

WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

LIFE

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MLM FIRMS PUNISHED

Eight have lost registrations for noncompliance with law

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WILL IT BE 'FORGOTTEN'?

Colin Powell called the Trayvon Martin case judgment questionable

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Cause lost

Buriganga's second channel almost entirely grabbed

TAWFIQUE ALI

The Buriganga forked at Kamrangirchar to form a perfectly flowing channel in the olden days, serving the locality with livelihood like fishing.

The Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) once had a plan to set up a harbour on the channel, known as Buriganga second channel, to ease pressure on Sadarghat terminal in the capital.

But the channel hardly exists today as hundreds of encroachers have earth-filled it from both sides to set up factories and other establishments.

The destruction of the channel actually paced up due to the dubious role of the district administration. Defying all logic and reasons, the administration has recorded the channel both as river and private land.

The district administration, official custodian of the channel, has also leased parts of the river area to set up establishments.

This indicates high level of corruption, as private parties got the ownership of some of the channel areas in exchange for money. The river has virtually turned into a source of making quick bucks.

The grabbers here include powerful real estate developers, a ballpoint pen manufacturer, a battery manufacturer, gas stations and private owners.

As usual, no one wants to take the responsibility of the crime. Asked how it happened and who to blame, a number of top officials concerned said the land filling happened a long time ago when they were not in charge.

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People have built large buildings encroaching on the Buriganga second channel reducing it to the green patch on the left. Inset, a signboard placed in the middle of the channel claims someone has bought the piece of "land". The photos were taken last week at Kamrangirchar. More photos on Page 2.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

High zinc rice released

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A decade-long research by Bangladesh scientists has culminated in the release of the world's first zinc-enriched rice variety, capable of fighting diarrhoea and pneumonia-induced childhood deaths and stunting.

The scientific feat comes with Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (BRRI) breeders succeeding in biological fortification (biofortification) of the staple with one of the most vital micronutrients zinc.

The National Seed Board (NSB) yesterday approved release of the hi-zinc rice -- named Brri dhan-62 -- which is also the most early-maturing variety ever released for Aman season.

Besides, 10 other high yielding and submergence, salinity and disease tolerant

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Agri scientists aggrieved

Govt extends retirement age of scientists at BCSIR; commotion follows

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A government decision to increase the retirement age for only a section of scientists drew immediate flak and deep resentment from agricultural scientists, who have long been promised special incentives but remained deprived till date.

The cabinet yesterday gave final approval to a draft bill that seeks to increase the retirement age of the scientists working at Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) from 59 years to 67 years.

Some 320 scientists and researchers of the BCSIR, popularly known as science laboratory, would be the beneficiaries of this decision, BCSIR Secretary Md Jahangir Alam told The Daily Star.

Agricultural scientists, who have made the nation proud through some breakthrough innovations and

research in recent years, felt deprived as some 1,700 agro-scientists working under the National Agriculture Research System (NARS) remained out of the purview of the increased retirement age benefit.

"The government has decided to extend the length of their [BCSIR scientists] services since they have been doing various researches and working to serve the people," Cabinet Secretary Mohammad Mosharraf Hossain Bhuiyan told journalists after the cabinet meeting at the secretariat yesterday.

Asked about other researchers and scientists, Mosharraf said the cabinet would also consider increasing their retirement age if such proposals are put forward by the ministries or institutions concerned.

Executive Chairman of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council (Barc) Dr Wais Kabir and Director General of Bangladesh Rice Research Institute (Brri)

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MPs 'meddling' in zila parishads

Administrators demand end to lawmakers' advisory role

SHAKHAWAT LITON and HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Administrators appointed to the zila parishads (district councils) yesterday demanded the removal of lawmakers from the post of advisers to the councils accusing them of interfering in the local government bodies.

They raised the demand at a meeting with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at Gono Bhaban, meeting sources said.

The chairmen of upazila parishads (upazila councils) had been demanding the same thing for the last four and a half years

saying the local lawmakers interfere in the upazila councils.

Yesterday, the district council administrators even went a step further and asked Hasina not to give party nomination to some MPs in the next elections for their controversial activities, the meeting sources added.

"They are supposed to advise the district councils but in the name of advice, they are interfering," an administrator told The Daily Star.

The administrator said the MPs had been

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The street in front of Notre Dame College at the capital's Arambagh floods after a two-hour downpour yesterday afternoon. Inset, people after work stand in queue in ankle-deep water in Motijheel for buses.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Peace is very necessary

Says Yunus; he is ready to share his thoughts if govt wants

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus has said he will happily share his thoughts with the government if it wishes to hear him like different political parties did in the last two months.

"I meet them [representatives of political parties] as they come to visit me. I am not going anywhere to give my thoughts. If anyone from the government wants to hear me, I will certainly do that with pleasure," Yunus said when a delegation of Bangladesh Kallyan Party met him at Yunus Centre in the capital yesterday morning.

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GRAMEEN BANK Govt actions in a month, says Muhith

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday said the government would do whatever it intended to do about the Grameen Bank in the next one month.

The government would take actions based on the recommendations of the Grameen Bank Commission's final report, he said.

Muhith said much time had been lost due to the pressure of responding to many letters addressed to him from former heads of states and ministers of

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Protest against cop extortion

Traders, transport workers block Dhaka-Aricha highway

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

Several hundred traders yesterday blocked the Dhaka-Aricha highway at Amin Bazar for an hour in protest at the increasing extortion allegedly by police.

Police have withdrawn all personnel from the Amin Bazar police camp on the edge of the capital following the incident and deployed a fresh batch of policemen.

Police claimed that one policeman was injured during the incident when he shot himself with his own weapon.

Traders said local policemen now demand Tk 80 from each shop on the footpaths at Amin Bazar whereas they used to take Tk 50.

Police officials of Amin Bazar police camp often take vegetables, fish and other

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