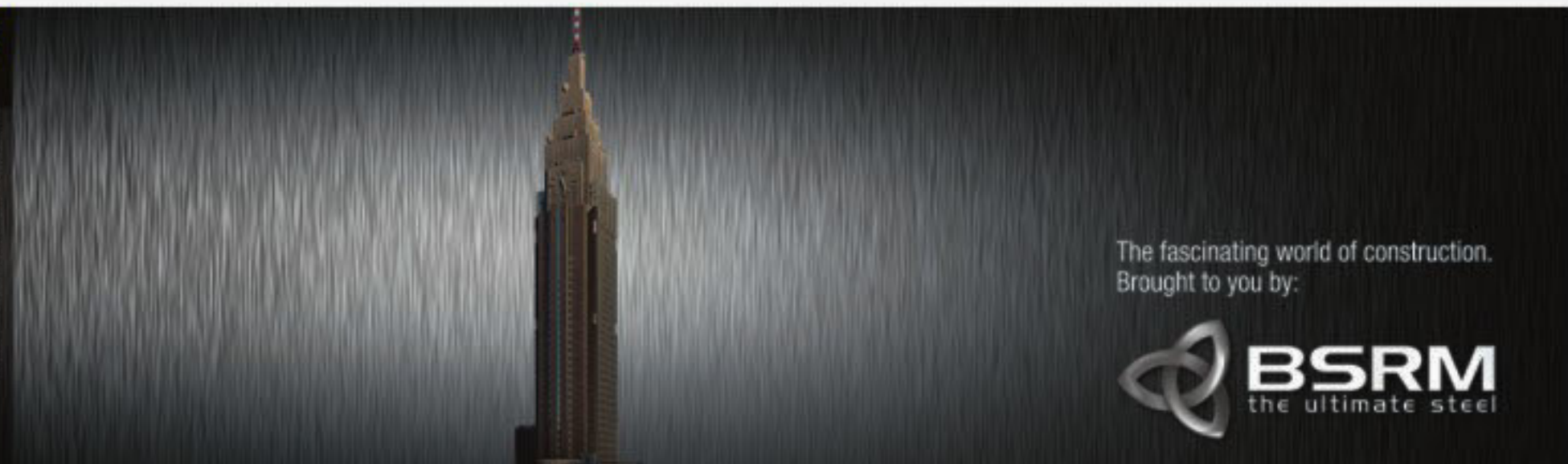


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Sand-laden cargo boats defy ban

Plying at night posing risk of accidents

PANKAJ KARMAKAR

Despite the government ban on plying of sand laden vessels at night, several thousand such carriers navigate after dark posing high risk to passenger vessels.

The sand carriers are violating the ban in the absence of proper monitoring by the authorities concerned and people's awareness about the rule, said Associate Prof K Shariar Iqbal of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering department, Buet.

In the last three years, over 50 people were killed in waterway accidents caused by collision between sand laden vessels and passenger carriers.

On July 4, at least eight people died while eight more went missing as a passenger engine boat capsized being rammed by a sand laden vessel on the river Shitalakkhya at Narayanganj.

The same accident occurred at Konda, Ashulia on July 11. This time the price had to be paid with a life of a garment worker.

The department of shipping through a gazette notification in 2007 imposed a ban on movement of sand laden carriers during nights

in the wake of such an accident on February 28 that year. The accident claimed 44 lives.

Following the notification, the shipping department launched several drives to stop sand laden vessels plying at night. But the drives soon ceased to continue presenting vessel owners with the opportunity to resume the practice, which caused another accident in 2009.

An investigation committee found that the operator of the sand laden vessel, that had caused the accident, was unaware of the ban. The committee again recommended stopping sand laden vessels ply at night and creating awareness through announcements.

The probe report said such accidents would continue to occur if the recommendations are not implemented. The prediction came true on July 4 this year.

According to shipping department statistics, over 3,000 registered sand carriers ply different waterways across the country. A leader of Bangladesh Cargo Vessel Owners Association put the figure at 10,000 including the unregistered ones.



Cargo boats loaded with sand ply dangerously close to ferryboats crossing the Shitalakkhya at Tanbazar in Narayanganj. Only a few days ago eight people drowned when a sand-laden cargo boat hit such a ferryboat.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Nimtoli still numb

Victims' families mourn deaths 40 days into devastating fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On the 40th day of the Nimtoli tragedy, family members of the victims and local people yesterday arranged chehlums at the area in Old Dhaka seeking salvation of the departed souls and quick recovery of the injured.

