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India, China plot Bangladesh woe

Over 200 dams to be built by two countries; int'l study reveals up to 22pc water to be dried up in 2 decades

PINAKI ROY

Bangladesh is going to face water shortage and its cumulative impacts in next two decades as China and India will build over 200 big and small dams on the Himalayan rivers Yangtze, Brahmaputra and Ganges to meet their growing water needs.

Building such dams will alter flow of Bangladesh rivers in dry season, says an international study on water budget of four Himalayan and sub-Himalayan countries -- Bangladesh, China, India and Nepal.

A decrease in water supply by up to 22 percent in next two decades, rise in sea level and increase in population might

push Bangladesh to the risks of food insecurity, outbreak of water-borne diseases and loss of biodiversity, says the report styled "The Himalayan Challenge - Water Security in Emerging Asia".

Many dams will be built in the Himalayan sub-regions as the countries will be working to safeguard their interests, states the report, which might be released today in Singapore.

China alone has already developed plans to construct over 200 dams to add to its existing 26,000 big and small ones.

India has recently set up a panel to study alternatives to tap the Brahmaputra to strengthen its claims over the river's tributaries, since there have been reports that China plans to divert those.

The report briefly says around 25 new dams are planned for the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers.

Constructing big dams in an earthquake-prone region on a trans-boundary river would be alarming, especially as there is no water-sharing treaty between India and China.

With the region facing a threat of water shortage, the report speculates "this could lead to a conflict between India and China".

Examining water needs and supplies from the Himalayan rivers in Bangladesh, China, India and Nepal for next two decades, the report states that 275 billion cubic metre (BCM) fresh water would

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6



PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

BNP standing committee member MK Anwar and a companion ride a rickshaw in the city's Dhanmondi during the dawn-to-dusk hartal enforced by his party yesterday.

Govt targets 5 lakh new tax payers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to bring five lakh new taxpayers under the tax net in the next fiscal year and set up tax offices at upazila level, Finance Minister AMA Muhih told the House yesterday.

In a scripted response to lawmakers' queries, Muhih said the government has taken measures for use of machines in the activities of tax division to ensure transparency and bring dynamism.

On micro credit interest, he said the Microcredit Regulatory Authority will fix reasonable interest rate for micro credit and implement it

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Savings certificates' proposed tax may go

Govt may lower duty on cars too

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government may withdraw the proposal for increase of tax on savings certificates, advance income tax at import level and on lower cylinder capacity cars in the face of criticism from different quarters including ministers.

Finance ministry sources said yesterday they are now reviewing the budget proposals on the basis of the reactions received. And a final decision in this regard may be taken and announced in the Jatiya Sangsad in a couple of days.

The proposed budget for next fiscal year seeks to increase advance income tax to five percent from three percent now on all com-

mercial imports except capital machinery, raw materials and essential items. It would mean increase of tax on about 3,000 commodities at customs point.

Business leaders have already said the brunt of the tax increase would fall on the consumers as prices of goods would go up. The National Board of Revenue (NBR) is learnt to have been considering lowering the tax hike to four percent instead of the proposed five percent.

At present, there is no tax on profit up to Tk 1.5 lakh on savings instruments. If the profit crosses Tk 1.5 lakh, tax at a rate of 10 percent is imposed on it.

In the proposed budget, the provision of up

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

MUKTIJODDHA SANGSAD Helal panel sweeps polls

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Major Gen (Retd) Helal Morshed Khan led 41-member panel made a clean sweep in the Muktiyoddha Sangsad Central Command Council elections held yesterday across the country after 10 years.

Helal was elected chairman of the council bagging 54,412 votes while Principal Abad Ali Chowdhury who led another panel got 36,258 votes and Ismat Kadir Gama 10,854.

Other office bearers include vice-chairmen Mohammad Wahidur Rahman, Sultan Uddin Ahmed Raza, AM Habib Ullah

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

No hasty decision on coal policy

PM stresses thorough study on proposal

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said that her government will not take any hasty decision regarding the coal policy.

"We will not take any decision whimsically, we will examine pros and cons of any proposal before implementing it," she said at the National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) meeting at the PM's Office.

This was the 6th meeting of the NSTC and the last meeting was held on February 23, 1998.

The PM who chaired the meeting said that there is plenty of coal in Bangladesh. "But, the scenario of the country is different from that of other countries," she said.

