Thaksin to increase activities ahead of Thai polls

AFP, *Bangkok*

Thailand's fugitive former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra is preparing to step up his political activities from exile ahead of elections next year, the opposition said yesterday.

In a video link to a meeting of the Puea Thai Party on Wednesday, the former billionaire telecoms tycoon offered his assistance in the poll battle, said spokesman Prompong Nopparit.

"He said he is ready to give advice about economic problems, advice to candidates during campaigns and advice about party policies," Prompong said.

By law Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva must hold an election by the end of 2011.

Thaksin, who lives abroad to avoid a jail term for corruption, drew wide support from Thailand's rural poor during office but was deposed by a military coup in 2006 and faces allegations of corruption and abuse of power.

The 61-year-old lives in self-imposed exile but he still has many supporters, particularly within the "Red Shirt" opposition movement, which was behind mass street protests in Bangkok in April and May.

Thai courts have issued a series of arrest warrants for Thaksin on charges including terrorism -- an accusation linked to the violent street rallies. The authorities have accused him of bankrolling the protests and inciting unrest.

Thaksin, a former owner of English football club Manchester City, has said the terrorism charges against him are "politically motivated".

Experts say the tycoon-turned-premier, who was a flamboyant but divisive leader, has not given up his political ambitions and continues to play an important role within the opposition behind the scenes.

"I'm not surprised that Thaksin would like to remain very active in politics," said Pavin Chachavalpongpun, a Thailand expert at the Institute of South East Asia Studies in Singapore.

He said the Red Shirts' hero was fading from public view because of the terrorist allegations and violence blamed by the authorities on radical Red Shirts.

"He'll try to come back (on the political scene) to play a legitimate role and I think the elite should be open enough to let him do that. Reconciliation will not be successful without Thaksin," Pavin said.

But Thaksin is unlikely to return to Thailand even if the opposition wins the next election, he said.

All 33 Chile

FROM PAGE 1

man's shoulders.

With much of the world transfixed on TV, celebrations erupted and the miners, who set a world record for survival underground, were welcomed as national heroes outside the San Jose gold and copper mine in the Atacama desert.

Rescuers held up a sign in Spanish reading: "Mission Accomplished" before ascending themselves after the 33 miners were evacuated. Some people compared the 24-hour operation to the mid-space rescue of the Apollo 13 crew 40 years ago.

Congratulations poured in from abroad, with U.S. President Barack Obama hailing the rescue as an inspiration to the world.

The evacuation process -- via a metal capsule named Phoenix after the mythical bird that rose from the ashes -- went quicker and more smoothly than anyone dared to believe, swelling Chileans' pride at the rescue.

The successful end to the miners' underground ordeal was particularly welcome to Chileans after the trauma of a massive February earthquake that killed more than 500 people.

New DMP boss pledges peaceful Dhaka city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The newly appointed Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Commissioner Benazir Ahmed said he would continue his efforts to ensure peace and security for city dwellers by containing crime.

Benazir made the remark at a press briefing at DMP headquarters after taking over his new assignment yesterday.

He urged all the communities to work together with police to combat crimes in the city.

He said drug addiction is one of the main causes of spreading crimes. Steps will be taken to foil the supply of drugs and it will be more effective than arresting petty drug traffickers and addicts, the DMP commissioner observed.

"To create a congenial atmosphere for holding free and fair Dhaka City Corporation election, I will carry forward the steps taken by former DMP commissioner. New steps will also be adopted in this regard" Benazir, who was earlier posted in police headquarters as DIG, said.

Former DMP commissioner AKM Shahidul Hoque prepared a list of possible troublemakers targeting the up coming DCC election, and was planning to take steps against them, he said.

While asked about his plan regarding tailback, he said DMP will take initiatives to aware people regarding traffic rules which will help reduce number of road accidents.

In our country, no lesson on traffic rules are taught at school while it is a part of the school syllabus in the most developing countries, he said.

"Around 22 lakh garment workers, mostly women, came to the capital from remote areas. They are vulnerable to the danger of road accidents as most of the garment factories are located in the city" the DMP commissioner said.

He said metropolitan police are not only for the riches. The force has a major role to play for the poor.

Benazir received training on "Comprehensive Security Response to Terrorism", "HR management" from America and "Intelligence analysis and Assessment" from Australia.

