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Stare of ecocide

At Ashuliya, a real estate developer engages 200 dredgers to fill up low-lying flood retention land, which may lead to an environmental disaster

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A real estate developer has engaged over 200 dredgers in filling up a vast low-lying land at Ashuliya, which may result in an environmental disaster.

In flagrant defiance of the existing laws and the authorities concerned, the Jamuna Group of Industries runs the filling-up drive for construction of the New Uttara Model Town. The dredgers are operating round the clock amid surveillance by armed hoodlums.

The entire Ashuliya area, about 20 kilometres northwest of the capital, is clearly defined in the Dhaka Master Plan as flood flow zone and vital retention point for floodwater.

The area must be preserved as simple agricultural land in dry season and a flood flow zone in monsoon, top Rajuk officials said.

Environmentalists fear that if Ashuliya is filled up, the floodwater will rush towards Dhaka, leading to erosion on the banks of Turag, Buriganga and as far as Shitalakhya.

The flood protection embankment of the capital will also be threatened by the onrush of floodwater. Worryingly, it will inflict 'irreparable' damages on the ecology of the region, they forecast.

Rajuk sources said the developer has already submitted a layout plan for the New Uttara Model Town to Rajuk for approval.

And, the file has been mysteriously classified as 'pending' despite the fact that top Rajuk officials are supposedly fighting to protect the area from being plundered.

Sources said some Rajuk officials are secretly lobbying for approval to the plan. Like many other similar projects approved by Rajuk – undercover, of course – the New Uttara Model Town may also be approved, warned an official source.

Rajuk first filed a case against Managing Director and Chairman of the Jamuna Group of Industries Nurul Islam Babul on September 10, 2001 with the Savar Police Station under the clauses 5 and 8 of the wetland protection act (case No. 13, dated 10.9.2001). But the police failed to take any action, as whenever an official of the Savar Police Station went to investigate the case he was either transferred or suspended, sources said.

Mohammad Samez Uddin, the tahshildar of the Tafsil Office at Savar, also filed a case with Savar Police Station against the Jamuna Group of Industries (case No. 53, dated 12.1.2002). Samez alleged in the petition that the developer forcibly and illegally occupied acres of khas (public) lands, parts of the Turag River and canals and low-lying areas. The developer also embarked on

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PHOTO: STAR

A real estate developer runs dredgers in the flood flow zone of Ashuliya, about 20km northwest of the capital, to fill up a vast low-lying area. The massive filling-up is inviting ecological catastrophe.

CID nabs 17 in Alam murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) have arrested 17 people over the last week in connection with the murder of industrialist SM Alam and his three housemaids at Alambagh in the city's New Jurain on January 1 this year.

The arrested are Mohammad Yusuf Miah, Miraj Miah, Haji Md. Rafizuddin alias Khathal Haji, Md. Islam, Rina, Sohel, Sohagh Bepari, Kabir, Abdur Rahman, Asma Rahman, Rehana, Noor Alam, Abdul Kader, Noor Moahmmad, Md. Ismail, Md Safiqul Islam, and Md. Nizam.

Unidentified miscreants slaughtered Alam and the three housemaids and looted cash and gold ornaments said to be worth about 4 crore from Alam's residence.

A murder case was filed with Shyampur Police Station and later shifted to the Detective Branch of Police. Finally, the CID took up the case on March 19.

CID inspector Bazlur Rahman said the huge amounts of cash and valuables looted from the victim's

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Sony killing Police get lead from Tagar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police extracted important information from the arrested Mushfiq Uddin Tagar, one of the main suspects in the Sony murder case, on the first day of a three-day remand yesterday.

During interrogation, Tagar and Masum Billah alias Rana, another suspect in the case, told the police about the weapons they possessed, the police sources said. The suspects also disclosed the names of other accomplices who were involved in the shootout that left Sabequn Nahar Sony, a BUET student, killed on June 8.

Earlier on Monday night, after being interrogated for several hours, Tagar said he had seven firearms, including cut rifles, pistols and several rounds of ammunition. He also said his rival, Mukammel Hayat Muki, another main suspect in

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Talismanic Ronaldo takes Brazil to final



PHOTO: INTERNET

Midas touch...Brazil's magical marksman Ronaldo fires the winner as a wary Turkey goalkeeper Rustu Recber watches during yesterday's semifinal clash in Saitama, Japan. Four-time world champions Brazil will take on three-time winners Germany in Sunday's finale at Yokohama.

REUTERS/AFP, Saitama

A moment of magic by superstar Ronaldo fired Brazil into a World Cup final showdown with Germany and shattered Turkey's dreams of glory here yesterday.

Ronaldo's shot, which Turkey goalkeeper Rustu Recber got a hand to the ball but could not keep it out, decided a tight tussle at Saitama Stadium that the four-times world champions thoroughly deserved to win and takes them through to their seventh World Cup final.

Ronaldo's strike made him topscorer at the tournament with six goals.

He said his team had had to fight all the way against dogged opponents.

"Turkey were well-organised. They are a very good team who deserved to be in the semi-finals," he said.

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Grameen Match Report

DHL Spec Report

Axe-wary ministers

Reshuffle in sight next month

REZAUL KARIM

A number of ministers and state ministers face probable axe as Prime Minister Khaleda Zia proceeds to downsize and reshuffle the mammoth cabinet early next month.

