

Injunction there, so is violation

FROM PAGE 16
December 6 to make way for a private economic zone styled Sonargaon Economic Zone, the villagers said on December 8 when this correspondent visited the village.

At least two metal pipes of the unloading dredgers were found dumping sand on the farmland while over a dozen others were being laid in Birashergaon, Bhabanathpur, Ratanpur and Jainpur.

With the ongoing legal battle awaiting a verdict at the HC, Unique Hotel and Resorts Ltd of Unique Group, in defiance of the HC ban, resumed dumping sand on agricultural land taking advantage of the court being on vacation, said Enayet Ullah Mollah, who is organising the affected locals for protecting their land.

The villagers were unable to cultivate winter crops this season, he said. A number of villagers said they did not cultivate winter crops this year fearing their land would soon be covered by sands.

On January 1, Mollah said half of the total 22 unloading dredgers were dumping sand on the farmland and the rest in the adjoining Meghna.

During a subsequent visit on January 9, however, sand dumping was seen to have been halted with the metal pipes lying idle all around the site. The same was seen during a revisit on February 18.

Meanwhile, around half a kilometre stretch of the farmland from Charhabanthpur graveyard to Hijaltala Beel across Ratanpur and Jainpur moujas was filled.

"The government often talks of agriculture as the backbone of a country's economy and food security but in reality they hardly take any action to protect agricultural land," said Abdul Halim, an expatriate villager who returned home six months ago.

"Who can save us, when the highest court is ignored?" he asked.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at a meeting of the International Fund for Agricultural Development in Rome on February 13 called upon the development partners to invest in sustainable rural economies to ensure resilience to agricultural crisis.

In her keynote speech, she referring to Sustainable Development Goals said that inclusive and sustainable rural transformation holds the key to eliminating poverty and hunger.

At the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos on January 18 in 2016, she called upon the world community for greater emphasis on agriculture for food security to reduce risk of lives and livelihoods of farmers, fishermen and women.

In late April 2016 at the Krishibid Institution in Dhaka, Hasina said her government would not allow indiscriminate industrialisation destroying

cultivable land and forests.

According to findings from Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the country is losing agricultural land at a rate of around one percent every year and is feared to lose a third of its agricultural land in next 25 years unless the trend is halted.

Villagers like Abdul Khaleq, Rongmala Begum, Yusuf Ali and Raja Miah said over 12,000 inhabitants of 10 villages in six moujas solely depend on agriculture for their life and livelihood.

They grow crops like paddy, jute, chillies, oil seeds, tomatoes, peas, sesame, carrot, pulses, onion and winter vegetables and during monsoon they catch fish on the same land, they said.

"With our farmland ruined, we are going to lose our ancestral livelihood and homesteads and be displaced," said Khaleq, an elderly local.

There are 11 government schemes to cultivate IRRI rice in 1,500 bighas of land from a total of 2,350 bighas of agricultural land in six moujas but nine of them are already damaged due to sand dumping and two on the brink of being ruined, said Mollah.

During a visit to the site on January 9, villagers said the sand filling stopped on January 2 (when the HC vacation ended). A villager was killed the following day over a feud between two contending parties over who would have the contract for the sand filling.

Mohammad Noor Ali, managing director of Unique Group, said, "Nothing like earth filling is happening there. We have just lined up sand unloading pipes so we can immediately start filling up work if the court verdict goes in our favour."

The execution of the 2004 ban is vested with Narayanganj district administration. A HC bench concluded hearing of the case on October 20 last year and the verdict could be delivered any day.

Rabbi Miah, deputy commissioner of Narayanganj, said he was informed by the upazila nirbahi officer that earth filling remained halted. Pointed out that the dumping went on for a month, he said, "I will check with Sonargaon UNO again."

Noor Ali said they have purchased 360 acres of farmland in the said moujas to set up the economic zone.

Meanwhile, land ministry in late May last year gave the company the approval to procure and hold the said amount of land.

