

Teesta flows in thin

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between Gajoldoba and Teesta barrage in Bangladesh," said Dr Ainun Nishat, noted hydrologist.

The Teesta, originating from Chholamo Lake at 5,330 metre above sea level in the Indian portion of the Himalayas, enters Bangladesh at Kalganj village under Satnai union of Nilphamari district.

It courses 45 kilometres through Rangpur, Lalmonirhat and Gaibandha before meeting the Brahmaputra in Kurigram.

Md Shamsuddoha, executive engineer of Water Development Board (northern zone), said India keeps the gates at Gajoldoba barrage closed in winter and redirects the water to its land irrigation.

"It leaves the river almost dried-up for most of the season," he observed.

Besides, the dwindling flow of water renders Teesta barrage almost useless during the dry season.

The barrage was built at Domar-Dimla point for Tk 1,500 crore in 1990 to help irrigation in six northern districts.

India started the work of Gajoldoba barrage a few months after Bangladesh began constructing the Teesta barrage in 1983. The Indian barrage opened after two years, while Bangladesh's took seven years to be in operation.

India has also constructed several dams across the Teesta in the last few years. Built under a project to produce 50,000 megawatts of electricity, these dams too contribute to the decreasing water flow in the lower basin, say sources.

The trickling stream of water has led to emergence of a good number of chars on the Teesta.

Navigability of the river has worsened so much that only small boats can now ply the water route there.

Because of the loss of navigability, the river cannot hold the rush of water during the monsoon and bursts its banks, causing floods.

Useless Teesta Barrage Phase-I of the Teesta Barrage project was completed around

Correction

In our report headlined "Build capacity for climate challenge," published on January 3, it was inadvertently mentioned that Bangladesh would receive a climate change adaptation fund of \$10 billion yearly for the next three years and the amount would be \$100 billion from 2020, quoting Dr Ainun Nishat, senior adviser on climate change to IUCN Asia.

Both are actually global funds.

The \$10 billion fund is meant for mitigation and adaptation to climate change and transfer of technology with preferential treatment for the most vulnerable countries like Bangladesh while the \$100 billion fund is only for taking mitigation measures without preferential treatment.

We regret the error.

CID seeks

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Since the reinvestigation of the cases had started, the CID arrested ex-state minister for home Luthfozzaman Babar, one of the founders of Harkatul Jihad Al Islami Bangladesh Sheikh Abdus Salam, BNP leader also Dhaka City Corporation Ward Councillor Ariful Islam Arif, and Abu Yusuf Butt alias Abdul Majid who is allegedly a leader of a militant outfit based in India administered Kashmir.

Besides, the CID questioned Maj Gen (ret) Sadiq Hasan Rumi, former director general of the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), Maj Gen (ret) ATM Amin who was DGFI director at the time of the carnage, Abdul Aziz Sarker, former director general of Rapid Action Battalion, and former inspector general of police Mohammad Abdul Qaiyum.

Superintendent of Police Obaidur Rahman who had been the deputy commissioner of the east zone of Dhaka city back then and also had been in charge of the rally security, was interrogated as well after the reinvestigation was launched.

'More women will be working than men within four years'

ANI, London

More women will be working than men within four years due to recession, creating a "Full Monty" effect, a British think-tank has predicted.

"We are having a Full Monty-style recession with women faring much better than men. As Britain has lost industrial jobs over the last couple of decades, the number of men in work has collapsed, and the numbers on benefits soared. The current recession is accelerating this trend further," The Telegraph quoted Neil O'Brien, director of Policy Exchange, as saying.

Official figures show that the number of men of working age with jobs has fallen from 92 per cent in 1971 to 75 per cent, while the number of women who are employed has risen from 56 per cent to 69 per cent.

Boeing buying plan sent back for scrutiny

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet committee on economic affairs yesterday sent back for further scrutiny the civil aviation ministry's proposal to waive Public Procurement Act conditions for the pre-delivery payment to buy two aircraft from Boeing.

A meeting of the cabinet committee asked the ministry to place the proposal again after further scrutinising its legal aspect by the law ministry.

Nine local banks have already finalised a loan of \$114.75 million for Biman Bangladesh Airlines Ltd to meet the pre-delivery payment to Boeing for purchasing the planes.

