

# Capital dredging in all rivers soon

Says BIWTA chairman

BSS, Dhaka

Capital dredging will be carried out soon in all rivers of the country to revive the lost waterways.

Many major and small rivers and tributaries are facing serious navigability problem as all the rivers got silted and there was no dredging to maintain navigability.

Chairman of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) Md Abdul Malek Mia said this while talking to BSS.

The country had 24,000km long waterways in the past, but silting of riverbeds hampered navigability of the waterways. At present, the country has 5,968km navigable waterways during the monsoon while 3,865 km during dry season.

To maintain the navigability of the rivers, a massive dredging of the rivers is required on yearly basis, Abdul Malek said adding that but due to paucity of funds and shortage of dredger BIWTA could not meet the dredging requirement in all routes.

With the directives of the prime minister, the BIWTA has prepared a master plan for dredging of 53 routes involving 328 million cubic meter of silt at a cost of Tk 114.73 billion.

Malek said after assuming power, the present government is giving importance on waterways and working to increase waterways through capital dredging.

As part of the initiative of increasing waterways, the government is also working to introduce circular water routes around the Dhaka city by

dredging and removing wastes from the river Buriganga.

A project of circular waterways around Dhaka (2nd phase) has started in July, 2007 at a cost of Tk 65 crore and it will be completed by June 2012.

The activities of the project are; dredging of 34.73 lakh cubic meter silt from Ashulia to Kanchpur, digging of 13.35 lakh cubic meter in three canals -- Rampura, Badda and Gubindapur -- establishment of landing facilities at Kanchpur.

A project involving Tk 21.5 lakh funded from the Climate Change Fund is being implemented to clear wastes from the Buriganga. It has started from January 6, he added.

Malek said the BIWTA has submitted a proposal involving Tk 255 crore to clear wastes from the Buriganga and dredging the river.

He hoped that the project will start from next fiscal and continue till 2014.

He said the navigability of the Buriganga will be returned fully as well as it will be a clean river after implementation of the project.

At present, the BIWTA owns seven dredgers, Malek said, adding that 53 of the rivers are transboundary. These rivers carry huge quantity of sediment every year to Bangladesh. A large part of sediment remains in these rivers before they mingle into the Bay of Bengal.

He said the country needs more dredgers for carrying out dredging for removing these huge amount of sediment.

Procurement of three dredgers for

BIWTA are under process that will possibly join the fleet early next year.

The BIWTA will also buy 17 more dredgers soon for carrying out capital dredging in all major rivers.

There is no alternative to carrying out dredging for removing sediment as every year 1.5 billion tonnes of sediment enter Bangladesh while rest of rivers in the world contain 2.6 billion tonnes of sediment a year.

Malek said all rivers including, the Padma, Jamuna and Meghna, contain huge sediment that causes navigability problems.

Due to lack of dredging many of the rivers lost their navigability long ago and now exist as mere canals, he said.

Malek hopes that under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina it would be able to restore navigability and these rivers will get back life once again.

He said 15,000 to 20,000 kilometers of waterways will be made navigable from the existing 5,968 km waterways within next four years.

Quoting a report of the World Bank, Malek said the per tonne-per km transport cost is Taka one for waterways, whereas it is Taka 4.50 for road and Taka 2.50 for railway.

The report also said 12.3 percent of the rural population or 50 percent of the rural household have access to water transports. Moreover, the use of waterways instead of road transport is estimated to save about 58.5 million liters of fuel.



Work of installation of sewer lines at Lalbagh in the city is going on for a long time, causing suffering to pedestrians as well as local residents.

## 20 injured as Magura AL factions clash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

At least 20 people were injured, 11 seriously, in a clash between two groups of the governing Awami League at a village in Magura yesterday.

Ten houses were ransacked during the clash that lasted for about an hour at the village of Gajdurba in Shalikhia upazila.

Police and locals said longstanding rivalry had been prevailing between the factions over forming the party's union unit committee and establishing supremacy in the area.

The groups -- one led by Moshir Rahman, former district unit president of the Jubo League and a resident of the village, and the other by Abdur Rajjak Molla, the union unit organising secretary of the AL, -- armed with lethal weapons got into a clash around 10:00am following an altercation over a trifling matter.

At one stage, both the groups swooped on their rivals' houses.

On information, police rushed in and brought the situation under control. They arrested seven people from the spot.

