

Vow to continue

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that there is still time to restore the dying rivers referring to the famous Thames River in Britain which was once polluted, but successfully restored since.

Referring to the prime minister's assurance of restoring all rivers in the country, the environmentalist said, "We want to trust these assurances and work together with you." Former adviser to a caretaker government Hassan Arif said, "We must all rise together to save the rivers."

The aquatic organisms, which were once abundant in rivers, haors and even in ponds, are almost gone today, Arif said noting the losses we are incurring in losing our rivers.

Professor Emazuddin Ahmed, former vice chancellor of Dhaka University, said building industries are important for development but that can never be at the cost of river pollution or encroachment, because rivers sustain life.

The major portion of drinking water for the city is now extracted from groundwater, he said, adding that if this continues, Dhaka city will sink to a lower level at some point soon. Therefore, there is no alternative to protecting the rivers, he noted.

The educationist lauded The Daily Star-Channel initiative and called on all to rise to the occasion.

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam said major cities in the world have grown up beside rivers because people need water.

"But, if the rivers are contaminated, citizens both rich and poor will suffer for it," he said calling upon all to raise their voices to stop river pollution and encroachment.

He also noted that the extent of the crisis might not be very apparent today.

"That is why we are here to tell you about impending dangers. You must spread the word to others and help the movement."

Passers-by and park goers also joined the programme.

"The pictures are excellent. They speak of the horrible state of our rivers," said Bayezid, a park-goer. "Yes, I will tell others about it."

Baul singers Ashik Dewan and Hashem Dewan sang songs on rivers at the exhibition, which will remain open from 3:00pm to 7:00pm today.

Solar power

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A high official of the central bank said the bank would refinance different financial institutions and banks from this fund. This would help face power and gas deficiency by using environment-friendly technology, and would also help maintain public health.

The BB would provide funds to banks and financial institutions at five percent interest (bank rate) so that they can provide loans on soft terms. In giving loans to customers, banks would charge below 10 per cent interest, said the official.

A top official of the central bank noted that lack of institutional financing for renewable energy sectors like solar energy and biogas is impeding effective growth and use of environment-friendly technology in these sectors.

They would prefer to see investment in solar panels particularly in char areas and remote areas still without power supply, he said.

Asian Highway

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early as possible," one source quoted her as saying.

She asked the communications minister to go on with all other work relating to construction of the Padma Bridge, side by side with tender floating.

The cabinet decided to bring private courier services under a legal framework, and for this approved in principle the proposed amendments to The Post Office Act, 1898.

She directed the ministers and state ministers to gear up their activities. "Think about welfare of the people who sent us to power, and work properly," she was quoted as saying.

Hasina, also Awami League president, warned that delay in implementing the party's electoral pledges would be fatal.

The PM asked the ministers to formulate one-year work plans and implement those, and approach her if they face any problems in doing so, according to the sources.

Hasina also wanted to know about infiltration of Rohingyas. The home ministry informed the meeting that their infiltration is affecting law and order in some districts bordering Myanmar. And it has directed the BDR, law enforcement agencies and district administration to take tough actions to stop infiltration.

The home ministry also said it has asked them to push back the infiltrators.

BRIEFING
Briefing newsmen, the PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad said the cabinet approved in principle the proposed Jute (amendment) Act, 2009, and amendments to fourth and 58th sections of The Post Office Act, 1898.

Anybody found guilty of violating the post office act will be fined Tk 50,000 to Tk 2,00,000, instead of Tk 50 to Tk 500, the proposed amendment to it says.

Azad said Finance Minister AMA Muhiut informed the cabinet meeting that Asian Development Bank would provide \$200 million in budget assistance for fiscal 2009-2010.

Daud's agents

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disbursed the money after identifying the men concerned by examining their national identity cards.

The IO said they had submitted a prayer to the Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner for transferring the four arrestees including Kamal to the Task Force for Interrogation (TFI) cell.

With the latest arrest of Arif the DB has so far arrested three Indian nationals and their Bangladeshi host Kamal.

Ireland

FROM PAGE 1
most with the bat to lead their side home with 10 balls to spare.

Niall made 40 off 25 balls, while Kevin completed the easy win with an unbeaten 39 off 17 balls that included four boundaries and two sixes.

Bangladesh, who had lost their opening game against defending champions India, return home with two defeats, while the Irish move into the Super Eights from group A along with the Indians.

Bangladesh, who needed to win the game to stay in the tournament, lost half their side by the 11th over with just 66 runs on the board.

