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Banglabandha land port still dysfunctional on lack of Indian support

RAFIQ HASAN

The country's only export-oriented land port Banglabandha could not be made fully operational even after its formal opening in May this year, mainly due to lack of co-operation from New Delhi, sources concerned said.

According to shipping ministry sources, the inefficacy of the land port in northern Panchagarh district results from the absence of an agree-

ment between Dhaka and New Delhi on transportation of goods to and from Nepal through a 52km Indian corridor.

New Delhi did not respond to Dhaka's proposal for reaching an understanding to facilitate Bangladesh-Nepal trade, sources alleged. Indian customs now allows only two hours a day to Nepal-bound trucks from Bangladesh for crossing the Indian territory.

"The warehouse built at the land

port at a cost of over Tk two crore remained unused since its opening," said a high official in the ministry.

According to sources, all necessary infrastructures at the port were developed temporarily to boost trade with the land-locked Himalayan Kingdom Nepal. But no support came from India, which lies between the two South Asian neighbours.

The government formally

opened the land port on May 22 this year with a hope that India would increase the transit time for using its corridor and improve infrastructures for transportation of goods to and from Nepal through Indian lands.

Bangladesh set up customs, immigration, banks, police camps, warehouses and all other necessary infrastructures for the land port. There is also a plan to build a

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Dhaka calls for regional water co-operation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh yesterday called for greater regional cooperation in sustainable management of common water resources and in addressing the twin problems of severe water shortage in dry season and floods in the monsoon.

The call came at the inaugural session of the Third South Asia Water Forum (SAWAF-III) that was convened in a city hotel yesterday with focus on issues like poverty reduction through water management, regional cooperation in disaster management, and sustainable environment.

Participants in the three day long conference will discuss a number of water issues and develop strategies to implement the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM).

As many as 70 papers on different key issues will be read out in the conference organised by Bangladesh Water Partnership

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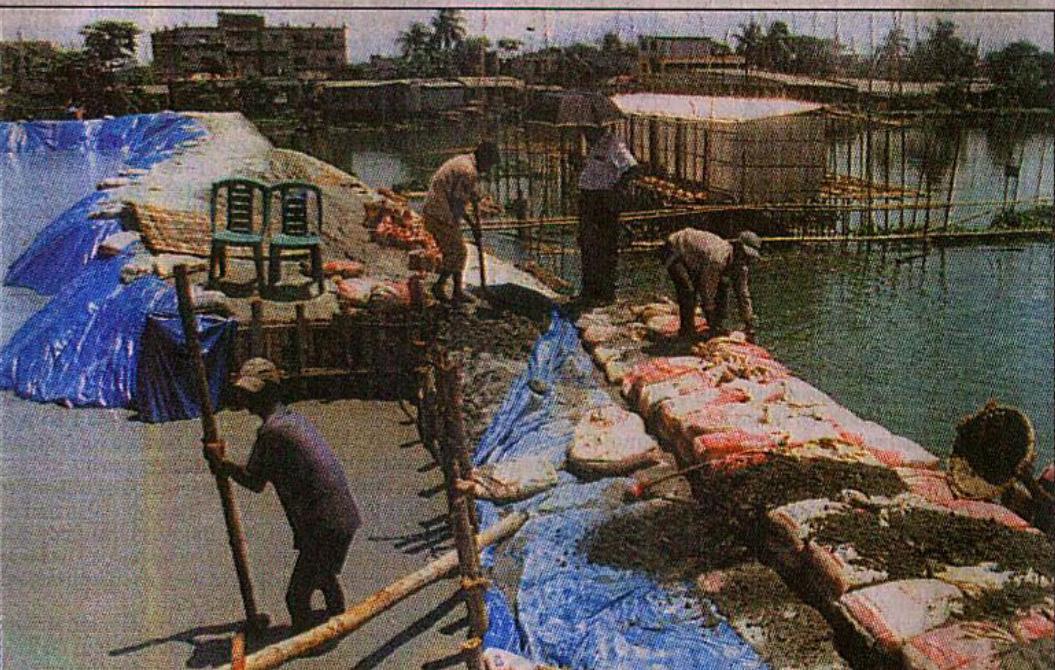


PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority builds a powerhouse in Kamrangirchar on a plot reclaimed from the Buriganga ignoring environment activists' repeated plea to cancel the project.