He also served in UN peacekeeping mission several times.

BNP prepares

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government notice asking the BNP chief to vacate the house, Delwar said it is a manifestation of the government's conspiracy against BNP.

Meanwhile, the party will stage demonstrations and bring out processions in the capital tomorrow protesting "undemocratic" and "autocratic" activities of the Awami League-led grand alliance government.

Delwar announced this programme yesterday while addressing a condolence meeting in the city, organised by BNP for the victims of the recent Sirajganj tragedy.

Earlier, a joint meeting of the leaders of BNP and its front and associate bodies was held the party central office at Nayapaltan with Delwar in the chair.

At the closed-door meeting, a number of leaders including former state minister Ruhul Kuddus Talukder Dulu and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal President Sultan Salahuddin Tuku demanded formation of Dhaka city unit committee of BNP before the announcement of a tougher agitation programme, meeting sources said seeking anonymity.

Issues like Khaleda's residence, Sirajganj incident and killing of BNP leader in Natore came up at the meeting.

Most of the leaders termed the issue of Khaleda's house a conspiracy by the government, and vowed to foil it.

Delwar told the meeting Dhaka city unit committee will be formed soon, and asked all to get prepared for a continued movement against the government.

At the condolence meeting held at the Institution of Engineers, Delwar said BNP will not allow government's misdeeds go unchallenged.

Others who spoke included party leaders Nazrul Islam Khan, Moyeen Khan, Iqbal Hasan Mahmud Tuku and A Z M Zahid Hossain while Selima Rahman was in the chair.

In another development, the BNP chief at her Gulshan office last night sat with a number of small parties including JGP, NAP (Bhasani) and NPP, and discussed the current situation of the country. Khandaker Delwar Hossain was also present at the meeting.

Summit JV wins

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that time on the ground that it did not have the financial strength.

The nearest competitor in the bid was Malaysian YTL Power International Berhard, said Mahboob Sarwar-E-Kainat, director general of the Power Cell under the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources.

But YTL had quit the bid at the last moment since it did not agree to the project implementation schedule outlined by Power Cell.

"Price, compliance and time were the determining factors for selecting the bidder," Mahboob said. The Power Cell will send the name of the bid winning company and other details to the power ministry next week.

He said the simple cycle plant of the project is scheduled to be operational within 24 months and the combined cycle plant within 36 months from the day of formally awarding the bid to the winner. Simple cycle unit is built using gas turbines while combined cycle unit uses the heat generated by simple cycle unit to produce extra power.

While Summit agreed to this schedule, YTL asked Power Cell to give it more time for smooth implementation of such a big project. YTL sought 30 months for launching the simple cycle unit and 40 months to complete the combined cycle component.

Talking to The Daily Star over the phone, Summit chief Muhammad Aziz Khan said, "Bangladesh has not been able to add any base load plant in the last nine years. I hope this project will change that as well as bring down the average cost of electricity for the entire nation."

Aziz added, "We will use the world's most efficient F class GE engines to achieve the best pricing and optimal use of natural gas."

Bibiyana power project will be implemented on a build, own and operate (BOO) basis under a 22-year agreement. The government will provide necessary land and gas to the selected sponsors for generating electricity.

The World Bank-financed project will cost over $300 million. The plant will use natural gas from US oil giant Chevron-operated Bibiyana gas field to generate electricity.

Tom West, legal adviser to Power Cell, said the bidding was competitive and transparent. "This is a challenging time, the nation needs the power. The bid was competitive."

Although there is a gas crisis in the country now, leading gas producer Chevron has submitted a plan to the government to enhance within three years gas production by 940 million cubic feet per day (mmcfd), which is almost half of the country's present consumption, from three gas fields that it operates. Chevron can increase Bibiyana field's production by 360 mmcfd between 2012 and 2013.

Two other consortiums that qualified in the retender initially did not participate in the final bid. They are Shasha Denims and its joint venture partner MPC Consortium of Meiya Power Company Ltd (Hong Kong), and `Otobi Ltd along with Asian Entech Power Corporation Ltd and their joint venture partners China National Machinery and Equipment Import and Export Corporation.

The first Bibiyana tender was floated back in 2007 and cancelled in late 2008 as it drew only one offer through a dramatic series of development.

