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Govt targets 300 rivers

All to be dredged in 8 years

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

The government has chalked out a Tk 12,000 crore project for dredging more than 300 rivers within the next eight years, as the length of navigable waterways in the country nearly halved in just two decades.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), in a proposal, identified 2,393 kilometres of waterways on 53 major river routes for dredging, to improve and restore navigability by 2018.

Although Bangladesh is a country of rivers, the length of its navigable waterways stood at 6,000 km in 1989, reduced from 8,000 km in 1963, due to continual drying up of rivers and other water bodies.

"The length of navigable waterways now stands at 3,800 kilometres," said Chief Engineer (Dredging) of BIWTA Md Abdul Matin recently.

"The rivers of Bangladesh discharge about 5 million cusec water during flood, and 2.4 billion ton of silt are flown [come in] annually through the rivers, which is 18.5 percent of the total silt of the world. ...As a result, the rivers have been gradually dying," the BIWTA project proposal says.

Increasing navigability of the rivers will ensure rapid, cost effective, and smooth plying of cargo

and passenger vessels, and the volume of traffic will also increase, it adds.

"Marketing and distribution of agricultural inputs and outputs will be enhanced which in turn will have a positive impact on the country's economy," it says adding, improvement of the waterways by dredging will also facilitate irrigation, and preservation of ecological balance.

Some of the river routes to be dredged are Dhaka-Munshiganj-Gajaria-Chandpur-Chittagong route on Buriganga, Dhaleshwari, Meghna and Karnaphuli rivers; Chandpur-Muladi-Hijla-Barisal route on Meghna, Arial Kha and Kirtonkhola rivers; Aricha-Baghabari and Narsinghdi-Katiadi routes on Jamuna river; Sadarghat-Mirpur-Tongi-Demra route on Buriganga, Turag, Balu rivers and Tongi canal; Munshiganj-Narayanganj-Demra-Ghorashal route on Shitalakhya river; Chhatak-Ashtagram route on Surma river; Dhamrai-Nagarpur-Atpara route on Bangshi and Dhaleshwari rivers; Mirpur-Rustampur-Kaliakoir route on Turag river; Saidpur-Srinagar route on Ichhamati river; Aricha-Rajshahi-Godagari route on Padma and Mahananda rivers; and Bardia-Kamarkhali-Talbari route on Matamuhuri and Gorai rivers.

The BIWTA project titled Capital Dredging on

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BAY OF BENGAL

Govt counts on donors

Eyes 89pc fund from them

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government has sought from its development partners 89 percent of the total cost of \$1.64 billion (Tk 11,473 crore) for the mega project of river dredging.

The Economic Relations Division has sent a proposal for the river dredging project prepared by the shipping ministry to multilateral and bilateral donors including the World Bank and Asian Development Bank.

The proposal shows \$1.46 billion or Tk 10,193 crore of the total project cost in foreign assistance while \$183 million or Tk 1,279 crore will be provided from the government's own source.

ERD sources said the government's massive plan for river dredging would be placed at the meeting of Bangladesh Development Forum scheduled for this week in the capital.

According to the proposal, 53 rivers will be dredged in two phases under the mega project.

As per primary assessment, a total of 32.76 crore cubic metre will be dredged, of which 13.02 crore cubic metre dredging will be on 23 river routes in the first phase.

The cost of dredging in the first phase is \$600 million (Tk 4,201 crore), of which \$527 million or Tk 3,692 crore is in foreign aid.

The expected period for the first phase is three fiscal years--from FY 2010-11 to FY 2012-13. The second phase is expected to start in FY 2014-15 and complete by FY 2017-18.

The cost of dredging 19.74 crore cubic metre on 30 river routes in the second phase is \$1.03 billion or Tk 7,271 crore. Of the amount, the expected foreign aid is \$928 million or Tk 6,501 crore.

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EU pledges climate help

UNB, Dhaka

The European community will always stand by Bangladesh in protecting its people from the disastrous impacts of increasing global warming and climate change.

The assurance came when a six-member high-level delegation from the European Union Headquarters led by Jean Lambert, a member of the European parliament, met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her official residence Jamuna yesterday evening.

Briefing newsmen after the

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BNP walks out again on Zia grave remarks

Speaker assures all unconstitutional, unparliamentary words to be expunged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP-led opposition lawmakers stormed out of parliament yesterday again in protest against recurrence of what they said "indecent remarks" about late president Ziaur Rahman's grave.

Pandemonium broke out in the House as the opposition also protested and shouted while a treasury bench lawmaker was reading out a High Court verdict that said portraying Zia as

having proclaimed the country's independence is unconstitutional.

The BNP lawmakers expressed outrage as soon as Awami League lawmaker Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim started speaking of the doubt Zia's grave raises about the existence of Zia's body there.