PHOTO: STAR

Banned but exists... Manufacture and use of polythene bags have been banned for over two years now. But a heap of polythene bags, collected from different city areas and washed in the Buriganga river at Kamrangirchar for recycling, exposes the unabated use of the environmentally hostile material.

Two more DU teachers get death threat

UNB, Dhaka

Two more Dhaka University (DU) teachers received death threat yesterday from unknown vigilantes.

DU sources said a member of an unknown group entered the office of Geology Department Chairman Prof Hossain Monsur at noon and misbehaved with him. The trespasser issued the death threat as the professor asked him to get out.

The activist was reportedly distributing leaflets on the university campus.

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Two traders robbed of Tk 1.1 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Muggers yesterday robbed two businessmen of Tk 1.1 lakh at Motijheel in the city.

Medicine dealers Osman Gani and Lytton Bishwas of Raipura, Narshingdi were going to Motijheel medicine market from Kamalapur railway station by a CNG-driven three-wheeler.

On their way near Shapla Square at around 7:00am, two goons pushed their way into the auto-rickshaw. They took away Tk 80,000 from Osman and Tk 30,000 from Lytton before forcing them out of the vehicle in Bakshibazar area.

Prayer Timing

July 14		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:10	4:45
Zohr	12:45	1:15
Asr	5:00	5:15
Maghrab	6:55	7:00
Esha	8:17	8:45

Source: Islamic Foundation

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Aids fight must match war on terror

Annan tells US

BBC ONLINE

The United States must lead the fight against Aids with the same commitment it shows to financing the battles against terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan says.

Terrorism could kill thousands but "here we have an epidemic that is killing millions", he said in an exclusive interview with the BBC.

"We hear a lot about weapons of mass destruction. We hear a lot about terrorism, and we are worried about weapons of mass destruction because of their potential to kill

thousands of people," Annan said in an interview with the BBC yesterday.

Annan appealed to the US to devote more money to tackling HIV/Aids.

But President Bush's Aids adviser said the US was already by far the biggest contributor to anti-Aids campaigns.

Annan who is attending the International Aids Conference in Bangkok, said the US was spending huge amounts to tackle terrorism and weapons of mass destruction but had failed to deliver on its promises to combat the spread of Aids.

He expressed disappointment

that some of the \$15bn earmarked by President George W Bush to tackle HIV/Aids was not yet going to the global fund - the body set up to raise money for Aids programmes.

The global fund is ready to go. If individual governments begin to set up their own initiatives, they start from scratch, it takes longer, the money that they hold will not be spent for a long time," he said.

Annan said he had hoped the US could at least contribute \$1bn a year through the global fund, with the EU putting in another \$1bn.

With additional resources raised

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Israel now rerouting West Bank barrier

Jihad chief in Jenin shot dead

AGENCIES, Jerusalem

Israel is redrawing the route of its West Bank barrier closer to its borders to ensure Palestinians are not cut off from their lands in keeping with a High Court order, security sources say.

The World Court, the UN's highest judicial arm, branded the barrier illegal and called for its removal in a non-binding opinion last week rejected by Israel and hailed by Palestinians.

Two senior US security envoys were to see Prime Minister Ariel Sharon shortly about the repercussions of the World Court decision, unauthorized Jewish settlement

outposts in the West Bank, and his plan to withdraw settlers from occupied Gaza.

In the northern West Bank town of Jenin yesterday, a local leader of the radical Palestinian movement Islamic Jihad was killed by Israeli troops.

Numan Tahaineh, 38, was killed in his car in an "assassination operation" by Israel, which has carried out numerous targeted killings of Palestinian militants during the latest Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The barrier henceforth should not isolate nearby Palestinian farmers from olive and citrus groves or maroon villages in enclaves without free access to essential services like

Israeli armored vehicles in Jenin earlier in the day, with troops storming the hospital and other buildings, according to an AFP correspondent and Palestinian security sources.

Meanwhile, an Israeli security source said yesterday redrafted Defence Ministry guidelines for the barrier -- a 100-metre (330-foot)-wide swathe of razor-fringed fencing and concrete walls -- would have it run "as close as possible" to the Israeli-West Bank boundary.

The barrier followed a raid by

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Proshika chief gets bail in sedition case

UNB, Dhaka

Qazi Faruque Ahmed, president of Proshika, was yesterday granted bail by the High Court in sedition case.

A division bench comprising Justice Nozrul Islam Chowdhury and Justice Farid Ahmed passed the order making the rule issued earlier absolute.