Though the environment department has accepted an environmental impact assessment report on the proposed scheme, it is holding back a mandatory environmental clearance citing the case with the HC and a subsequent contempt charge in this regard.

A field inspection report of the Department of Environment in late

December said Unique has filled an estimated 500 decimals or 217753 square foot area of farmland. The 71 acres filled up earlier remains unchanged. Around a dozen unloading dredgers were seen working there.

"Instead of restoring farmland and river wetlands filled up earlier to their original state in keeping with the HC order, the entrepreneur company continued filling up fresh area of farmland and low-lying wetlands," says the government report.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, chief executive of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), said the earth filling despite the ban is disrespecting the legal process and an attempt to frustrate the judicial proceedings.

And the land ministry's endorsement was in contravention of the agricultural land reform ordinance and the deputy commissioner had bypassed the scrutiny of agricultural nature of the land while the matter was under trial, she said.

Back in 2009, Unique Group with its company Unique Property Development Ltd embarked on a massive earth filling in a part of the Meghna, adjoining low-lying wetlands and agricultural land in the six moujas -- Jainpur, Chaihishya, Char Bhabnathpur, Bhatibanda, Pirojpur and Ratanpur -- to make way for the Sonargaon Resort City.

In the face of a hefty penalty slapped by environment department in 2011 for causing colossal damage to agriculture, environment and marine ecology, the developer stopped the move only to return within a couple of years and this time giving the company a different name.

Following a public interest litigation by BELA, the HC in March 2014 banned destruction of these ecologically-sensitive agricultural land to prevent any further damage to the villagers so largely dependent on agriculture. The court also ordered the developer to restore the arable land to their original state.

3 lakh yaba

FROM PAGE 2
and possession of narcotics. According to the press release, Bangladesh Coast Guard has so far recovered 6.2 lakh yaba tablets from the coastal area in the past one week.

A potential

FROM PAGE 2
government has taken various initiatives including construction of metro rail and flyovers.

The press secretary said the Rohingya issue also came up in their discussion and the prime minister informed him of the adverse effects of the Rohingya influx on the environment and people of Cox's Bazar.

4 Bangladeshi

FROM PAGE 1
Until December 2017, Bangladesh had 1,398 troops serving in Mali.

In September 2017, three Bangladeshi peacekeepers were killed and four others injured in an explosion during a clash with criminals in Mali.

Earlier in 2015, a Bangladeshi peacekeeper was killed and another sustained bullet injuries in the nation's capital Bamako.

The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in a statement said they were reinforcing their security presence, in cooperation with the country's army as well as regional and international forces, in central Mali, which has seen a surge in violence.

"These acts demonstrate [the militants'] disarray and in no way affect MINUSMA's determination to carry out its mandate," said Mahamat Saleh Annadif, head of MINUSMA.

MINUSMA was established by a UN Security Council resolution in 2013 to support political processes in the country and carry out a number of security-related tasks.

25 defaulters

FROM PAGE 1
Towel Tk 312.96 crore, Nurjahan Super Oil Ltd Tk 304.49 crore, Keya Yarn Ltd Tk 292.53 crore, Saleh Carpet Mills Tk 287.1 crore, Fair Yarn Processing Ltd Tk 273.16 crore, SK Steel Tk 271.48 crore, Chowdhury Knitwear Tk 269.38 crore, Help Line Resources Ltd Tk 258.30 crore, Six Seasons Apartment Ltd Tk 254.57 crore and Bismillah Towels Ltd 243.84 crore.

A lawmaker present at yesterday's meeting told The Daily Star that the committee asked the BB and finance ministry officials to find out the obstacles to realise defaulted loan.

The committee also suggested forming a joint committee comprising BB and finance ministry officials. The committee would have to submit its report in 45 days.

The report should also mention whether the relevant law needs to be amended to minimise loan defaults.