The civil aviation ministry yesterday argued that the schedule for the payment has already expired and that it has requested Boeing to extend the timeline by another month.

At the meeting, the industries ministry placed the draft of a new industrial policy. The cabinet committee, however, decided to discuss the draft policy at another meeting.

The communications ministry also placed a proposal on collection of tolls at the Jamuna Bridge.

The committee decided that tolls collection and maintenance of the bridge will be run separately and an international tender will be floated for this.

Jamuna Bridge will remain under the supervision of the army until this process is completed, it said.

Hasina's visit

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"As close neighbours, both the countries don't have any alternatives to joining hands and working together to ensure peace and stability in the region," she told newly appointed Indian High Commissioner Rajeev Mitter when he called on her at the Foreign Ministry.

In response, the envoy said India is eagerly waiting for Bangladesh prime minister and hoped that the visit will open a new chapter of friendly relations between the two countries.

Referring to the historic Ganges Water Sharing Treaty signed during the previous tenure of the Awami League government, Dipu Moni said Bangladesh is keen on holding out hands of cooperation in water-related issues.

She emphasised that Bangladesh would appreciate India's favourable response to further duty free access of Bangladesh commodities to Indian market and removal of NTBs (non-tariff barriers).

During the meeting, they discussed details about the premier's visit.

Welcoming the high commissioner, the foreign minister assured him of government supports in discharging his diplomatic duties and wished him success in his tenure in Bangladesh.

5th amendment

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The two petitions were filed by immediate past BNP-Jamaat-led alliance government and Muktiyoddha Kalyan Trust in September 2005. Those two are among four such leave to appeal petitions aiming to protect the fifth amendment.

Dealing with the two remaining petitions, the apex court yesterday fixed January 18 for hearing arguments of the petitioners. BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain filed one of those petitions while three SC lawyers Tajul Islam, Kamruzzaman Bhuiyan, and Munshi Ahsan Kabir jointly filed the other, both of which were filed in May last year.

A five-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice Md Tafazzul Islam came up with the orders after hearing arguments of the incumbent attorney general, and counsels of the writ petitioner and appellants.

On August 29, 2005 the HC in a landmark verdict declared illegal and void the fifth amendment to the constitution, rendering illegal the regimes of Khandaker Moshtaque Ahmed, Abu Sadaat Mohammad Sayem, and Maj Gen Ziaur Rahman between August 15, 1975 and April 9, 1979.

The same day at midnight the Attorney General's Office, under the erstwhile BNP-Jamaat-led regime, urgently moved a petition to impose a stay on the HC verdict. The SC also issued the stay order the same night.

At that time, the erstwhile law minister Moudud Ahmed termed the HC verdict as 'valueless' saying it just created a 'temporary sensation', while leading lawyers hailed the verdict saying it proved that martial laws cannot change the constitution.

Incumbent Attorney General Mahubub Alam told reporters yesterday that the HC judgement will remain upheld unless the apex court takes a decision contrary to the current one during adjudication of the remaining two leave to appeal petitions.

He said he will communicate the SC order to the government, so it may proceed to implement the HC verdict.

The attorney general said the fifth amendment is no more effective since yesterday's SC decision.

Replying to a question he said the government now has to reprint the constitution omitting the part of the fifth amendment.

He said the words Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim however will not be removed from the preamble of the constitution.

Counsel for Khandaker Delwar Hossain, TH Khan however said the stay order on the effectiveness of the HC verdict will continue since two other leave to appeal petitions against the verdict are pending.

Constitution expert Dr M Zahir told The Daily Star that the HC verdict has been upheld by the SC order, but it is still under challenge until the remaining leave to appeal petitions are adjudicated.

Chairman of the Law Commission Justice MA Rashid said "If the High Court's judgement of declaring unconstitutional and illegal the fifth amendment to the constitution is upheld, the constitution should be read and enforced according to the directions given in the judgement until the constitution is amended in light of it."

The HC in its verdict noted

that although all government activities during the said period are being declared illegal, the history cannot be altered. Many of those illegal acts were carried out in public interest. From that perspective, the court 'condones' some of the actions which could also have been carried out in line with the constitution.

