



# The Daily Star

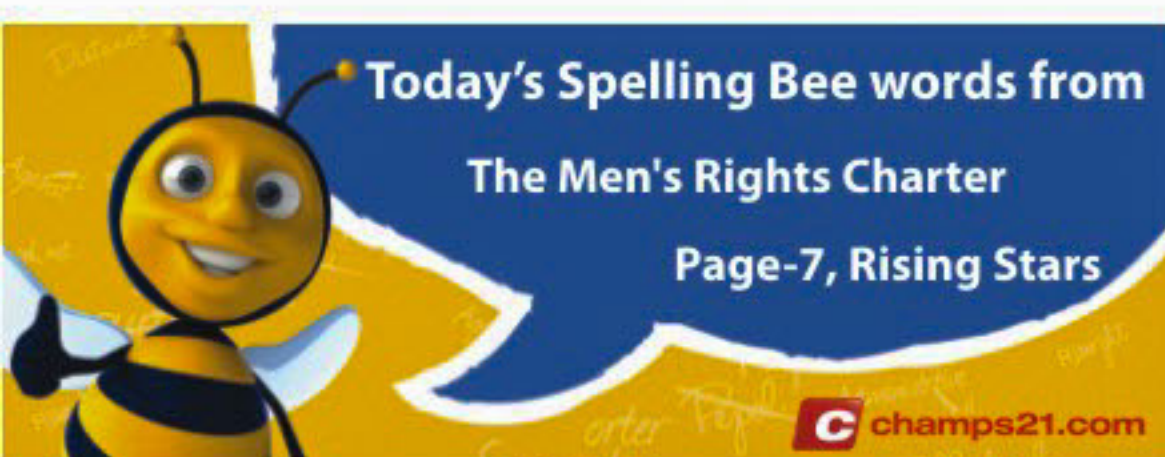
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## EMIRATES TO SOAR FLIGHTS

The airlines is upbeat about the growing number of Bangladeshi travellers

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## PLOTTING DIRTY

Putin accuses the opposition over the upcoming election

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# Tolls being gobbled up

*Probe finds vehicles crossing Bangabandhu Bridge without records; heavy vehicles shown as light ones; role of toll collection company comes under question*

M ABUL KALAM AZAD, Back from Bangabandhu Bridge

A probe has found that employees of a joint venture company collecting tolls at Bangabandhu Bridge have been misappropriating huge sums by showing a lesser number of vehicles crossing the bridge or by showing heavy vehicles as light ones.

The Bangabandhu Bridge Authority (BBA) last month at random scrutinised last year's toll records for three months -- January, February and December -- and found that Tk 11.93 lakh had been misappropriated by hiding real data

on the computer and duplication of money receipts.

The actual amount of the embezzled money will be known when a full-fledged audit is done, said BBA officials.

Every day's toll records were supposed to be checked in line with video footage of every vehicle crossing the bridge to prevent irregularities. But it did not happen owing to the negligence of the people concerned.

The government can cancel a contract with a toll collection company for such irregularities. But the

company is yet to face any action even a month after the irregularities came to light, as it is backed by a state minister and the general secretary of an associate body of the ruling party, said a source.

Bridge Division Secretary Khandaker Anwarul Islam said steps would be taken once he got the complete probe report.

BBA Assistant Engineer Khairuzzaman, who supervises toll collection at the bridge, said, "Misappropriation of tolls is not possible without the involvement of the

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## MARCH 1971 Nat'l Assembly session postponed

SYED BADRUL AHSAN

The Bangalee nation reached a decisive point in its march to history in March 1971.

Three months into an unprecedented victory in the general elections, in which the Awami League led by Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman obtained a clear majority in the Pakistan national assembly, the Pakistani establishment gave out

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Dhaka Gladiators' Pakistani opener Imran Nazir pulls on his way to a swashbuckling 75 in the final of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) match against Barisal Burners at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. Nazir's heroics propelled Dhaka to a 8-wicket victory. Story on Page 16.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Spelling Bee on Channel i

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Daily Star Spelling Bee contest made its television debut on Channel i last night.

