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ENCROACHMENT

Eviction drive extends to Shitalakhy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) and Narayanganj district administration launched a drive yesterday to evict the land grabbers along the river Shitalakhy and knocked down parts of five multi-storey buildings.

Sources said part of a semi-concrete yarn coning factory and around eight to 10 small makeshift structures were also demolished during the daylong eviction drive against structures built illegally on the river.

The drive started at about 9:45 in the morning in presence of Narayanganj Deputy Commissioner (DC) Md Shamsur Rahman and BIWTA joint director Md Abul Bashar. The eviction team partially demolished two five-storey and three six-storey buildings.

A total of 134 structures including makeshift ones have been listed for partial demolition as those were built illegally encroaching on the river Shitalakhy, said officials, adding that owners of five of the structures have obtained stay orders from the court against eviction.

While the six-storey building owned by one Jahangir was being demolished, Narayanganj municipality commissioner Maksudul Alam Khoshed came to plead for sparing the structure for a couple of days. However, Magistrate Abdul Hai did not pay heed and persisted in knocking it down.

"We are determined to carry on with the drive to recover the demarcated area of the river," Hai told The Daily Star over phone.

Meanwhile, the eviction drive against the encroachers on the Tongi end of the river Turag continued for the seventh day yesterday to complete the unfinished demolition.

But a number of religious structures, built illegally on the river Turag, have been given immunity from eviction 'due to religious sentiment,' said the officials concerned.

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

A worker of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority demolishes a section of a multi-story building with a sledgehammer at Tanbazar in Narayanganj yesterday. Part of the building encroached on the Shitalakhy. Inset, the walls of another building that occupied part of the Shitalakhy is torn down.

River-gobblers
must be
defeated

Says industries
minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Industries Minister Dilip Barua yesterday pledged to protect the country's rivers from pollution and encroachment.

"Whatever techniques the river grabbers or polluters resort to, we shall defeat them and save the rivers," he said, expressing solidarity with The Daily Star-Channel i initiative "To the Prime Minister: Save rivers, Save Dhaka".

The industries minister was addressing a gathering at Shatayu Angan at Ramna Park in the capital at the concluding ceremony of a two-day exhibition organised as part of the initiative to save the rivers of the city.

Barua said, "Rivers flow like our life. Survival of rivers is related to the balance of the total environment. If rivers don't flow, man cannot survive."

"People are deprived of fresh air and safe water due to pollution by tanneries and other industries," Barua said. He warned that industries must use effluent treatment plants (ETPs) to treat industrial wastes.

Otherwise, industries will

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352 students
fall sick after
taking WFP
biscuits

STAR REPORT

At least 352 students of Potkakhali Government Primary School under Sadar Upazila of Barguna reportedly fell sick after having biscuits distributed by World Food Programme (WFP) yesterday.

The children were admitted to Barguna General Hospital where doctors declared them to be out of danger.

Police had to be deployed

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BNP hints at
return to JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition BNP yesterday hinted that it might return to parliament before or on the day the national budget is placed in Jatiya Sangsad.

"It is the duty of the opposition to discuss and criticise the budget. How will it happen unless we join the session?" senior leader of BNP and former speaker Jamiruddin Sircar said at a briefing at the Jatiya Sangsad media centre.

Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abdin Farroque, however, told reporters there that

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BARIND MULTIPURPOSE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
**Nizami found guilty
of Tk 35cr misuse**

He denies wrongdoing

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

A government probe team detected that former agriculture minister Matiur Rahman Nizami was behind misuse, waste and misappropriation of at least Tk 35 crore of Barind Multipurpose Development Authority (BMDA) during the four-party alliance rule.

The team also found that Tk 81.27 crore more of BMDA was wasted, misused or embezzled during that period.

In response, Nizami, who heads Jamaat-e-Islami, a partner of the four-party alliance, told The Daily Star, "I am surprised hearing about the probe report. I am in no way involved in the alleged corruption and misuse, waste and misappropriation of BMDA money. This is a politically-motivated move against me with an intention to defame me."

He said he never interfered in BMDA opera-

tions when he was a minister from 2001 to May 2003. The BMDA had been run by successive governments and it had no direct link with the minister, he claimed.