The seriously injured -- Abu Hasan, 20, Islam Sheikh, 32, Pakhi Begum, 30, Babul Molla, 40, Sonaula, 40, Ramjan Ali, 45, Makhon Molla, 27, Nantu Molla, 40, Zakir Hossain, 45, Majeda Begum, 30 and Kamal, 32 -- were admitted to Magura Sadar Hospital while others received treatment from different private clinics.

# Moscow keen to boost ties in energy sector

Russian FM tells Dipu Moni

UNB, Dhaka

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov yesterday expressed his keenness to intensify cooperation with Bangladesh in various fields, including the energy sector, and forge closest ties to work hand in hand.

Lavrov expressed the eagerness during an official meeting with Foreign Minister Dipu Moni at the foreign ministry in Moscow, according to a message from Bangladesh Mission in Moscow.

Dipu Moni recalled the enormous contributions of the former USSR to the independence of Bangladesh in 1971 as well as to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the war ravaged country.

She emphasised the foundation of close bilateral relations laid down by the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and conveyed

the intention of his daughter, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, to revive that "natural" relationship through cooperation in all conceivable areas for mutual interests.

Dipu Moni and Lavrov agreed on taking concrete steps and initiatives for enhancement of trade, promotion of Russian investment, collaboration on food security and agricultural development, and strengthening cultural ties through exchange programmes.

They also discussed the ways and means of enhancing bilateral trade and investments, and removing barriers to trade.

They concurred on intensifying traditional cooperation in the areas of education and defence between the two friendly countries.

Bangladesh foreign minister made a special request for a permanent property for Bangladesh Mission in

Moscow.

Lavrov expressed his government's full support for establishing nuclear power plants in Bangladesh. Both the FMs expressed satisfaction over the signing of the 'Framework Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of the Use of Nuclear Energy for Peaceful Purposes'.

Architect Yeafesh Osman, State Minister for Science and ICT, signed the agreement on behalf of the Bangladesh while Sergey Kirienko, director general of the state Atomic Energy Corporation - Rosatom - signed on behalf of Russia.

Both the countries agreed to work jointly on further steps for the nuclear power plants and speed up necessary actions.

Russia expressed its willingness to support Bangladesh in enhancing power generation through modernisation and rehabilitation of

Russian-built conventional power plants along with the technology of combined cycle generation and developing new units of production to meet growing power deficit in Bangladesh.

The two foreign ministers emphasised working together in oil and gas exploration and development of the sector for which delegations of Russian State Company - Gazprom - will visit Bangladesh for assessment and conclusion of an MoU.

They also agreed to work together in the area of counter-terrorism and to develop a joint-working group for that purpose.

Lavrov said that the Russian leadership was looking forward to receiving Hasina in Russia.

Dr SM Saiful Hoque, Bangladesh Ambassador to the Russian Federation, was present at the meeting.

## Garment workers threaten movement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Garment Sramik Trade Union Kendra yesterday threatened to launch a tough movement if the government does not fix Tk 5000 as minimum wages for a garment worker by July 27.

The trade union held a rally at Mukhtangan in the city to press home their 10-point demand, including ensuring rights to trade union and providing housing and healthcare facilities.

The labour leaders said the Awami League had pledged before the election to increase the salary of workers, but it has only raised the salaries of government employees and ministers and lawmakers.

Due to price hike of essentials, the garments workers with their meager income are going through severe hardship, they said.

They said the government has already doubled the salary of ministers, lawmakers and government officials considering the price hike of essentials, but the garments workers are being neglected.

CPB president Monjurul Ahsan Khan, labour leader Sahidullah Chowdhury, engineer Sheikh Muhammad Shahidullah, advocate Mantu Ghosh and KM Ruhul Amin spoke at the rally presided over by Trade Union Kendra president Idris Ali.

## 3 robbers held

UNB, Khulna

Three robbers along with arms were arrested from Modinabad Launch Ghat in Koira upazila early yesterday.

The arrested were identified as Mujibur Rahman, 44, Iqbal Hossain, 40, and Akbar Hossain, 33. They all hailed from Digholia upazila of Khulna.

## Expat rescued from drug rehabilitation centre in N'ganj

Centre director arrested

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

The police arrested a director of a drug rehabilitation centre in Narayanganj on Thursday night on charges of confining a youth to his centre.

The police also rescued the youth, Faruk Hossain, an expatriate in Japan, from Ashru Drug Rehabilitation Centre at Panchabati 10 days into his confinement.