Qazi Faruque faces at least one and a half dozen criminal cases filed one after another since he was arrested on May 22.

Another division bench comprising Justice Nazmunnur Sultan and AKM Asaduzzaman granted ad interim bail to Shahidul Alam, director general of BIAM for three months when he appeared in the court.

He sought the bail in apprehension of implicating him in smuggling of secret documents from the Prime Minister's office (PMO) along with AHM Nurul Islam who was sent into forced retirement as acting secretary to the prime minister.

"India buys rice from its farmers at \$257 per tonne while it exports rice to Bangladesh at only \$127 a tonne," the minister said at the closing ceremony of a donor-funded project -- Poverty Elimination

Through Rice Research Assistance (Petra) -- held at Sheraton Hotel in the capital yesterday.

Anwar went on, "We still import rice mainly because of our trade policy loopholes. Rice production in the country has reached 26 million tonnes a year, which is enough for meeting our requirement."

Agricultural production in Bangladesh is the costliest in South Asian countries including India, Pakistan and Myanmar. In many

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Subsidy makes Indian rice dumping

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Minister for Agriculture MK Anwar said dumping of Indian rice at much lower prices is one of the major reasons why farmers in Bangladesh are not getting reasonable prices for their product.

"India buys rice from its farmers at \$257 per tonne while it exports rice to Bangladesh at only \$127 a tonne," the minister said at the closing ceremony of a donor-funded project -- Poverty Elimination

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JB chair quits, add'l secy takes over

Sonali Bank DMD fills MD post temporarily

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday appointed finance ministry Additional Secretary Shafiqul Islam as acting chairman of Janata Bank (JB), after M Aliyubur Rahman resigned from the chair citing

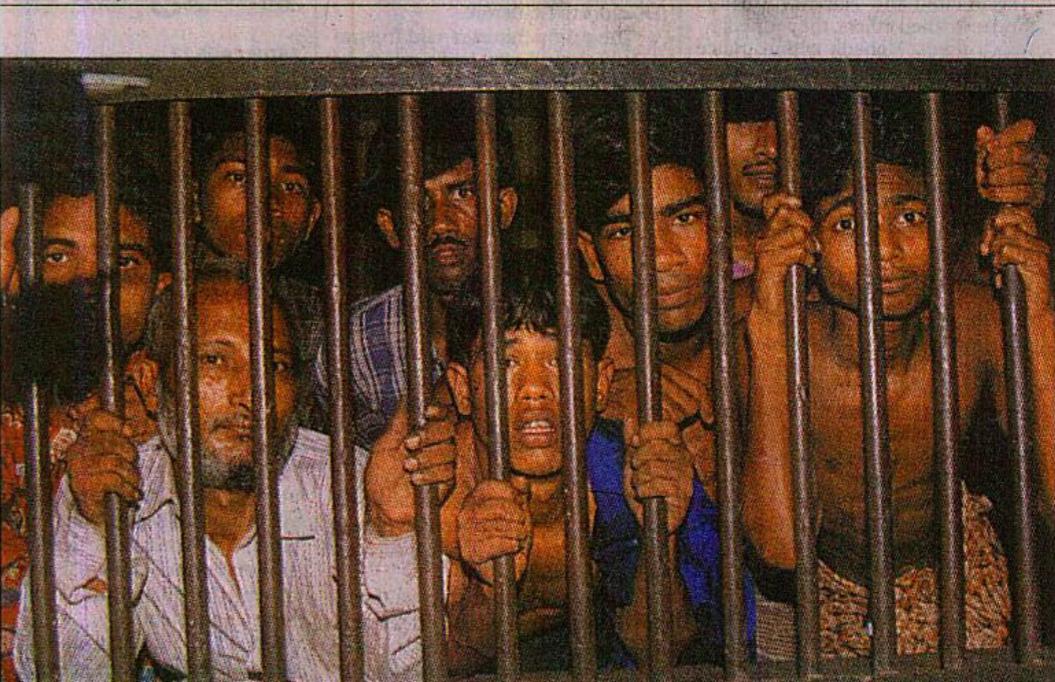
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FUND RELEASE
Saifur slams ministries' foot-dragging

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman criticised some ministries yesterday for not being able to release funds on time and also identified the incapability of those ministries as one of the main reasons for not implementing the development projects on time.

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An assortment of people, picked after Monday's shootout at Rayerbazar, watch out activities from behind bars at Mohammadpur Police Station yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR