



The Turag has been shrunken into a narrow channel at Dhour of Ashulia as grabbers encroach on it from both sides. The photo was taken a few days ago.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Turag close to death

FROM PAGE 1
administration had wrongly set up boundary pillars along the dry-season waterline excluding extensive foreshore area, integral to a river, said officials.

Authorities of Lamichha Spinning Mills have filled a 9,292 square metre area of the Turag's foreshore at Bhadam mouja while an unidentified claimant on the other side has earth-filled nearly an acre right in the middle of the river at Bhakral mouja, narrowing the river down to a stream near Dhour Bridge.

Kamrul Hasan, deputy town planner of Rajuk, who was in a team to pull down the spinning mill on March 10, said the site is designated as flood flow

zone in the Detailed Area Plan of Dhaka.

On that day, the Rajuk team went to demolish the gigantic under-construction structure with only 10 labourers equipped with six hammers and all they did was dismantling some bricks, staging a farce in the name of eviction.

Md Anwarul Islam Ferdous, a director of Anotex Group that owns Lamichha Spinning Mills, said after the said eviction drive, they went to the High Court that stayed any eviction move against the structure for four months and they completed construction of the factory building during the stay.

Asked why the BIWTA issued licence

for a factory on the river foreshore based on faulty demarcation pillars, Md Saiful Islam, joint director of the BIWTA, said, "The boundary pillars could be reset later."

The BIWTA along with Gazipur district administration embarked on a similar two-day drive on April 14 to clear massive earth filling opposite the spinning mill and remove a 16,000 square feet concrete wall on 36 decimals of river area by a private university.

This move too ended up in a sheer farce as the ill-prepared and ill-equipped BIWTA team could do nothing more than removing some timber and concrete pillars of the protection wall.

Dhaka Central International Medical College and Hospital authorities have filled up 1.34 acres into the Turag river from the boundary pillar in Machhimpur mouja near Kamarpara Bridge and currently they are building concrete guide wall in the middle of the river to demarcate "their land".

Director of project Abul Kalam said hospital's chairman Md Motazzaroul Islam "somehow" procured the land and wants to retain its possession.

Close to this site, Bangladesh Shahid Smriti Foundation has proposed a plant nursery on more than half an acre of land constructing similar guide walls in the river.

Jasimuddin Shikder, president of

the foundation, said that they have taken lease of the "land" and the nursery owners filled it up and built the boundary walls in the river. He refused to provide the contact details of these owners.

In a similar fashion, scores of land claimants and sand traders have filled up the river opposite to Bishwa Ijtema ground and along the embankment stretch from Kamarpara to Ashulia.

When his attention was drawn to these, BIWTA Director Abul Bashar, though responsible for conserving rivers within river port areas, declined to make any comment saying, "The port officer knows better."

Md Saiful Islam, in-charge of Dhaka river port, said, "We have

nothing to do to save Dhaka rivers, including the Turag, unless the district administration hands over those to us along with foreshores [demarcated] accordingly."

Md Nurul Islam, deputy commissioner of Gazipur, said, "We had to make compromises in some cases, as some individuals somehow became owners of the land inside the river."

"It is true that a massive destruction of the Turag is on ... We will soon sit to discuss it," he told The Daily Star.

One may recall that the HC in a 2009 judgment clearly defined the foreshores as an integral part of a river and directed the government to save those.

'Criminal' killed

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normal life after serving 11 years in jail in two phases.

Detectives picked him up on Thursday and killed him after confirming his identity from his wife Nipa Begum over the phone, complained family members at the morgue of Dhaka Medical College.

Talking to The Daily Star, Deputy Commissioner (media) Masudur Rahman of Dhaka Metropolitan Police said a DB team was patrolling the Khilgaon Bishwa Road area, prone to mugging at dead of night.

At one stage, the patrol team noticed suspicious movement of several young men near Khidmah Hospital around 3:00am and challenged them.

Sensing danger, the youths opened fire on the law enforcers. Detectives retaliated with gun shots triggering the "shootout" that left one of the youths injured by bullets.

He was taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where physicians declared him dead around 4:00am, mentioned Masudur.

A pistol loaded with three bullets was recovered from the spot.

Police claimed DB constables

Alim and Jony Barua were injured in the incident and received treatment at Central Police Hospital in Rajarbagh.

Jakir's sister Baby Begum said his brother left his Meradia home on Thursday morning.

"An anonymous caller phoned Nipa several times from Jakir's cellphone on Thursday. The caller inquired Nipa about his husband and confirmed that the man was Jakir," added Baby.

"If my brother committed any crime, he could have been put on trial under the country's existing laws. Why was he murdered?" questioned Baby.

An autopsy of Jakir will be performed at Dhaka Medical College today, said morgue sources.

On June 29, Ramzan Ali and Rakib Hossain Aqmal were killed in another "gunfight" between suspected criminals and detectives in the capital's Motijheel.

Cops at that time also identified the deceased as criminals, but the family members of the two claimed that they were not involved in criminal activities.

Loom band dress

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rubber loops by hand, reports Wales Online.

There have been 126 bids so far for the Welsh-made garment and there are still more than four days left for the price to go up.

The eBay listing, by user helenwright72, gives very little information about the creation of the dress, describing it simply as a "multi coloured dress made from loom bands".

The item's location is listed as the seaside town of Prestatyn, in Denbighshire.

Loom bands are booming and have been worn by royalty, pop stars and even football players, and if you are a parent with a child of a certain age, you will probably be only too aware of the loom band craze.

Small, multi-coloured pieces of elastic that can be created into rings, bracelets and necklaces with the help of a loom and a hook, they have become the best selling toy of all time.

All 20 of the best-selling toys on Amazon UK are either looms or loom-related. The products top the sales list for every age group except the under-twos.

