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SECOND EDITION

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## RIVERS IN DHAKA, CTG CITIES PM approves masterplan to save them

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and PINAKI ROY

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has approved a masterplan to free all major rivers in and around Dhaka and Chattogram cities from encroachment and pollution by 2030.

The PM also directed all concerned to work to this effect "without any delay", a top official at the local government and rural development ministry told The Daily Star.

The premier's approval of the masterplan came recently. A high-powered inter-ministerial committee, led by the LGRD minister, finalised it late last year.

Under the masterplan, the rivers around the capital -- the Buriganga, the Turag, and the Shitalakkhya -- will be freed from grabbing and pollution. The Karnaphuli in Chattogram will also be saved from encroachment and pollution.

"We started our work around three months ago. We have already distributed the tasks among different ministries and departments," LGRD Minister Tajul Islam told this newspaper after the committee met at the Secretariat yesterday.

"Now they are preparing action plans and working on the budget required to implement the masterplan."

The 25-member inter-ministerial body will monitor the progress of the implementation of the master plan as many ministries and departments are involved in the process. It will also ensure that the work of one department does not overlap that of another, mentioned the minister.

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Dirt, debris, and waste turn the Kutubkhali canal water dark in the capital's Shonir Akhra area and give off an overpowering stench. The water of this canal flows into the Shitalakkhya river. This picture was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## DoE punishes 23 errant factories

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Environment yesterday disconnected utility connections of 23 dyeing factories and steel re-rolling mills in the capital's Kadamtali and Shyampur for polluting the Buriganga river and the air.

The drive, led by Director (monitoring and enforcement) of DoE Begum Rubina Ferdousi, also fined seven steel re-rolling mills Tk 1 lakh each for polluting the air.

The drive began at 11:30am and continued until 3:30pm in which representatives of Rab, police, Wasa, Desa, and Titas took part.

"We conducted the drive against the dyeing factories and the steel re-rolling mills as they did not have ETPs [effluent treatment plants] and environmental clearances from the DoE," said Rubina.

The drive is going on in compliance with High Court orders and it will continue against all such

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## KHALEDA'S RELEASE

## Admit guilt, we'll consider your parole

Says home boss; BNP demands release on humanitarian grounds

STAR REPORT

Mentioning that BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia has not yet appealed for parole, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan yesterday said the government would consider it if she admitted guilt and apologised.

"The government will consider the BNP chief's release if she appeals for parole after admitting her guilt and offering apology for it," he said while talking to reporters after attending a religious programme in Tarail upazila in the afternoon, reports UNB.



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## CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

## Measures starting to pay dividend

Claims China as new cases drop; Taiwan reports first death

REUTERS, Shanghai/Beijing

The number of new cases from China's coronavirus epidemic dropped for a third consecutive day yesterday, as an official claimed the strict restrictions that Beijing imposed on affected regions were beginning to show results.

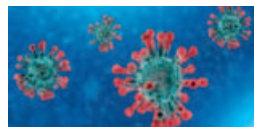
Taiwan yesterday reported its first coronavirus death, the fifth fatality outside mainland China. Taiwan Health Minister Chen Shih-chung said during a news conference that the deceased person was a 61-year-old man who had diabetes and hepatitis B. Taiwan has to date accumulated 20 confirmed cases.

The coronavirus, thought to have emerged at a wildlife market in the central Chinese province of Hubei, has presented the ruling Communist Party with the huge challenge of stamping it out while at the same time minimising damage to the world's second-largest economy.

China's latest figures showed 68,500 cases of the illness and 1,665 deaths, most of them in Hubei.

The National Health Commission reported on Sunday 2,009 new cases, down from 2,641 the previous day, and 142 new deaths, just one lower than the 143 on the previous day. All but four of the new deaths were in Hubei.

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COVID-19  
UPDATE1,670  
DEATHS69,267  
confirmed cases68,500  
confirmed cases in  
mainland ChinaWorst hit Chinese  
region Hubei  
56,249 casesThe virus spread to at  
least 25 countriesAt least 767 confirmed  
cases outside China

## FEUDING AL FACTIONS IN CTG

## 'Go alone' policy got Rezaul ticket

NURUL HAYAT CHOWDHURY and ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chattogram

There were rumours in political circles over the last week that Mayor AJM Nasir Uddin would not get the Awami League ticket to contest the upcoming Chattogram City Corporation election.

At a meeting of AL's Local Government Nomination Board on Saturday, AL President Sheikh Hasina spoke her mind: "Leave Nasir out of consideration."

The 18 AL aspirants from the port city were present at the meeting at the Gono Bhaban, insiders told The Daily Star.

Hearing it from Hasina, most of the aspirants lauded the decision and said no businessman should get the AL ticket, indicating that Chattogram Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Mahbubul Alam should also not be nominated.

When the mayoral hopefuls said Hasina was the one who should pick the nominee, she announced the name of Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, joint general secretary of Chattogram City AL.

The city AL is divided in two factions -- one led by Mayor Nasir and another by the family of late mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury.

Rezaul, however, has never aligned himself to either

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## WASTING ICU EQUIPMENT

## Govt finds 5 doctors of NICRH negligent

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A government probe committee has found five officials of National Institute of Cancer Research and Hospital to have been negligent in preserving and protecting hospital equipment, including intensive care unit ventilators, said a report submitted to the High Court yesterday.

The five officials are: AMM Shariful Alam, a director and project director between May 3, 2007 and February 8, 2009; Farhad Halim, who was project director from March 16, 2004 to May 3, 2007; Professor Mollah Obaidullah Baki, a

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Rickshaw vans carrying steel rods travel against the traffic near Rayerbagh bus stand on the Dhaka-Chattogram highway. Scenes like this are very common there and the traffic policemen stationed there, not in frame, rarely take action to stop the blatant breach of traffic law.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING Will ask ACC to investigate Laxmipur MP

Says Qader; Momen terms allegations 'fake news'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Road, Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader will ask the ACC to investigate the allegations of human trafficking against Laxmipur-2 MP Quazi Shaheed Islam alias Papul.

"As per the prime minister's stance against corruption, I will ask the Anti-Corruption Commission to look into the matter," Quader told reporters at his ministry yesterday.

"Legal measures will be taken if there is any complaint of corruption [against Shaheed Islam]," he added.

However, Foreign

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## You wil be Remembered.....



**Mr. Ekram Uddin Mollah**

Born : 30th January 1991 - Died : 17th February 2019

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