

No legal bar to free rivers

SC clears way for govt to knock down all illegal structures; rejects appeal of 7 companies against HC verdict

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Supreme Court (SC) order yesterday cleared the way for removing all structures, excluding the government ones set up to serve the public interests, from the rivers around the capital.

The rivers are Shitalakkhya, Balu, Turag and Buriganga. Even the jetties and other structures established by some private commercial companies within the rivers' boundaries upon the government permission have to be removed as per the apex court's order.

The Appellate Division yesterday passed the order after dismissing seven appeals filed by seven commercial companies challenging a High Court (HC) order that directed the government to remove the structures.

The companies are City Group of Industries, Heidelberg Cement Bangladesh Ltd, Kamal Vegetable, Akij Cement, ACI Cement, Cimex Cement and Molla Salt Industries.

Some legal experts opine the HC verdict of June last year regarding the four rivers has been upheld.

Advocate Manzill Murshid, a lawyer concerned, told The Daily Star there is no bar to remove the structures excluding those set up by the government in the rivers to serve public interests.

The four dying rivers will be restored and the city dwellers will be protected from environmental pollution following the apex court order, he said.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



The photo shows a 'plot' on the river Buriganga in the capital's Lalbagh area. A boundary wall has been built around it allegedly by a salt factory. Ironically, BIWTA created this piece of land by dumping waste dredged from the riverbed as part of its drive to restore the stream.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

No change on river front

Grabbing, polluting go unabated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The rivers flowing through and around the capital look dismal though 10 months have gone since the High Court directed the government to take measures to save them.

Buriganga, Turag, Balu and Shitalakkhya--all still give off a terrible stench. Encroachers continue filling them up and industrialists keep polluting their water, found the correspondent in recent visits there.

In fact, little has changed since the government announced shortly after taking office in January last year that it would do everything necessary to put an end to river pollution and encroachment.

Except for taking up some ambitious projects involving hundreds of crores of taka, the administration has so far failed to go tough on influential polluters and grabbers.

On June 25 last year, the HC issued a set of directives for

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

DEV BUDGET GLITCH

Delays in projects bleed public coffer

Govt had to pay donors Tk 127cr in last 6 yrs as 'commitment fees'

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Delays in implementation of foreign loan funded development projects not only deprive the people of the benefits, but commitment fees also bleed the public coffer as penalty in most cases.

In the last six years, the government had to pay about Tk 127 crore as commitment fees to development partners including World Bank (WB) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) for delays in implementation of 45 projects, a finance ministry source said.

LITANY OF COMMITMENT FEES

- Tk 127cr paid in 45 projects over last 6yrs
- Tk 110cr paid to WB in 38 projects during 2004-08
- Tk 12.2cr paid to ADB in 5 projects during 2004-09
- Tk 4.54cr paid to NDF in 2 projects in 2008

(NDF) also provides some loans to Bangladesh on the same conditions.

About 80 percent of the foreign loans

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1

Bangladesh receives come from WB and ADB.

These lending agencies disburse loans in instalments, and for every instalment the government has to meet some prerequisites.

If the prerequisites are not met by the deadline for disbursement, the government has to pay a commitment fee on the amount of the instalment as a penalty, in order to get it released.

Another lending agency Nordic Development Fund (NDF) also provides some loans to Bangladesh on the same conditions.

BNP MARCH TO EC

Protest loses steam halfway amid no cop obstruction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A protest march of the main opposition BNP towards the Election Commission Secretariat ended halfway yesterday in the capital, not because it was obstructed by law enforcers, but because the party leaders leading the march ran out of steam.

Apparently the leaders became too exhausted to march all the way from Muktangan to the EC Secretariat in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

The march made a promising start with around 10,000 activists and supporters of the party behind their top leaders around 4:00 pm from Muktangan. The procession came across police forces at different intersections, but faced no resistance from them, which apparently surprised the BNP leaders.

By the time the procession covered about two kilometres and reached Bangla Motor, some of the top leaders had already abandoned it, and the remaining declared the march over, leaving the rest of the marchers, and journalists bewildered.

"We've ended the march peacefully because the police obstructed us, and we didn't want any confrontation," BNP Senior Joint Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir claimed to The Daily Star. But The Daily Star correspondent saw no sign of police resistance, although a large number of them were escorting it, rather cordially.

