

HC hears hurdles

Court injunction

Ducking of 2001 verdict

Missing demarcation

Clouts of grabbers

Lack of govt coordination

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Government drives against encroachment largely fail because encroachers often obtain stay orders and injunctions from the court against eviction drives, high officials of BIWTA, Environment Directorate, and Land Survey Directorate told a High Court bench yesterday.

But the HC said non-implementation of a 2001 verdict on saving rivers has caused the present pitiable situation. It feels the situation is so critical that now it has to play a vital role in recovering the rivers from encroachers.

The anti-encroachment drives have also suffered from other administrative problems and resistance from influential people, officials of the three organisations told the HC bench comprised of justices ABM Khairul Haq and Momtazuddin. SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Sincerity the answer

Strict enforcement of laws, blocking grabbers' way to court's stay order, effective river commission must to save rivers

PINAKI ROY

Commitment of the government, tough enforcement of environmental laws and formation of an effective river authority are the key to save the rivers physically and biologically.

The government must step forward to save the rivers and acquire land, if necessary, in addition to recovering the grabbed riverbanks. Otherwise, the Dhaka city will be unlivable in near future, said experts while talking to The Daily Star.

They also said steps should be taken so that the grabbers may not mislead the courts by showing fake documents and obtain stay orders or status quo on eviction drives.

Only setting up of effluent treatment plants will be not enough. The government should recover and excavate the encroached land and turn those into parts of the rivers again, they added.

They reiterated that introducing strict laws and forming new authorities may turn futile if the government does not work sincerely since many recommendations were in vain due to lack of political commitments. SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



The bank of the Buriganga was near the houses at the bottom left corner of this photo but as its flow moved, government and private organisations occupied the land and even leased some of it out.

Rally for rivers

One does not have to be an expert to identify river encroachments. It's just too obvious. But it's all the more difficult to prove as all the river-gobblers have ownership papers, thanks to our corrupt land administration and lax monitoring by river regulatory body. Powerful, rich and ruthless, these river-gobblers find no difficulty in maneuvering legal system and managing law enforcement. They have become seemingly invincible. But should we let them get away with it? Lend your hands and together we can win a war.

... The Daily Star



Lt Gen Mubin new army chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Principal Staff Officer (PSO) of the Armed Forces Division Lt Gen Abdul Mubin has been appointed as the Chief of Army Staff, sources in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said.

He will replace the current army chief General Moeen U Ahmed, who took a leading SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

MPs asked not to influence transfer

Hasina rules out job demands for party men at ALPP meeting

HASAN JAHID TUSHER and RASHIDUL HASAN

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed her party lawmakers not to stick their noses in transfers and postings of government officials at any level.

She said the intervening has a negative impact on the mechanism of the government.

Hasina, president of Awami League (AL), gave this directive at a meeting of the AL Parliamentary Party (ALPP) at the ruling party's conference room in the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

"If you interfere in one position, it has an impact on five other posts," a lawmaker told The Daily Star quoting Hasina as saying.

She ruled out the demand of a number of lawmakers to give party workers government SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

jobs. She told them that none would be given jobs if they fail to pass the exams.

A total of 232 MPs out of the 270 of the AL-led grand alliance attended the ALPP meeting. Many of them had to stand there since the room only had seating for 180.

She directed lawmakers to remain very alert as conspiracies are being hatched by different quarters who want to use AL lawmakers to put the government in a difficult situation.

"Be careful in delivering speeches so that none can have the chance to criticise those," another lawmaker quoted Hasina as saying.

She directed her ministers and state ministers to work more than they speak. She also asked lawmakers to boost party activities to SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Obama reaches out to Muslims

Praises women leadership in countries like Bangladesh

AGENCIES, Cairo

Quoting from the Quran for emphasis, President Barack Obama called for a "new beginning between the United States and Muslims" yesterday and said together, they could confront violent extremism across the globe and advance the timeless search for peace in the Middle East.

"This cycle of suspicion and discord must end," Obama said in a widely anticipated speech in one of the world's largest Muslim countries, an address designed to reframe relations after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, and the US-led war in Iraq, reports AP.



SEE PAGE 15 COL 7
FULL TEXT OF SPEECH ON PAGE 11

Budget session gets underway

BNP-led opposition boycotts over seat row in JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The second session of the ninth parliament, which will pass the budget for the next fiscal year, began yesterday, but the BNP-led opposition leaders boycotted it over disagreement about seating arrangement in the House.

In his inaugural address, Speaker Abdul Hamid expressed hope that constructive opinions from both treasury and opposition lawmakers would play an important role in making the next budget realistic, development-friendly and a document for improving fortunes of the country's people.

"The budget is an important medium to implement the ruling party's electoral pledges since the government implements all of its programmes through the budget," he said, mentioning the main electoral pledges of ruling Awami League. SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

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