaka city corporations investing more than Tk 262 crore over four years till 2024 in constructing 334.19km of drainage infrastructure, including box culverts and drains, the capital continues to suffer severe flooding during rain.

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Experts blame indiscriminate filling of waterbodies and canals in the name of urban development, along with outdated and inadequate drainage systems, as the main causes of severe waterlogging in the city. They point out that the filling of flood flow zones has significantly reduced water-carrying capacity, intensifying the city's vulnerability to waterlogging.

A 2019 study by the Bangladesh Institute of Planners (BIP) revealed that Dhaka has lost 3,440 acres out of 9,556 acres of designated flood flow zones, retention areas, and waterbodies since the publication of the previous Detailed Area Plan (DAP-2010).

Adil Mohammed Khan, president of BIP, said the main reason for this persistent waterlogging is unplanned urbanisation that has destroyed waterbodies, canals, and flood flow zones.

He said a liveable city should have at least 35 to 40 percent of its area comprised of

waterbodies and green spaces. In Dhaka, this has been reduced to around 10 percent.

According to BIP data, waterbodies covered 20.57 percent of Dhaka's central area in 1995. By 2023, this figure had dropped to just 2.9 percent. Similarly, green space has shrunk from 22 percent to only 9 percent over the same period.

Adil explained that while artificial drainage can reduce the duration of flooding, it cannot fully eliminate waterlogging if natural channels are destroyed.

Former BIP president Mohammad Fazle Reza Sumon said although water receded faster this time due to recent cleaning efforts in canals like Manda, Zirani, Shyampur, and parts of Sutivola and Dumuni, problems remain.

He said tertiary drains connected to these cleaned canals have not been upgraded to handle rainfall above 400mm.

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Build 'three zero clubs' to save the planet
Prof Yunus urges the youth

BSS, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Prof Muhammad Yunus yesterday urged the youth to build "three zero clubs" to save the planet from destruction, saying the planet will not sustain under the current civilisation.

"The civilisation we are building today is a self-destructive civilisation that will kill [the planet]," he said while delivering his lecture at Soka University in Tokyo.

During the occasion, Prof Yunus received an honorary doctorate degree from Soka University.

He was conferred the honorary degree in



recognition of his contributions to social innovation and global development.

At the programme, Prof Yunus said human beings will not be able to survive under the current civilisation, as environmental destruction is going

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Open Panthakunja for all, abandon ramp project
Mock trial directs govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mock trial yesterday directed the interim government to immediately abandon a ramp of the Dhaka Elevated Expressway, stating it would damage Hatirjheel and Panthakunja.

Considering the overall situation, the public court declared Panthakunja Park open for public use.

The home adviser and relevant authorities were ordered to ensure unrestricted public access to Panthakunja and maintain law and order during the trial, which was held near the SAARC Foara intersection in the capital.

The court directed to suspend all activities related to the connector road until the verdict is implemented, as well as reconsider the contract with the foreign company.

Judges of the court were -- Prof Gitiara Nasreen, member of Media Reform Commission; Shamsi Ara Zaman, general secretary of July Martyrs Memorial Foundation; Prof Anu Muhammad, editor of Sarbojonkotha; Dr Iftekharuzzaman, head of ACC Reform Commission; and Jyotirmoy Barua, convener of Nature and Life Protection Platform.

In the Panthakunja case, the court asserted that the right to file a case in the environmental court must be made accessible to all.

The court also considered the recommendations of the Constitutional Reform Commission highly significant.

According to the commission's proposal: "The commission recommends that any agreement made with (a) a foreign state, (b) an international organisation, (c) a foreign government, (d) a foreign company, or (e) a majority foreign-owned company registered in Bangladesh must be presented in the lower house. Any international agreement that affects national interest or state security must receive prior approval by majority

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Mother fish release eggs in Halda river

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Carp species -- including rui, katla, mrigal, and kalbaish -- released eggs in the Halda River yesterday, a significant moment for Bangladesh's freshwater fish breeding efforts.

The spawning began around 2:00am at 8:10 points along the river, according to fisheries officials.

Hundreds of boats reportedly gathered between 2-5 buckets of eggs each.

Earlier, egg samples were observed at multiple sites yesterday afternoon and on Monday night, with several collectors reporting small quantities gathered, ranging from 50-100 grammes.

Muhammad Shafi, an egg collector from North Madarsha village in Hathazari, said he collected 13 buckets using eight boats, while Md Kamal from Garduara village reported gathering 35 buckets using 13 boats, which he has since preserved in hatcheries for fry production.

The Halda's annual breeding season spans from April to June. Heavy rainfall and thunderstorms, combined with high tides or ebb tides, create optimal conditions for mother fishes to spawn.

This year, recent rainfall led to favourable spawning



A man struggles to ride his bike on a waterlogged road near new market area of the capital yesterday. Non-stop rain that began on Thursday morning and continued into early yesterday submerged numerous areas. The major reason for the constant waterlogging woes is a combination of encroachment and waste-dumping in canals, alongside poor drainage systems. Pictured above, the clogged up Shuvadda canal.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN, PALASH KHAN

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