When the correspondent pointed out the reality, Alamgir just

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Govt to review power import MoU with India

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday formed a high-powered committee to review thoroughly the memorandum of understanding (MoU) on power import from India before ratifying a deal.

According to a decision, made at a regular cabinet meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair, Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Planning Minister AK Khandaker and PM's Finance Affairs Adviser Moshir Rahman will scrutinise the deal for ratification.

PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad said this to reporters after the meeting. The cabinet on December 31 last year approved in principle a MoU with Delhi, seeking open-ended import and export of electricity with an option to purchase power from both public and private sectors of India.

The MoU was signed between Bangladesh and India during Hasina's visit to Delhi.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Jubo League factions fight for contract

30 hurt in Meherpur bomb attack

OUR CORRESPONDENT, KUSHITIA

At least 30 people were hurt in a bomb attack by a Jubo League faction during a tender dropping in Meherpur yesterday.

Of the injured, Asirul, Tareq, Hira, Ranga, Raza, Bhola, Rezaul, Atiar, Nafiz Uddin, Abbas and Zia were admitted to Meherpur General Hospital.

Police and Rab sources said a gang led by district Jubo League general secretary Bipul attacked the rival group led by Golam Rasul, president of Meherpur sadar upazila Awami League, when the latter reached LGED office to drop tender documents.

The attackers exploded six bombs leaving 30 persons splinter-hit. They also threw two explosives at a Rab vehicle partly damaging its front side, Rab sources said.

Rab and police jointly chased both groups, charged baton on them and brought the situation under control.

Later at about 2:00pm, men loyal to Bipul attacked the house of district AL general secretary Kaji Mia Jan. They ransacked rooms and torched a motorcycle. The same group also burnt another motorcycle owned by Amanullah, a supporter of Golam Rasul, on CB Road.

Rab raided the houses of some leaders of both factions around 3:00pm but could not arrest anyone. Rab, however, seized Bipul's motorcycle.

Police later arrested two persons including a bomb-hit AL activist. The two are Turaf, 30 and Asirul, 30.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7



Your dream of sweet home is now a reality with our Home Loan

At Prime Bank, we offer you an easy-to-avail Home Loan with convenient repayment options. With maximum limit on loan amount, you also have unlimited options of choosing your home. Drop in anytime, let us help you realise your long cherished dream.

Prime Bank Limited
 a bank with a difference

29 Rajuk Avenue, Dhaka-1000, Mobile: 01714 088931-2, 01714 133281-2

www.primebank.com.bd

Swine flu vaccination starts today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government launches today its H1N1 pandemic vaccination campaign to combat swine flu.

Health Minister Ruhul Haque is scheduled to inaugurate the programme at a city hotel.

The country received some 30 lakh doses of vaccine from the World Health Organization (WHO) last week, official

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

বার্জার পেইন্টস

আরও একধাপ এগিয়ে

সম্পূর্ণ হলো বাংলাদেশের টেক্সটাইল

সেক্টরের অগ্রযাত্রায়

Trusted Worldwide

বিস্তারিত দেখুন পৃষ্ঠা-৩ এ

FROM 3KVA WE ARE GENPOWER. WORLD'S BIGGEST GENERATOR MANUFACTURER. NOW WE ARE IN BANGLADESH. TO 3000 KVA GLOBALLY RENOWNED ENGINES AND ALTERNATORS. BUILT IN OUR MODERN PLANT IN ANKARA. EUROPEAN QUALITY COMPLIANCE.



GUARANTEED LOW PRICES ■ TWO YEARS WARRANTY ■ WITHIN 24 HOURS BACKUP POWER
FINANCING AVAILABLE ■ NEW STOCK ARRIVALS EVERY WEEK

WE SPECIALIZE IN MODULAR SMALL POWER PLANTS. INDUSTRIAL GENERATORS AVAILABLE ON RENTAL BASIS.

GENPOWER
 GENERATOR
 www.genpower.com.tr

NOW APPOINTING DISTRIBUTORS FOR REGIONAL BIG CITIES

NOBODY SHALL BE LEFT IN THE DARK...
LARGE STOCK ON HAND PLEASE CALL **967 7101**

IN JOINT VENTURE WITH

Priceclub.ae
 www.priceclub.com.bd Low Prices! Always!!
 ORCHARD POINT HOUSE 17 ROAD 7 DHANMONDI FAX 8613251 EMAIL INFO@PRICECLUB.COM.BD