

Push for a fair

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the next 17 years. Later, we will go for a permanent treaty," said Moshir.

He said they are not discussing about the quantity of the water. They are talking about how much of the total available water would be shareable.

"The treaty will basically be a political decision....," he said.

His remarks came after Congress lawmaker from West Bengal Abu Hasan Khan Chowdhury told the BBC that Shib Shankar Menon, Indian national security adviser, had said India would get 75 percent of the Teesta water.

Menon visited Dhaka on Aug 28-29 to finalise Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's Dhaka visit plan. Manmohan is to visit Dhaka on September 6-7.

Water resources ministers of Bangladesh and India will sit Tuesday to have last minutes talks before inking the deal in presence of the two prime ministers, sources in the ministry of water resources said.

Indian Water Resources Minister Pawan Kumar Bansal was scheduled to be at a Joint River Commission meeting today. He cancelled his trip to Dhaka at the last moment.

Meanwhile, Kolkata-based daily Anandabazar reported that West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee cleared the draft after talking to security chief Menon at a meeting.

She was anxious about some issues in the draft and did not want to harm the interest of her state in anyway, the paper reported.

It also said the interim deal will be based on 52-48 percent watershed.

Mamata and chief ministers of four Indian states bordering Bangladesh will accompany Manmohan during his Dhaka visit.

The deal on the Teesta and the Feni water sharing was agreed upon by the two sides during Sheikh Hasina's visit to New Delhi in January, 2010.

Since the inception of the Joint River Commission in the 1970s, the two countries have been in discussion over sharing waters of eight rivers - Manu, Muhuri, Khowai, Gumti, Dharala and Dudhkumar, Teesta and Feni - without reaching any agreements.

So far they only have a treaty on sharing the water of the Ganges.

Concern over

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using the shaheed minar, the icon of non-communalism, to stage a political programme on a religious festival was not right.

The signatories of the statement include Syed Shamsul Haque, Qayyum Chowdhury, Shamsuzzaman Khan, Abu Osman Chowdhury, Ramendu Majumder, Hashem Khan, M o h a d e v S h a h a, Nirmanuldon Goon, Muntasir Mamun, Mahfuza Khanam, Nasiruddin Yusuf, Anwar Syed Haque, Golam Kuddus, Ferdousi Priyabhashini, Habibullah Siraji, Kazi Arif, Muhammad Samad, Qamrul Hasan Khan, Fakir Alamgir, Mannan Hira, Hasan Arif, Jhuna Chowdhury, Aslam Sunny and Abdus Sabur.

Many of them are known as pro-Awami League personalities.

On the Eid day [August 31], several hundred protestors, including civil society members, journalists, and leaders and activists of different socio-political and cultural organisations, demanded resignation of the communications minister for the battered condition of roads across the country and his failure in ensuring road safety and stopping corruption in the sector.

Nigeria says Qaeda behind UN attack

AFP, Abuja

Nigerian authorities said Wednesday that an al-Qaeda linked suspect who recently returned from Somalia masterminded last week's attack on UN headquarters there, one of the bloodiest targeting the world body.

The statement by Nigeria's secret police over Friday's suicide bomb attack that killed at least 23 people came amid mounting concern over whether local Islamist sect Boko Haram has formed ties with outside extremist groups.

High hope for trade

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Osman said duty-waiver will definitely increase export volume.

Of the 61 items, 47 are garment products including pants, shirts, blouses, skirts, kids' garments, trousers, cotton nightshirts, jeans, pajamas, swimwear, and tracksuits. The remaining 14 include nuts, paper and tissue paper, cables, plastic products, coconut oil, paper board, corrugated tin sheet, natural rubber, silk fabrics, etc, according to the Bangladesh commerce ministry.

Bangladesh Prime Minister's International Affairs Adviser Gawher Rizvi earlier told The Daily Star that Dhaka persuaded Delhi to allow duty-free access to Bangladeshi products. At one time there was a list of 450 negative products, which has now come down to 61.

"We are still talking, and when Dr Manmohan Singh comes, we will try to make further progress in this regard," he said.

