

# They don't need Teesta water?

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

When the Teesta is drying up this lean period with people of Bangladesh demanding due share of water of the cross border river from India, ruling Awami League men of Lalmonirhat think otherwise.

They don't want Teesta water at this moment.

At a press conference yesterday, they said farmers had cultivated about 1,20,000 hectares of land in Teesta char areas at 26 unions in the northern districts of Lalmonirhat, Kurigram, Rangpur and Gaibandha.

"If India releases water, crops on these char areas would be damaged," said Sarowar Hayat Khan, joint secretary of Lalmonirhat district AL. At least 60 thousand char families would be affected, he claimed.

Under a newly formed platform called "Teesta Nodir Purba Teer Rokkha Committee", led by Sarowar, local AL leaders and activists staged a human chain before the press conference held around noon at Paruliya

char village of Hatibandha upazila, where the Teesta barrage is located.

Safayet Hossain, deputy director of agriculture department in Lalmonirhat said the cultivated char land in total would not be more than 5,000 hectares in 17 unions of five upazilas in the district.

The Teesta flow has been as low as 416 to 830 cusecs since last February against 45,000 cusecs required for the boro fields under the Teesta barrage irrigation project.

Contacted, Mahbubur Rahman, executive engineer of Water Development Board at Dalia in Lalmonirhat, said if India releases water, it will have a very positive impact on agriculture in Bangladesh.

He added no land would be flooded unless Teesta flow reaches up to 30,000 cusecs.

Talking to farmers Azizul Islam, Naya Miah, Atiar Rahman and many others at Char Sholmari of Kaliganj upazila, it was learnt that only a few who have ability to set up shallow

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## Car wash

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a sponge or wince at the high cost of a car-wash, it means salvation may soon be at hand.

A Nissan spokesman said: "The Nissan Note is first car to trial paint which could make car washes obsolete.

"Washing a car can be a chore - and a costly one at that. In response, Nissan has begun tests on innovative paint technology that repels mud, rain and everyday dirt, meaning drivers may never have to clean their car again."

Scientists have developed 'super-hydrophobic' and 'oleophobic' paint, which repels water and oils. It has been applied to the all-new Nissan Note supermini to create what it calls 'the world's first self-cleaning car'.

Explaining how the dirt-repellent coating works, a Nissan spokesman said: "By creating a protective layer of air between the paint and environment, it effectively stops standing water and road spray from creating dirty marks on the car's surface."

The Note already features a 'wash and blow dry' function on its rear view camera. This uses water and compressed air to automatically keep the lens free of dirt and ensure the Notes' safety sensors work in all conditions.

## Squeezed by extortionists

FROM PAGE 1

Police and political party cadres extort around Tk 474.50 crore every year from hawkers in Dhaka city alone, and about Tk 375.50 crore in the rest of the country, said BHF leaders.

Hawkers of several areas have alleged that police and ruling party men also extort money from them in the name of cleaning footpaths and providing electricity.

Asked about the allegations, Jubo League Chairman Mohammad Omar Faroque Chowdhury said they would investigate and take steps if hawkers bring specific allegations against any leaders or activists of the pro-Awami League youth body.

The technique of extortion is almost the same all over the capital, and it is done systematically.

Policemen engage agents, known as linemen, to collect money from stalls on footpaths. In return, they give protection to hawkers, according to a number of hawkers.

"If I pay a lineman Tk 20, I don't need to worry about other thugs. I will not be driven away from the footpath," said a hawker who sells combs and cutters on Mirpur road.

The middle-aged man has been

paying extortion money for at least eight years.

On condition of anonymity, a lineman in Jatrabari area said the money he collects from footpath hawkers every day goes to some policemen and four to five local ruling party men.

"Sometimes, I have to give money to other thugs as well," said the paid agent.

The linemen usually collect money in the evening, as most hawkers close their sales by then.

The range of payment varies from Tk 20 to Tk 400, depending on commercial importance of the location and size of the business.

