



Developers continue their work in the Hatirjheel canal in the capital as the authorities are yet to take any step to stop it despite recent commitment to save the waterbody. PHOTO: STAR

HATIRJHEEL, BEGUNBARI CANALS

No step yet to stop choking of 2 major flood outlets

PINAKI ROY

The government is yet to take any step to stop 'development' work in Hatirjheel and Begunbari canals despite experts' recommendations and the government's earlier commitment for saving the two adjoining water bodies in the capital.

The significance of Begunbari and Hatirjheel wetlands in southern and central parts of Dhaka lies in the fact that connected to the

Narai canal they drain out rainwater from a vast area of the city.

The wetlands—Hatirjheel on the east of the Tongi Diversion Road and Begunbari on the west—also form part of the flood retention zone.

However, most part of the Begunbari wetland is already occupied. Bangladesh Railway has also leased out pieces of land in Begunbari area to different public and private organisations, which

have built multi-storey buildings ignoring laws that prohibit filling up of wetlands.

In Hatirjheel too influential and local people have built more than 1,200 illegal structures over the years.

Experts said if Begunbari and Hatirjheel cannot be saved, the city's inundation problem will increase manifold causing a great disaster to the city's environment.

"If Begunbari and Hatirjheel

cannot be saved, the drainage balance of the capital will be completely destroyed," said Iqbal Habib, architect and wetland expert with Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa).

According to a recent survey of the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk), there are 1261 illegal structures only in Hatirjheel area: 150 one-storey to six-storey concrete structures, 855

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Crucial coal policy draft put under microscope

New committee holds first meet tomorrow, only days before deadline

SHARIF KHAN

As the sixth draft of a national coal policy has drawn a lot of criticism for being anti-investment and self-contradictory, the energy ministry has formed yet another committee to review and finalise it.

Formation of this committee was announced on June 21 through a circular with a one-month deadline to complete its task but sources

said its first meeting is expected to be held tomorrow.

The ministry has assigned the eight-member committee headed by former vice chancellor of BUET

Prof Abdul Matin Patwari to scrutinise the sixth draft, make recommendations, finalise the draft and submit it to the energy ministry.

The committee could not meet so far as Patwari is on a tour abroad from last month. The caretaker govern-

ment had earlier made Patwari head of another committee to scrutinise some power deals signed by the four-party alliance government.

The present committee includes Chairman of the University Grants Commission Prof Nazrul Islam, defence representative Maj Gen Ismail Faruk Chowdhury, journalist Ataus Samad, geologist Prof Badrul

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Lanka may be last recipient of Buddha's hair

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, Ctg

The hair-relic of Gautam Buddha, to be presented to the Sri Lankan government later this month, might be the last Buddhist relic to be given away, as Bangladesh's own stock of such relics is now very little.

"We would not be able to give any relics to anyone in future as the quantity is very little and might be exhausted," said Ajit Barua, President of the Bangladesh Buddhist Association.

Since a Tibetan monk donated it in 1930, the hair relics (Kesho Dhatu) of Gautam Buddha have been preserved in Chittagong Buddhist Monastery in the port city for last 77 years.

The gift to Sri Lanka would not

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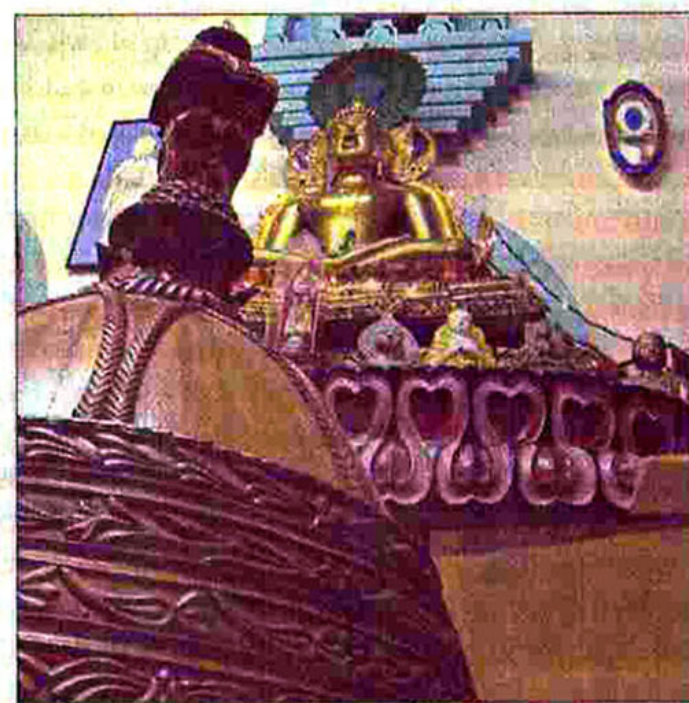