Opener Tamim Iqbal was the only frontline batsman to offer any semblance of resistance, making 22 before he was run out.

Mashrafe Bin Mortaza hit a quickfire 33 not out towards the end, including 20 runs in the last over from Alex Cusack, as the last three wickets added 71 valuable runs.

"We won the toss, got early wickets and if you had said that we would restrict them to around 140 at the start, we would have been happy with that," said Johnston.

"I haven't taken the new ball for a while but the conditions were conducive to swing bowling."

The Irish were sitting pretty at 61-1 in the 10th over when three wickets fell for 28 runs, including that of Niall O'Brien, who holed out against Shakib Al Hasan.

Kevin O'Brien took charge after his brother's dismissal, lofting Abdur Razzaq and Shakib for sixes, to help Ireland surpass the victory target of seven runs an over.

SCORES IN BRIEF
BANGLADESH: 137 for 8 in 20 overs (Mashrafe 33 not out, Tamim 22, Ashraful 14, Musfiqur 14, Zunaed 13, Rokibul 13; Johnston 3-20)

IRELAND: 138 for 4 in 18.2 overs (N O'Brien 40, K O'Brien 39 not out, Porterfield 23, Mooney 16 not out, Wilson 10; Mashrafe 2-30)
Result: Ireland won by six wickets.
Man-of-the-match: Niall O'Brien.

Tannery shifting

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Earlier in 2001, the HC in a judgment directed the government to take adequate measures to control pollution in the industrial units and factories.

But that direction was not implemented till date.

Court sources say the bench observed that it will continue proceedings with this environmental related case until its directives to prevent pollution are implemented and its findings on this issue will be sent to the prime minister with recommendations for consideration.

The court fixed June 22 for delivering further order on the matter.

DC of Dhaka Md Zillar Rahman told the court the survey of the rivers can be conducted in two categories - Cadastral Survey and Revisional Survey.

The original boundaries of the rivers can be determined through the Cadastral Survey and the present conditions of the rivers can be identified with pictures through the Revisional Survey, he added.

He said it could be determined who are the illegal occupiers and encroachers of the rivers through the Revisional Survey.

Zillar prayed to the court to direct his authorities not to transfer him during the surveys and direct the inspector general of police, deputy inspector general (DIG) and Dhaka Metropolitan Police commissioner to ensure security of the magistrates, policemen and survey officials.

Gazipur DC Md Kamaluddin Talukder informed the court that his office has started demolishing illegal structures on the river Turag in association with Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA).

He said his office needs sufficient manpower and logistic support in order to conduct the survey on the rivers.

Md Mosharraf Hossain, DC of Munshiganj, said the flow of the rivers Shitalakkhya and Buriganga, which have conjoined in Muktepur in Munshiganj, is being seriously hampered as the riverbeds are being filled up.

He suggested dredging of the rivers for free flow of waters.

Supporting the statements, DC of Narayanganj Md Shamsur Rahman said steps must be taken to save the rivers from pollution and encroachment.

The Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) officials also informed the HC that environment and water in Dhaka are being polluted due to illegal sewerage connection made by the house owners in the city.

They said no ground water will be available in the city after 10 years as water layer is going down and the environment is being polluted.

They suggested making it mandatory for the industries

to have their own effluent treatment plants (ETP) and for the house owners to have safety tanks in every building in the city.

Additional Attorney General MK Rahman performing as the attorney general. Deputy Attorney General Mostafa Zaman Islam, Wasa Managing Director Md Shahjahan Ali, Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) Chief Executive Officer Md Nurul Huq, petitioner of the river encroachment case advocate Asaduzzaman Siddiqui and Chief Executive of BELA Rezwana Hasan, among others, attended the two-hour-long meeting.

Free Turag

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Gazipur Atul Sarkar said that they would try to demolish the remaining portions of Masjid Market, Bata Market and Fish Market at Tongi Poura Bazar on the river Turag.

But grabbed portions of the two heavily built structures--Shajid Washing and a unit of Ananda Group of Industries--near Kamarpura Bridge are still left for demolition, said Sarkar.

"Instructions of Gazipur deputy commissioner (DC) are that the drive should be wrapped up till demolition of all the listed structures," he told The Daily Star.

The drive will enter its sixth day today on Tongi part of the river at 9:30 in the morning with 50 locally hired labourers.

On the illegally built structures on the Dhaka side of the Turag that are yet to be demolished, BIWTA joint director Md Abul Bashar said they needed a resurvey of the river bank to decide on the recently built structures.