Loan defaulters of one bank often take new loans from other banks after filing writ petitions with the High Court seeking its order to stay their status as loan defaulters, Abdur Razzaque, chief of the parliamentary standing committee, told reporters.

"That's why we are thinking about sitting with the law ministry," he said.

N Korea sends

FROM PAGE 16
that North Korea had sent acid-resistant tiles, valves and thermometers to Syria. The diplomat was citing a report on North Korea authored by a UN panel of experts.

The same report also claims North Korean missile experts visited Syria in 2016 and 2017, after the chemical weapons supplies had been sent to the Middle Eastern state.

During one of the trips, the technicians stayed at Syrian military facilities. A UN member state reported to the panel of experts that scientists from North Korea may still be operating in Barzeh, Adra and Hama.

The details come just two days after the Syrian regime was accused of carrying out a chlorine gas attack on Eastern Ghouta, a suburb in the Syrian capital, Damascus.

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's regime has repeatedly denied claims that it uses chemical weapons. Medical aid organizations, however, say they have routinely treated victims of chemical attacks and blame government forces, as the country's war nears its seventh anniversary. The US and other countries have made the same accusations against the Assad government.

Bombshells rock

FROM PAGE 16
administration.

They put the sustainability of his role as a top foreign policy adviser to Trump in doubt because he will have access to far fewer government secrets and cannot see the Presidential Daily Brief, the collection of the spy community's treasures prepared for the commander in chief.

The downgrade appears to make it all but impossible for Kushner to do his job even though the White House and his lawyer say that is not the case.

Similarly, Kushner could find himself asked to leave sensitive meetings in the White House or force top intelligence or foreign policy officials to avoid the most sensitive subjects in meetings that he is in with the president.

"He can't see intercepted communications -- that's the top secret, he's now downgraded to secret ... he can't see the most secret CIA information about their informants," said Phil Mudd, a former CIA and FBI official who is now a CNN national security analyst.

"He can't see some of the stuff our Western allies see," he added.

Ultimately, unless Kushner is cleared by the FBI to receive a permanent security clearance or gets a waiver from the president his diminished role will spur fresh speculation about his longevity as a White House staffer.

His departure and potentially that of his wife Ivanka Trump would mark a huge earthquake in Trump world.

Trump was already under ethical fire for breaking anti-nepotism conventions by hiring family members. Kushner's new troubles will make those questions even more acute.

The idea that key foreign countries, including Mexico, Israel, China and the United Arab Emirates had acted on conversations about how to manipulate Kushner, according to current and former US officials familiar with intelligence reports cited by the Post, is also a problem.

After all, the optics of a senior presidential adviser sitting down with leaders who have been publicly reported to have tried to compromise him would weaken his leverage and

PM thanks JP

FROM PAGE 1
Raushan also asked whether the JP was in opposition or in government.

The cabinet formed after the January 5, 2014, elections has a JP minister and two state ministers. The BNP-led 20-party alliance boycotted the polls.

In her 50-minute speech, the PM issued a note of warning against those involved in corruption, militancy and criminal activities.

Hasina also said even if ministers, MPs and leaders of her party were involved in corruption, they would be brought to book as the Anti-Corruption Commission had been working independently.

She said, "We don't want to tolerate any corruption. The Anti-Corruption Commission has been working independently. They can summon and quiz any of our ministers, MPs and leaders if they have doubts [about anybody's involvement in corruption]. The government is not interfering and will not do so. "They [ministers, MPs and AL leaders] will get punishment if allegations of corruption against them are proved."

The ACC has already started the process of questioning a number of them, the PM added.

Referring to the cases filed against her during the last army-backed caretaker government, Hasina said she did not appeal for withdrawing the cases. "The cases were quashed as allegations of corruption against me were not proved."

Pointing to the BNP's amendment to its constitution ahead of the Zia

create a questionable optics.

The political implications of the Kushner news are less profound than the national security questions but no less intriguing.