US firm for revised deal

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Due to such high cost and risk involvement, the company is asking the government to update its PSC in line with the government's 2012 model PSC and modify the terms and conditions for gas sale.

When ConocoPhillips signed its PSC, it was offered a gas price of maximum \$4.5 per million cubic feet a day (mmcf) in case it discovers gas and sells it to Petrobangla. The 2012 PSC has scaled up this price to \$6.5 per mmcf.

Besides, the company also wants this revised rate to be paid at well-head instead of having paid upon transmitting the gas onshore in Chittagong as per the PSC.

ConocoPhillips has pinpointed its prospect 1,500 metres under the water. From this depth, through remote controls, it would have to drill up to another 3,000-4,500 metres to find and confirm any discovery. A failure in this operation means all costs will have to be digested by the company.

The company wants a separate deal for gas transmission as the pipeline would stretch 350 km under the sea. If a separate deal is made, ConocoPhillips might get an extra \$2 per mmcf gas supply.

It has sought a separate deal for the

pipeline, as installing it alone would account for 30 percent of the total investment for development of this gas field. In the Sangu gas field situated 50 km off the coast in shallow waters, installing the pipeline accounted for less than 10 percent of the total investment.

"Accepting these proposals would make the company take the risks, about which we have little idea," said an official.

Such an operation is completely different from the offshore Sangu field, which is now dead, located 50 km off the Chittagong coast in less than 200 metres dept. British company Cairn that discovered, developed and operated the field most of the time had invested around \$1.2 billion there, although it had less than around 400 billion cubic feet (bcf) gas.

The company has presented its proposal to the state minister for energy and the energy adviser and said it would not mind to walk out of Bangladesh if the government did not find any reason to modify the PSC.

The government has yet to respond to ConocoPhillips proposal.

It had also presented the high officials with a comparison picture of PSC in Myanmar where oil companies get between \$6.85 per mmcf at well-head

in certain shallow water gas fields and \$7.26 per mmcf in others. This price at shore and at Thailand or China border ranges between \$8.26 and \$10.86 per mmcf after transmission through hundreds of kilometres of pipeline.

Besides, PSC operators in Myanmar also enjoy a lot of freedom in selling gas to private consumers which is not offered in Bangladesh; plus the PSC operators in deep sea blocks get price formula linked to fuel oil without any cap and consumer price index escalation.

"But our context is different from Myanmar that does not have a domestic gas market. We have a growing gas market and perennial crisis. We are planning to import Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) with per mmcf costing between \$14 and \$18 to meet our domestic demand. Therefore, the government needs to think if it wants to revise its PSC or not to get offshore gas for \$8-9 per mmcf," notes the Petrobangla official.

The country's biggest foreign investor is Chevron, which has discovered and developed three gas fields and is supplying half of the country's gas requirement. For such huge operations, it has so far invested \$1.5 billion. But a single gas field development operation in the deep sea would beat this investment.

Germany supremely confident

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Lahm said Germany players not only have more experience in the latter rounds of the World Cup that will help on Sunday but also every player on the team has played in the finals of the Champions League, German Cup or cup final in England.

"The experience we've got all the way through our team is definitely an edge for us," he said. "A lot of our players have experience in important final matches with their clubs and it doesn't always matter if they won or lost. I think that deep experience everyone on our team has is definitely important for a tournament like this."

Mueller and Lahm even answered

questions at times about how they planned to celebrate the victory on Sunday.

Mueller said that there was an abundance of confidence on the team with its "golden generation" that has made it to at least the semifinals of the last four World Cups and the last three European championship tournaments.

"I've been telling friends back in Germany on the phone that we're going all out here so that you can keep having those big barbecue parties in Germany to celebrate during the best time of the year in Germany," said Mueller, who also had no doubt about the outcome on Sunday.

"I'm not expecting that we'll be ahead 5-0 at half time again like against Brazil even though that would be nice," Mueller said, reflecting a growing smugness and optimism back home in Germany that it's no longer a question of "if" but only a matter of "by how many goals" they'll win.

"It could end up being a tight match like against Algeria or France. But it doesn't matter. We know what we have to do."

Mueller said the team are looking forward to returning to Rio de Janeiro for the final after beating France there in the quarterfinal 1-0 but said they're not going to see the

tourist attractions.

"Unfortunately we won't be going to Rio to take a guided tour or to get to know the magic of the city," he said. "There's only one reason to go there: to pick up the World Cup trophy. We know what we have to do."

Mueller, who has five World Cup goals here, said scoring again in the final would help the team beat Argentina as well as help him win a second Golden Boot for most goals scored after he won it in 2010 with five goals.

"If I score that'll help in both competitions," he said, but added winning the World Cup was more important to him.

Govt staging drama

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How can you say it is a win even after we got less than what we had claimed? It would have been a victory if we could secure more than our claim," said Fakhru.

He was addressing a discussion at Dhaka Reporters Unity in the capital yesterday.

On Tuesday, United Nations Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in a landmark judgment upheld Bangladesh's claim of 200 nautical miles exclusive economic zone and its territorial rights in the Bay of Bengal.

The Hague-based court awarded Bangladesh 19,467 sq km area out of the disputed 25,602 sq km with neighbouring India.

Foreign Minister AH Mahmood Ali termed the judgement "a victory of friendship" and said it was a win-win situation for the people of Bangladesh and India as the judgement finally resolved the issue peacefully.

On a separate note, Fakhru yesterday alleged that the government had given the construction work of the Padma bridge to the companies lacking experience.

Meanwhile, BNP Joint Secretary General Ruhul Kabir Rizvi yesterday at another press conference alleged that the government had been misusing law enforcers to detain opposition leaders and activists as it was afraid of the movement they would wage after Eid.