The court said assumption of power by Khandaker Moshtaque Ahmed with effect from the morning of August 15, 1975 by placing Bangladesh under a martial law, and his assumption of the office of president of the People's Republic of Bangladesh by the Proclamation of August 20, 1975 were in clear violation of the constitution, and without lawful authority.

"Consequently, all his subsequent actions as the president of Bangladesh were illegitimate and void," it observed.

Taking over of the office of the president on November 6, 1975 by Justice Abu Sadaat Mohammad Sayem, his assumption of the powers of chief martial law administrator (CMLA), his act of appointing Ziaur Rahman as the deputy CMLA, and the Proclamation of November 8, 1975 were all in violation of the constitution, which means all his functions and actions as the president or CMLA were illegitimate, the verdict observed.

The HC verdict also directed the authorities to handover the property of the erstwhile Moon Cinema Hall in Waizhat in Dhaka to its original owner, who actually initiated the case through filing of a writ petition.

Masudul Alam, on behalf of Bangladesh Italian Marble Works Company (BIMWC), filed the writ petition in 1994 to reclaim ownership of Moon Cinema Hall which the government right after the country's independence announced as abandoned property and awarded to Muktiyoddha Kalyan Trust.

The petition also challenged the legality of the Martial Law Regulation of 1977.

Country reels

FROM PAGE 16

The biting cold claimed two lives in Dinajpur including an octogenarian man -- Md Reaz Uddin of Chopagari village in Ghoraghat upazila. About 400 people have been admitted to hospitals in Panchagarh, Joypurhat and Dinajpur for cold related diseases, says our Dinajpur correspondent.

Railway police of Parbatipur yesterday recovered the body of a woman in her 60s from platform-5. They suspect she died due to severe cold.

The cold wave and dense fog disrupted ferry and launch services on Paturia-Daulatdia, Maowa-Karakanda routes and also in Chandpur yesterday.

Three ferries anchored in the middle of the river as the ferry service on Paturia-Daulatdia route remained suspended for two hours yesterday due to dense fog, reports our Manikganj correspondent.

Nearly 100 goods-laden trucks and 200 buses and small vehicles were seen lined up at Paturia and Daulatdia ghats at 8:00am due to fog.

Launches from different districts reached Chandpur port after much delay due to heavy fog in the river, says our Chandpur correspondent.

UK minister

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Government, Foreign Affairs, Education and Women and Children Affairs, said a British High Commissioner release.

Denham's other engagements include interaction with community representatives in Sylhet Division, exposure to a UK funded poverty eradication programme, a discussion with British Bangladeshis on a range of issues including forced marriages, and a meeting with the mayor of Sylhet.

The aim of the visit is to enhance existing bonds between the societies of Bangladesh and the UK to celebrate the multiculturalism of Britain, learn more about the views of young Muslims as well as reiterate UK's commitment to assist the country in the fields of education, climate change and democracy.

Climate talks a let-down

Admits Manmohan
AFP, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who successfully fought against binding caps on emissions at the Copenhagen climate talks, admitted yesterday that all parties involved were unhappy with the results.

Singh told a science conference in the city of Thiruvananthapuram that world leaders "were able to make only limited progress at the Copenhagen summit and no one was satisfied with the outcome."

"There is no escaping the truth that the nations of the world have to move to a low greenhouse gas emissions and energy efficient development path," he said.

At last month's talks, India and other emerging nations such as China thwarted plans for legally binding emissions caps, arguing the importance of maintaining rapid economic growth.

India insists that developed countries, blamed for most global warming thus far, should bear the burden of mitigating its future effects.

India's per capita emissions are among the lowest globally as much of the country is without power, but in volume terms it is still among the top five carbon emitters.

At Copenhagen, a total of 30 billion dollars was pledged from 2010-2012 to help poor countries in the firing line of climate change. Rich nations also sketched out a target of providing 100 billion dollars annually by 2020.

The deal set the aim of limiting warming to two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit), but set no binding targets to reduce emissions of gases that scientists say are heating the world's atmosphere to dangerous levels.

Indian Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh welcomed the lack of binding measures and praised the united front presented by major emerging countries.

A diplomatic battle erupted over the summit's final agreement, which has been widely panned for its failure to oblige countries to implement emissions reductions.

