

# Govt to revive water bodies

PM says on boosting fish production, inaugurates National Fisheries Week

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said the government has decided to revive water bodies across the country to boost fish production.

"We have already taken decisions to bring back all of our water bodies such as pond, khal (canal) and beel to their earlier state to increase fish production," she said while inaugurating the "National Fisheries Week-2019" in the capital's Krishibid Institution Bangladesh (KIB).

The government has already instructed the authorities to take prompt measures to this end, she said.

Calling upon all to not keep any water body unused, the PM said the government had taken "My House, My Farm" project to meet the demand of fish.

State Minister for Fisheries and Livestock Ashraf Ali Khan Khasru and Secretary of the ministry Raisul Alam Mondal spoke on the occasion.

A video presentation of the country's success in fisheries and livestock was also screened.

Earlier, Hasina distributed the "National Fisheries Award-2019" among 17 institutions and individuals for their contributions to the fisheries sector.

She later opened a fair on the KIB premises.

Hasina has called for greater emphasis on production, processing, and marketing of fish, stressing the need for pisciculture to meet the national demand for protein. "We have to increase the fish production for our socio-economic growth."

The PM said she believed that fish could become the country's main export item if the country ensured sustainable use of its aquatic resources and wetlands.

Hasina also mentioned that the fisheries sector met 60 percent of the national demand of protein.

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina releases fish fry into the Gono Bhaban Lake yesterday, marking the National Fisheries Week-2019.

PHOTO: PID

## Sufferings abound

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union parishad in the upazila.

"We got only 10kg rice since the floods came a week ago. How can we survive on this," said Abdul Jobbar, a day labourer of Sunoi village under Kalmakanda upazila of Netrokona, another area where few have got relief.

In Mymensingh, Md Rafiqul Islam, chairman of Pogla union, said he had so far distributed only five tonnes of rice and 60 packets of dry foods among 500 families. The number of affected families, however, is 4,000.

In yet another instance of insufficient relief, only five families out of the 50 sheltering at Kalirga village under sadar upazila of Kurigram got 10kgs of rice while the rest got packets of dry food, and some flattened rice and sugar, Abdul Mannan, a flood victim said.

In Nilphamari, Moinul Islam, chairman of Tepa Kharibari union in Dimla upazila, said the actual number of flood-hit families in the union was around 1,680. But the upazila administration had enlisted only 880 for relief.

Allegations against the authorities tasked with relief distribution is rife in many other areas.

"They [authorities] announced to give 20kg rice to each affected families. But they are now giving us 10kg," said Tong Pray Mro, a resident of Sualok union under sadar upazila of Bandarban.

"My name was not enlisted. That is why, I did not get any relief after visiting the relief distributing centre in the past three days," said Mya Nu Prue Marma, 57, a resident of Bakichhara village of Bandarban.

Contacted, the Bandarban relief and rehabilitation officer said 450 metric tonnes of rice and Tk7.50 lakhs had been allotted for 9,242 flood-affected families of Bandarban. Of this, 210

metric tonnes of rice and 5.75 lakh taka had already been distributed.

### TWO KIDS DROWN IN FLOODWATER

In Tangail, two children drowned in the flood at Kalihati upazila yesterday. The deceased are Tanjila, 8, and her younger sister Lima, 5.

Anwar Hossain Pramanik, chairman of Durgapur union parishad, said Tanjila, a grade-three student and Lima, a grade-one student of a local primary school, were swept by a sudden current of water near their house and went missing in the morning.

Later, their bodies were found floating nearby at around 2:00pm, he said.

### TRAIN COMMUNICATION SNAPPED

Train communications in some routes, including Jamalpur-Dwarganj and Santahar-Lalmoinihat, remain halted due to flood, said a press release of the Bangladesh Railway.

## Hundreds rally in Sudan capital for protest 'martyrs'

AFP, Khartoum

Hundreds of Sudanese demonstrators yesterday marched in the capital towards a prominent square to honour comrades killed in the months-long protest movement that has rocked the northeast African country.

