

Govt keen to implement water sharing treaty with India

Says state minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Jahangir Kabir Nanak yesterday said the government is working to implement the water sharing treaty with India signed in 1996.

He also said the transboundary water problems would be solved by regional coordination and a task force would be formed to this end.

He said this at a seminar on 'Transboundary river basin of Bangladesh: Situation analysis of water and sanitation' to mark the World Water Day at the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) auditorium.

This year's theme for the World Water Day is 'Shared Water - Shared Opportunities'.

"Had the treaty come into effect, there would not have been any water crisis, but the past governments failed to implement the treaty due to their political weaknesses. We will implement the treaty by strengthening the friendly ties with India," Nanak said while talking to journalists after the seminar.

He said the government will take steps to adopt coordinated policies at the national level to protect the water resources.

A regional water policy will also be adopted along with India, Nepal and Bhutan, he added.

Secretary to the Local Government Division of LGRD ministry Shaikh Khurshid Alam said, "We need to ensure adequate flow of water, its quality and optimum use of the resources to address the water crisis."

DPHE, NGO Forum for Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation, United Nations Information Centre (UNIC), World Health Organisation (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) and WSP jointly organised the seminar.

Md Mustafizur Rahman, chief engineer of DPHE, chaired the seminar while Dr Andrew Trevett, environmental health adviser and acting WHO representative to Bangladesh, and Carel de Rooy, country representative, Unicef Bangladesh, also spoke.

Prof Rezaur Rahman of Buet presented the keynote paper at the seminar.

Meanwhile, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Hasan Mahmud yesterday said the government is taking pragmatic steps for resolving the regional water sharing issues as well as moving ahead for sharing the hydropower potentials in South Asia.

In this connection, he mentioned the signing and implementation of Ganges Water Sharing Treaty signed between Dhaka and Delhi in 1996.

The State Minister was speaking at the Chief Guest at a seminar entitled 'Transboundary Water: Sharing Water, Sharing Opportunities' at Dhaka Reporters' Unity Lounge.

Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Society organised the programme. Danish Ambassador Einar Heibogaard Jensen attended the seminar as the special guest.

Hasan Mahmud said international agencies and friends were also interested to support initiatives taken by the government. He said to reap the maximum benefit from transboundary water resources all the countries in the region should act in a coordinated fashion.



BNP Chairperson Khaled Zia presides over a meeting of standing committee of the party at her Gulshan office in the city yesterday.

20 Hindus injured in clash with land grabbers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

At least 20 people of Hindu community were injured in a clash with the land grabbers following the disputed Mondir land. The incident took place at the village Samaj Gram of Chatmohar upazila under Pabna district on Sunday evening. The clash erupts following the disputed land of 'Hari Mondir' of the village. Of the injured 15 people including the women are admitted to Chatmohar health complex.

Sources told that the land of 'Hari Mondir' of Samaj gram was disputed since a long. Local sources told that the dispute over the land was continuing between Hindu community and the land grabbers. Following the enmity the muslimen of land grabbers attacked the Hindu community people at the afternoon yesterday. The victims tried to resist prompted the clash.

At least 20 people including the Hindu men and women were injured in this incident. Of them 15 were admitted to Chatmohar health complex sources told. Of them Sushil Haldar, Vela Haldar, Gobinda Sutradhar, Ajit Haldar, Goutam Sutradhar, Shuva rani, Shamol Shutra Dhar, Lota Rani, Bimal, Nepal Haldar, Panitash Maitra, Alea Rani, Shipra Rani are critically injured.

Being informed the additional police rushed the spot. The preparation was going to filing the case on filing this report on Sunday night. "We have visited the spot. The land is disputed. We are investigating the matter." Additional police Superintendent Basudeb Bonik told yesterday night when he was visiting the spot.

Police and locals said the accident occurred when a Panchagarh-bound BRTC bus and a tractor collided head-on leaving 22 people injured.

On information, police rushed to the spot and sent the injured to Thakurgaon Sadar Hospital.

Two boys rescued from traffickers

A CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj

Police rescued two minor boys while they were being trafficked yesterday at Maksudpur in Gopalganj.