A number of them threw files and papers from their desks while some headed towards the speaker's podium to demonstrate a protest.

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NIZAMI MEETS KHALEDA BNP for separate agitation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami wants to forge a movement from a common platform to face government's actions against its leaders and workers while BNP prefers a separate programme.

A number of BNP leaders said they are ready to protest any sorts of political repression but they will not take any responsibility regarding some sensitive issues like trial of war

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KUSHTIA COLLEGE

Admission halts again on 'BCL quota' demand

They assault 2 journalists; cop suspended for inaction

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

The authorities of Kushtia Government College were yesterday forced to stop the first year honours admission process once again as they turned down a demand of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) to enrol 200 students illegally.

The BCL men also severely beat up two journalists --Touhidi Hasan, district correspondent of Prothom Alo, and Sharif Biswas of satellite Desh TV--who went to the principal's room for collecting information on the outrageous demand for 'political quota.'

Campus sources said a group of BCL activists confined the principal of the college to his room around 11:30am and asked him to stop the admission process that resumed yesterday without meeting the BCL demand. BCL college president Enamul Bari Sumon and general secretary Abdullah Al-Mamun accompanied by some outsiders allegedly led the incident.

Seeing the journalists at the principal's room, BCL cadres got angry and caught them. The cadres then took them to a room of the

college library and assaulted them by locking the door from outside.

On information, police rushed to the spot and rescued the journalists sometime later. They were undergoing treatment at Kushtia general hospital.

Kushtia Sadar thana Sub-inspector Obaidul Quader was suspended for not taking immediate step to rescue the journalists. Police later arrested two BCL outsiders--Babu and Sohag--on charge of beating up the journalists.

On February 1, the college authorities were first forced to stop the process for the same reason. They resumed viva of the students on the merit lists yesterday for admission in 18 disciplines.

The BCL activists locked the entrances to the college to realise their demand on February 1. The Daily Star carried a story on the incident on February 2.

Preferring anonymity, a teacher of the college told The Daily Star that the BCL leaders had threatened the principal by saying "anything can happen if the admission process is not stopped without meeting the demand."



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

This recent photo shows rickshaws running on both lanes of Fakirapool DIT Road. The lane, on the right of the picture, is marked for these three wheelers.

Siddhirganj power plant switched on

PM says 8 more power plants soon

UNB, Siddhirganj

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government has taken comprehensive steps in long and short terms to mitigate the existing power crisis in the country.

"The process has been started to set up eight oil-fuelled rental power-generation plants that would produce 530 megawatts."

The PM said this while inaugurating the 120-MW first unit of the 240-MW peaking power plant project at Siddhirganj in Narayanganj.

The government has also taken steps to produce 820-MW electricity with peaking power plants within next year, and 7,000

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Rajshahi cops blame it on RU

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Refuting allegations against police administration, Rajshahi Metropolitan Police Commissioner Nawsher Ali yesterday blamed Rajshahi University authority for not playing its role to control February 9 campus violence that left one Chhatra League worker killed and about 100 people injured.

Nawsher Ali said the allegation should not fall on the

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31 more held

STAR REPORT

Police arrested 31 more Islamic Chhatra Shibir cadres at Rajshahi and Dhaka yesterday raising the total number of Jamaat-Shibir men detained to 364 since the Rajshahi University violence on February 9.

Meanwhile, two cases were filed against over 450 leaders and activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and Shibir in connection with their clash with Chhatra League men in Nilphamari Saturday.

Police said a team from Boalia Police Station picked up 13 cadres from Shalbagan area of Rajshahi and Motihar police arrested 10 at different private hostels in Rajshahi. Four cadres were also detained on Rajshahi University campus.

Boalia Police Station Officer-in-Charge Jasim Uddin said they detained the 13 cadres when they were trying to bring out a procession at Shalbagan area around noon.

Motihar Police Station OC Tofazzel Hossain said among the

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Apollo Hospitals Dhaka
NEW APPOINTMENT NUMBER
(02)-8845242
 Existing Appointment Number : (02)-8401680 (effective till 15th February). Other numbers will remain unchanged.
 Effective from 15th January

We Mourn

We are deeply shocked and saddened by the untimely death of **Mr. Rafiqul Islam Executive director, Corolla Corporation (BD) Limited, his wife Rashida Islam, his brother Tariqul Islam, wife Kaniz Fatema, son Fahim Islam, Daughter Ayesha Islam and Maid Rezina** during the fire in Japan Garden City last Thursday (Innallillahe Wa Inna Ilaaihe Razeun). We pray for the salvation of the departed souls.

Management & all employees of Corolla Corporation (BD) Limited