The rallies came a day after protest leaders and army rulers inked a power sharing deal to form a joint civilian-military body tasked with installing a civilian administration -- the main demand of demonstrators.

## Deadlines stretched to allow graft

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hectares were supposed to be acquired.

But on March 29, 2016, the project cost was increased to Tk 573 crore and deadline extended by a year.

"... the cost of the project was increased by Tk 52 crore unnecessarily," the report read.

Until December 2016, the project made 46.72 percent progress but Wasa paid its contractor 54.75 percent (Tk 313.71 crore) of the cost mentioned in the revised detailed project proposal, it said.

For supplying an additional 40 crore liters a day to Dhaka and Narayanganj, Wasa took up a three-year project in March 2015. The estimate cost was Tk 252 crore.

Wasa was to set up or reinstall 162 deep tube wells, restore 30 more, and build 70km supply lines.

By December 2016, Wasa had installed 162 deep tube wells but then it revised the DPP and included setting up another 375 deep tube wells, restoration of another 120, and building 100km pipe lines.

The project cost jumped to Tk 612 crore, more than double the initial cost.

By June 2018, Wasa had spent Tk 50 crore of the cost in the revised DPP. "Though some deep tube well and water line has been set up, most of the work is found incomplete. There are incongruities between progress and payments to the construction firm," said ACC.

The report did not specify the work done or the payments made.

"It was learnt that Wasa, its project implementation authority, engineers, and project director were behind this," the report read.

The ACC said Wasa adopted Sayedabad Water Treatment (Phase-3)

project worth Tk 4,597 crore in July 2015. Even though the deadline is only a year away "there is no significant progress in the project", it said.

Wasa's Padma Jashaldia Water Treatment Plant (phase-1) project was supposed to cost Tk 3,508.75 crore and ensure better supply to Old Dhaka's Mitford, Nawabpur, Lalbagh, Hazaribagh, and Dhanmondi, Mohammadpur and its adjacent areas by 2018 end. The project taken up in 2013 is yet to finish.

The Tk 5,248 crore Dhaka Environmentally Sustainable Water Supply project was launched in October 2013. The project was supposed to end this December 2019 but Wasa spent Tk 238 crore and only 8 percent progress had been made.

A Tk 3,317 crore project undertaken in 2015 to treat sewage had a deadline of this December. "The work progress is miniscule," read the report.

To address waterlogging problem in Agargaon area, Wasa took up a project to improve the drainage system at a cost Tk 24 crore in 2015. The project tenure was to end in June 2017 but no significant progress was made.

The Development of Dhaka's Water Supply Network project launched in 2016 for an estimated Tk 3,182 crore has a December 2021 deadline. It has made no progress, the report said.

"There are allegations that even though there is no progress in work, the construction firm has been paid," it said.

The ACC said corruption and irregularities also took place in the selection of consultants, and contractors, and during revenue collection and overtime bill disbursements.

It said manual meter reading was an area where syndicates have been

formed to misappropriate money and deny the government of its revenue.

The anti-graft watchdog recommended forming joint measuring and monitoring teams to check corruption; forming powerful committees to oversee tender activities; paying special attention while adopting projects and allocating budget; introducing digital system for revenue collection; and formulating specific rules to prevent illegal overtime bills.

It asked Wasa high-ups not to give in to political influence and visit project sites frequently.

The Daily Star made several calls and sent text to Wasa Managing Director Tagsem A Khan for comments. He did not respond.

After handing over the report to Local Government and Rural Development Minister Tajul Islam yesterday, ACC's Commissioner Mozammel Haque Khan told journalists, "The report will sensitise such organisations to prevent corruption."

Minister Tajul, "Action will be taken, if any official is found negligent."

Meanwhile, TIB's Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said the ACC findings were in many ways a mirror reflection of TIB's recent report on Wasa.

