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## PM seeks donors' help in dredging all rivers

UNB, Dhaka

The government will start the dredging of Gorai river immediately to save agriculture and ecology of the country's southwestern part, including the Sundarbans.

Besides, it will make capital and maintenance dredging of all rivers, which have silted up.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said this at a meeting with ambassadors and representatives of donor countries and agencies at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) yesterday.

Press Secretary to the Prime Minister Abul Kalam Azad briefed newsmen after the meeting.

In the meeting, the prime minister apprised the donors of the government's plan for

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## Manju, Omar sent to jail on surrender

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent Jatiya Party (Manju) Chairman and former communications minister Anwar Hossain Manju and ex-state minister for law Shahjahan Omar to prison after they surrendered before it in connection with two separate corruption cases.

They were earlier convicted on different terms in absentia in separate cases filed against them on charges of accumulating wealth illegally and taking bribes.

Special Court-10 Judge Arifur Rahman passed the order after the two appeared before it seeking bail.

Earlier, the Supreme Court (SC) had directed Manju, Omar and 11 others, convicted in absentia in corruption, extortion and bribery cases, to surrender before trial courts.

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PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Use of water polluted by industrial waste dumping near Savar EPZ has led to the death of paddy (picture inset) in this field in Taler Tek area near the EPZ.

# Savar in grave peril

### Untreated waste from DEPZ pollutes waters, farmlands since 1983; no CETP installed yet; around 2 lakh people exposed to serious health risk

PINAKI ROY

Untreated liquid wastes from Dhaka Export Processing Zone (DEPZ) have been polluting the Bangshi river and other water bodies around, putting around two lakh people of 12 villages in the area into tremendous health risk.

Only a couple of decades ago the villagers used water from the nearby water bodies like Dholai beel for drinking, bathing and irrigation. But now the water of Dholai beel and the Bangshi river looks pitch black and it stinks as wastes from the DEPZ, where many of the world famous brand items are produced,

continue to pollute the water.

Inhabitants of the villages around Dholai beel in Savar, where the DEPZ discharges its untreated effluent, said the wastes have severely contaminated the land there and they cannot cultivate paddy now. The pollution has thus threatened the existence of some traditional livelihoods while villagers often suffer from water-borne diseases.

Polluting more than 1,000 acres of land in Dholai beel, the filthy water pours into the Bangshi in Savar. The pollution spreads over the villages during floods.

In the 143.84 hectares area of DEPZ there

are over 300 industrial units, including chemical, leather, textile, agro-based industries, garment and garment accessories, woven and knitted fabrics, medical and biological, pharmaceutical industries and backward and forward linkage industries. A few of these industries discharge harmful effluent.

Under an open-door policy the government established the DEPZ in 1983 to attract foreign investors but it is yet to set up a central effluent treatment plant (CETP) for the industries in the DEPZ.

The authorities concerned, however, said setting up of such a plant is underway and it may

take seven to nine months to be completed.

"We have 24 industries that discharge liquid waste and 23 of them have individual ETP and setting up of another's is under process," said Brigadier General Jamil Ahmed Khan, chairman of Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority (Bepza).

Admitting discharge of liquid waste, he said sometimes however these industries produce wastes more than the capacity of their individual ETPs. "When the central ETP will be completed, all industries will be under its cover," he said.

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## GRAFT ALLEGATION Delwar claims JS body can't summon him

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday said the parliamentary probe body did not have any jurisdictions to summon him.

He also said such a committee does not hold any authority to call someone.

After a party meeting at BNP's Naya Paltan office Delwar told reporters that the probe committee was formed 'without following legal procedure.' He said he would think about it after receiving the formal letter from the parliamentary body.

The all-party parliamentary committee decided to summon former speaker, deputy speaker and chief whip to defend themselves.

A sub-committee also recommended filing of

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## Rejoinder, our reply

The Electricity Generation Company of Bangladesh (EGCB) in a rejoinder differed with a paragraph of The Daily Star news headlined "Govt opens maiden power plant bids" published May 1, 2009.

The rejoinder said the report mentioned that the EGCB relaxed a tender clause that dictated the bidder should install 300 mw using two units. For Bhel that manufactures 100 mw generators and not 150mw ones, the EGCB gave the opportunity to use three units. But this information is not correct.

It added, the tender document was reviewed by SNC-Lavalin and authenticated by the World Bank. The tender documents were sold to the bidders since the invitation, which was also published in The Daily Star January 28, 2009, containing the bid requirements in respect of

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## UNOs more powerful than vice-chairmen

### Reveals review of guideline for upazila parishads

SHAKHAWAT LITON and HASAN JAHID TUSHER

The LGRD ministry's operational guideline for newly elected upazila parishads renders upazila executive officers (UNOs) more powerful than elected vice-chairmen.

