



Govt firm on freeing rivers

PM asks to continue drive against grabbers, ensure industrial units have effluent treatment plants

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed the authorities concerned to continue demolition of illegal structures on riverbanks across the country and compel the owners of mills and factories to use effluent-treatment plant to save rivers and other water bodies from pollution by industrial waste.

"The ongoing eviction drive will have to be continued to demolish all the illegal structures built through occupying the riverbanks," said the prime minister while addressing the function on the occasion of golden jubilee of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) at the city's Osmani Memorial Hall.

Hasina, also president of Awami League, directed to take strict measures so that the reclaimed riverbanks are not occupied again.

She said every mill and factory must have effluent-treatment plant to save rivers from pollution. "We will have to save our rivers for our own existence," Hasina added.

Asking the government officials to work sincerely and transparently, the premier said, "No irregularity and negligence in implementing the government's development plans and projects will be tolerated."

Hasina said her government is committed to reviving the water-transport system for ensuring easier and cheaper communications. She said three to four marine academies are needed to be set up in the country for ensuring modern management of the water-transport system.

She said the government would take up a mega plan to dredge all the major rivers of the country for overall development of water transport system and added that massive plantations of trees along the riverbanks should be started to protect people from the increasing natural calamities due to global warming.

Sheikh Hasina said the 110-kilometer waterways surrounding Dhaka would be made navigable for watercraft, as it will be effective for reducing huge traffic congestion in the capital.

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AUG 21 GRENADE ATTACK

2 confessed criminals given shocking bail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

When the nation is keenly awaiting justice in cases for the grisly August 21 grenade attacks to assassinate Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, a Dhaka court yesterday granted bail to two accused who even confessed to their roles in implementing the terror plan.

Arif Hassan Sumon, who obtained bail from Judge Masdar Hosain's Speedy Trial Tribunal-1, had confessed to a magistrate that he threw two grenades at Hasina's public rally on August 21, 2004, of which one exploded.

The other accused who obtained bail, Munshi Mohibullah, had confessed that he

played a role in planning the attack on Bangabandhu Avenue.

Sumon and Mohibullah are operatives of the banned Islamist outfit Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (Huji). Mohibullah is the brother of top detained Huji leader Mufti Abdul Hannan, the prime charge-sheeted accused along with 21 others in the cases linked to the attack.

Judge Masdar Hosain, who had refused bails to Sumon and Mohibullah and other accused on several occasions earlier, yesterday did not elaborate the grounds for granting them bail.

A few senior lawyers including the chief public prosecutor expressed disappointment

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Rickshaws clog Dhanmondi Road-1 as a large number of rickshaw pullers flock to the capital to earn extra money ahead of the Ramadan and Eid.

City grinds to gridlock halt

Traffic system almost collapses; illegal rickshaws, buses throng roads; DMP seeks closure of school after mid-Ramadan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Traffic situation across the capital keeps worsening every day much to the plight of city residents while the authorities sits on various projects to improve the city's infrastructure.

The capital experiences gridlock before 9:00am on almost every working day in most parts of the city, causing untold sufferings to hundreds of commuters.

It could take about two hours to travel a distance of only eight kilometres during peak times. The situation got worse yesterday as thousands

of people started for railway, bus and ferry terminals after office hours to journey to their homes on a three-day holiday beginning from today.

Hundreds of vehicles remained stranded on roads from the Zia International Airport to Shahbah and Mirpur section-10 to Farmgate for hours.

Meanwhile, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner AKM Shahidul Huq urged the government to issue an order shutting all educational institutions in the city from 15th Ramadan to help police ease traffic jam ahead of Eid.

"I remained stranded on the Airport

road for 30 minutes," said Abu Amanullah Khan, who works with a private company. He finally abandoned his plan for travelling to city's central part from Uttara.

Many city lanes got jammed by rickshaws. Parents travelling by rickshaws with their children remained stranded for hours on their way back home from schools.

Mrs Arzu started from Gulshan Shooting Club by her car at 2:00pm and reached Karwanbazar, only four kilometres off the club, at 4:25pm.

Wishing anonymity, a traffic sergeant at Farmgate said the traffic situa-

tion was much better a few months ago as they did not have to clear roads often for VIPs.

"Once we clear the road for VIPs for 30 minutes, it causes traffic jam for the next three hours," he added.

Dhaka city got a bad name for severe traffic jam years ago but in recent times the situation deteriorated rapidly affecting public life, businesses and even emergency services.

The traffic department blamed lack of coordination with Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) in the control of traffic signal.

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Don't overlay reports on Bangabandhu

JS body asks BTV, Betar ahead of nat'l mourning day

RASHIDUL HASAN

A parliamentary standing committee yesterday asked the state-run Bangladesh Television (BTV) and Bangladesh Betar not to overlay Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in observance of the mourning month of August and the National Mourning Day on August 15.