"We hope that the two reports will motivate the ministry and other relevant authorities to take specific actions to drastically reform this vital institution," he said, adding that Wasa for too long had been enjoying absolute and unaccountable concentration of power.

Iftekharuzzaman said the ACC has to go a step beyond such reporting and use the findings to hold to account those responsible for the institutionalisation of corruption in Wasa.

## 15 migrants die in Turkey bus crash

Casualties include Bangladeshis

REUTERS, Istanbul

Fifteen illegal migrants were killed and more than 20 injured in a minibus crash in southeast Turkey yesterday, a local governor said.

The minibus carrying the migrants went off the road and rolled into a ditch in the province of Van. Footage from the scene showed the minibus in the ditch, with the casualties laid out on the side of a road.

Broadcaster NTV said some of the passengers had fallen off the bus as it rolled into the ditch.

The destination of the bus and the nationalities of the migrants were not immediately clear. NTV quoted Van Governor Mehmet Emin Bilmez as saying the migrants were thought to be Afghan, Pakistani and Bangladeshi.

More than a million migrants and refugees, many fleeing conflicts and poverty in the Middle East and Africa, have passed through Turkey in recent years on their way to the European Union.

Numbers declined sharply in 2016 when Turkey, in exchange for 3 billion euros in EU aid and a promise to ease visa restrictions for Turks, began to exert more control on migrants trying to cross to Europe.

## Mob beats man to death

He was carrying severed head of a boy in bag

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

A mob yesterday killed a man who was carrying a severed head of a seven-year-old boy in his bag in Netrokona's New Town area.

Mohammad Fakrujjaman Jewel, additional superintendent of Netrokona police (Sadar circle), said the dead -- Robin Mia, 35, of the town's Katli area -- was a rickshaw puller by profession and an alleged drug addict.

Robin was suspiciously roaming around Rishipara area of the upazila with a bloodstained plastic bag in his hand. Smelling a rat, locals asked him to show them what he was carrying in the bag but he denied, said police.

At one point, Robin tried to flee the area but locals caught him and found the severed head in his bag. The agitating locals then beaten Robin to death around 1:30pm.

Meanwhile, locals found the beheaded body of the boy in Katli area where the boy used to live with his parents in a rented house, the ASP said.

The boy is Sajib Mia, son of rickshaw puller Raisuddin, of Aamtoli area in Netrokona Sadar.

According to the Sajib's family members, he went out of home around 10:00am to buy ice-cream but did not return.

On information, police went to the spot, recovered the bodies and sent those to Netrokona General Hospital morgue for autopsies.

No case was lodged in this regard till the time this report was filed.

## Amnesty

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pay a fine of RM 700 (around Tk 14,000) to obtain proper travel documents like passports and special travel passes under this programme, Yassin said, adding the migrants would have to arrange their own transportation to their home.

The whole repatriation process will be conducted solely by the Malaysian Immigration Department, the Malaysian minister added.

"Once the new year begins, we will take action against both the illegal immigrants and their employers to the full extent of the law," he said.

Mohammad Harun Al Rashid, an expert on labour migration, said all undocumented migrants, including Bangladeshis, should take this opportunity to return their home.

Bangladesh High Commission in Malaysia should also help process travel documents and the government should consider arranging air tickets for those who cannot afford those, he added.

Malaysia is a home to some 800,000 Bangladeshis. The Malaysian Immigration Department detained 5,272 Bangladeshi workers, among other nationals, between January 1 and June 4 this year in stringent actions against undocumented foreign workers.

At a press conference, Yassin said his government would not entertain issues like undocumented workers not being paid by employers and not having money to return home.

"They are here illegally. We are not going to help settle their salary disputes," he added.

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## Another key suspect held

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"Since it primarily seemed that Minni was involved [in the murder], she had been placed on a 5-day remand," Maruf told The Daily Star last night.