The strike against Kushner is a bold move by Kelly who has worked to remove what he sees a distracting elements around the President -- such as former top political adviser Steve Bannon and former foreign policy aide Sebastian Gorka. But his decision to take on the President's son-in-law is the most significant and potentially risky coup yet.

Last week, Trump told reporters he would let Kelly decide what to do about his son-in-law's clearance but stressed that Kushner had done an "outstanding job." The comment was seen by many in Washington as a broad hint to Kelly that the president wanted Kushner kept in the loop.

Now any attempt by Trump to contradict Kelly's move would shatter the chief of staff's authority and make his position all but impossible. But if Kelly prevails, his decision on Kushner will be regarded as a gutsy political victory and would undercut speculation he cannot last much longer in the White House.

Signs that Mueller is looking into Trump's finances meanwhile add a layer of intensity to the drama surrounding his investigation.

The president has previously warned that he would not tolerate the special counsel seeking such information, so speculation about whether Trump will try to fire Mueller will be revived.

While there is no indication so far of any wrongdoing by Trump or collusion with a Russian election meddling effort, the report again poses the question of whether his past business dealings could have been a target for any Russian attempt to compromise him.

Any sense on the part of the President that the walls are closing in will not have been helped by Tuesday's testimony to a House committee by Hope Hicks, his communications director and close campaign aide.

Bangladeshi IS supporter jailed

FROM PAGE 16
overstayed his visa and was living in east London, was jailed for seven years at Kingston Crown Court.

The jury found him guilty of two counts of encouraging terrorism and one count of supporting a proscribed organisation.

Commander Dean Haydon, head of the Metropolitan Police's Counter Terrorism Command, said: "This investigation started with one conscientious individual trusting his instincts and reporting something suspicious.

"He could have ignored the message Hussain sent him but instead he took a screenshot of the message and contacted the UK authorities immediately. It is in great part thanks to him that police were able to bring Hussain to justice."

Hussain was linked to the message by the Counter Terrorism Internet

Referral Unit, which specialises in identifying and seeking the removal of terrorist material, and an urgent investigation was launched.

Detectives trawled thousands of messages sent by Hussain, including Facebook posts encouraging people to join IS and launch attacks and which included a speech by leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the IS chief.

Commander Haydon said the fanatic was "actively seeking to recruit Isis followers", adding: "We know from the disturbing material we found on his devices that he supported IS.

"The material included videos of barbaric IS violence and warped reasoning for killing people, including children and Muslims."

Officers from Counter Terrorism Command arrested Hussain on 30 June.

He was sentenced after officials warned of the rising threat of "remote

radicalisation" online, which makes plots harder to detect.

IS has generated support around the world using its sophisticated propaganda network, including videos, radio bulletins, magazines, newsletters and websites.

The terrorist group's media operations suffered a hit during military offensives that drove militants out of its self-declared "caliphate" in Syria and Iraq but have since recovered.

Propaganda messages are regularly sent out in multiple languages from IS factions operating in countries including Afghanistan, Egypt and Libya, being translated and spread onwards by supporters.

A global crackdown on terrorist material by firms including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube has seen the vast majority of IS propaganda on the platforms removed, but it continues to operate on Telegram and smaller sites.

World must

FROM PAGE 1
"The international community should do something in this regard," Ihsanul quoted the Nobel laureates as saying. They narrated the stories of some Rohingya refugees who have taken shelter in Cox's Bazar.

Expressing shock at the atrocities on the Rohingyas, they wondered how the world could remain silent.

The Nobel laureates thanked the PM and the people of Bangladesh for standing beside the forcibly displaced Myanmar citizens.

They called Hasina a "kind mother".

The trio mentioned that Bangladesh needed more international assistance for the rehabilitation of Rohingyas.

The Nobel laureates said they met 100 women who were raped in Myanmar before fleeing to Bangladesh and most of the children lost their fathers.