Usually, a government does not reshuffle the cabinet or drop anyone during a budget session, hence the changes will probably take place after the current budgetary session ends on June 30.

Concern is spreading from the top brass to the junior most ministerial positions and has increased following the forced resignation of AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury as president on June 21.

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Sources said the prime minister has almost finalised her decision to drop some cabinet ministers and a number of state ministers for allegations of corruption and their poor performance in running the administration.

The PM has been informed by party reports and intelligence agencies on dishonest conduct and lacklustre performances by certain ministers, the sources added.

Moreover, ministers holding important portfolios who have been ineffective will exchange portfolios with other ministries of comparatively less importance.

Badruddoza's exit Opposition demands talks in House

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday witnessed an hour-long unscheduled deliberation on the resignation of president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury with the opposition demanding a discussion on it for the third consecutive day.

In response to the opposition demand, Acting Speaker Akther Hamid Siddiqui, who was presiding over the morning sitting of the House, said he had received several notices on the president's resignation and would consider those after the proposed budget is passed.

Lawmakers from the main opposition Awami League (AL) and Ershad-led Jatiya Party (JP), rising on points of order, asked for explanation

why the House was not even informed of the president's resignation that led to a national debate.

The treasury bench members however kept mum on the issue.

Badruddoza stepped down on June 21 following the ruling BNP Parliamentary Party's unanimous resolution asking him to resign immediately.

"When the issue is being discussed even at tea stalls, why should it not be discussed in the parliament?" Golam Habib Dulal of the JP asked the acting speaker. "Although the House is the centre of all state activities, it was not even informed of the matter," he added.

AL lawmaker AKM Jahangir Hossain said he had submitted three notices for discussion on the presi-

dent's resignation, but the chair did not even inform the House about the fate of those notices.

He gave notices under Section 71 of the Rules of Procedure (addressing the leader of the House), under Section 62 (motion for adjournment on a matter of public importance) and under section 147 (general motions).

The opposition lawmaker said what can be more important than resignation of the president that created a national crisis. The parliament must have a discussion on such an important matter. At least the chair should have informed the

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WB okays \$199m power loan

WORLD BANK RELEASE, Washington

The World Bank Tuesday announced the approval of a US\$191 million International Development Association (IDA) credit and a US\$8 million Global Environment Facility (GEF) grant for the Rural Electrification and Renewable Energy Development Project, that expands access to environmentally-sound energy in remote communities in Bangladesh.

Despite the rapid increase in the expansion of the rural energy network, enabling some 350-400,000 additional households to be connected each year, an estimated 10 million rural households in Bangladesh lack access to electricity.

The absence of reliable power remains a significant barrier to

economic development and lasting poverty reduction in Bangladesh. The Rural Electrification and Renewable Energy Development Project will extend the electricity system to nearly 700,000 remote households and small businesses.

At the core of this expansion effort is a successful partnership between the Rural Electrification Board and the Village Electricity Cooperatives which ensures the efficient and reliable delivery of rural electricity.

The Village Electricity Cooperatives are governed by councils which include elected consumer representatives. The electricity tariffs are established by the cooperatives themselves under regulatory oversight of the Rural Electrification Board.

"The Rural Electrification Board

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5 killed as truck collides with microbus in Manikganj

UNB, Manikganj

Five people were killed and nine others injured in a head-on collision between a truck and a microbus at Uchulia on Dhaka-Aricha highway yesterday.

Police said microbus driver Keshu Miah, 37, passengers Kartik Saha, 35, Delwar, 30, and another 32-year-old unidentified man died on the spot when the truck coming from Dhaka collided with the microbus at about 6 am.

Another injured passenger, Rashid, 30, died on way to hospital in Dhaka.

The seriously injured people who were sent to Pangu Hospital in Dhaka were identified as Delwar, 25, Liton, 25, Halim, 27, Akmat Ali, 44, Ratan, 35, and Sorban Uddin, 42.

A case was filed with Sadar police.

AJM closes on Sunday

UNB, Dhaka

Adamjee Jute Mills will be closed down Sunday (June 30) and payoff for the employees under a 'golden handshake' start immediately, said a government announcement today.

"The government has decided to close down Adamjee Jute Mills from June 30 and paying off dues of its employees under a golden handshake will begin without delay," it said.

Jute Minister Hafizuddin Ahmed disclosed the decision in a meeting with the CBA leaders of Adamjee at his ministry today (Wednesday).

He said the government did not shut down the world's biggest jute mill earlier considering the employees' welfare and interest.

"But the mill is incurring huge loss perennially posing a threat to the country's economy that cannot be allowed anyway," the Minister told

the union leaders, stating the imperative of closing it.

He said the staff would be paid wage arrears for four weeks, including house rents, before closing the mill.

Adamjee has some 17,000 permanent workers, employees and officials apart from a large number of temporary workers.

Minister Hafizuddin Ahmed requested the CBA leaders to help implement the government decision.

The union leaders assured the Minister of their help in implementing the decision on closure of the biggest loss-incurring state-owned enterprise.

Among others, Alhaj Giasuddin Ahmed MP, Jute Secretary ASM Sanwar Kamal, BJMC chairman ASM Abdul Halim and Adamjee Jute Mills CBA president Ruhul Amin Sarder were present in the meeting.