



Shippers see scope

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with India," said Gazi Belayet Hossain, chairman of Coastal Ship Owners Association of Bangladesh (Coab).
According to Coab, Bangladesh has a competitive edge over its neighbours on ships and vessels. Many of the country's 2,000 cargo and ships remain unused.
The advantage Bangladesh can reap from this is also evident in carrying goods to and from India under the Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade. More than 90 percent of the 300 vessels that have been used for the purpose are Bangladeshi.
In fiscal year 2010-11, the country earned \$26 million in freight charge by carrying goods to and from India under the protocol, Coab data show.
The amount can be manifold higher if vessels are allowed through the coastal belt of the Bay of Bengal

between Bangladesh and India, Coab leaders say.
The issue of using the coastal route came to the fore after a secretary-level meeting in Dhaka on Tuesday agreed in principle to work further on operating vessels between Bangladesh and India.
The proposal was tabled by Bangladesh.
At present, if Bangladesh imports goods from Mumbai, Chennai or any other port in India, it comes to Chittagong or Mongla port via Singapore or Colombo port in Sri Lanka. It costs \$1,200 a tonne.
But if the cargo or vessel is allowed to ply the coast, the cost will come down to \$300-\$350 per tonne, according to industry experts.
Sheikh Mahfuz Hamid, joint secretary of Coab, said he had been trying to get the permission to use the route for the last eight years as it "would benefit" Bangladesh.

"We oppose transshipment or transit through road or rail that cannot meet the country's own demand. If we give the facility to India it should be on waterways," said Mahfuz.
According to Coab, Bangladesh can earn about \$300 million per year by carrying 3 lakh tonnes of goods to and from India through the coastal belt.
Mahfuz, however, says the initiative is at a primary stage as it has been discussed at a secretary-level meet for the first time.
The meeting that ended on Tuesday agreed to send a Bangladesh delegation led by the director general of the shipping department to examine the feasibility of introducing the new idea of coastal shipping.
This correspondent made repeated attempts to reach Shipping Secretary Abdul Mannan Howlader for comments over the phone, but he did not take any call.

Flood tightens

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under the influence of full moon and rainwater in last three days, bringing sufferings to over 2 lakh people.
Vehicular movement on Patuakhali-Kuakata route remained suspended for five hours as the gangways at all three ferry ghats on the route went under water yesterday.
Our Barisal correspondent reports, water in Bishkhali, Khakdon and Bolesor rivers was flowing above danger level at different points, inundating different areas of the district.
Erosion caused by rivers has taken a serious turn in Sirajganj with fall in water level in the Jamuna. More than 500 homesteads were devoured while more than 300 houses were washed away in the district.
Over a dozen villages in Kazipur, Sadar and Chowhali upazilas were affected by the erosion, reports our Sirajganj correspondent.
Chowhali Upazila Parishad Protection Embankment collapsed for the second time yesterday noon. The Water Development Board has started dumping concrete blocks and sand-filled geo bags to prevent further damage to the embankment.
Disaster Management and Relief Division in its daily monitoring report said flood situation might improve in Sylhet, Jamalpur, Gaibandha and Sirajganj districts in the next 48 hours.
Our Gaibandha correspondent reports, water is still flowing above danger levels along Jamuna and Ghagot basins, inundating 25 unions under four upazilas of the district.
The government yesterday allocated an additional Tk 50 lakh and 2,900 metric tonnes of rice as relief for the flood-hit people in Sylhet, Gaibandha, Jamalpur, Bogra and Kurigram districts.

Govt may

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has thrown the project into uncertainty.
Speaking in parliament on July 2, the finance minister urged the Washington-based lender to review its decision, and said, "We hope to reopen our dialogue with the new WB leadership shortly on this issue."
The finance ministry has been preparing a letter to send it to the new WB President Jim Yong Kim. English transcripts of the finance minister's recent statements, including the one in parliament, on this issue will be attached to the letter.
Preferring anonymity, a finance ministry official said the letter may contain some new proposals that involve issues on which the government and the WB could not reach a consensus.
Another official said before the government places its proposals, it wants to make sure that the WB will review its decision after receiving the proposals.
Bangladesh's representatives in the WB headquarters are holding talks with the bank's high-ups on this matter.
The official said a high-profile team will carry the letter to the WB headquarters on behalf of the finance minister. Board of Investment Executive Chairman SA Samad is likely to lead the team.