The rescued boys were identified as Ifi and Shawan, both are students of class IV of SM Model Government Primary School in Gopalganj town.

The boys were rescued while traffickers taking them to Dhaka by a bus. The traffickers deserted them sensing trouble at a police check post on the Dhaka-Khulna highway at Maksudpur.

Officer-in-Charge (OC) AKM Liakat Ali said they handed over the boys to their parents.

Badal, a local daily, has been suffering from throat cancer for the last three months.

Badal, also a freedom fighter, has lost all his savings after spending about Tk three lakh for his treatment.

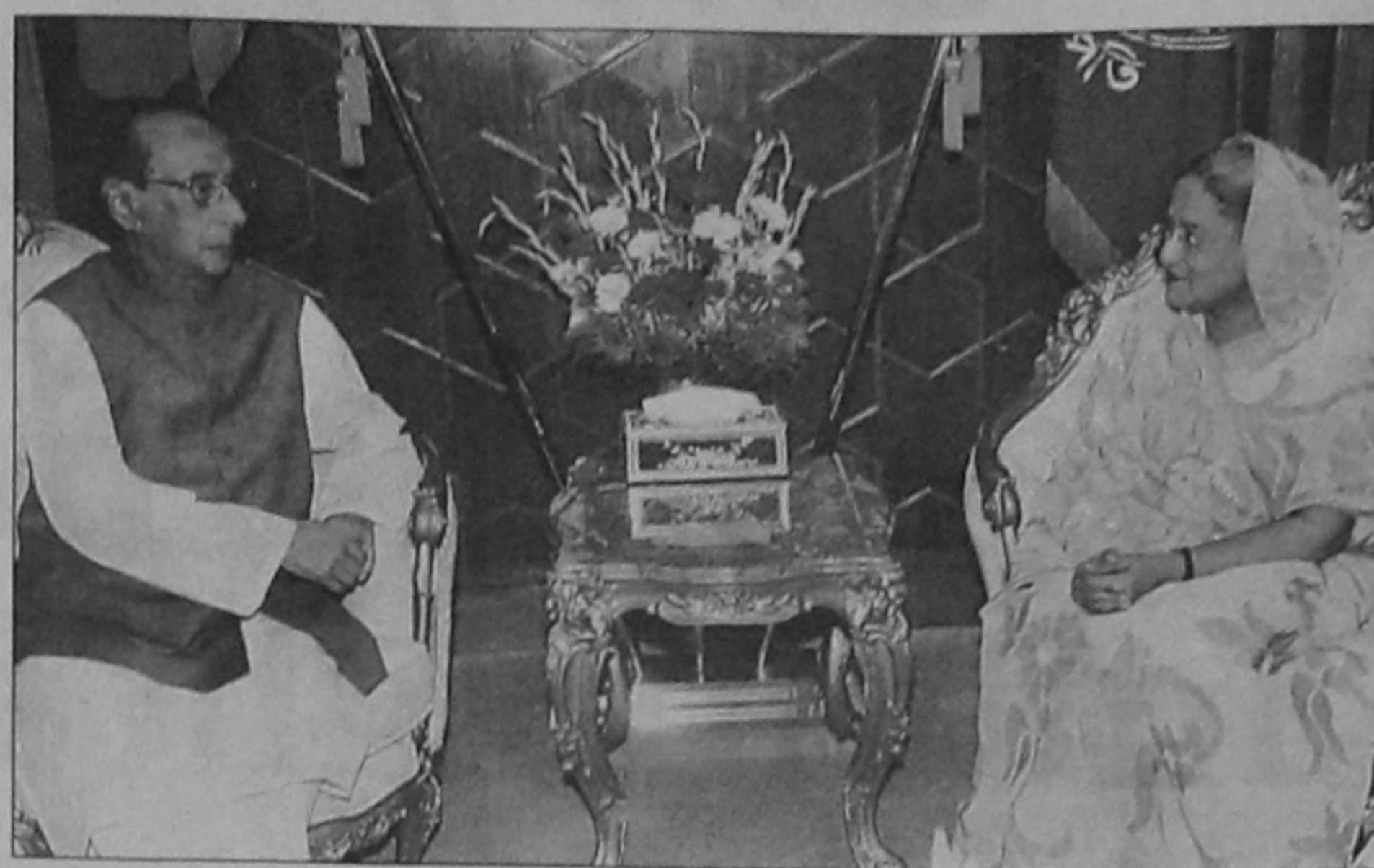
After seeing doctors at Mymensingh and Dhaka, he later flew to Kolkata in January and got admitted at Thakur Pukurpar Cancer Welfare Home and Research Institute where he underwent a major operation on January 19.