Our New Delhi correspondent Pallab Bhattacharya reported that Indian Commerce and Industries Minister Anand Sharma had a series of meetings with top officials of his own ministry and also with those of revenue, foreign, and home ministries discussing economic and security aspects of India-Bangladesh relations on Thursday.

Sharma enquired about the revenue implications of granting duty-free access to the products Bangladesh requested for, about the rules of origin, and local value addition in Bangladesh, according to official sources.

Bangladesh had for the last one year been pressing India for permitting all 61 items to be taken off the list of negative goods the latter maintains under South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA), because Dhaka is keen to sell those to India in a bid to reduce a massive gap in bilateral trade.

MOU IN SEAPORTS Sources in Bangladesh's foreign and shipping ministries said the two countries prepared a draft of an MoU regarding use of Chittagong and Mongla seaports by India for its goods in transit -- which is now awaiting a review by India.

After India sent the draft to Bangladesh in April, Bangladesh incorporated views of different ministries concerned before recently sending it back to India.

"We are expecting Indian opinion to reach Dhaka by September 5. Unless there is any disagreement on use of words, the MoU will be

Unique protest

FROM PAGE 1 were: stopping issuance of illegal driving licence, ensuring discipline in mass transport system, enacting tougher law to curb road accident, proper training for drivers and ensuring accountability in the administration.

The rally threatened to launch a countrywide token hunger strike and then go for fasting unto death if the communications minister does not resign.

It has also announced an hour-long sit-in on the roads and highways across the country from 12:00 noon on September 13. Centrally, the programme would be observed on Manik Mia Avenue, in front of the parliament.

"A conscious person cannot sit idle during a political crisis. They stage protest in a bid to help the government," eminent writer and columnist Syed Abul Maksud, who is leading the newly formed civic body, said in his welcome speech.

Everyone has seen the miserable condition of roads created over the last two months, but it could not draw the attention of the government, Maksud said, adding, "This is why, our movement is against the inept people [in the government]."

The protest rally came following the deaths of five people, including noted filmmaker Tareque Masud and ATN News CEO Ashfaque Munier Mishuk, in a tragic road accident on Dhaka-Aricha highway in Manikganj on August 13.

Mujahidul Islam Selim, Mahmudur Rahman Manna,

signed during Manmohan's visit," said a highly-placed government official of Bangladesh.

A foreign ministry official said the Indian goods, which will be shipped through the seaports, will be carried by railway and waterway.

Primarily one or two routes will be used to carry goods on a trial basis, said a commerce ministry official.

During Manmohan's visit, a framework of agreement will also be signed on areas of further cooperation between the two countries. Some more MoUs and agreements might be signed regarding power purchase, Teesta water sharing, and demarcation of land borders, officials said.

Govt to repair

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"The finance ministry has released Tk 690 crore for emergency reconstruction of 2,000 km damaged roads and another Tk 107 crore from the approved fund of Tk 1,410 crore to restore the other 3,000 km roads," he said.

The ministry further estimated that to complete all the maintenance works within the stipulated time it would require another Tk 1,500 crore.

"We wrote to the prime minister and the finance ministry about the requirement and requested them to immediately approve the fund so that all the roads could be permanently reconstructed at the same time," the communications secretary said.

Abdul Kuddus, chief engineer of RHD, said emergency reconstruction of around 2,000 km roads including the 120-km Dhaka-Mymensingh road is almost complete under 40 different projects with the expenditure of Tk 690 crore.

Reconstruction work of another 3,000 km roads are going on in full swing under 320 different projects at an estimated cost of Tk 1,410 crore, he said.

The launching programme of permanent restoration work for the estimated 5,000 km roads is being hindered as the finance ministry is delaying the release of the second chunk of money, Mozammel said.

"We have hired contractors asking them to launch the maintenance work. But they are not starting the work on the plea that the finance ministry has not yet released the majority portion of the fund," the communications secretary said.