Bangladesh side.
Another official said the finance minister may attend the meeting.
The ERD official said the WB in its statement on June 29 raised corruption allegations against high-level government officials. It may leave a negative impression about Bangladesh among the donors and adversely affect their relations with Bangladesh.
A finance ministry official said if the government fails to convince the WB to change its decision, it will consider alternative ways to arrange funding of the project.
Possible alternatives for funding were discussed at a high-level meeting on Tuesday with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair.
"The alternatives include taking out a large amount of money -- say around Tk 5,000 crore -- of the current fiscal year's budget."
Besides, the government may request Asian Development Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency and Islamic Development Bank to raise credits for the project.
The three development partners' total commitment is \$1.15 billion. The government may request them to provide an additional \$600 million to \$800 million, said the official.
Moreover, the government considers issuing sovereign bonds, special bonds for non-resident Bangladeshis, local bonds, and imposing surcharge on the mobile phone bills for arranging funds for the project.
Bangladesh Bank Governor Atiur Rahman said the government should leave the door open to the project's co-financiers so that they can participate in a new financial arrangement for the project, according to a source present at the meeting.
The finance minister on July 2 told the House that the government would start the project's work this fiscal year.

Police raid Sarkozy office
AFP, Paris
French police searched Nicolas Sarkozy's offices and home on Tuesday as part of their probe into claims the former president was involved in illegal political campaign financing, his lawyer said.
Magistrates are investigating claims that staff for Lilliane Bettencourt, heiress to the L'Oreal cosmetics empire and France's richest woman, gave envelopes stuffed with cash to Sarkozy aides to finance his 2007 campaign.
Around ten police officers accompanied investigating magistrate Jean-Michel Gentil on the raid on his home and on offices he has recently rented in Paris, a source close to the enquiry said.

Some ministers
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applied [for plots] in both the projects. As a result, same people/husband-wife/children might have got plots in both the projects according to their eligibility. [Many of] Those who got more than one plot each have surrendered one plot, keeping one."
Rajuk will take action against those who are yet to surrender one plot, he added.

Lokman Murder

Family rejects charge sheet
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narsingdi

Family members of the murdered Narsingdi mayor Lokman Hossain yesterday rejected the charge sheet filed with a Narsingdi court.
The court on July 1 accepted the charge sheet that cleared 11 out of the 14 accused in the killing case of the mayor.
Lokman's brother Kamruzzaman, also mayor of Narsingdi municipality rejected the charge sheet on behalf of his family at a press briefing at their residence in Basail.

"We reject the charge sheet as we were not contacted during the investigation and names of the main accused in the case were dropped," he said.
The charge sheet which was submitted eight months into Lokman's murder did not contain the name of the prime accused Salauddin Ahmed Bachchu, younger brother of Posts and Telecommunications Minister Rajiuddin Ahmed Raju.
Lokman, the popular municipal mayor and general secretary of the city Awami League was shot dead on November 1 last year in the party office in the town.
Mamunur Rashid Mondal, inspector of Detective Branch of police and also investigation officer of the case, pressed charges against 12 people on June 24.
Chief Judicial Magistrate Nitai Chandra Saha accepted the charge sheet on Sunday and fixed July 27 for the hearing.

25 more Rohingyas sent back

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg
Bangladesh border and coastguards have sent back 25 Rohingyas who had intruded into Bangladesh territory in Teknaf at different times between Tuesday night and yesterday morning.
Lt Col Zahid Hasan, commanding officer of BGB-42 battalion, told The Daily Star they detained 12 Rohingyas, including five women and five children, from Shah Pori jetty area around 3:00am.
The BGB men held another refugee from Waikong in Lomba Bil area around 8:30pm on Tuesday.
The border guards gave 13 refugees food and water before sending them back to Myanmar at about 4:00pm, he said.