For instance, if a hawker has a big stall on a footpath in Motijheel or Farmgate area, he has to pay around Tk 350-400 a day. And for a smaller stall in areas such as Shukrabad or Shyamoli, the amount ranges from Tk 20 to 100.

A lineman collects money from stalls on certain footpaths under a police station and never asks for money from hawkers in other areas.

A hawker leader said, "At least one sardar [team leader] is assigned to guide the linemen working in the areas under a police station."

There are 49 police stations in the capital.

Talking to The Daily Star, Dr Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), said such extortion by police shows the extent of corruption by the law enforcement agency whose integrity is already in question.

He also blamed unhealthy political culture that works as a barrier to getting rid of the malpractice.

"It often becomes difficult to move against corruption, as influential political people usually benefit from this."

"Police should take steps against their corrupt members and bring them to book," he said.

Hawkers Federation President MA Kashem said they have stalls on three-fourths of the capital's footpaths.

Hawkers have no legal right to run businesses on footpaths. But they have a moral right to do so as the government several times promised to rehabilitate them but did little to keep its pledge, he said.

Kashem said they are willing to pay the money to the government, not to the extortionists, so that it can be used for the country's development.

# The killing mission

FROM PAGE 1

Major General Manzur and Major Khaled [who was an accused in the Zia killing] will have to be put in your [Emdad] jeep. Both of them will have to be killed on the way to the cantonment from Hathazari police station or at any convenient place after you enter the cantonment," said Aziz.

Staring at Latif he said: "This is all I've got sir."

"It's okay," replied Latif, signifying his consent to the plan.

"Major Khaled is an extraordinary officer and he will make all our efforts to escape. He knows how to survive even if he is dropped into water with his hands and feet tied," Latif warned Emdad. "So, Khaled will have to be killed first," Latif ordered Emdad.

Emdad stood silent. "Do you have anything more to say," Aziz asked.

"I need major Kamal with me," replied Emdad.

"Kamal will be around you," Aziz quipped.

"Why is Kamal needed," questioned Latif.

"The task is very difficult," answered Emdad.

"Officers younger than you have done tasks more difficult than this one," Latif rebuked Emdad.

The telephone rang, suddenly. Aziz picked it up and indicated that Emdad would have to step out of his office.

No one else but army chief Ershad called up Aziz.

"Right sir; yes sir. Work is going

on as per your instructions. I have already detailed manpower. They will go soon [to Hathazari police station]," Aziz told Ershad over the phone.

At one stage, he said: "Brigadier Latif is here. Will you speak to him?" Aziz sought to know from the army chief and instantly handed the phone over to Latif.

"Latif, I have given detailed instructions to Brigadier Aziz. He [Manzur] should be finished," Ershad told Latif.

"Yes, sir," Latif replied.

The phone conversation was over. They came out of the office after 15 minutes. "Will you think once more sir," Aziz told Latif.

"Decision has been taken, it has to be done," Latif gave a quick reply.

Assigned by the two brigadier generals, Emdad went to the training battalion and asked the subedar major of the battalion to send one section of efficient non-commanding officers (NCO) to him. After sometime 10 NCOs came. He also asked for four more soldiers and three drivers.

Along with the group of soldiers, Emdad went to the centre of the training ground. The sun had gone down sometime before. Darkness engulfed them. They were not seen from adjacent areas. Emdad briefed them about the special assignment. They assured Emdad of extending all cooperation and requested him not to be afraid.

On completion of preparations, Emdad reported to Aziz and Latif,

who wished him success.

At around 8:00pm, the squad led by Emdad started for Hathazari police station, 20 km off Chittagong cantonment.

They found a crowd outside the police station compound and many police personnel inside. Emdad met DIG Shajahan there and informed him about the order given by the two brigadier generals to bring Manzur and others under army custody.

But Sheikh Maruful Haq, superintendent of police, had refused to hand over Manzur to the soldiers. This annoyed Emdad. He was getting edgy and threatened to take Manzur by force.

On advice of the deputy commissioner, Ziauddin M Choudhury, Maruful informed Emdad that the local administration was communicating with the acting president for instructions from the government. This gave little relief to Maruful, who was facing an armed group of soldiers in the police station.