Law Commission

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21-point work plan to the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs for the government's comment, but the ministry did not respond.

As per the Law Commission Act, the government was due to send its opinion on the work plan by November 30 last year. The commission would then finalise the plan and inform the government about it by December 31.

But Law Minister Shafique Ahmed, on December 22, told The Daily Star that the law commission is independent and it can implement its plan without waiting for the government opinion.

Sources said the commission in 13 years since its establishment has drafted as many as 88 recommendations, but except for four or five, all of the proposals were brushed aside as those were believably not in favour of successive governments.

The law commission plan also includes -- the judicial reform to make justice delivery system accessible, inexpensive, informal and speedy; and the reforms of the laws regarding the information and communication technology, for protection of the rights of the migrant workers and the indigenous people, and for maintenance and management of the government lands -- khas land, vested and abandoned properties.

Justice MA Rashid however said the law commission could execute its plan, even without the government opinion, but it might not be effective.

JS sits today

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then president's address to the inaugural session of the ninth parliament on January 25 last.

Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abidin Farroque yesterday confirmed that lawmakers belonging to BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami and Bangladesh Jatiya Party would not return to the House today.

The opposition had started its boycott demanding more front-row seats in parliament and later came up with fresh demands. It has kept off 43 consecutive sittings of the House out of 86 held so far.

Seats of the opposition legislators will fall vacant automatically if they remain absent from parliament for 90 consecutive sittings, according to constitutional provisions.

A number of them have already kept off more than 63 sittings, parliament secretary officials said.

Meanwhile, the Business Advisory Committee led by Speaker Abdul Hamid sits an hour before the House sitting to decide on duration of the session and business to be transacted.

Contacted yesterday, BNP standing committee member Moudud Ahmed said, "We will of course take a decision regarding the absence for 90 sittings."

The BNP parliamentary party will discuss today the next course of action, said Moudud, who was elected in the April 2 by-election from Bogra-7 constituency, and did not get any scope to join the House session.

To justify continuing the boycott, Farroque told reporters the atmosphere is still not conducive to their return to parliament, and their demands have not been met as yet.

He mentioned that the demands include withdrawal of 'politically motivated' cases against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and Senior Vice-Chairman Tarique Rahman, dropping the decision to cancel lease of Khaleda's cantonment residence, strengthening security of leader of the opposition (Khaleda), stopping unpleasant remarks on late president Ziaur Rahman and discussion in parliament on various issues.

"Still there is time. If the speaker takes initiative to meet our demands, we will join the new year session," Farroque said.

Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, the speaker said, "I still urge opposition law-

AL allies

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day before the government completes one year in office, said AL Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif.

Frustration and resentment developed within the 14-party allies as the AL had not convened a single meeting before to fix strategies on how to work as one political force and implement their common electoral pledges.

Senior leaders of all allies, except Gono Forum President Kamal Hossain, have already been invited to attend the meeting. Sources said the AL and the Gono Forum chief are not on good terms.

Each party has been asked to join the meeting with no more than three leaders.

Alliance leaders observed that both the meetings are very important as the government will complete its one year on January 6 and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will visit India next week to sign crucial treaties.

Talking to The Daily Star, AL President Member Obaidul Quader said the prime minister would give necessary directives to the party's rank and file at the Central Working Committee for implementing the party's electoral pledges quickly.

He said the issue of dealing with the opposition would also be discussed at the meeting and how the party could handle the climate change consequences.

Meanwhile, Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad yesterday said the position of his party is now weak in the grand alliance. He, however, claimed that there is no rift within the alliance.

"We want to stay in a strong position within the ruling Awami League-led grand alliance, not in a weak position," he said while exchanging views with journalists at a city hotel.

The party would hold a rally at the city's Paltan Maidan January 6 marking Jatiya Party's 24th founding anniversary and a year of grand alliance government.

PM not going

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Rajeev Mitter, who made his first call on Foreign Minister Dipu Moni yesterday afternoon, formally conveyed the request to her and discussed curtailing Hasina's visit starting January 10.

Officials at the Indian High Commission in Dhaka, however, declined to comment on the matter.

Hasina was scheduled to go to Kolkata on her way back home from New Delhi to meet West Bengal Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya and veteran politician and former West Bengal chief minister Jyoti Basu.

