

Shawal 24, 1434 Hijri

Your Right to Know



#### **CHILD MORTALITY**

Malnutrition accounts for fifty percent of the fatalities

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#### **GURUNG GUIDES NEPAL**

Anil Gurung hits the opener in the hosts' 2-0 SAFF football win over Bangladesh

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4 Dhaka rivers lose 2,500 acres of land thru' dubious demarcation

TAWFIQUE ALI

River-saving efforts of the government are backfiring to some extent as around 2,500 acres of foreshores and existing waterways in four rivers in greater Dhaka has been given to "land owners" in the process. According to related laws, no-one can 'own' foreshores or

waterways of rivers within the declared port limit. Any authority like the district administration cannot lease out such land either. The Shitalakkhya river alone has lost 1,860 acres of land

including 595 acres of foreshores due to faulty demarcation, according to official estimate of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA).

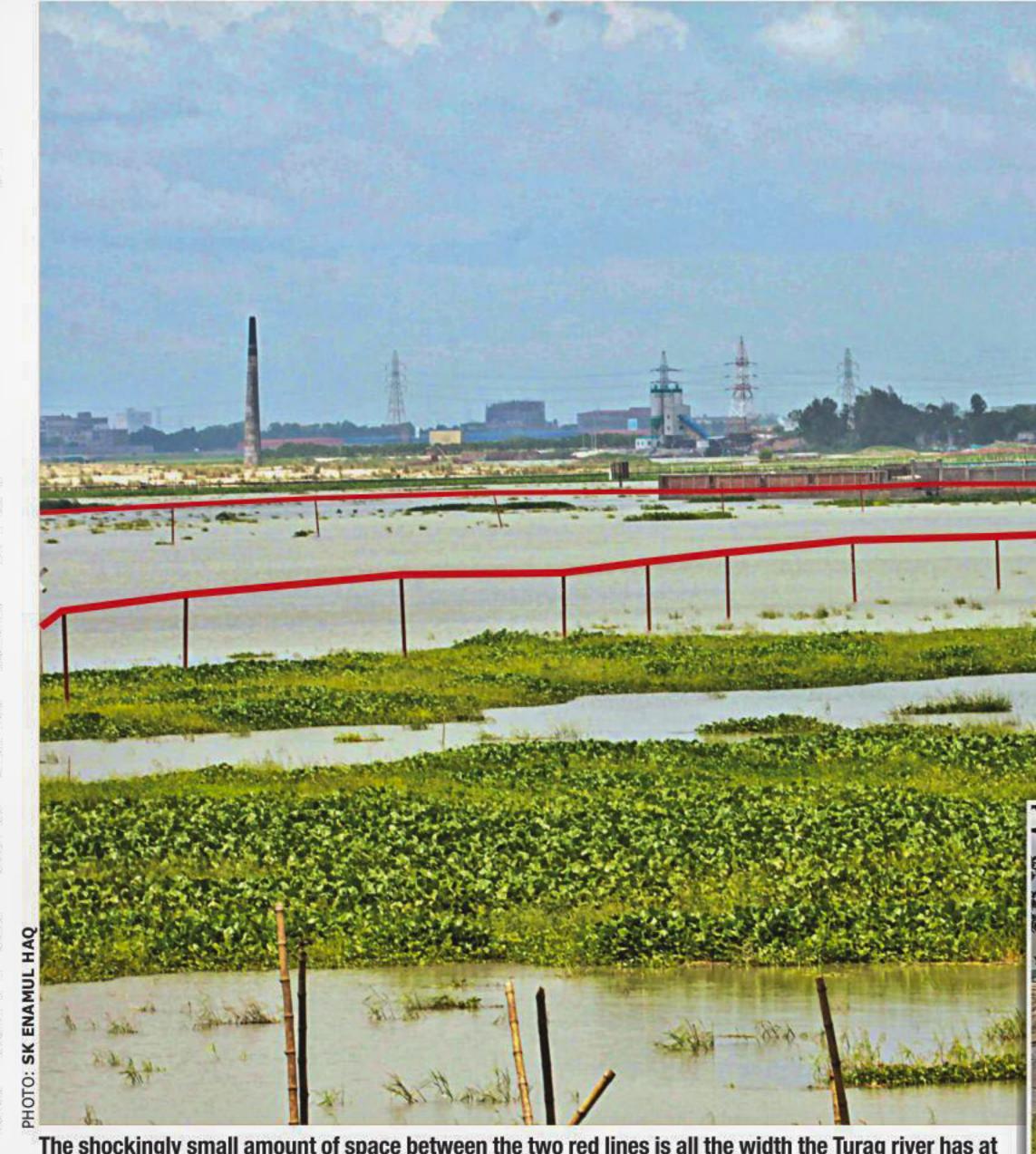
Insiders say at least 500 acres more of foreshores and river areas was lost in the Buriganga, the Balu and the Turag, as these rivers were demarcated ignoring the Cadastral Survey (CS) records.