The premier informed that her government sent a team to Germany to observe the coal extraction systems. She said the open pit coal mining in Germany was viable as the country has vast lands and the coalmines situated at places where there is no dense population like Bangladesh.

"We have to think about the people of the area and loss of lands before going for extracting coal from the mine," she told the meeting.

The government would not take any decision that might harm the interest of the people and inflict sufferings to them, she said.

After extracting the coal from the mine, it must be worked out how the vacated mine

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

No AL link with attacks on pickets

Ashraf refuses to own BCL actions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

LGRD Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam yesterday said his party would not take responsibility for any activities of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) as it is not an affiliate of the party.

The AL general secretary made the comment at his secretariat when a group of journalists drew his attention about the BCL's involvement in attacking the pro-hartal pickets during BNP's country-wide strike.

"Chhatra League is not an associate organization of Awami League following the amendment of party's constitution," he told reporters.

The minister said he did not have any information that the ruling party activists had taken stance against the strike in any place of the country.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2



PHOTO: STAR

Chhatra League activists beat up BNP lawmaker Shahiduddin Chowdhury Annee in front of policemen during hartal hours at Shahbagh intersection in the capital yesterday.

BOY MURDER Cops suspect role of prime suspect's wife

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police suspect the wife of Shamsuzzaman Arif, prime accused in the murder of six-year-old Samiul Azim in the capital's Adabar, as she is absconding since the incident. Investigation officer (IO) Kazi Shahan Haque, also sub-inspector (SI) of Adabar police station, said "Extramarital affair between Arif and Samiul's mother Ayesha might have cost the child his life and the disappearance of Arif's wife Sathi has deepened suspicion about the killing."

The IO said Sathi is a greedy woman and she introduced her husband with Ayesha

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

WATERWAY WORKERS Tk 3,000 lowest salary fixed

Govt publishes gazette notification

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government through a gazette notification yesterday announced new pay scales for the water transport workers in three categories.

Labour Directorate Director Abu Taleb Mia announced the new wage structure. The newly published gazette fixed a minimum basic salary of Tk 3,000 and maximum Tk 6,720 for the workers of sea coasters, coastal tankers and inland water cargo vessels and barges.

They will also get 60 percent of their basic as house rent, Tk 700 as medical allowance and another Tk 250 as laundry allowance.

Workers of all kinds of private shallow tank-

ers will get a minimum basic wage of Tk 2,555 and maximum Tk 5,890 in addition to 55 percent as house rent, Tk 700 as medical allowance and another Tk 250 for laundry.

For the workers of passenger launches, goods-laden cargo vessels, twin launches, inland barges and bulkhead vessels (for dredging and carrying sand), the new minimum basic salary will be Tk 2,190 and maximum Tk 5,280.

They will be given 20 percent of their salary as house rent, Tk 700 as medical allowance and another Tk 250 for laundry.

Earlier, the water transport workers called strikes for three times demanding new wage scale.

SATELLITE CITY Govt's eviction plan in Tongi, Gazipur slated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

AKM Mozammel Huq, an Awami League lawmaker, yesterday bitterly criticised the government move for evicting dwellers from three unions of Gazipur and Tongi municipality areas in a bid to set up satellite city there.

Mozammel, from Gazipur-1 constituency, also urged the government to immediately stop the eviction process by acquiring 4,322 acres of land where over 10,000 families live.

"The government's move to build residences of the rich by evicting thousands of poor people is totally unacceptable," he said while talking to

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

POLYTECHNIC STUDENT KILLING CASE Top criminal Bikash acquitted

COURT CORRESPONDENT

All the six accused, including top listed criminal Bikash, were acquitted yesterday in a case filed for killing a student of Tejgaon Polytechnic Institute in 1991.

Bikash Chandra alias Bikash who was later declared top criminal by the government is also wanted in a dozen of cases.

Sharif Hossain alias Sharif who was a Chhatra Dal activist and a second year student of the institute, was shot dead by a group of miscreants on April 11, 1991 following an internal feud.

Judge Ismail Hossain of the Fourth Additional Metropolitan Session Judge's Court gave the judgment as the prosecution failed to prove the charges brought against them.

Other acquitted persons are Mizanur Rahman Ripon, Mizanur Rahman Mizan, Mohammad Faruque, Munna alias Abdul Zabbar and Monir Hossain alias Munir.