"A number of structures appear to be within the river's alignment. We need to include them as well for eviction," he said.

Talking about unfinished demolition of Bengal Indigo textile on Dhaka part, he said there are electric and gas supply lines at the site and it needs time.

A total of 63 structures have been identified as illegally built on the river on Tongi part while 69 have been identified as such on Dhaka part.

Authorities carried out the eviction drive for three days on the river's Dhaka part.

EVICTON DRIVE OF DHAKA WASA

To free the city canals from the encroachers, Dhaka Wasa conducted the drive near Mohammadpur Kaderabad Housing to save the city from water logging, official sources said.

The drive, led by magistrate Kazi Wasiuddin, began at 10:30am and continued till 5:00 p.m. Dhaka Wasa launched the drive on Sunday and dismantled 10 structures, including two concrete and four semi-concrete structures.

"We have started the drive to freeing the canals of the city from encroachers and gradually other canals will also come under the drive," said an official of Dhaka Wasa.

JS body to probe

FROM PAGE 16
taking actions against the last caretaker government's wrongdoings through probe by forming a parliamentary body.

Many lawmakers in the inaugural session of the ninth parliament also made the same demand.

In response to another proposal from AL lawmaker Mir Shawkat Ali Badsha, the law minister said the government is thinking of amending the constitution or enacting a law to ensure that portraits of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman are displayed and preserved at government offices.

A report containing the statements of the law minister and 31 other ministers and state ministers was tabled in the House addressing the issues raised by lawmakers in the inaugural session of the ninth parliament.

The ministers for the first time came up with brief statements on the contents of the lawmakers' notices, rejected by the speaker under section 71 of the rules of procedure.

However, 15 lawmakers were allowed to speak on the contents of their notices for two minutes each at every sitting.

As per the latest amendment to the rules of procedure, brought at the flag end of the last parliament, a minister's brief statement in response to the lawmakers' notices will be put on the table within the first three sittings of the next session.

Senior BNP lawmaker Salauddin Quader Chowdhury

welcomed the move saying an all-party parliamentary probe body should be formed to this end as soon as possible.

Referring to Rahmatullah's notices, the law minister said people welcomed the change-over of January 11, 2007. But later the caretaker government acted against the people's aspiration.

"The caretaker government emerged with a conspiracy to eliminate politics and politicians from the country to implement their own agenda. Many politicians including Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, businessmen and eminent personalities were put behind bars as part of the conspiracy," the minister alleged.

He said at last they were defeated by the people through restoration of the democratic system.

On AL lawmaker Badsha's proposal, Shafique said the government has already issued a circular to display and preserve portraits of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at the offices of government, semi-government and autonomous organisations.

In response to AL lawmaker Kabirul Haque's notice, Shafique said it would require a thorough study to restore the 1972 constitution's provisions that ban religion-based political parties.

He however said if the activities of any religion-based political party pose threat to the country's independence and sovereignty it can be banned under the Special Powers Act.

US working with allies to cut off N Korean arms

ANI, Washington

The Obama Administration is working with US allies to develop ways to cut off North Korean shipments that may be carrying nuclear technology or other weapons.

Asked about a request from a group of senators for the administration to consider re-designating North Korea a terrorism sponsor, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the administration would look into it.

Hillary Clinton said in an interview broadcast on Sunday, that failing to take aggressive and effective action against North Korea, could spark an arms race in northeast Asia.

"We will do everything we can to both interdict it and prevent it and shut off their flow of money," Hillary Clinton said of possible attempts by North Korea to ship nuclear material.

Hillary Clinton also said the US is considering returning North Korea to a list of state sponsors of terrorism, after President Barack Obama pledged "a very hard look" at tougher measures because of the North's nuclear stance.

Ctg arms

FROM PAGE 1
Wing Commander (ret'd) Sahab Uddin had links to the 10 truckloads of arms seized in Chittagong in 2004, sources close to the Task Force Interrogation (TFI) cell told The Daily Star.

About the ammo recovery at Kahanu in Bogra in 2003, he said the shipment was meant for ULFA, an insurgent group in the northeastern Indian state of Assam, and being carried through Bangladesh from one place to another in India.

He also said Sahab Uddin had good relations with ULFA and Pakistan intelligence agency.

Meanwhile, Major General (ret'd) Rezaqul Haider Chowdhury, another former DG of National Security Intelligence (NSI), told interrogators that as DGFI director then his understanding was that the ammunition and explosives seized at Kahanu belonged to an Indian insurgent group.