CHEMICAL FACTORY

1 more fire victim dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

One more victim of the Jatrabari chemical factory fire died yesterday in hospital after fighting for his life for eight days.

Bishu Miah, 25, of Mithapukur upazila in Rangpur, succumbed to his injuries at the Burn and Plastic Surgery Unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

The death toll from the incident now rose to 11.

On October 6, seven people were burnt alive and four were injured in the devastating fire originated from a boiler explosion at Lily Chemical Company in the area.

Three of the wounded died at DMCH in next two days.

Bishu's body and a donation of Tk 20,000 were handed over to his family members yesterday morning, said Nurul Islam, project implementation officer of Tejgaon circle of Dhaka district relief and rehabilitation office.

Earlier, Dhaka's deputy commissioner office announced Tk 20,000 for the families of each victim for funeral.

No hilsa

FROM PAGE 1

Chittagong and Cox's Bazar districts covering 7,000 square kilometre areas.

The ban is part of the government plan that include creating mass awareness against netting of mother fish and conducting surveys on hilsa breeding.

Hilsa production stood around 3.13 lakh tonnes in 2009-10, which was 2.98 lakh tonnes in the previous fiscal year, the minister said.

Bangladesh earned Tk 125 crore in foreign exchange by exporting hilsa in the last fiscal year and the amount would be nearly 350 crore this year, he said.

"We strongly prohibited catching of jatka hilsa fry. We are also providing alternative employments to the fishermen who depend on fishing only," Biswas said.

Between February and May last fiscal year, the government provided 19,768.6 tonnes of rice to 1,64,740 fishermen families, which resulted in increase of fish production this year, the minister noted.

There is a plan to enlist all the fishermen and provide them with identity cards so that they all can be brought under safety net programmes, Biswas said.

"We want the fishermen not to catch jatka and mother fish. If anyone disobeys, he will be punished as per the law," he said.

Tigers clinch

FROM PAGE 1

With this win the Tigers conquered new territory; a series victory against a top-flight, full strength opposition.

Shakib and company silenced the cynics who have expressed qualms about the ability of the Tigers with this magnificent performance against the Black Caps who have seen a different Bangladesh in their third visit to the country.

Previously, Bangladesh have won a few matches sparsely against the top opponents but this was the first time they dominated a series from the very first game and now they still retain the chance of a whitewash.

The morning however did not show the day for Bangladesh.

In-form opener Shahriar Nafees returned to the dressing room in the very second ball of the innings after New Zealand skipper Daniel Vettori invited his opponents to bat, and the visitors tightened their grip on the home side reducing them to 44-3.

But Shakib had other plans as the left-hander joined opener Imrul Kayes to repair the early damages. He then got able support from Mahmudullah Riyad (37) and Mushfiqur Rahim (13) to take away the visitors' early initiative during his well-composed 113-ball 106 that contained eleven fours and a six. His fifth hundred helped Bangladesh to put up a fighting total of 241 before being bundled out in 48.1 overs.

Despite the classy effort from Shakib under trying conditions, Bangladesh were still twenty runs short of their target due to lack of fire in the finishing overs. They could manage only 40 runs from the last ten overs losing five wickets, but a disciplined bowling effort made sure the total could be defended.

And when Shakib's turn came to show something with the leather, the left-arm spinner did exactly what his team required to win the match as he finished as the most successful bowler with three for 54.

Pacer Shafiul claimed the two prize scalps of Brendon McCullum, who for successive second occasion was dismissed by the right-arm paceman for 21 runs, and Williamson but the dismissal of Grant Elliot was the turning point of the match as the right-hander shared a 70-run sixth wicket stand with Williamson after the visitors were reeling at 80-5.

Elliot (22) tried to paddle against a short length ball from Shakib but top edged high in the air and it was Abdur Razzak who took an excellent running catch which emulated the former Indian captain Kapil Dev's running catch in the 1983 World Cup final against West Indies.

Threat then came from Nathan McCullum (33) but fortune favoured the brave as a brilliant throw from the deep from substitute Naeem Islam hit the stumps directly to beat McCullum's effort. His dismissal also effectively killed the hopes of New Zealand to snatch victory from the Tigers.