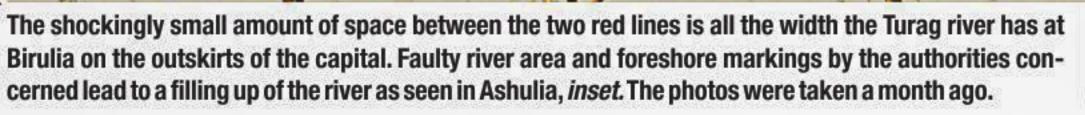
Foreshore is the soil lying between low-water mark of dry season and high-water mark of monsoon during normal tide and is vital for a river for navigability and port activities. The High Court in 2009 ordered the deputy commission-

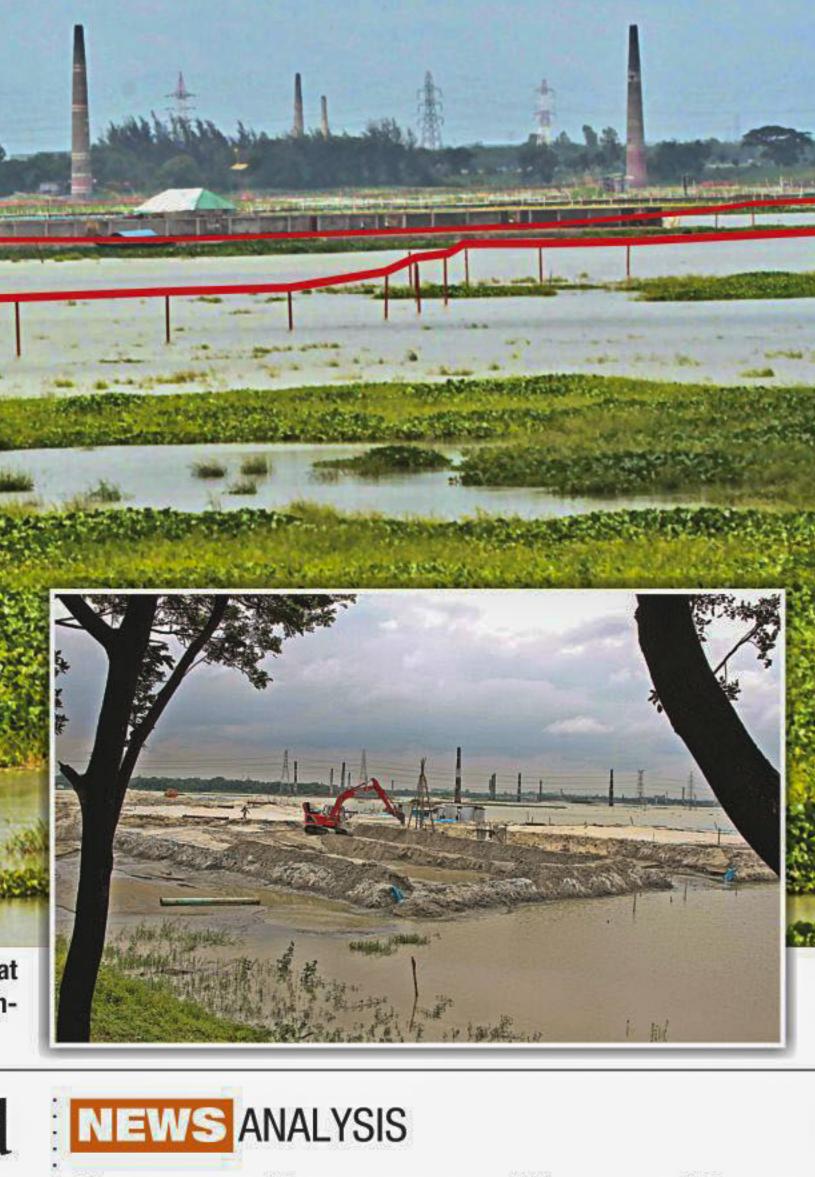
ers (DC) of Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur and Munshiganj to demarcate the Buriganga, Shitalakkhya, Turag, Balu and Dhaleshwari as per the CS and Revised Survey (RS) records. The court ordered the DCs to retain the eroded areas and

formed land [shoals] as part of these rivers, set up boundary pillars, build walkways and plant trees on the banks.

The government launched a Tk 99-crore project to install SEE PAGE 2 COL 6







## MAY 6: AFTER CRACKDOWN



Law enforcers at Shapla Chattar in the wee hours of May 6 after they had flushed out the Hefajat men who had been occupying downtown Dhaka for almost a day. PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

## A list riddled with holes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nineteen are traceless, five named twice, three alive. Six died in Narayanganj violence and one of heart attack. Slot number 10 is left vacant.

These are the holes a police investigation has found in the rights body "Odhikar's list of 61 people killed in the crackdown on Hefajat at Motijheel Shapla Chattar in the early hours of May 6."