He said the group was using the Bangladesh territory to have the consignment shipped from one part of India to another.

Rezaqul also said he does not know if the four ULFA members and their Bangladeshi accomplice arrested in this connection were grilled by the joint interrogation cell (JIC) at the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI).

Liakat on the other hand claimed all the arrestees were quizzed at the JIC.

Of the five, Altu Mian, the Bangladesh national, was arrested after his name was found in a prescription left at the scene.

Following up information gleaned from him, the four ULFA operatives were arrested at Jhenigati in Sherpur district and in another place (unspecified).

The arrestees told the investigators that they had received the ammunition and explosives at Bethchhari border point in Sylhet.

Liakat, ex-NSI deputy director (technical), said that after he had returned to Dhaka office from Bogra, a tense Sahab wanted to know the identity of the arrestees.

The arms hauls began to hog the headlines again after Sahab last month gave a confessional statement linking former NSI chiefs Rahim and Rezaqul to the deadly consignment seized at the jetty of Chittagong Urea Fertilizer Company Limited five years back.

13 killed

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Firefighters with the help of local people recovered 11 bodies and rescued the passengers trapped inside the sunken coach which reportedly dived under 20-foot-deep water.

Ten of the dead passengers were identified as Ibrahim, 32, Anis, 30, Christina N Baroi, 15, Annapande, 2, Satyanarjan Debnath, 70, Rafiq, 35, Ripon, 35, Jahangir, 35, Abdur Razzak, 45, and Ratul 3. The identity of another dead youth could not be known immediately.

Of the injured, 8 were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital while 11 to Sreenagar health complex and 21 others to different hospitals and clinics.

The firefighters salvaged the coach from the ditch yesterday noon.

Girl dies

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Doulatdia area of Rajbari also died after showing similar symptoms early Sunday.

The committee will also examine how the capsules and tablets were maintained and used, how they were given to children, the expiry dates of the drugs and listen to the versions of parents, health workers and hospital chiefs.

It will try to find out the reasons for the symptoms the children have been showing.

Health Minister AFM Ruhul Huq said there are no side effects to the Vitamin A capsules and deworming tablets and the parents need not panic. The rumours are being spread intentionally, he said.

He also said high quality capsules and tablets were given to the children.

Unicef Communication Chief Christine Jaumes also said yesterday that the quality of the deworming tablets, supplied by the Unicef, is rigorously controlled.

In Munshiganj, some 32 children were admitted to Munshiganj General Hospital and 160 received emergency treatment since Saturday.

Resident Medical Officer of Munshiganj General Hospital Ehsanul Karim said someone on horn speaker late in the night suggested that parents provide turmeric or lemon juice to children. This panicked the parents and they started to do so which led to vomiting by the children. However, the parents concluded that it was the outcome of the Vitamin A Plus campaign.

Panic seized hundreds of parents who rushed to Khansama Upazila Health complex in Dinajpur after an announcement from a mosque that 1,000 children had died after receiving vitamin A capsules and deworming tablets.

In Bandarban Sadar upazila some 20 children with diarrhoea and nausea took treatment since Saturday and of them six were admitted to hospital.

In Nilphamari, four children who received vitamin A capsules and deworming tablets Saturday, fell sick.

Hundreds of parents who gave their children vitamin A capsules and deworming tablets thronged the Narayanganj General Hospital yesterday.

Three children were admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital yesterday afternoon. They were provided with the same capsules Saturday.

A number of medical professionals apprehended that malnutrition, hot weather and empty stomach may have triggered diarrhoea of some children.

Brushing aside their apprehension, National Professor MR Khan said usually several thousand people, including children, have diarrhoea in summer whereas it is only 200 children who reportedly got diarrhoea.

New admission

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The number of government colleges in the country is 251 while the number of private colleges is 2,964.

Talking to The Daily Star, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said, "We have kept the provision of reserved seats in the new policy so that the meritorious students outside the metropolitan cities can take admission to the renowned colleges."

Every year, a large number of students in the rural areas cannot get the chance to take admission to renowned colleges of their choice despite doing well in SSC examination, he said.

He also said they have cancelled the provision of student's age while getting admission in the colleges since the provision is illogical.

The minister said they have finalised the policy on the basis of opinions and recommendations of the principals of different educational institutions and all others concerned.

"Our main target is to increase the standard of all educational institutions and we will try to improve the quality of the colleges which are lagging behind," Nahid said.