But Emdad and his soldiers lost patience very soon. "The army contingent is getting restive," Maruful phoned the deputy commissioner in the next few minutes.

Divisional Commissioner Saifuddin again called the acting president. This time, Justice Sattar informed him that he had consulted Ershad. "Manzur should be handed over to the army," Sattar ordered.

Ali Mohammad Iqbal, deputy commissioner of Chittagong Metropolitan Police, made a phone call to Aziz to confirm the identity of

the army officers who had gone to the police station.

In response, Aziz told Iqbal that he and Latif had sent Emdad to take Manzur and others under army custody on the directives of the army chief. He asked Iqbal to hand them over to Emdad. The police eventually agreed.

Manzur understood that the army men had gone there to take him. He hurriedly called DIG Shajahan and said: "Shajahan, I surrendered to you. I will stay in police custody. You can in no way send me to the cantonment," argued Manzur.

Emdad was, however, surprised to find there Major Rezaul Karim, who was his batch mate and whom Manzur had engaged as security officer during turbulent times. He did not find Major Khaled, who fled Chittagong cantonment along with General Manzur.

Emdad quickly decided to save Major Reza, who had surrendered to the police along with General Manzur. Reza was put on another jeep and sent to the EBRC in the cantonment, escorted by three soldiers.

Emdad and his team found it difficult to detach Manzur's wife from him. She held Manzur's hand tightly and made it clear that she would go with Manzur wherever he was taken.

Then Emdad ordered some of his soldiers to forcibly separate her from Manzur. Once that was done, the soldiers tied Manzur's hands behind his back, blindfolded and put him on a jeep. The family members of

Manzur and Delwar were put on the pick-up and sent to the EBRC.

The jeep carrying Manzur, Emdad and five guards started for Chittagong cantonment. Police escorted them up to the second gate of the cantonment. The jeep then entered the cantonment.

But Emdad could not decide his next course of action. The jeep moved about in the cantonment aimlessly for about one and a half hours.

At one stage, Emdad found a jeep coming towards them. He got down from his jeep and went to the other jeep and found some army officers, including Lt Col Shamsur Rahman and Major Kamal Uddin Bhuiyan.

Shams and Kamal, on instructions from Brig Aziz, were looking for Emdad inside the cantonment. Due to the delay in the execution of the task, Ershad repeatedly asked Aziz to kill Manzur before first light.

Noticing Emdad at around 11:00pm, Shams enquired about the delay in the completion of the task and ordered that the job be done quickly.

The jeep carrying Manzur and Emdad then moved towards the firing range. It stopped at the firing range and went to the northern side adjacent to the hill.

Manzur appeared to have understood what was going to happen to him. "Tell my wife to forgive me. I could not leave anything for her and for my children," Manzur told Emdad and the NCOs in the dark of the night.

Emdad and others apologised to

Manzur.

It was now time to finish Manzur. Emdad ensured that all his men had unloaded their weapons. He loaded a Chinese rifle with only one bullet. And he sought to know who wanted to shoot the general.

"It is not possible for me to shoot the general," said Havildar Mozaffar. Another soldier, Delwar, also refused to shoot the general.

Then Havildar Malek agreed to shoot. He shot the general in the head. Manzur collapsed on the ground.

Emdad and his men returned to the jeep and found Lt Col Shams and Major Kamal. "Have you completed the task?" Shams and Kamal asked Emdad.

"Yes," Emdad and his soldiers replied.

But Shams and Kamal wanted to be certain and they wanted to see the body of the slain general. Emdad had, therefore, to take them to the spot. In the darkness, they lit a match stick and identified Manzur's corpse.

Emdad and his team then went to the EBRC.

Shams and Kamal entered Aziz's office. Aziz and Latif were waiting there for the "desired good" news.

[The report has been prepared on the basis of the depositions of witnesses and accused in the Manzur murder case and the book, "Assassination of Ziaur Rahman and the aftermath", by Ziauddin M. Choudhury, who was deputy commissioner of Chittagong in 1981.]



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