The parliamentary body on information ministry also formed a five-member sub-committee to investigate the alleged widespread irregularities, corruption and mismanagement in Film Development Corporation (FDC) and irregularities in the business of cable TV service providers.

Headed by Awami League (AL) lawmaker Reza Ali, the sub-committee was asked to

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Used lube of Kandari-6, a state-owned vessel, is dumped into the Karnaphuli in Chittagong. The photo was taken at Jetty-1 of Chittagong Port.

PHOTO: ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

2 more end up with renal failure

Rid's banned paracetamol syrup still in market, being prescribed to children

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two more children are fighting for their lives with renal failure at Shishu Hospital as they were given Rid Pharma's Temset paracetamol syrup in late July.

This substantiates claims that Rid's drugs are still available in the market, especially in the rural areas, three weeks after the government ordered Rid Pharma's drugs to be taken off the shelf.

Two-and-a-half-year-old Sinthia and 15-month-old Tofayel are undergoing treatment at Dhaka Shishu Hospital after their village doctors gave them Temset paracetamol syrup of Rid Pharma.

Tofayel, who was brought to Dhaka from Brahmanpara of Comilla Friday, was given Temset following high fever in late July by village doctor Monsur.

"When we saw he was not getting better, we took him to another doctor and finally brought him to this hospital," said Morshedha, mother of Tofayel, at Dhaka Shishu Hospital. She said she handed over the syrup to head of paediatric nephrology department Prof Hanif the day before yesterday.

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Special steps taken to ensure water supply during Ramadan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Authorities of six metropolitan cities have taken special steps to ensure uninterrupted water supply during the upcoming month of Ramadan.

High officials of the six city corporations told this at a meeting held at the conference room in Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (WASA) Bhaban in Dhaka yesterday.

Md Shahjahan Ali Molla, managing director of Dhaka WASA, said they would form vigilance team to monitor the activities of employees and officials involved water supply.

Steps taken by Dhaka WASA include establishing twelve complaint centres to be work round-the-clock, keeping active all the 525 pumps of WASA for lifting water and

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UNUSUAL BDR DEATH

Probe gets one more month

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

The home ministry has extended the deadline for submitting the report of a probe into the 'unnatural deaths' of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) soldiers in custody by a month again, as the investigation committee could not make any headway yet, even after three prior extensions.

At least 36 BDR soldiers died in custody in the capital and elsewhere following their arrests in connection with the February mutiny in the border security force's headquarters in Pithkhana, which had left 75 persons killed including 57 army officers deputized to the force.

Meanwhile, some home ministry officials questioned the ability of the four-member investigation committee, saying it

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Saidee sued for war crime

A CORRESPONDENT, Pirojpur

Jamaat leader Delwar Hossain Saidee and four others were sued on charge of war crimes with Pirojpur chief judicial magistrate's court yesterday.

Judge Rafiqul Islam ordered officer-in-charge of Sadar Police Station to take up the case.

Manik Poshari, son of late Sajjuddin Poshari of Chitholia village in Sadar upazila, filed the case.

Other accused in the case are Mohsin, Momin Hawlader, Hakim Qari, and Sobahan Hawlader.

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ZIA ORPHANAGE CASE

Khaleda, Tarique asked to appear in court Aug 30

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday asked former premier and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, her son Tarique Rahman and four others to appear before it on August 30 in a case filed for embezzlement of Tk 2.10 crore by forming fraudulent Zia Orphanage Trust.

The court will give its decision on the same day whether the charges would be taken into cognisance against them in presence of the accused.

Judge ANM Bashir Ullah of Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court fixed the date after defence lawyers had submitted petitions seek-

ing adjournment of the hearing on acceptance of the charges.

The other charge-sheeted are former BNP lawmaker Kazi Salimul Haque, Khaleda's nephew Mominur Rahman, Sharfuddin Ahmed, and former Principal Secretary Kamal Uddin Siddiqui. Mominur and Kamal Uddin have been absconding.

Lawyers of Khaleda, Tarique and Sharfuddin submitted petitions to the court saying their clients were earlier granted bails from the High Court (HC) of different terms on different dates.

At one stage, the judge asked Khaleda and Tarique's lawyers why their clients did not

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JS team claims 3 Tipai successes

RASHIDUL HASAN

The parliamentary delegation after its return from India yesterday said their visit to the Tipaimukh dam had yielded three achievements.

Referring to the first achievement the team revealed that India assured them the dam was meant for a hydroelectric plant, not an irrigation project.

About the second one, Abdur Razzaq told reporters at the Jatiya Sangsad media centre that India would not build any barrage or structures for withdrawal of water from the downstream of Tipaimukh dam site or in Fulertal area of Manipur in India.

Citing the third success Razzaq said, "India told us about the amount of water to be discharged from Barak river in the dry season and how much will flow into the Surma and Kusiara of Bangladesh, once the dam is built."

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