The remaining 26 were not killed in the operation either.

Police say they got the list in the documents seized from the Odhikar office and later released it to the media.

The Daily Star has conducted a quick investigation into some police claims and about 25 persons listed as dead.

According to police, Zahidul Islam Saurav of Nimai Kachari under Bagmara upazila of Rajshahi, Jasim Uddin of Comilla and Sohel, a student of Ujani Madrassa in Chandpur, are alive.

But our correspondents found no trace of Saurav and Jasim. There is no village called Nimai Kachari in Bagmara and neither law enforcers nor Hefajat leaders in Comilla could say anything about Jasim.

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### Odhikar Report on Hefajat Deaths Questions aplenty

. M ABUL KALAM AZAD

Odhikar's fact-finding report, "Assembly of Hefajat-e Islam Bangladesh and Human Rights Violation", is a composition of half-truths, biased and one-sided presentation of what happened on May 5 and in the early hours of May 6 in the capital, according to an analysis by The Daily Star.

The June 10 report says nothing about the destructive activities by Hefajat men, the involvement of Jamaat-Shibir activists and their instigation of acts of violence. But it has elaborately described the role of law enforcers and pro-ruling party men.

Hundreds of unruly Hefajat men were involved in widespread violence, including arson and even torching of bookshops that sold copies of the holy Quran. Though many TV channels broadcast the incidents live, Odhikar is completely silent about it. It has depicted Hefajat-e-Islam as a very peaceful organisation and its leaders and activists as innocent individuals.

While being flushed out of Shapla Chattar, Hefajat men attacked a policeman with bricks near the Alico building in Motijheel, leaving him dead on the spot. A correspondent of The Daily Star covering the event on that night witnessed it, but the Odhikar report made no mention of it.

The 28-page report starts with an introduction of Hefajat and its objec-: tives. It termed Hefajat a people's platform, a non-political and sociocultural organisation, and mentioned its objectives were to promote "social dialogue to dispel prejudices that affect community harmony and - relations".

In reality, Hefajat's character is completely the opposite of what the Odhikar report states. The organisation's recent activities, provocative

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### Dhaka for a quick wayout

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has called for an immediate resolution of the crisis in war-torn Syria to end the sufferings of the civilians.

"Bangladesh believes in amicable solution to all international conflicts through diplomatic and peaceful means," the foreign ministry said in a statement yesterday explaining its position on

the Syria crisis. Bangladesh had been closely monitoring the situation in Syria and had already advised its nationals to leave the country, said the statement.

It would like to emphasise the centrality of the United Nations for immediate cessation of hostilities to end the

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8 : speaker said.

# vote on Syria action UN experts leave tense Syria; Russia rejects

US chemical report, demands proof

AGENCIES

President Barack Obama yesterday said the US · should take military action against Syria but he · would seek congressional authorisation for intervention lifting the threat of immediate punitive air strikes on Syria.

The decision represents a significant gamble for Obama, who has an estranged relationship with lawmakers, especially

· Republicans. He risks suffering the same fate as British campaign." Prime Minister David Cameron, who on

· Friday lost his own vote on authorising · military action in parliament.

As commander-in-chief, Obama has the constitutional authority to order military action without the backing of Congress.

However, he said it was important to : have the debate. Congress is to debate Obama's decision · to attack Syria during the week starting on

: September 9 when they return to work, its

But the president also said he had decided that military force should be the price for what the United States says is the "undeniable" use of chemical weapons by

"Our military has positioned assets in the region," Obama said. "We are prepared to strike whenever we choose."

The US president has said he is looking at a "wide range of options" but has ruled out "boots on the ground" or a "long-term

"We are looking at the possibility of a limited, narrow act," Obama said Friday.

Syria, meanwhile, said it has its "finger on the trigger" as it braced for what it had considered an imminent Western military strike, following the departure of UN weapons inspectors.

"The Syrian army is fully ready, its finger on the trigger to face any challenge or scenario that they want to carry out," Prime Minister Wael al-Halqi said.

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# Obama to seek Congress Democracy not within BNP yet

Party turns 35 today

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The BNP celebrates today its 35th founding anniversary amid severe organisational weaknesses stemming mainly from a lack of democratic practices within the party.

Over the years, the BNP has not called its national and grassroots-level sessions on a regular basis, thereby deterring the growth of new leadership. Its failure to hold meetings of different forums of the party and thus promote debate and discussions on policy-making in line with democratic norms has also been a stumbling block.

The unbridled corruption and misuse of power by many of its leaders when the party was last in power between 2001 and 2006 are also blamed for the party's present state. For this, it paid heavily in the December 2008 general elections when it faced a humiliating defeat at the hands of the Awami League.

Yet the party is now dreaming of returning to state power at the next general election. This is because of the lack of a credible and strong alternative to the BNP and the Awami League as well.

Though there were many national issues, the party could not wage a strong agitation over the last four and a half years due to its organisational weaknesses. As a result, the party SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