He is now receiving treatment under the supervision of cancer specialist Dr A Ganguly there.

Badal, father of two, said he would need to visit Kolkata for at least six times for taking cameo and radiotherapy and he needs about Tk 10 lakh for the long-term treatment.

Since he is unable to bear such huge expenses, Badal has appealed to the affluent to stand by him so that he could start his normal life again.

Contributions can be sent to Zillur Rahman Khan and Mir Golam Mustafa, Savings Account No 4030/290430/300, AB Bank, Mymensingh branch.



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina calls on President Zillur Rahman at Bangabhaban in the city yesterday.

Ad-interim bail to Jamaat leader Razzaq, wife

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday granted anticipatory bail for three months to Jamaat leader barrister Razzaq Siddiq and his wife Saleha Razzaq Siddiq in a case filed by the police on charges of criminal intimidation to on-duty police and trespass.

Upon a bail petition jointly filed by the Razzaq couple, an HC bench comprising Justice Syed AB Mahmudul Huq and Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury issued a rule upon the government to explain within three weeks as to why the petitioners should not be granted regular bail in the case.

The petitions appeared before the HC for bail in the case.

On March 19, Dewan Abul Hossain, police inspector of the Immigration at Zia International Airport (ZIA), filed the criminal case with the Airport Police Station against them on charges of obstructing the authorities at the airport in the course of their duties at early hours on March 19.

According to the case statement, the couple violated the law by forcing their way into the protected boarding bridge zone ZIA without the authorities' approval or exit seals on their passports, intimidating security personnel and obstructing them from discharging their duty in the early hours on March 19.

After securing interim anticipatory bail, barrister Razzaq filed a writ petition with another HC division bench challenging the legality of filing the case against him and his wife.

The HC is likely to hear the petition today.

Barrister Ajmalul Hossain appeared for the petitioners.

BDR MUTINY

153 more suspects shown arrested

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A total of 153 Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) mutiny suspects were shown arrested yesterday in the mutiny case filed with Lalbagh Police Station and sent them to jail.

Meantime, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) team also detained 14 more BDR members for their alleged involvement with the killings and lootings at the BDR headquarters on February 25-26.

Besides, three others were placed on different terms of fresh remand for interrogation in connection with the case.

Criminal Investigation Department (CID) produced 153 BDR members before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM) Court at about 5:30pm and prayed to show them arrested in connection with the case.

Metropolitan Magistrate Faisal Atiq Bin Kader granted the petition for showing them arrested in the case and sent them to jail, as the CID did not seek any remand for them.

The arrestees detained by Rab are suber Mohammad Alauddin, havidars Masud Kabal, Shafigul Islam, Akter Ali, Jalal Uddin Ahmed and Yaser Ali, lance nayeks Anwarul Islam, Abdul Kayyum, Joyanal Abedin, Monzurul Islam and Mohammad Shah Alam, sepoys Bazlur Rashid, Alim Reza and Abul Kalam.

Rab said they gathered important information about the BDR carnage and the arrestees were handed over to Lalbagh police for taking next legal actions against them.

Remand of arrestees

The same court placed sepoys Gofran Mallick and Gausul Azam on a three-day remand while Abdul Latif on a seven-day remand for interrogation against the prayers for different terms of remand after CID's Assistant Superintendent Police (ASP)

Abdul Kahar Akond produced them before the court.

CID is also interrogating 34 others in their custody.

CID has so far showed arrested a total of 328 BDR mutiny suspects in connection with the case.