Shakib took the ball in the very crucial 49th over when New Zealand needed 24 runs from the last two overs and McCullum silenced the partisan crowd by hitting a boundary in the very first ball. He then managed two runs from the very next delivery but Naeem broke the hearts by sending back McCullum and in the third delivery Daryl Tuffey was dismissed by Shakib which all but confirmed the Tigers' victory.

But requiring 16 runs from last six balls with one wicket in hand, Williamson, who batted with a runner from the middle of his innings, started brilliantly taking two runs from the first delivery of Shafiul and then hitting a boundary in the next ball. But in the third ball it was time for Shafiul to jump high and bring a smile on the faces of the million cricket lovers in the country.

Train attack

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incident spot in Sirajganj yesterday that they need more time to get the details of the incident.

The other members are Abdul Awal Bhuiyan, chief operating superintendent of the railway; Anwarul Haque, chief signal and telecom engineer; Chief Mechanical Engineer Dulal Kumar Roy and Chief Medical Officer Dr Moklesur Rahman.

The team members yesterday morning visited Mulibari rail crossing near Bangabandhu Mulitpurpose Bridge and the venue of the BNP rally near the rail crossing. They talked to the witnesses of the incident and took the version of gateman Hiramon Das who was on duty at Mulibari rail crossing during the incident.

Later, they went to Jamtoil, Shaheed M Mansur Ali and Soidabad rail stations and talk to the authorities of the rail stations.

The statements of the train driver, guard and other employees, however, could not be taken as they sustained injuries in the incident and were undergoing treatment.

The team members said some important information came up during the probe but did not mention those.

Replying to a question if any negligence of the railway officials and employees in discharging their duties on the day caused the incident, they said no such information was found.

During the yesterday's investigation, locals of the area said the rally organisers had chosen a risky place for the venue.

They expressed surprise as former prime minister and opposition leader Khaleda Zia gave her speech on the day while the bodies of the victims were lying in a pool of blood on the rail track and the train was on fire.

On Monday, At least six persons were run over and killed by an intercity train when it ploughed through a crowd spilling from an opposition rally onto the railway track at Soidabad near Bangabandhu Mulitpurpose Bridge in the district. Following the killings, the train was looted and set on fire allegedly by BNP activists.

Meanwhile, the ruling party leaders said Awami League will not take the responsibility of the case filed by advocate Golam Haider against seven BNP leaders and activists for the train attack.

District AL acting president Mostafizur Rahman said Haider filed the case without any consent from the party.

Despite several attempts, the correspondent could not reach Haider over the telephone for his comment on the issue.

In another incident yesterday, Shahjadpur and Ullapara police arrested four BNP leaders and workers in the case filed for the train attack.

The arrestees are Abdul Jabbar, Shahjadpur upazila BNP joint secretary and union parishad chairman, Shahjadpur upazila BJP (Matin) convener Abdul Wadud Khokon and Ullapara BNP activists Ruhul Amin and Shahabuddin. They were sent to Sirajganj Sadar Police Station.

CID to quiz

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Special Superintendent of CID Sheikh Mohammad Maruf Hasan gave the information but did not mention the day or time of the interrogation.

Family members of Ibrahim Ahmed, meanwhile, seemed anxious as Shaon is yet to be interrogated.

Rina Islam, wife of Ibrahim, said, "Shaon might be trying to influence the investigation as the CID delayed calling him in."

The gun used to kill her husband belonged to Shaon and the arrestees in the murder case also confessed that they had hid the evidence on orders of Shaon, she added.

If Shaon is arrested and interrogated, the truth will come out, she said.

Ibrahim was killed by a shot from Shaon's gun in his car parked at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban on August 13.

Following the incident, Kamal Hossain Kala, Shaon's driver, filed a murder case with Sher-e-Banglanagar Police Station. The case was shifted to Detective Branch of police on August 17.

Rina Islam earlier quoted Law Minister Shafique Ahmed as saying that an arms case should be lodged against Shaon as his pistol was used to shoot her husband. However, police saw no involvement of the lawmaker in the incident.

On September 18, the CID took over the charge of the investigation from the DB amid controversy after which Shaon's close aides Mazharul Islam Mithu, Delwar Hossain, Golam Mustafa and driver Kala were arrested.