If the finance ministry further delay in releasing the necessary funds, the cost of the maintenance work would go up as the rain during the current monsoon will multiply the damaged conditions of the roads, he added.

4 lakh

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irregular foreign workers on August 1. The deadline for registration was August 31.

Through registration, irregular workers are allowed to return home without penalty or to stay back to work. Regular ones were also registered aiming to discipline the immigrants sector in Malaysia.

Until August 25, registration of 2.55 lakh irregular and 1.31 lakh regular Bangladeshi workers was done, said Mantu Kumar Biswas, first secretary (labour) of Bangladesh High Commission, quoting the Malaysian home ministry.

Another 10,000 might have been registered during the weekend and Eid-ul-Fitr vacation between August 26 and 31, he told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday.

As per the high commission, there are 5 lakh Bangladeshi migrants in Malaysia.

Asked about the action against the workers who still remain unregistered, Mantu said, "They will face problem."

Over 2.5 million foreign workers in Malaysia have been registered. Of them, 1.6 million were legal while the rest illegal workers, according to Malaysian's official news agency, Bernama.

The home ministry in Malaysia said the deadline for registration had been extended twice and no more extension would be done. It also warned of crackdown on the undocumented workers it is going to launch soon.

ATN Bangla

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comments on the role of the country's political leaders at a protest rally at the Central Shaheed Minar. He had said, "Leaders of both ruling and opposition parties are the same since none of them care about the people of the country."

Lutful Kabir, deputy commissioner of Gulshan Division of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said Mamun filed a case in this connection Thursday morning.

He said police were trying to find the vehicle used by the attackers.

Casualties

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after the Mirsarai tragedy in July, which killed 41 school and college students, followed by the Manikganj crash in August, which claimed five lives including that of filmmaker Tareque Masud and media personality Mishuk Munier.

Traffic police and transport workers say the causes behind most of these accidents remain the same over the years: faulty road networks, reckless driving and unfit vehicles. These also cause immense sufferings to thousands of people trying to reach their destinations.

"During Eid time, another menace on the roads comes from overworked drivers, who continue to drive without rest for days. At times, they fall asleep on the steering," says Abdur Rob, himself a driver of Ena Paribahan.

A ban on overworking imposed by the bus owners' association could not stop the drivers from taking up trips clandestinely with other companies because there is a very high demand for drivers during Eid time, he adds.

Most of the major roads are also devoid of proper traffic signals or markings. The Roads and Highways Department (RHD) officials told The Daily Star that they have earmarked 219 dangerous spots countrywide, where accidents are frequent. "We're taking up works to redesign these spots to make the roads safer," an RHD engineer said requesting anonymity.

But transport workers, particularly drivers of long route buses, said the entire road network should immediately have proper warning signs about dangerous bends, intersections and other hazards.

"Look at the roads, the warning system is virtually nonexistent or improper," said Anwar Hossain, Convener of the Mymensingh road committee.

Eid-ul-Fitr celebrated

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ministers, state ministers, Dhaka city mayor, senior political leaders, foreign diplomats and high civil and military officials also joined the prayers, led by Khatib of Baitul Mukarram national mosque Prof Maulana Muhammad Salahuddin.

The biggest Islamic religious festival marked the end of the fasting month of Ramadan.

The country's largest Eid congregation was held at Sholakhia Eidgah in Kishoreganj.

Around 4 lakh devotees from home and abroad gathered there to perform their Eid prayers, reports our Kishoreganj correspondent.

From the very onset of the Eid holidays, the city looked deserted. Millions of people had left the city to rejoice with their near and dear ones.

Parts of the capital wore a festive look on the Eid day

and the day after. Main thoroughfares and road islands were decorated with national flags and banners inscribed with 'Eid Mubarak'.

Men, women and children in new outfits flocked to public parks, lakes, Sangshad Bhaban area, Dhaka zoo and other recreation spots.

"There are only a few amusement spots in the city, which makes us visit the same places time and again," said Maruf Ahmed, who was visiting the Shishu Park on the Eid day with his two children.