PHOTO: ZOBAER HOSSAIN BIKDER
This adorned wooden pot in front of the statue of Buddha contains his hair, part of which will be gifted to Sri Lanka.

Sircar violated basic standard of financial propriety

M Hafizuddin writes to The Daily Star

Section 10 of the General Financial Rules says: "Every officer incurring or authorising expenditure from public funds should be guided by high standards of financial propriety."

Its sub-section 3 says: "No authority should exercise its powers for sanctioning expenditure to pass an order which will be directly or indirectly to its own advantage."

According to the general financial rules, the mother of all financial rules, the existing practice is

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Reforms with a 'motive' won't bring good

Says Gayeshwar after meeting Bhuiyan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Joint Secretary General Gayeshwar Chandra Roy, who has all along been siding with Khaleda Zia on the issue of intra-party reforms, yesterday met pro-reform leader and Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan.

Coming out of the meeting at Bhuiyan's Gulshan residence, he said that it would bring no good for the party or the country if there is a motive behind the reform initiative.

"Reforms should be carried out with everyone involved in the process and no particular individual on the sidelines," he told the

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MYSTERY STILL SHROUDS MASS SUICIDE

'Coffins no proof that they became Christians'

AMINUL ISLAM, from Mymensingh

The rumour that the nine persons of a family who committed suicide in unison on Wednesday in Mymensingh had converted to Christianity is not true, claimed a close relative of the family.

Nine members of late Anwar Hossain Fakir's family committed suicide jumping under a running train near their residence at Kashor on Wednesday. The dead were identified as Hena Begum, 60, wife of late Anwar Hossain Fakir, their daughters Mubi, 40, Akhtari Begum, 35, Murshida, 30, and Shabnam, 10, their sons Arif, 26 and Rahat, 18, and Mubi's son Mollah, 8 and her daughter Mariam, 10.

Tariqul Alam Tuhin, a nephew of Hena, said the rumour that they all had converted to Christianity was sparked by two coffins found at the house of the victims, but those two coffins had actually been used to carry Anwar Hossain Fakir's body from Dhaka to Kashor after he had died in Birdem Hospital in the capital in 2003.

The family members might have preserved the coffins with great care as memories of the deceased, Tuhin added.

Anwar Hossain Fakir, also known as Dervish Baba in the

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Rajuk surveyor held with fake seals, cheques & passports

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The joint forces on Thursday night arrested a suspended surveyor of Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha (Rajuk) at his residence in Uttara.

The surveyor (Kamungo), Nikhil Chandra Das, who is known as Barua among his colleagues, allegedly confessed to the forces that he owns wealth worth around Tk 10 crore, sources in the joint forces said.

A team of the joint forces raided Nikhil's rented house in Sector-11, Road no 5/C in Uttara at 10:00pm.

They searched all rooms of the house for one and a half hours and recovered 48 forged seals of top Rajuk officials including that of the

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Kumar, Mahela rule

BISHWAJIT ROY from Kandy

There were spells of sporadic rain but those could not stop a full day's action, unlike the last two days, on the third day of the final Test as Kumar Sangakkara and Mahela Jayawardene put the Bangladesh bowling attack to sword at the Asgiriya Stadium here yesterday.

During their record third wicket stand of 311 runs, the highest for

any wicket against Bangladesh, the left-right combination once again played big role as Sri Lanka ended the day exactly on 500 for 4, already a mammoth 369-run first innings lead.

Sri Lanka skipper Jayawardene was dismissed after scoring 165 runs but his deputy Sangakkara, who was unbeaten on 222, slammed his second consecutive

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