Indonesian civil servants stumble over 'name that tune' exam

AFP, *Jakarta*

Aspiring civil servants in Indonesia faced an unusual question in their selection exam this week when they were asked to name a song from the latest album by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

About 3,000 candidates who were applying for vacancies at the trade ministry were surprised to find the question about the president-cum-crooner's most recent collection of pop songs under the general knowledge section.

Cholera

FROM PAGE 1

Mekalanos of Harvard Medical School in Boston found a virus called toxin CTX bacteriophage, which infects vibrio cholerae bacteria and make it cause the disease cholera.

"But none knew how and when it infects the bacteria. Now we know that," Dr Faruque said.

"We discovered and characterised the TLC phage which changes, albeit slightly, the chromosomal sequence of the cholera bacterium," he added.

"The subtle change in bacteria enables an incoming toxigenic CTX virus to be incorporated. Eventually a harmless strain of vibrio cholerae transforms into a dangerous killer," Dr Faruque told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Although some of these mechanisms have already been known, our work advances the understanding," he said.

The research was conducted in collaboration with Dr John Mekalanos, and was published yesterday in the Nature, the internationally reputed science magazine.

World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that cholera kills more than 1,00,000 people, mainly children, every year, and infects over a million in poor countries in Africa and Asia.

Scientists say around 70 percent cholera patients would die if proper medication were not provided.

Recently many died in flood-hit Pakistan due to cholera. Some sub-Saharan African countries also have prevalence of the disease.

Bangladesh is comparatively safer from cholera due to continual intervention.

'Many' missing

FROM PAGE 16

Director (operations) of Fire Brigade, Major Shahjalal told The Daily Star yesterday that they have no specific information about the number of missing passengers.

Local administration continued the search effort with four boats yesterday, said Savar Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Rabbi Miah. The boats searched Kamrangirchar, Mohammadpur, Bosila and Amin Bazar areas.

Reazul Islam, a garment factory worker, said he was searching the area in a hired boat to find out his missing cousin Mamunur Rashid. He felt that it could have been easier if there were an information centre to help the relatives.

Local people and relatives of the missing passengers alleged that the rescue operation lacked coordination among the fire brigade, army, navy, coast guard and BIWTA teams.

As there was no information centre at the accident site, family members found it very difficult to keep track of the rescue operation and to know whether any of their missing relatives or their bodies was found.

Apart from rescuers, representatives from the district and upazila administration, police, Rab and Red Crescent Society were at the accident site. But none of them took any initiative to make a list of the missing persons, claimed some relatives.

The local administration is responsible for opening an information centre and keep tally of the persons missing, Major Shahjalal said.

Savar UNO claimed they made announcement on loudspeakers and urged relatives to contact with the magistrate at a nearby ground. But they received no response and consequently no information centre was opened.

Family members of the bus driver, Abdul Khaleque, informed the chairman of Baishakhi Paribahan, Sohel Rana that Khaleque has been missing since the accident. They now fear that he might have died in the accident.

On Tuesday, rescue teams salvaged the sunken bus about 54 hours after it plunged into the Turag at Amin Bazar in Savar. It took the rescuers 29 hours to locate the bus underwater.

Sub-inspector (SI) Shamsuzzaman of Savar Police Station said a case was filed early Wednesday against the driver of the bus. The SI, also the investigation officer (IO) of the case, added that they could not confirm whether the driver was alive.

China calls for resumption of N Korea nuke talks

AFP, *Beijing*

China on Thursday called for the resumption of six-nation talks on dismantling North Korea's nuclear programmes after a top envoy from Pyongyang met with Chinese officials in Beijing.

North Korea's Kim Kye-Gwan, who has been Pyongyang's envoy to the disarmament negotiations for years, held talks Tuesday with China's Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi and nuclear envoy Wu Dawei, the foreign ministry said.

"The two sides had a frank and deep exchange of views on bilateral relations, the situation on the Korean peninsula, the six-party talks and other issues of common concern," ministry spokesman Ma Zhaoxu told reporters.

"Our position on the Korean peninsula is clear and consistent, we stand for maintaining the goal of the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula and safeguarding peace and stability on the peninsula."

Kumari Puja

FROM PAGE 16

The third day of Durga Puja -- the largest festival of the Hindus -- begins with a recital of Sanskrit hymns in puja pandals as thousands of devotees will fast and will offer 'anjali' to the goddess seeking divine blessings.