Once again, the locals and family members were in tears while recalling the memories of their lost ones in the chehlums.

Grief-stricken people visited the graves of their loved ones at city's Azimpur and Hosni Dalan graveyards and offered prayers. The structures in the area still bear the marks of the inferno.

Many families of the arson victims had to arrange yesterday's prayers at other places, as they are yet to return to their houses, which were burnt in the fire while some others are passing nights in other people's residences.

Only seven survivors are fighting with burn injuries at city's Combined Military Hospital while others have returned to their homes in the area after receiving



A woman prays yesterday for the departed souls of her family members died in the Nimtoli blaze during chehram, a religious programme observed 40 days after a person's death. PHOTO: STAR

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Hasina for climate compatible rice

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked scientists to invent new varieties of rice compatible with the climate change and varied seasons.

"We have to produce rice that will harmonise with the seasonal changes and adjust the changing climate," she said during a speech at International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) at its 50th anniversary at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

The premier said the agriculture sector would directly be affected due to the adverse impact of the climate change.

As an impact of the climate change, Hasina noted that the sea level would rise and a huge land mass of the country likely to be submerged, raising the level of salinity.

Hasina said emphasis should be put on the invention of high-yield varieties that could adapt to the hostile climate.

"You have to invent new varieties of crops

that should adapt with this situation so that the production of rice must not come down," Hasina directed the scientists.

Hasina said one of the main components of the high yielding variety of rice is water for irrigation. "But you know, it has been taken into consideration greatly as the use of underground water increased alarmingly," she said.

She urged the scientists to devise new varieties of paddy that would require comparatively less quantum of water for its irrigation.

"We will give special facilities and incentives so that the scientists can concentrate on their research works," she assured the scientists.

Hasina said the country's agriculture sector has been turned into commercial agriculture from subsistence agriculture.

"These days the agriculture does no longer depend on climate. Implementation of the modern agriculture began in the country. Our agriculture products are now being exported to many countries around the world. Our

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

COMBINING RICE TRAITS IRRI made early breakthroughs

DG tells The Daily Star

REAZ AHMAD

International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) has achieved early breakthroughs in combining multiple traits in rice plant so that farmers in the predominantly rice-growing Asia can effectively fight the climate change fallouts.

The visiting Director General of IRRI Dr Robert S Zeigler disclosed this to The Daily Star in an exclusive interview at the institute's Dhaka office yesterday.

"You know in recent years we've successfully developed several varieties tolerant of various stress conditions (drought, salinity, submergence) and Bangladesh also released some of those through local adaptation. As a next big thing, we're now combining multiple traits in rice plant," said Zeigler.



Dr Robert S Zeigler

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Jamaat trio, JMB boss being quizzed together

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three detained Jamaat leaders were brought face to face with JMB chief Saidur Rahman for interrogation at the DB office last night.

As of filing this report at 12:45am, the four were being quizzed to verify the information they gave earlier in separate interrogations.

Detective branch officials said they had the Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh chief face to face with Jamaat Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami, Secretary General Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojahid and Nayeb-e-Ameer Delwar Hossain Sayedee at around 8:30pm.

The interrogators were questioning them to see if

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

CHOWDHURY ALAM 'MISSING' Home ministry orders cops to trace him

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The home ministry yesterday asked police and Rapid Action Battalion to immediately locate BNP leader Chowdhury Alam who went missing on June 25.

The directive came from a meeting of the core committee on law and order chaired by Home Minister Sahara Khatun.

Family members and party colleagues alleged Chowdhury Alam, also the Dhaka City Corporation ward-56 councillor, was picked up by law enforcers.

Law enforcement agencies denied the allegation. State Minister for Home Shamsul Islam Tuku, who was

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OnlinePoll

Do you think the new telecom law that restricts the companies to appeal only against fines, not against any other regulatory actions would discourage growth of the ICT & telecom industry?

- Yes 38.6%
- No 60.0%
- No Comments 1.4%

Total votes: 458

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think the government is avoiding its responsibility in tracing DCC Councillor Chowdhury Alam?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net

Prayer Timing

July 14		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-10	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-55	7-00
Esha	8-17	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

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