



PM seeks full river plan

Says dredging to start with Gorai; project must not cross 15 years

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed the authorities concerned to immediately formulate a complete action plan for dredging the country's rivers, which have mostly silted up.

The PM made the directive while chairing the maiden meeting of the recently formed high-powered committee on river dredging and water resource management at the PM's

Office.

She also told the meeting that the proposed long-term river dredging project should not be of more than 15 years as "rivers must be given back their navigability immediately."

PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad briefed newsmen after the meeting.

Hasina said, the massive river dredging project should be started through excavating Gorai River since its process had

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Swine flu cases keep on rising

13 more diagnosed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thirteen more people have been diagnosed with swine flu yesterday across the country, bringing the total number of swine flu patients in the country to 117.

While the government officials confirmed that all the cases appear to be mild, except the case of a three-month-old child, the director of Institute of Epidemiology cautioned that the number of swine flu cases in the country could multiply manifold within the next three to four months.

Prof Mahmudur Rahman, director of the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR), however said that this information was not to be interpreted as a need for panic but that precautionary measures should be strengthened.

Rahman also said, "The baby suffering from swine flu has been admitted to a hospital."

Talking to The Daily Star, Prof Rahman that the prediction about the number of swine flu cases was arrived at following the

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DEFORESTATION IN PROCESS... Allegations are rife that illegally felled trees are sold at this Hatubanga wholesale timber market, strategically situated on the edge of the reserve forest, in Asgana union in Mirzapur, Tangail.

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Lawsuit blocks new NBR hiring

JS body unhappy as 400 unqualified tax inspectors continue their job

RASHIDUL HASAN

A parliamentary committee yesterday expressed disappointment over appointments of 400 inspectors to the National Board of Revenue (NBR), who do not even have the required minimum qualification for the job.

The parliamentary watchdog body also asked ministries concerned to resolve a pending legal issue that has been keeping NBR from recruiting new inspectors.

Elaborating on the matter, chairman of the committee AHM Mostafa Kamal said some former NBR inspectors had filed cases with the High Court about 20 years ago, protesting their firings from the job. The court subsequently directed NBR to refrain from appointing new inspectors till the matter is resolved.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance however

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Loggers reign supreme

Half of Mirzapur's reserve forest disappeared; timber market, brick kilns thrive on Tangail greens

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

The Department of Forest is losing control on a vast tract of greens in Tangail as big timber market and brickfields thrive largely on illegally felled trees.

Almost half of the 7,225-acre reserve forest in Mirzapur upazila has disappeared in the last four decades as the forest department and the district administration turned a blind eye to it.

The district administration and forest officials are now playing a blame game for a mushroom growth of brick kilns within the reserve forest.

Encroachment on the forestland, years of neglect in preserving the forest and allowing a massive wholesale timber market and a large number of brickfields to sprout up have caused wholesale deforestation, locals say.

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