Sources said Faruk, who has been living in Japan for the last 19 years, is a victim of conspiracy by his family members who wanted to misappropriate all the money he remitted from Japan throughout all these years.

Faruk has sent crores of money from Japan to his mother Rizia Khatun and two brothers Foyez and Shasuddin who bought 104 shops in different markets, 12 apartments, 15 kathas of land in Kamragirchar, 26 kathas of land in Uttara and

shares in different companies with his money.

On returning home recently, Faruk found out that no documents of the properties certify him as the owner, which led to a feud with his mother and brothers.

His brothers then hatched a conspiracy and in collusion with the director of the drug rehabilitation centre, Samsuddoha, confined Faruk to the centre, showing him as a drug addict, the police said.

On Thursday night, some friends of Faruk -- Azad, Hemayet, Monir and Helal -- tried to rescue Faruk from the centre, but the centre employees and security guards beat them and also confined Monir to the centre.

Other friends then informed the police who rescued Faruk and Monir and arrested Samsuddollah Officer-in-Charge of Fatullah Model Thana Police Jiban Kanti Sarkar said.



Nagorik Committee-backed candidate Mohiuddin Chowdhury, left, speaks at a press conference at his residence in the port city of Chittagong yesterday while Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury introduces Chattagram Unnayan Andolon-backed candidate Mohammad Manjur Alam at a view exchange meeting at the Institute of Engineers, Chittagong. (Story on Page 1)



PHOTO: STAR

# Occupied land of Dhakeshwari Mandir to be recovered: Sajeda

BSS, Dhaka

Deputy Leader of the House and Awami League Presidium member Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury yesterday assured members of the Hindu community of returning the 'vested properties' to the owners and taking steps for recovering illegally occupied land of the Dhakeshwari Jatiya Mandir.

"The act with regards to returning the vested property to the heirs is now being repealed by the land ministry to cope with your demands and it will be placed in the Jatiya Sangsad soon, she told the Hindu leaders.

She was addressing the inaugural session of the biennial conference of Bangladesh Central Puja Ujjan Parishad at the Dhakeshwari Mandir in the city.

She offered all support from her good office to identify the grabbed land of the Dhakeshwari Mandir, one of the sacred places of the Hindu community as well as an important heritage of

Dhaka city, originally built on 20 bighas of land, but now remains only seven bighas.

Information Minister Abul Kalam Azad, State Minister for Religious Affairs M Shajahan Mia attended the function as the special guests while local lawmaker Dr Mostafa Jalal Mahiuddin, Chief Adviser of the Parishad Major Gen (Retd) CR Dutta, Bangladesh Ambassador to Nepal Nim Chandra Bhomik, also spoke at the function.

President of the Parishad Swapan Kumar Sahapresided over the meeting while general secretary Advocate Satyendra Chandra Bhakta placed biennial report.

Sajeda said, "For a citizen of Bangladesh, she/he is patriotic who believes in three-Bangabandhu, Bangladesh and Bengali Nation. Those, who have no faith in the three principles -- allowed the Razakars to adorn with the national flag.

She hoped that Bangladesh in near future would again see the renaissance of the ideology of Bangabandhu, which will bring for-

ward the nation to the progress and prosperity. She said the perpetrators of post-election violence on minority community would not be spared.

Pointing out the current socio-political situation, she said people are living in peace. "But, some 'fake' Chhatra League activists appeared in the scene to create trouble and frustrate people's hopes and aspiration".

Criticising the BNP for choosing hartal as a political weapon, Sajeda said hartal would not help reducing the price of commodities. Rather it would increase the price and multiply the public sufferings, she said observing that the hartal is a part of conspiracy to undo trial of war criminals.

Azad urged the leaders of the minority community to make a committee who would better understand their problems and work constantly to realise their demands.

Shajahan said the process for establishing the Hindu Foundation and Debottar Property Board are now under process.

## Traffic disrupted at Mawa Ghat

A CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Traffic movement remained disrupted yesterday due to a technical fault of a ferry and the rise of water level at Mawa Ghat, causing sufferings to hundreds of passengers.

Sirajul Haque, Mawa Ghat manager of the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC), said, "The ferry ghat went under water after the water level rose on Thursday. The repairing work is going on, which might be finished by the evening."

He also informed that the No 1 and No 3 ferry ghat at Char Jananat and No 2 and No 3 ferry ghat at Mawa were also inoperative.



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