Rab protests

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the country," Commander M Sohail, director of Rab's Legal and Media Wing, told a press conference at the Rab headquarters in the capital.
"We are protesting the report through the press. We will send a letter of protest to them and, if necessary, we will seek legal remedy," he noted.
Some local upstart rights bodies and vested quarters are helping the HRW to hatch a plot against the country, complained the Rab official. He however did not elaborate on the local upstart rights bodies.
Brad Adams, director of HRW in Asia, launched the report "The Fear Never Leaves Me" at a press briefing in the capital. The report deals with the BDR (Bangladesh Rifles, now Border Guard Bangladesh) mutiny in April 2009 and its aftermath.
The report claimed that Rab has been involved in many human rights abuses against the accused in BDR mutiny cases.
The HRW demanded the government disband Rab to stop such human rights violations.
The Rab is neither interrogating the mutiny suspects nor investigating the incident, said Sohail, so no question arises of taking the mutiny suspects into Rab's custody.
While preparing the report, the HRW did not contact Rab for its version, he added.
Contacted, Senior Secretary CQK Mustaq Ahmed of the home ministry said autopsies were carried out on the bodies of the mutiny suspects, who died in custody. But the findings of the autopsies did not mention about any sign of torture on the bodies.

Pakistan reopens
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The deal, formally approved by the full cabinet yesterday, drew a swift warning from the Pakistani Taliban that they would attack the supply trucks and kill the drivers if they resumed ferrying supplies to Afghanistan.
The land routes into Afghanistan are vital as the United States and its Nato allies withdraw troops and equipment built up in Afghanistan since the 2001 invasion.
The blockade had forced the United States and its allies to rely on longer, more expensive northern routes through Central Asia, Russia and the Caucasus, costing the US military about \$100 million a month, according to the Pentagon.
Initial hopes of a deal on reopening the routes fell apart at a Nato summit in Chicago in May amid reports that Pakistan was demanding huge fees for the thousands of trucks that rumble across the border every year.
Hillary stressed "Pakistan will continue not to charge any transit fee."
The US commander of Nato-led forces in Afghanistan, General John Allen, praised the deal as "a demonstration of Pakistan's desire to help secure a brighter future for both Afghanistan and the region at large."
But cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan, the head of the opposition Movement for Justice, condemned the deal, saying it was unacceptable while the United States continued to carry out drone strikes on Pakistani soil.
The deal was announced just days before a donor meeting on Afghanistan in Tokyo, when Afghan President Hamid Karzai will seek at least \$3.9 billion in annual international aid to rebuild the economy.
However, a US and Nato investigation said the killings were the result of mistakes made on both sides.

PM trashes WB

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"Therefore, I think it should be investigated and revealed who are behind it [cancellation of credit] and what are their objectives behind raising allegations of corruption," the premier said in reply to a question from independent MP Fazlul Azim.
She said she would speak more about it on June 8 during her winding up speech for the ongoing parliament session.
On Monday, Finance Minister AMA Muhith also made a statement in parliament about the issue.
The World Bank on Friday cancelled its funding for the project. It noted that it had "credible evidence corroborated by a variety of sources which points to a high-level corruption conspiracy among Bangladeshi government officials, SNC-Lavalin executives and private individuals in connection with the Padma Multipurpose Bridge Project".
Speaking about alternative funding sources for the project, Hasina said that Malaysia had submitted a proposal relating to the construction of the bridge. Her government, she added, would seek proposals from other too.
"Whatever the proposal is, it must be in line with the interest of our country and our people."
She said her government was not taking a loan from Malaysia. "They will construct the bridge with their money under BOOT [Build, Operate, Own and Transfer]. And they will take back their money within a certain period. We will not need to spend a single penny."
Hasina said the bridge could be built by other means as well, including Public Private Partnership.
She said, "We may be poor. But we have been able to maintain a GDP growth amid the global economic recession. Our economic condition is not that bad. So it cannot be said that we will not be able to build the bridge on our own."
She said she had a meeting on Tuesday with the secretaries of the Economic Relations Division, finance ministry, Bridges Division and Bangladesh Bank governor to explore ways of building the