Concern over restrictions on freedom of movement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US Ambassador James F Moriarty yesterday expressed concern over the recent media reports of restrictions being placed on the freedom of movement of individuals seeking to travel outside Bangladesh.

Referring to reports on BNP leader Shamsul Islam and Jamaat leader barrister Razzaq who were recently prohibited from departing at the airport by immigration officials, he said, "I am concerned about the lack of transparency in these cases."

Terming these cases violations of freedom of movement, the US envoy, in a letter to Home Minister Sahara Khatun, said these would be included in their next report on human rights practices in Bangladesh.

He further said, "As far as I am aware, in neither case has the government of Bangladesh provided the individuals in question with details regarding the basis for the denial of their right to travel."

"I also note that both cases involve senior officials of opposition political parties. I am not aware of any cases in which members of the Awami League have been restricted from travelling," the envoy added.

HC bench delists contempt petition

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A High Court (HC) bench yesterday dropped from its list the contempt of court petition filed against Barrister Rafique-Ul Huq on charge of using 'abusive' and 'objectionable' language about a judge of the court.

The HC bench of Justice Syed AB Mahmudul Huq and Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury also delisted a petition filed by Rafique, one of the senior most lawyers of the Supreme Court (SC) seeking exemption from personal appearance in connection with the petition.

The bench came up with the decision, telling the lawyers concerned present in the court that they (two judges) will deliver split orders on the petitions and the matters might be transferred to another bench of the HC.

Barrister Rafique, however, yesterday did not appear before the HC bench in connection of this petition, although the bench earlier directed him to appear in person before the court on March 22.

The petitioners' lawyer Advocate Ramzan Ali Sikder yesterday verbally prayed to the HC bench to issue an arrest warrant against him (Rafique), saying that he ignored the HC direction by not appearing before the court.

He said this is an aggravated contempt of court and outrageous conduct by Barrister Rafique-Ul Huq towards the HC.

His conduct has not only undermined the court but also people will lose their confidence towards the court, he said.

Ramzan Ali Sikder later told The Daily Star that he would move the contempt petition before another HC bench.

The HC on February 23 upon the contempt petition issued a rule on Rafique-Ul Huq to show cause within three weeks why contempt proceedings should not be drawn against him on charge of contempt of court for using 'abusive' and 'objectionable' language about a judge of the court.

The HC bench also directed Rafique to appear in person before it at 10:30am on March 22 in connection with this petition filed by Idrisur Rahman and Zahurul Islam Mukul.

On March 17, Rafique-Ul Huq submitted a petition to this court to exempt him from personal appearance.

Hearing the petition, the court fixed March 22 (yesterday) for passing order on it.

Advocate Khondker Mahbub Hossain and Barrister Ajmalul Hossain appeared for Rafique.

Obituary

METRO DESK

Amir Ali Chowdhury, former diplomat and freedom fighter, passed away at Apollo Hospitals in the city yesterday, says a press release.

He is survived by his wife, one son, four daughters and host of admirers to mourn his death.

His namaz-e-janaza will be held at Gausul Azam Jame Masjid (Uttara Sector 13) after Zohr prayers today.

Amir Ali was one of the prominent members of the Bangladesh Mission in Kolkata who flew the first flag of independent Bangladesh on April 18 in 1971.

He served in Bangladesh missions in the United Kingdom, Indonesia, India, Myanmar and Australia.

He was born at Moulvibaria in Brahmanbaria in 1929.

Subhash Chandra Basu

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Subhash Chandra Basu, technical director of West Zone Power Distribution Company Limited in Khulna, passed away due to a cardiac arrest on Saturday at the age of 57, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, a son, a daughter and a host of relatives and admirers to mourn his death.

World Meteorological Day today

UNB, Dhaka

World Meteorological Day will be observed today in the country in a befitting manner like the other member countries of the globe.

The theme of this year is "weather, climate and the air we breathe" considering that a healthy atmosphere is essential to live a healthy life, said an ISPR release.

It said over the last decades, population growth and rapid industrialisation have contributed to pollute atmosphere, which is effecting the health, food, water security, making wealth prediction unpredictable.

