

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 re-excavating Gorai River since its process had

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Brokers rule BRTA office

'Ruling party leaders' make quick money arranging fitness certificates for unfit vehicles

SHARIFUL ISLAM

A black taxi with its usual wobbly wheels and numerous dents ground to a halt in front of the vehicle inspectors at Bangladesh Road Transport Authority office. The squeaks, rattles, the blunt noises and the hissing went on, as the engine was kept running.

As the BRTA staff opened the bonnet plumes of blue smoke and white steam headed upwards. Any layman could say that the vehicle should have been scrapped years ago.

Looking at the condition of the vehicle even the motor transport inspector appeared shocked. But one of the brokers, who were around the official, came before him and gave him a smile and the fitness was okayed just like that. The official did not even

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Military law not applicable for BDR trial
TH Khan tells SC as amicus curiae
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The offences committed in the BDR mutiny cannot be tried under the military law since the BDR is not a disciplined force like the army, advocate TH Khan yesterday told the Supreme Court.

The Army Act 1952 is applicable only to army personnel and the BDR personnel accused of various offences committed during the February 25-26 bloody mutiny cannot be tried under the act, he said.

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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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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 Hatubhanga wholesale timber market, strategically situated on the edge of the reserve forest, in Aagana union in Mirzapur, Tangail.

PHOTO: STAR

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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