Bikash is now in jail while Munir on bail. The four others were absconding after the killing.

Earlier the prosecution and the defence had completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of three prosecution witnesses, including complainant and investigation officer of the case.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

HR COMMISSION Member Prof Gias replaced

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has cancelled the appointment of Prof Giasuddin Mollah as a member of the recently constituted National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

Dr Giasuddin, a professor of the department of political science of Dhaka University (DU), was appointed as an

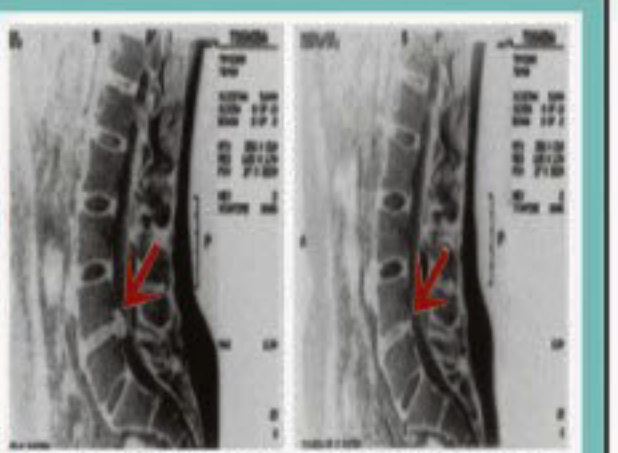
SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

| Prayer Timing | | |
|---------------|-------|--------|
| June 28 | | |
| | Azan | Jamaat |
| Fajr | 4-05 | 4-40 |
| Zohr | 12-45 | 1-15 |
| Asr | 5-00 | 5-15 |
| Maghrib | 6-52 | 6-55 |
| Esha | 8-17 | 8-45 |

Source: Islamic Foundation

হাড় ও মাংস না কেটে মেরুদণ্ডের ডিস্ক প্রোলাপ্সের ব্যথা, হাড় ও জোড়ার বাত বিকলাঙ্গতার সফল ও ঝুঁকিবিহীন লেজার সার্জারী

ঘাড়ের (সারভাইক্যাল) ও কোমরের (লাম্বার) ডিস্ক প্রোলাপ্সের ব্যথা এবং বাত রোগে হাড় ও জোড়ার বিকলাঙ্গতায় অত্যন্ত ব্যয়বহুল ও ঝুঁকিপূর্ণ অপারেশনের পরিবর্তে স্বল্প খরচ ও স্বল্প সময়ে ঝুঁকিবিহীন অত্যাধুনিক লেজার সার্জারী এখন বাংলাদেশে।



লেজার সার্জারীর আগে লেজার সার্জারীর পরে

চিকিৎসা প্রদান ও তত্ত্বাবধান করছেন বিশিষ্ট লেজার সার্জারী বিশেষজ্ঞ

ডা. মোহাম্মদ ইয়াকুব আলী

এম বি বি এল, এম এল সি, পিএইচডি (সিউম্যটোলজী), মেডিকেল সার্জারী (অর্থোপেডিক-সিউম্যটোলজী)

ইনস্টিটিউট অব লেজার সার্জারী এণ্ড হাসপিটাল ৫, নিউ ইন্সটান রোড (পাউন্স নগর), ঢাকা-১০০০, ফোন: ৯৩৪৭৫২০-১, ফ্যাক্স: ৯৩৮০২-৯৩৪৭৫২২, মোবাইল: ০১৯২০৩৬৫৫৯৫, সাক্ষাৎ ও সরকারী ছুটির দিন ব্যতিত প্রতিদিন সকাল ৯টা - ১১টা।

পপুলার ডায়াগনস্টিক সেন্টার রুম # ৩০৫, বাড়ি # ১৬, রোড # ২, ধানমন্ডি, ঢাকা, ফোন: ৯৬৬৯৪৮০, সাক্ষাৎ ও রবি, মঙ্গল ও বুধসপ্তাহের সময়: সন্ধ্যা ৬টা-৯টা ৮টা।

আনোয়ার খাঁ মর্ডার্ন হাসপাতাল লিঃ বাড়ি # ১৭, রোড # ৮, ধানমন্ডি, ঢাকা, ৯৬৬৭৪৮৩, সাক্ষাৎ ও রবি, মঙ্গল ও বুধসপ্তাহের সময়: দুপুর ২টা-৫টা।