She was also scheduled to visit Viswa-Bharati University at Santiniketan in West Bengal on January 13.

Sheikh Hasina will leave for New Delhi on January 10 and will hold talks with her Indian counterpart Dr Manmohan Singh at Hyderabad House on January 11.

She is also due to visit the Ajmer Sharif in Rajasthan to offer feteha at the shrine of Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti (RH).

Death warrants

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informed about the warrants.

The five convicts are Syed Farooq Rahman, Sultan Shahrar Rashid Khan, Bazul Huda, AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed and Mohiuddin Ahmed.

Advocate Anisul Huq, chief state counsel of the Bangabandhu murder case, told The Daily Star the count down of the execution would begin after the disposal of the review petitions if filed by the convicts.

As per the Supreme Court rules the convicts can file review petitions against the SC verdict within 30 days of receiving the certified copy of the verdict.

The counsels for the convicts received certified copy of the SC verdict of Bangabandhu murder case on December 24 and they could file the review petition by January 21.

Sources said if the court rejects the review petitions, the convicts will get seven days to submit a mercy petition to the president.

If the president rejects the mercy petitions, the prison authorities would start the process of execution as per the jail code.

The sources said as per their experiences of implementing execution, the jail authorities would start counting 21 days from the day of receiving president's decision of rejection.

The prison authorities can execute the convicts after 21 days but it must be before 28 days from the day of receiving the president's decision, they added.

Talking to The Daily Star, barrister Abdullah Al Mamun, lawyer for Bazul Huda and AKM Mohiuddin Ahmed yesterday said that he thinks the issuance of death warrants was illegal, as it was done before the expiry of the time frame of 30 days for submitting the review petitions.

On November 19, the Appellate Division upheld the death sentences handed down by the High Court earlier to a dozen killers, including the five in the condemned cells.

Tigers face

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Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur today.

State-run television channel BTv, apart from satellite channels SuperSport and Neo Cricket will beam the match live from 2:30pm.

The only other seamer, apart from the youthful Shafiqul Islam, in the two-man pace attack is speedster Rubel Hossain as the hosts opted for four spinners to face their South Asian rivals.

The match will represent a big challenge for Bangladesh stand-in captain Shakib al Hasan and his side as they look to build upon what has been the most successful year for Bangladesh cricket in their history.

Shakib has been the lynchpin in the side as the Tigers recorded series wins over West Indies and Zimbabwe in 2009.

However, a poor showing in this season's Premier Division Cricket League means the spotlight will be very much on the man from Magura who is deputising in place of Mashrafe bin Mortaza, who is absent through lack of match fitness.

Meanwhile, former ICL players Shahrar Nafees and Aftab Ahmed both missed the cut for a place in the team for the tournament opener, with the Tigers keeping faith in the side that has performed admirably in the past year.

Sri Lanka will announce their side before the start of the match today. But Kumar Sangakkara's team is also full of

fresh young faces with Tillakaratne Dilshan in particular posing a fearsome challenge for the hosts.

Dew is set to play a crucial role, with the day-night affairs in the cold giving an advantage to the team who wins the toss. Both captains will therefore be looking to call the coin correctly when play rolls around at the home of country's cricket.

The other team in the tournament is India who will play their first match tomorrow against Sri Lanka at the same venue. Teams will face each other twice before the final that takes place on the 13th of January and there will be a day's break after every two matches.

All the seven matches of the tournament will be day-nighters.

TEAMS
 BANGLADESH: Tamim Iqbal, Imrul Kayes, Mohammad Ashraful, Roqibul Hassan, Shakib al Hasan (captain), Mushfiqur Rahim, Mahmud Ullah, Naeem Islam, Abdur Razzak, Rubel Hossain, Shafiqul Islam.

SRI LANKA (from): Kumar Sangakkara (captain), Tillakaratne Dilshan, Upu Tharanga, Thilan Samarawera, Thilina Kandamby, Chamara Silva, Lahiru Thiriminna, Thisara Perera, M Pushpakumara, Malinga Bandara, Suraj Randiv, Thilan Thushara, Suranga Lakmal, Nuwan Kulasekera, Chanaka Wellagedara.