The guideline allows upazila chairmen to delegate their duties, both financial and administrative, to UNOs, while elected vice-chairmen are not allowed to exercise any financial authority without having prior approval of 'specified authorities', even when they act as chairmen.

The LGRD ministry also did not define any function of the elected vice-chairmen.

According to the guideline issued on Tuesday, an upazila parishad chairman, on consent of the parishad, may delegate his or her power to a UNO who is also the secretary to the parishad.

The guideline also does not impose any restriction on delegating financial authority to UNOs. But it categorically says a vice-chairman acting as a chairman will not be able to exercise financial authority without prior approval of 'specified authorities', the definition of which is interestingly absent both in the guideline and the Upazila Parishad Act 2009.

According to the upazila parishad act, a chairman does not require to take approval of the 'specified authorities' to exercise financial authority, and one of the vice-chairmen is supposed to act as the chairman in absence of an elected chairman.

The acting chairman will come from a panel of two members constituted by the upazila parishad itself.

"It means the ministry limited the power of the elected vice-chairmen. But it did not do so regarding delegation of the chairmen's power to upazila nirbahi officers," eminent jurist

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## MEDICINE PURCHASE, FOREIGN TRIPS Sircar spent Tk 1 crore for non-existing MPs

SHAKHAWAT LITON

In spite of the absence of parliament, former speaker Jamiruddin Sircar spent over Tk 1 crore in the last two years for purchasing medicines for non-existing lawmakers and sending parliamentary delegations abroad.

Of the amount Tk 54 lakh was spent for purchasing medicines for the medical centre of the Parliament Secretariat, which provides lawmakers and its officials with medical facilities, and over Tk 50 lakh was spent for foreign trips of "parliamentary delegations".

Speaker Abdul Hamid informed the chief of the all-party parliamentary probe body, advocate Fazle Rabbi Mia, of this on Tuesday and asked him to look into the

matter since the probe body is yet to track the spending of over Tk 1 crore.

The probe body has already detected huge corruption in the Parliament Secretariat during the tenure of the former speaker.

Fazle Rabbi yesterday told The Daily Star that he got the information about the expenditure and that the probe committee will investigate how the money was spent.

Officials in the Parliament Secretariat said they did not know how the money was spent in the name of purchasing medicines in the last two years and that they do not know who took the medicines from the medical centre during the period.

"Most of the time medical officials

told us that medicines were not available at the centre. But now we come to know that half a crore taka was spent for purchasing medicines!" a senior official in the Parliament Secretariat said.

The former speaker made a number of foreign trips during the last two years forming "parliamentary delegations" with his personal officials.

Besides, he has spent Tk 11 lakh during 2002-2004 to purchase shirts, shoes, ties, sandals, mirror stands, jewellery, crests, tablecloths, embroidered quilts, pearl necklaces etc.

A report prepared by the Parliament Secretariat says those were bought as gift items to be used by the former speaker's office. As per the report, 400 pieces of

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## Probe post-poll violence in 2001

### HC asks govt to form bodies in 2 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed the government to form an enquiry commission in two months to probe violence and criminal offences against the opposition parties and minority communities across the country after the 2001 polls.

The HC bench of justices ABM Khairul Haque and Md Mamtazuddin Ahmed in the judgment also asked the government to get the investigation reports from the enquiry commission within six months of its formation.

The bench, however, ruled that any party of this case could move to this court for directions if they deemed it necessary after the submission of the enquiry reports.

The HC in its verdict observed that it was evident from the book "Crime on Humanity" published in 2002 and the report

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## AL men blamed for law, order slide

### Top law-enforcers tell Home of extortion, tender manipulation; special drive in a week

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Top officials of law enforcement agencies yesterday blamed Awami League men for deterioration of law and order, identifying extortion and tender manipulation by the party men as main reasons behind it.

The top officials identified the reasons behind the deterioration of law and order at an internal meeting of the home ministry with Home Minister Sahara Khatun in the chair.

The meeting decided to launch a special drive in the capital within a week to curb increasing criminal activities including killing and mugging.

State Minister for Home Affairs Tanjim Ahmad Sohel Taj, Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Sikder, Inspector General of Police Nur Mohammad, Rab DG Hassan Mahmood, among others, attended the three-hour long meeting at the ministry.

During the meeting, the minister and the state minister expressed their dissatisfaction over the continuous deterioration of law and order and asked the officials concerned to point out the reasons behind it.

In reply, the officials said most of the cases AL and its front organisation's leaders are directly involved in extortion and tender

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OnlinePoll ✓

The govt has decided to turn the clock ahead by one hour to cope with nagging power crisis. Do you think daylight saving time will be effective?

Yes (62.71%)  
No (34.23%)  
No Comments (3.07%)

Total votes: 783

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think former speaker Jamiruddin Sircar should be stripped of his MP status for his alleged graft?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net