"There is no seat crisis in the colleges of the country. However, some problems have been created because of competition in getting admission to the renowned colleges. This competition will be over if all the colleges of the country ensure quality education," he added.

The new policy will be applicable for all the public and private colleges of the country in 2009-2010 academic session.

"The number is very insignificant," he said, adding that vitamin A can never cause diarrhoea. Rather by strengthening the immune system it saves children from such diseases.

There is no bar on taking deworming tablets during summer, said child specialist MR Khan. Having an empty stomach is also not a problem, he noted.

Private TV station Channel i reported that according to the preliminary report of Janaswastha Pusti Institute the deworming tablets are to blame for the children becoming sick. It said the vitamin A capsules were brought in from Canada a month ago and were stored maintaining normal temperature as required. It said the capsules had their expiry date in 2012 and they were of a fresh batch.

Our correspondents in Dinajpur, Nilphamari, Mymensingh and Narayanganj contributed to this report.

Shutdown in 30 Nepali districts

PTI, Kathmandu

Opposition Maoists and a prominent Madhesi group yesterday enforced a general strike in 30 districts of Nepal, causing hardship to the people and affecting supply of essential commodities in the Himalayan nation.

Thousands of passengers and tourists were left stranded and the supply of necessities were obstructed due to the strike in all Terai districts and few hilly districts of western Nepal.

Maoist cadres called for a shut down in eight districts of western Nepal including Manang, Mustang, Kaski, Tanahu, Gorkha, Lamjung, Syangja and Parvat to protest against President Rambaran Yadav's decision to reinstate the sacked Army chief Lt Gen Rookmangud Katawal. Yesterday, Maoist activists had forcibly shut down Indian cosmetic giant Hindustan Unilever's joint venture plant in Nepal and vandalised half a dozen vehicles during a strike at Basamadi area in Makawanpur district in central Nepal.

Madhesi Peoples' Rights Forum (MPRF), a prominent Madhesi party today announced strike in 22 districts of the southern Nepal demanding the termination of the membership of its three lawmakers, including Deputy PM Bijay Gachhadar, for joining the Madhav Kumar Nepal-led CPN-UML coalition. MPRF president Upendra Yadav asked Constituent Assembly Chairman Subash Chandra Nemwang to take action against parliamentary party leader Bijay Kumar Gachhadar, Sarad Singh Bhandari, Ram Janam Chaudhary and a dozen other party lawmakers.

PDB plans

FROM PAGE 1
these projects, PDB would take steps to determine technical and financial feasibility, location selection, fuel types and types of contracts for rental, IPP and public-private partnership.

The five large coal-fired plants will be located in Khulna, Chittagong, Meghnaghat-3, Meghnaghat-4 and Maowa. The first two plants could be commissioned by 2013 and the rest in 2015.

The coal could be imported or locally produced. Sources say coal has been chosen as the main alternative source of power, as the other options like imported oil or liquefied natural gas (LNG) are costlier.

On an average, coal-fired power costs US 5-6 cents per kilowatt hour, nuclear power also costs the same, gas 6-7 cents, wind 8 cents and solar 10-15 cents globally.

Besides, PDB could undertake a 125mw coal power project at the cost of \$190 million at Katakhal in Rajshahi. The PDB may also take up three 100MW dual-fuel (having the capacity to use both gas and oil) projects, each costing \$160 million in Faridpur, Hathazari and Dobazari.

On the one-year rental power projects, PDB recommends heavy fuel-fired plants in Thakurgaon of 20MW capacity, Khulna barge-mounted 50MW capacity and Noapara 50MW capacity.

The remaining rental plants would be fired by liquid fuel. They are 50MW Ashuganj, 40MW Bheramara, 40MW Barisal, 50MW Katakhal, 50MW Cox's Bazar and 50MW Shiklabaha.

The government had bitter experience with rental power projects, none of which could launch operation in time and some of which could not launch operation at all.

PDB sources say this negative experience was caused by selection of wrong contractors during the caretaker government.

The upcoming power crisis demands that the government take quick measures to minimise the crisis. If awarded to competent contractors, rental plants can be a very effective solution, though it will be costlier than conventional plants," said an official.

As per the Power System Master Plan (PSMP) update

Another BDR

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where the doctors declared him dead at 3:30pm. His death certificate stated that it was a case of 'Cardio-respiratory failure due to acute myocardial infarction (MI) and hypertension'.

Belal Hossain had been suffering from hypertension for last 10-12 years, said the press release.

His body will be sent to his village home, the press release