Another special ritual Sandhi Puja, which marks the inter-linking of time between Mahashtami and Mahanavami, will start at 3:57pm.

Shandhi Puja is observed marking time of Ramchandra's victory over Ravon.

MP's rally

FROM PAGE 16

"I will not listen to who is saying what. My duty is to take the accused into custody and I am just trying for that," asserted the DB official.

Meanwhile, police yesterday started quizzing the lone arrestee in the case, Russell Hossain Rappu, to know about his role in the incident. Chhatra League activist Rappu was placed on a three-day remand on Wednesday.

"We want to know who led the attack and what was the motive behind the gathering at the spot with lethal weapons," the IO said, adding they will also try to know whether the attack was pre-planned.

More than 100 Awami League, Jubo League and Chhatra League activists attacked a BNP procession with lethal weapons at Bonpara bazar on Friday, killing Babu and badly injuring 20 others, including four journalists.

Mahua Noor Kochi, wife of Babu, filed a murder case with Baraigram Police Station naming 27 persons and some 20 unnamed.

Kochi expressed her disappointment over the police failure to arrest the killers of her husband, who was also president of Bonpara Poura unit BNP.

The historic march

FROM PAGE 16

on their campaign to some representatives of the present generation at the liberation war museum in the capital.

The programme will begin at 4:00pm.

To launch a new campaign, some 10 students from different educational institutions will march from Dhaka to Sunamganj to raise fund for the proposed new building of the Liberation War Museum that will preserve the history of the war.

The new building is likely to be set up at the city's Aagargaon.

The 38 heroes of 1971 and their noble endeavour were about to be lost in the tide of time after the war was won on December 16, 1971. Although they returned to their free homeland soon after the independence, not many people had remembered of their campaign.

The liberation war museum authorities, however, came across Dilip Kumar Nag, one of the heroes, in August last year in Brahmanbaria.

The museum officials dramatically met this war veteran during their visit to Sahbajpur High School in the district as part of their campaign to share liberation war history with schoolchildren.

Subsequently, two more members of the group were found on information obtained from Dilip, and the museum authorities organised a reception programme for the three on October 2 last year, said Ranajit Kumar, project coordinator of the museum.

"We weren't valued all these years," Nag lamented while talking to The Daily Star last night, "I had communication with only three of the group while the others got separated."

The great historical breakthrough, however, was yet to be made. With the news of the reception published on daily newspapers, more than 30 members of the team contacted the museum authority from across the country.

To celebrate this great achievement, the liberation war museum is all set to organise a grand reception for all of them at the liberation war museum tomorrow.

They will also be awarded with citation papers, said Mofidul Haque, a trustee of the museum.

After sharing their memories and experience, they will handover the flag of "Swadhin Bangla" (the first national flag designed with the country map inscribed in the red circle) to the representatives of the present generation.

The team will begin their march on Saturday, October 16, from the capital towards the martyr monument at Doloura, Sunamganj. On the way, they will visit different schools where the museum had reached out to relate the glorious history of the liberation war to the children.

"We feel inspired by the group of freedom fighters. Through our march we want to feel the pain hundreds of thousands refugees underwent during the liberation war. After the war, these people were forgotten. We want to carry the news of their effort and courage to the countrymen," said Sharif, one of the representatives of the present generation.

Dredging

FROM PAGE 16

possession. Besides, the government is set to procure another 12 to 15 dredgers by next one or two years," he told reporters after a meeting held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

"We have asked the ministry to prepare the detailed dredging plan, specially the timeframe as to when the dredging will be carried out in which river," Noor-e-Alam, also a ruling Awami League lawmaker, said.

He also informed reporters that Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority and Water Development Board have already floated tenders for purchasing two dredgers for each.

On fixing price of dredger, Noor-e-Alam said, an inter-ministerial committee will be formed headed by the secretary of shipping ministry to fix prices.

"The committee was also asked to hold three meetings in three months to monitor the overall activities of dredger procurement and dredging," said the committee head.

The standing committee yesterday invited private dredging associations who have expressed their interest to engage in river dredging activities, he said.

There are about 11 big dredgers in their [private companies] possessions and they will purchase another 10 within three to four months, Noor-e-Alam added.

On the recent unrest at the Chittagong Sea Port, the House watchdog asked the ministry to investigate the issue and find out people responsible for the untoward situation.