Headed by Omar Faruk Chowdhury, lawmaker from Rajshahi-1 constituency, the seven-member government team submitted its report to the agriculture ministry on May 31 recommending more intense investigation. The Daily Star obtained a copy of the report.

Other members of the team are lawmakers Shadhan Chandra Majumder of Naogaon-1, M Israfil Alam of Naogaon-6, Shamsur Rahman Sharif of Pabna-4, M Ziaur Rahman of Chapainawabganj-2 and Akhtar Jahan, representative of the agriculture ministry and Asit Kumar Mukutmoni, additional divisional commissioner of Rajshahi.

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Govt wants
opposition to
return to JS
PM tells EU Troika
UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister (PM) Sheikh Hasina said the government sincerely wants the main opposition to join the parliament to make the House centre of all public welfare activities.

"We sincerely want the opposition party to join the parliament and make the House effective," she told the visiting European Union (EU) Troika delegation led by Helena Bambasova, Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia, Czech Republic, when they called on her at the PM's office yesterday.

As the demand of the opposition party for increasing its seats in the front row of parliament came up for discussion, the PM said the ruling party does not evaluate the opposition party in terms of the

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**At least 11 killed in
Pak hotel blast**

AFP, Peshawar, Pakistan

A huge suicide truck bomb ripped through a luxury hotel yesterday killing 11 people and wounding 52 in Pakistan's Peshawar city, capital of a northwest province plagued by Taliban violence.

Two foreigners were among the dead, provincial information minister Mian Iftikhar Hussain told AFP, but would not reveal the nationalities.

Attackers in a pick-up truck entered the compound of the five-star Pearl Continental hotel, spraying security guards with bullets before ramming the vehicle into the building and detonating with foreigners among those injured.

It is the seventh deadly bombing to hit the troubled city in a month, as fears grow that Taliban militants are exacting revenge for a punishing six-week military offensive against them in three northwest districts.

"It was a suicide attack," city police chief Sefwat Ghayur told AFP.

"Occupants of a double-cabin pick-up truck forced their way in, firing at the security guards. The attackers struck their vehicle into the hotel building, and it exploded on impact," he added.

Chaos enveloped the hotel popular with dignitaries, officials and foreign visitors, with smoke and fire billowing around the building in the high-security Khyber Road area of Peshawar, capital of North West Frontier Province.

"Eleven people have been killed," provincial police chief Malik Naveed told AFP. "The toll is likely to rise."

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ACC used
politically
in last 2 yrs

Alleges law minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday said the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) was politically used to thwart democracy during the two-year tenure of the immediate past caretaker government.

The ACC could not act independently, but filed cases against politicians to harass them, following directions of the joint forces, he said.

The ACC back then had no intention to nurture democracy, it had some different purpose instead, he added.

The Anti-corruption Commission is now functioning independently. It is now pursuing cases with its own lawyers, and it will not be influenced like in the past,"

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**Trans-Asian Railway
deal effective
from tomorrow**

REZAUL KARIM

The intergovernmental agreement on Trans-Asian Railway network comes into force tomorrow.

Countries throughout Asia will commit to coordinate the development and operation of international rail routes linking 28 countries of the region.

Marking the occasion, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the regional arm of UN, will arrange a meeting tomorrow at the United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok.

The Agreement comes into effect ninety days after China has become the eighth country to ratify the treaty. The other parties to the agreement are Cambodia, India, Mongolia, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Thailand. Their railway ministers will participate in the ceremony through video messages, according to UNESCAP news yesterday.

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Online Poll

Bangladesh Army wants to form a special unit to ensure the country's internal security and tackle incidents like mutinies and bombings

Yes (50.61%) No (47.91%)
No Comments (1.48%)

Total votes: 743

TODAY'S POLL

Law Minister has said a parliamentary body could be formed to investigate the last caretaker govt's 'wrongdoings' and initiate necessary actions. Do you support?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net

Offshore gas
deals to be
finalised in
a month

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

The government will be finalising deals for offshore gas exploration within a month with the International Oil Companies (IOCs) selected in the bidding completed during the past caretaker government's tenure.

To fulfil e-Ela hi Chowdhury, power and energy adviser to the prime

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Prayer Timing		
June 10		
Asan	Jamaat	
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Magrib	6-50	6-55
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

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