World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), established in 1873 after assuming the responsibilities of former International Meteorological Organisation (IMO), observed March 23 as World Meteorological Day every year in all 188 member countries to facilitate international collaboration in meteorological, including coordinated observations and standardised instrumentation and better forecasting.

Based on the theme, Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) has arranged an exhibition of Weather Observing Instruments, Weather Charts and Video Footage on Climate Change from 10:00am to 4:00pm on its headquarters premises.

A technical session will also be held at the conference room of BMD at 2:00pm. Scientists will present research papers on weather, climate, cyclone, storm surge, earthquake and tsunami.

Besides, radio and TV channels will put out special programmes on the significance of the day.

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 3rd death anniversary of Anwara Begum, wife of M M Mizanur Rahman.

Bachchu, a leader of Narayanjan unit of Awami League, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa mohafil will be held at her village home in Narayanjan.

Relatives and admirers are requested to attend the programme.

2 killed, 37 injured in road accidents

METRO DESK

Two people were killed and 37 others injured in separate road accidents in Thakurgaon and Thakurgaon in last two days.

Our correspondent from Netrakona reports: Two people were killed and 15 others injured in a road accident on Netrakona-Durgapur road at Suknakuri under Durgapur upazila in Netrakona yesterday.

The dead were identified as Salah Ahmed, 50, of Khusukanda village and Raham Ali, 45, of Billapara village under Durgapur upazila.

Police and locals said the accident occurred when a Durgapur-bound passengers bus fell into a roadside ditch losing its control leaving them dead on the spot and 15 others injured.

Seriously injured passengers were sent to Mymensingh Medical College and Hospital.

Police confined the bus but its driver managed to flee.

Our correspondent in Thakurgaon adds: At least 22 people were injured in a road accident on Thakurgaon-Panchagarh road at Salondar village under Thakurgaon



Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Khulna and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Noakhali and Comilla in next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met Office said predicting nearly unchanged day temperature over the country.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:11pm today and rises at 5:59am tomorrow.

Country's highest temperature 34.8 degrees Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rangamati and lowest 19.3 degrees Celsius at Rajshahi.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	31.7	23.6	71	41
Chittagong	32.0	23.0	87	67
Rajshahi	30.2	19.3	89	60
Khulna	31.8	23.8	82	60
Barisal	32.2	23.2	88	67
Sylhet	32.8	21.5	50	52
Cox's Bazar	32.8	23.0	72	72



Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain speaks at a roundtable on role of the BRTA and other stakeholders in road transport system of Bangladesh at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left are TIB Chairman Prof Muzaffer Ahmad and Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman. (Story on Page 16)

Data theft attempt from Indonesian mobile firm

AGENCIES, Jakarta

Chinese telecoms equipment maker Huawei Technologies has suspended an employee suspected of trying to steal data from Indonesian mobile firm Excelcomindo (EXCL/IK), according to officials at the firms on Friday.

"It did happen but it was only a reckless action [of] the employee," said a spokeswoman for Indonesia's third-largest mobile phone firm PT Excelcomindo Pratama Tbk.

The visiting Huawei employee was caught by a member of staff at the firm but no company data was stolen, he said.

Thong Poh Wah, a spokesman for Huawei (HWT.U),

said the employee had returned to China.

"The employee has been suspended while the company investigates the matter," he said.

"While the personal action by this employee is in no way connected with our company, Huawei has issued an official apology to our partner and has taken appropriate disciplinary action against the employee and also taken steps to ensure that this does not happen again," the spokesman added.

Hasnul Suhaimi, Excelcom's president director, told Reuters that it had received an apology over the incident.

"Huawei has apologised

and explained it was not intentional," said Suhaimi.

The official said the incident happened last Friday, and the employee was caught trying to copy documents onto a USB memory stick.

He described the area where the incident happened as a "less important" part of the company, without elaborating.

Huawei, which competes against industry peers such as Ericsson (ERICB.ST) and Nokia Siemens Networks (NSN.UL), has aggressively been seeking to gain market share in fast-growing markets like Indonesia. (Reporting by Andreas Ismar, Tarmo Virki in Helsinki and Kirby Chien in Beijing; Writing by Ed Davies, editing by Will Waterman)