During the holidays the city looked much cleaner as the level of pollution was fairly lower than usual. Many families were seen taking strolls on the streets till late at night, which was unimaginable even a week ago.

"This is the city where we want to live. The footpaths

are free from encroachers and we enjoy walking there which we cannot do usually. The streets are free from vendors and other nuisances," said Anisul Haque, a resident of Moghbazar.

Dhakabashi, a socio-cultural organisation, brought out a colourful procession from in front of the Shishu Academy on Thursday.

Bangladesh missions abroad also celebrated the Eid-ul-Fitr.

Prison inmates, residents of vagrant centres and children at orphanages enjoyed special meals on the Eid day.

Leaders of the government and political parties hosted receptions for dignitaries, elites and the general public.

State-owned Bangladesh Betar and Bangladesh Television, private television channels and radio stations aired special programmes on the occasion.

Khaleda accuses Khairul

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The 15th amendment has been adopted only to make sure the present government stays in power forever, she mentioned adding, no election would be allowed without reinstating the caretaker government system to the constitution.

The former premier said she will announce a fresh agitation programme soon to protect the country and its people. "It will not be for going to power but to save the people from the government's torture."

Referring to the death of pro-BNP lawyer Mamtaz Uddin Ahmed on August 26, Khaleda reiterated that the lawyer was tortured to death in police custody.

On the upcoming visit of the Indian prime minister, she said BNP wants good relations with India on the basis of equality.

At the reception the leader of the opposition exchanged Eid greetings with party men, diplomats, political leaders, eminent citizens and the general people.

BNP has been highly critical of Khairul Haque for giving verdicts on some

important political issues.

His SC bench in a verdict declared the caretaker government system illegal but said the system could continue for the next two general elections. The full text of the verdict is yet to be disclosed.

Later parliament cancelled the caretaker system through adopting the 15th amendment defying protests from BNP and its allies.

The bench led by Khairul also deemed the fifth amendment illegal, which annoyed BNP as the amendment was added to the charter to legalise the regime of party's founder and late president Ziaur Rahman.

Khaleda had to leave her previous residence at Dhaka cantonment following a court order during Khairul's tenure as chief justice.

The BNP chairperson returned home from Saudi Arabia on Tuesday night after performing Umrah.

LEADERS MEET KHALEDA Several senior leaders of the BNP-led four-party alliance and like-minded parties met with Khaleda Zia on the Eid day at her Gulshan residence.

Defiant Gaddafi

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presidential and legislative polls in early 2013, a rebel leadership official said yesterday.

"We have outlined a clear road plan, a transition period of about 20 months," Guma al-Gamaty, the National Transitional Council's representative in Britain, told BBC radio.

He said the process of transition was already under way and the NTC would move properly to Tripoli within a few days.

Amid conflicting reports of where the 69-year-old fugitive might be, a commander in the forces of the new ruling council said he had fled to a desert town south of the capital, one of several tribal bastions still holding out.

Seeking to avoid more bloodshed, opposition forces also extended by a week a deadline for Gaddafi's hometown of Sirte, on the coast, to surrender.

Meeting the National Transitional Council in Paris at the invitation of France and Britain, prime backers of the Libyan uprising which followed other Arab Spring revolts, Western powers said Gaddafi was still a threat, but handed the NTC \$15 billion of his foreign assets to start the job of rebuilding.

"We have committed to unblock funds from the Libya of the past to finance the development of the Libya of the future," French President Nicolas Sarkozy told a news conference.

"The world bet on the Libyans and the Libyans showed their courage and made their dream real," Mahmoud Jibril, the prime minister in the interim government, said as Nato air forces maintained support for NTC fighters on the frontlines in Libya.

A history of tribal, ethnic and regional friction as well

as divisions during the rebellion have created a wariness about the ability of the new leaders to introduce the stable democracy that is the declared goal for the potentially oil-rich nation of six million.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said UN sanctions should be lifted in a responsible way and the National Transition Council (NTC) should be given Libya's UN seat.

