



Did you know? The Fort Peck Dam is the highest of six major dams along the Missouri River, in the United States. At 21,026 feet (6,409 m) in length and over 250 feet (76 m) in height, it is the largest hydraulically filled dam in the U.S.



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Aila woes worsen

Water board started embankment-repairing 6 months after receiving fund; govt disappointed with poor donor response

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

As the plight of villagers intensifies on a vast swath of coastal land hit by cyclonic storm Aila ten months ago, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will meet disaster and water officials tomorrow to find a solution to perennial water logging in the region.

Meantime, the government's climate fund is yet to be channelled to the Aila victims despite repeated calls from different corners because of sloth decision-making.

Worst still, although the Water Development Board (WDB) received Tk 40 crore in cash, and Tk 75 crore in wheat in July last year from the food ministry to repair breached embankments, it took them six months even to start the work.

The Aila victims are now on a desperate edge as new breaches developed in the embank-

ment three days ago, inundating fresh areas with brackish water. For the last ten months, nothing grows on the inundated land, and cry for drinking water is peaking.

Quoting Aila victims, Food and Disaster Management Minister Md Abdur Razzaque told a group of reporters in his office yesterday that water level at the affected area has risen to a new height this year. "People of the region have not seen such a rise in the past," the minister said.

A visibly unhappy Razzaque said over the last couple of months they made desperate attempts to repair the breaches in the embankments.

"We even engaged the army to repair and protect the embankments in a bid to save people from being marooned, but water is gushing through newer breaches, flooding more villages," the minister said.



Jaliakhali village of Kamarkhola union in Khulna has submerged again as the dike collapsed in the massive pressure of river water recently. Inset, the broken segment of the embankment. The sufferings of these Aila-hit people appear to be never ending.

PHOTO: STAR

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Matia's ACs switched off to save power

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury tried to lead by example switching off the air conditioners at both her office and home since last week.

While visiting her office yesterday, the ACs were found inactive. Only two small wall-mounted fans, one for her and the other for visitors, were running. The windows were also wide open for fresh air to circulate.

Such an initiative by a minister took officials and

No price approval, yet drug in market

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

Popular Pharmaceuticals Ltd has marketed a drug without the price approval from the government, which the Directorate General of Drug Administration termed a punishable offence.

Popular has manufactured Medroxy, a 5-milligramme drug for treating hormonal disorder, and quoted a price of the drug for approval of the Directorate General of Drug Administration.

On March 3, Price Fixation Committee of the drug administration held a meeting in this regard and sent its recommendation to



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Speaker ensures free movement of lawmakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speaker Abdul Hamid yesterday said the lawmakers will not need permission of the speaker to go abroad when the House is not in session.

"From now on, lawmakers will not require permission of the speaker before going abroad. But when parliament is in session, they will need to take the permission," he said.

The new ruling came after Awami League lawmaker Tofail Ahmed raised the issue, which was supported by AL

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Govt moves to save five Dhaka rivers

Tk 944cr project on cards; Buriganga reclamation scheme seeks Ecnec nod today

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

To free five rivers in and around Dhaka of pollution and illegal occupation, the government is going to take up a Tk 944 crore project.

The Project for Reclamation of the Buriganga River is going to be placed before the Executive Committee on National Economic Council (Ecnec) today for approval.

The New Dhaleshwari, Pungli, Bangshai, Turag and Buriganga rivers would be under this project. Its aim is to improve the quality of

water by increasing water flow in the Buriganga and the Turag during the dry season and navigability by dredging.

The project also aims to develop irrigation and fisheries. The project work will start on July, 2010 and will be completed by June 2014.

The project documents say in the last several decades the flow of the Buriganga, Turag, Shitalakkhya and Balu dropped significantly.

The water of these rivers is severely polluted with industrial waste, toxic chemicals and

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Ringleader of car thieves held

Stolen car parts seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives Sunday night arrested the ringleader of a car stealing gang at the city's Jatrabari and found stolen car parts worth Tk 24 lakh in Narsingdi.

The ringleader, Mohammad Billal, 40, had an aim of pocketing Tk 200 crore. Over the last 15 years he has earned around Tk 10 crore by selling stolen parts of some

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Defaulters got Tk 3,644cr interest waiver in 8 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Loan defaulters received interest waiver amounting to Tk 3,644.80 crore during 2001-08, Finance Minister MA Muhith told the House yesterday.

While replying to lawmakers, Muhith said state owned four commercial and five specialised banks have waived interest on loans of Tk 1 crore or above against 693 accounts.

The minister said the government does not have any plan to exempt interest on loans to farmers, who are affected by natural disasters and unable to clear agriculture loans up to Tk 10,000.

In response to another query on purchasing lands by the private banks, Muhith said it has been learnt from different sources that private banks

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Villagers hang a dead fishing cat at Singair in Manikganj after killing it yesterday morning. Locals first injured the poor thing with fishing spear after it came to locality in search of food Sunday.