Hosted by Chowdhury Abd Allah Quaseed, the programme featured a video presentation on the first round of the competition, now taking place in

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# Issue bilateral, action unilateral

*Delhi assures Dhaka of discussion, continues to construct around 700 dams, many in line with river-linking project*

PINAKI ROY

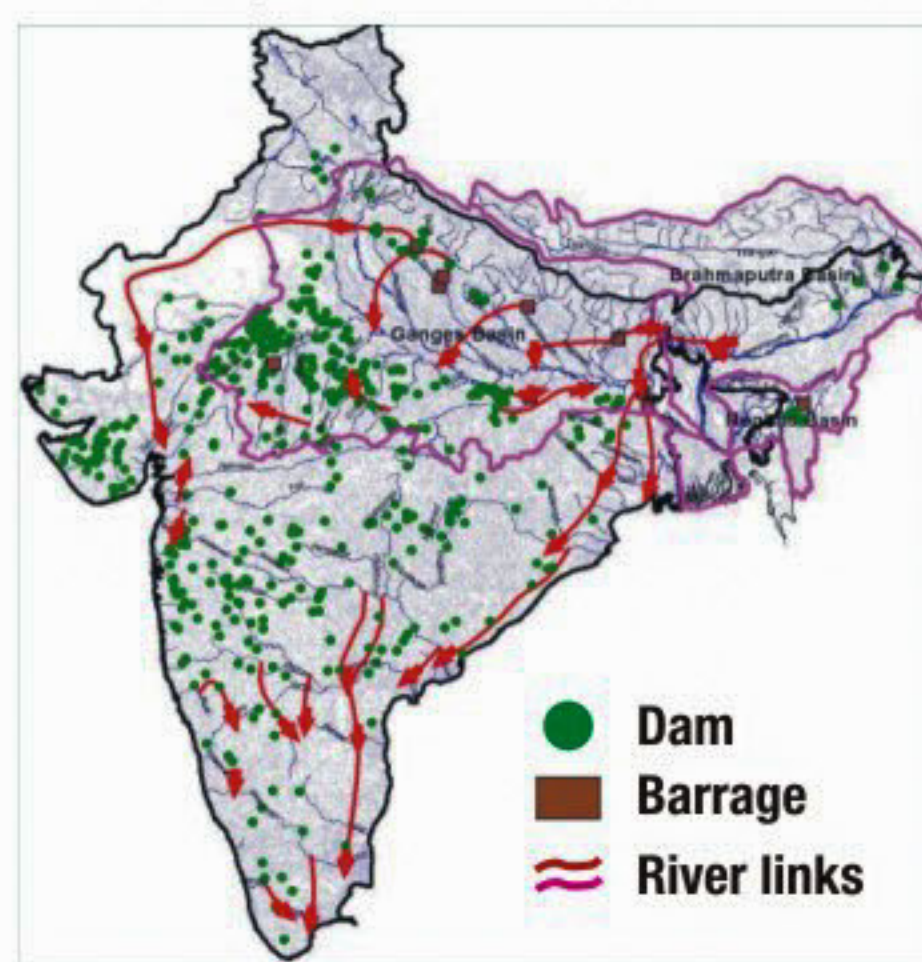
Over the years India has been assuring Bangladesh of not making any unilateral decisions on its National River Linking Project but it is building around 700 dams on its rivers and many of them are for facilitating the mega project.

Experts say despite what India has been saying, it never stopped the implementation of the project. It went on with the projects that facilitate the mega project even though the matter was pending with Indian courts. The draft of its National Water Policy 2012 also encourages inter-basin transfer of water through river-linking.

According to the final report of World Commission on Dams (WCD) in 2000, an estimated 1,700 large dams were being built in the world and India

accounted for 40 percent of those dams.

The report said out of the 45,000 large and small dams in the world, India has about 4,000, which makes it the fourth, after the USA, China and Japan, country to have that many dams.



● Dam  
■ Barrage  
— River links

A follow up report in 2010 named "WCD 2000+10" focused more on the lasting impacts of the report. It said countries such as India and China (which combined accounts for over half of the dams in the world) continues to reject "the report for the fear that it

could bring dam construction to a halt".

No newer data was available at the World Commission on Dams website.

Many of the dams are on rivers that flow into Bangladesh.

Khalequzzaman, assistant prof of

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