Other powers, notably Russia and China, have been slower to warm to Gaddafi's enemies but attended the Paris conference as international competition warms up for a share of contracts in rebuilding Libya and in exploiting its big oil and gas reserves.

Russia recognised the NTC as Libya's government on Thursday.

"The Russian Federation recognises Libya's National Transitional Council (NTC) as the ruling authority and notes its reform programme that includes the development of a new constitution, holding general elections and forming the government," the foreign ministry said.

China also acknowledged the "significant position" of Libya's rebel transitional council Thursday, but stopped short of offering formal recognition to its governing authority.

Abdel Majid Mlegta, coordinator of the Tripoli military operations room for the NTC, told Reuters "someone we trust" had said Gaddafi fled to Bani Walid, 150 km southeast of the capital, three days after Tripoli fell. With him were his son Saif al-Islam and intelligence chief Abdullah al-Senussi, all three of them facing international war crimes charges.

An Algerian newspaper said Gaddafi was in the border town of Ghadamis

and phoned Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to appeal for refuge. Bouteflika did not take the call, though Algeria has taken in Gaddafi's wife and three of his children.

Mlegta said Gaddafi was planning a fightback from Bani Walid and appeals to notables in the town to hand over Gaddafi had gone unanswered. He ruled out attacking the town because of tribal ties shared by its residents and many NTC fighters.

Independent reports from Sirte and Bani Walid have not been available with communications cut. NTC commanders say residents are running low on supplies but many remain loyal to Gaddafi.

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PM critical

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posed the question while exchanging Eid greetings with reporters alongside her scheduled programme for exchanging the greetings with cross-section of people at Ganobhaban in the capital.

If these people start now, they would be able to reach their villages within couple of hours, the premier said, adding: "This is not right to make sweeping comments without knowing anything."

Regarding the demonstration under the banner of Students - Teachers Professionals, Hasina said "My question whether the other people failed to reach their village homes? I must say this time round the people went to their villages for celebration in better condition than the previous times."

She expressed hope that the people who went to their village homes would return safely to their respective places.

About the dilapidated condition of roads and highways, Hasina said it was not the "fault" of her government. "Rather, the governments who had been in power since 2001 are responsible for such condition of the roads," she added.

The premier said it was her government that had created a separate fund and allocated Tk 1,400 crore for repairing roads and highways across the country. "The works will be started during the dry season," she said.

Congratulations the countrymen on the occasion of the Eid-ul-Fitr, Hasina said the government's aim is to serve the people and mitigate their sufferings.

"We remain alert about the problems and we would solve those one by one, Insha-Allah," she said.

The premier expressed satisfaction that people have been able to celebrate the Eid peacefully with their near and dear ones "due to the timely steps taken by the government for repairing the damaged roads."

She also said that for the development of the communication system, the government has laid emphasis on railways and waterways, alongside developing the roadways.

A large number of buses have been purchased for the state-owned Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation to facilitate transportation of the common people, she added.

Replying to another question about the planned movement of the opposition after the Eid, the premier said "People are well, what will be their issue. Don't they want to let the people lead their lives peacefully?"

Expressing satisfaction over the law and order situation during the holy month of Ramadan, Hasina said the people especially in the capital were seen busy in doing shopping till late night and returned to their homes safely due to the excellent law and order situation.

She thanked the members of the law enforcement agencies for maintaining the law and order across the country during the crucial period.

Woman dies

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heated argument as Tofazzal asked for his money back, police and locals said.

Later around 3:00am, criminals allegedly led by Martin swooped on Tofazzal's house and beat up his wife Nurjahan Begum, their daughter Lucky and sons Sumon and Manik.

The gang also set fire to the house. All the family members but Shirin managed to get out of the burning house. Trapped inside, she suffered burns all over her body.

Tofazzal filed a case with Kahirhat Police Station against 15 persons, including Martin, in this connection.

Police arrested three locals -- Obaidul Haque, Russel and Sohag -- Thursday night suspecting their involvement in the arson.

Obaidul Quader, a ruling party lawmaker, visited the spot on Thursday and assured the family of exemplary punishment to those involved in the incident.