PHOTO: FOCUSBANGLA

Speedy Trial Act gets extension

To remain in effect till Apr 2012

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government decided to extend the term of the Speedy Trial Act by two years for effective and fast dealing with crimes like extortion, tender manipulation, vandalism, mugging, etc.

This is the fourth extension from April 10 to April 9, 2012. The third extension by the caretaker government will end on April 9, 2010.

The decision came at a regular cabinet meeting at Bangladesh Secretariat with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

The Law and Order Disruption Offence (Speedy Trial) Act was enacted on April 10, 2002 for two years to ensure quick trials of the crimes. In 2004, it was extended by two years while the second extension was in 2006, and third in 2008 by the council of advisers with the then chief adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed in the chair.

Prime minister's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad in a press briefing after the meeting told newsmen that the cabinet gave final approval for the extension to the home ministry.

In a proposal, the home ministry said trials of a good number of cases are going on under this act now. If the act is nullified, the proceedings of the cases will stop and it may deteriorate the law and order of the country.

After introduction of the law, cases could be disposed of in a short time, added the proposal.

The press secretary said the government would issue an ordinance to extend the duration of the act, as the next sitting of parliament will be the budget session and the fourth parliamentary session ended yesterday.

The government has made this decision even though the

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Pathological lab catches fire in city

2 injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A fire broke out from a chemical reaction at a pathological diagnostic centre in the city's Green Road yesterday.

The fire damaged equipment and chemicals of the laboratory on the second floor of a ten-storey building.

Lab assistant Mohammad Suman received severe burns as the accident occurred while he was processing chemicals at the lab at 11:30am.

Dilip Kumar Ghosh, deputy assistant director of Fire Service and Civil Defence

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Notice

The 'Science & Life' page, which could not be published for the last five weeks due to unavoidable reasons, is going to reappear from today.

We regret the inconvenience caused to the readers.

--Editor

ACC starts to list graft cases

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission has instructed its investigation officers to identify the cases remained stayed on the same ground as that against Awami League lawmaker Habibur Rahman Mollah.

ACC lawyers said over 500 more petitions against corruption cases filed by the anti-graft body are now pending with the High Court and they believe the same fate as Mollah's awaits the cases.

Though not sure about the exact number of corruption cases stayed upon the petitions, the ACC asked its IOs to consult the ACC lawyers for having the stays on their cases vacated soon.

"As soon as we get a copy of the Supreme Court verdict, we will go to the High Court for having the stays vacated," said Ghulam Rahman, chairman of the commission.

"Now the trial of corruption suspects would be held on substantive allegations doing away with mistake in formalities or procedure in filing the case," Ghulam Rahman added.

ACC sources said officials concerned already held meeting with IOs yesterday and gave necessary instructions in this regard.

ACC Chief Counsellor Anisul Haque said it would take a couple of days to determine whether they would move with the cases individually or all together.

The ACC sees a ray of hope for the anti-graft drive as the SC on Sunday upheld the HC verdict in connection with the petition of Habibur Rahman Mollah challenging the HC verdict delivered on November 20, 2008.

Mollah filed the petition with HC in 2008 alleging the anti-graft watchdog didn't follow the timeframe prescribed by its law

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CONGRATULATIONS



Heartiest congratulations to **Mr. Mohd. Noor Ali**, Chairman, Unique Group and Leading Businessman on being elected as Chairman, Eastern Bank Ltd.

We wish him long life and all out success.

Officers and Staff of **UNIQUE GROUP**

OnlinePoll ✓

Do you think the country will achieve 7000MW electricity by 2013 the way government is handling the tender process?

Yes (56.1%)
 No (42.0%)
 No Comments (1.9%)

Total votes: 1027

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think deploying only plainclothes police officers in front of girls' schools can solve the teasing problem?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net


Prayer Timing

April 6

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-40	5-15
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-21	6-24
Esha	7-45	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation

DEATH ANNIVERSARY



ON THE SECOND DEATH ANNIVERSARY OF (LATE) NAZIUR RAHMAN MONJUR, FOUNDER CHAIRMAN OF BANGLADESH JATIYA PARTY (BJP), FORMER LGRD MINISTER OF PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH, FORMER MAYOR OF DHAKA CITY CORPORATION, A MILAD MAHFIL HAS BEEN ARRANGED TODAY AT HIS BHOLA RESIDENCE.

ALL RELATIVES, FRIENDS AND WELL WISHERS ARE KINDLY REQUESTED TO ATTEND THE MILAD MAHFIL AND PRAY TO THE ALMIGHTY ALLAH TO GRANT ETERNAL PEACE TO THE DEPARTED SOUL.

GRATITUDE FAMILY MEMBERS