bridge with the country's own resources.
"I would like to tell the people that we must build the Padma bridge. If needed, we will do so with our own money. We are able to meet \$1 or \$2 billion from our own reserves, which we sought from donor agencies. It is not a problem to spend that much money from our reserves."
On the World Bank's cancelling the credit agreement, she told the House, "They can do it. It's their will. And others may also do it and that's their will."
Launching a blistering attack on the global lending body, Hasina said the World Bank had itself repeatedly tried and mounted pressure on her government to appoint a particular company as consultant. It had even sent three letters to the government to this effect. "But the company was found to be fake."
If one reads reports published in the Wall Street Journal and Forbes magazine on alleged corruption in the World Bank, then one would understand where the corruption lies, she said.
She said her government had already spent Tk 1,500 crore on acquiring land and on completion of rehabilitation work. The World Bank itself said that there was no corruption in spending the money for the work.
"Usually, huge corruption takes place in this sort of work."
Hasina strongly defended her government's actions following the bank's allegations of corruption. She said the minister, secretary and project director concerned were removed for the sake of proper investigation.
"Did any government do more than this? Did the past BNP government do so when allegations of corruption were raised in the power and communications sectors?"
Hasina said the World Bank had cancelled the funding of seven projects in the communications sector due to corruption during the last BNP-led government.
"We wanted a fair and transparent probe into the charges of corruption. If the minister's involvement is proved, he has to be fired

from the cabinet," Hasina said.
At one stage of her long statement, she said, "One thing I want to tell people, all MPs, ministers and government officials: my family includes myself, my younger sister, and our five children.
"Apart from them, I have no one else as my family members. None of my family members takes commission. If anybody uses the name of my family members and wants to take undue advantage, I request all to either make a call or send a text instantly to my mobile phone. My numbers are 01711520000 and 01819260371 or email me at sheikhasina@hotmail.com. I will take action."

Shab-e-Barat

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Quran, and seeking blessings from Allah, the almighty, for peace and progress of their families and relatives.
The devotees across the country would visit the graves of their near and dear ones and offer special munajat.
According to Muslim belief, on this night, Allah, the almighty, decides the fate of all human beings for the coming year taking into account their past deeds.
President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in separate messages greeted the Muslims on the holy occasion.
In his message, the president prayed for the greater unity of the Muslim Ummah and the country's continued progress and welfare.
Sheikh Hasina, in her message, called upon all to be devoted to human welfare and nation-building being inspired with the teachings of Shab-e-Barat.
The Islamic Foundation has chalked out a daylong programme at Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in the capital. The programme includes discussions, Hamd, Nat, Milad, Zikr and Doa.
Bangladesh Television, Bangladesh Betar, and private television channels and radio stations will air special programmes on the occasion.
The daily newspapers will publish special articles highlighting the significance of Shab-e-Barat.

Make law

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The environmentalists placed their demands yesterday at a press conference organised by Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) at Dhaka Reporters' Unity.
At the conference titled "Landslide and Water Logging in Chittagong", they also proposed the formation of a separate authority to oversee the hilly areas of the country.
Heavy rainfall in three southeastern districts-Chittagong, Cox's Bazar and Bandarban-- claimed over a hundred lives last week. The deaths were caused by landslides, drowning and lightning.
Bapa President ASM Shahjahan said landslides are causing scores of death every year but no effective measures are being taken to prevent such tragedies from occurring.
"Effective measures are needed to stop such deaths and political parties need to show their commitment in this matter," said Shahjahan, also a former adviser to the caretaker government.
Accusing political high-ups of leasing and cutting of hills, Iqbal Habib, joint secretary of Bapa, demanded legal action against those involved.
"We request both the prime minister and the leader of the opposition to intervene and solve these problems," said Abdul Matin, general secretary of Bapa.
"The recent waterlogging in Chittagong was also created by man," said Zarina Hossain, vice-president of Bapa, Chittagong. Though the government had approved the drainage master plan of Chittagong Development Authority in 1995, it is yet to be implemented.