It is much more than what the media said, and the international community should act against the atrocities, they said.

The prime minister narrated how the exodus of Rohingyas into Bangladesh had started in 1977. She said Bangladesh has given shelter to 10,78,000 Rohingyas on humanitarian grounds.

The country has already signed an agreement with Myanmar for repatriation of the Rohingyas, she added.

Hasina reiterated her call to the international community to put extra pressure on Myanmar to solve the crisis.

She also described how the influx of Rohingyas was affecting the local people and environment in Cox's Bazar. PM's International Affairs Adviser Gowher Rizvi was present.

বাংলাদেশ হাউস বিল্ডিং ফাইন্যান্স কর্পোরেশন
হিসাব ও অর্থ বিভাগ, সদর দফতর, বিএইচবিএফসি ভবন
২২ পুরানা পল্টন, ঢাকা-১০০০, বাংলাদেশ।

ক্রেডিট রেটিং কোম্পানী নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে
Expression of Interest (EOI) আহ্বান প্রসঙ্গে

বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক ও বাংলাদেশ সিকিউরিটিজ এন্ড এক্সচেঞ্জ কমিশন (বিএসইসি) কর্তৃক সর্বশেষ প্রস্তুতকৃত তালিকায় অন্তর্ভুক্ত ক্রেডিট রেটিং কোম্পানীসমূহের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, বাংলাদেশ হাউস বিল্ডিং ফাইন্যান্স কর্পোরেশন (বিএইচবিএফসি) এর ২০১৭-২০১৮, ২০১৮-২০১৯ এবং ২০১৯-২০২০ অর্থ-বছরের ক্রেডিট রেটিং এর জন্য ০১ (একটি) ক্রেডিট রেটিং কোম্পানীকে নিয়োগ দেয়া হবে।

তালিকাভুক্ত ক্রেডিট রেটিং কোম্পানীসমূহের মধ্যে আত্মহী কোম্পানীসমূহকে প্রয়োজনীয় তথ্যাদি এবং ডকুমেন্টস যেমন, (১) বর্ণিত কাজ সম্পাদনের জন্য যোগ্যতার প্রমাণপত্র সন্ধ্যা আবেদকারীদের অভিজ্ঞতা, সম্পদ, পেশাদার জনবল (যেমন- সিএ/সিএমএ/এসিসিএ/সিপিএ/সিএফএ সনদধারী) এবং সেবা প্রদানের সামর্থ্য (২) বাংলাদেশ ব্যাংক ও বিএসইসি এর অনুমতিপত্র ও আরজেএসসি-এর নিবন্ধন সনদ (৩) ই-টিন সনদ (৪) বিপত ও (তিন) বছরে সরকারি/বেসরকারি ব্যাংক ও আর্থিক প্রতিষ্ঠানের ক্রেডিট রেটিং কাজের অভিজ্ঞতার বিবরণ (প্রমাণপত্র দাখিল করতে হবে) ইত্যাদি সন্নিবেশ করে আগামী ২২.০৩.২০১৮ খ্রিঃ তারিখ বিকাল ৪.০০ ঘটিকার মধ্যে শুধুমাত্র হিসাব ও অর্থ বিভাগ (৪র্থ তলা), বাংলাদেশ হাউস বিল্ডিং ফাইন্যান্স কর্পোরেশন, প্রধান কার্যালয়, ২২ পুরানা পল্টন, ঢাকা-১০০০ বরাবর আত্মহী প্রত্র (Expression of Interest) সীলগালা যুক্ত খামে দাখিল করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

উল্লেখ্য, কোন প্রকার কারন দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকেই যে কোন আত্মহী প্রত্র (EOI) গ্রহণ/বাতিলের ক্ষমতা বিএইচবিএফসি সংরক্ষণ করে।

মোঃ শফিকুল ইসলাম মিজগ
সহকারী মহাব্যবস্থাপক