Eviction drive

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Biswas also seized three motor cycles and fined motorcyclist Tk 500 for illegal parking on a footpath.
But the drive could not cover much of the areas under DSCC because of insufficient police force.
Ananda, however, said they would resume the drive intensively at 10:00pm as more policemen would join it at that time.
In the morning, the city corporation had shortage of police force, which was why they began the drive two hours late at 12:00noon from the scheduled time.
"We could not start the drive on time as DMP [Dhaka Metropolitan Police] failed to provide enough police force because of the ongoing trial of the BGB mutiny case," he said.
DSCC will conduct a drive at Motijheel, Fakirapool and Arambagh and some other parts of the city after 10:00pm as sufficient number of police will be provided at that time, he said, adding they would continue the drive for four days (July 4, 5, 8 and 9) to clear all major footpaths under DSCC.
Dhaka North City Corporation yesterday morning did not conduct any drive against illegal occupants of footpaths but a drive was scheduled to take place after 10:00pm at Uttara.
The LGRD and cooperatives ministry on Monday gave the authorities a 24-hour ultimatum for removal of all roadside illegal structures.
DSCC, DNCC and DMP failed to do so due to what they claimed was lack of logistics and insufficient police force.

Arafat died of poisoning

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The analysis focused on biological samples taken from the late Palestinian leader's belongings given to his wife Suha by the military hospital in Paris where he died, according to Francois Bochud, head of the Institute of Radiation Physics at the University of Lausanne.
"The conclusion was that we did find some significant polonium that was present in these samples," Bochud told Al-Jazeera.
To confirm the theory that he was poisoned by polonium it would be necessary to exhume and analyse Arafat's remains, Bochud said.
"If [Suha Arafat] really wants to know what happened to her husband (we need) to find a sample -- I mean, an exhumation... should provide us with a sample that should have a very high quantity of polonium if he was poisoned," he said.
Polonium was used to kill

Russian former spy turned Kremlin critic Alexander Litvinenko, who died in 2006 after drinking tea laced with the radioactive substance at a London hotel.
The Palestinians yesterday said they are ready to accept a medical examination of the body of former leader Yasser Arafat if his family agrees.
"After the Al-Jazeera broadcast I met today with president (Mahmud) Abbas and recommended accepting an analysis of the body of the martyr president Arafat, and Abbas for his part agreed on the condition that the family... accepts," said Tawfiq Tirawi, who led a Palestinian probe into Arafat's death.
They also demanded an international probe into the death.
"We call for the formation of an international investigation committee modelled on the international investigation committee set up to look

into the assassination of former Lebanese prime minister Rafiq Hariri," senior Palestinian official Saeb Erakat said.
Arafat, a Nobel Peace Prize winner who led the struggle for Palestinian statehood for nearly four decades, died on November 11, 2004, following several weeks of treatment.
He had been airlifted to France from his besieged headquarters in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.
French officials, citing privacy laws, refused to reveal the precise cause of death or the nature of his condition, fuelling a host of rumours and theories as to the cause of his illness.
At the time of his death at the age of 75, Palestinian officials charged he had been poisoned by longtime foe Israel, but an inconclusive Palestinian investigation in 2005 ruled out cancer, AIDS or poisoning.

10 killed as drug cartels clash in Mexico

AFP, Morelia, Mexico
Rival drug cartel members clashed on Tuesday in south-central Mexico, killing 10 people and leaving five others wounded in a shoot-out, officials said.
"The early reports were that at least 10 people have been killed and five more hurt who were taken to local hospitals" after the violence in the towns of Zacazonapan and Otzoloapan, in Mexico state, said Elias Alvarez with state security in Michoacan, to which many victims fled.