Minni was arrested on Tuesday and placed on remand the following day. No lawyer represented her at the remand hearing.

Minni's father Mozammel Hossain Kishor said his daughter was the victim of a conspiracy designed to save a powerful quarter. Meanwhile, the High Court yesterday rejected a prayer for cancelling the remand. The bench of Justice FRM Nazmul Ahasan and Justice KM Kamrul Kader said it would not interfere into the investigation.

Earlier in the day, Supreme Court lawyer Faruk Hossain placed before the HC bench several newspaper reports on Minni's remand in the investigation.

He told the court that Minni is

the principal witness of the case but police arrested her as an accused. She was placed on the remand although no lawyer defended her, he said, adding that this would deter other witnesses from making statements before the lower court.

Minni is yet to recover from the shock of her husband's killing. Her arrest is illogical, Faruk said.

The lawyer prayed to the HC to direct the lower court on a suomoto move to cancel the remand order.

Minni's father Mozammel Hossain Kishor, said that he had requested three lawyers to represent his daughter at the remand hearing, but none of them agreed to do so.

"We are living in fear... We don't know what to do," he told The Daily Star.

Also yesterday, another accused Arian Shrabon gave confessional statement before Senior Judicial Magistrate Sirajul Islam Gazi, said Inspector Humayun Kabir who is

investigating the case.

The court sent him to jail after recording the statement. So far 11 accused gave confessional statements.

Inspector Humayun said police were trying to arrest four other suspects. They are Musa, Mohaiminul Islam Sifat, Rayhan and Hasan.

On June 26, Rifat Sharif, a 25-year-old internet service provider, was hacked by a group of young men in broad daylight. In a video footage of the incident that went viral on social media, the victim's wife Minni was seen screaming and trying in vain to save her husband from the assailants.

The victim's father filed a case with Barguna Sadar Police Station accusing 12 people. The prime accused in the case, Sabbir Hossain Nayan who went by the name of Nayan Bond, was killed in a "gunfight" with police on July 2.

## No special force under DCs

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In their written proposals, the DCs of Cox's Bazar, Cumilla, Bagerhat and Chuadanga had proposed establishment of a special force under district administrations for maintaining security at DC offices, circuit houses and for the operation of mobile courts.

Yesterday, the home minister also said he directed the DCs to take a firm stance against drug abuse, militancy, terrorism and extremism.

"Our ongoing drive against drugs will continue. The DCs will work with everyone else to raise awareness [on this issue]," he said.

### GOVT TO CONSIDER 'JANAPRASHASAN BANK'

Earlier at the conference, the DC of Noakhali had recommended establishing "Janaprashasan Bank" for the admin cadre.

After a session of the conference yesterday, Md Farhad Hossain, the state minister, said, "We have told them [the DCs] their proposal will

be considered."

Replying to a query, he said a corruption-free and public welfare-oriented society would be established to implement the ruling party's election manifesto.

He said they discussed ways to speed up services and make operations smooth.

Referring to public sufferings at district and upazila offices, he said measures must be taken quickly to resolve various problems at the AC Land offices. DCs will take steps to speed up the digitalisation process there, he said.

Besides, the DCs have been asked to enhance monitoring to improve the standard of education at schools where they are the governing bodies' chairmen, the state minister said.

### ACC CHIEF MEETS DC

Anti-Corruption Commission Chairman Iqbal Mahmood, after a session with the DCs, said activities done in good faith while discharging duties were not crime in

line with the CrPC. "But you have to ensure that work was done in good faith."

Iqbal told the DCs that the commission was working to send the message to all that no one is above the law.

Seeking cooperation from the DCs to root out corruption, Mahmood said there was a connection between the ACC and the Cabinet Division. "That is why the Cabinet Division is informing the government about all reform activities of the ACC," he said.

Urging the DCs to take more actions to curb corruption, he said a coordinated effort in the education sector was necessary to wipe out graft, irregularity and unethical activities from the society.

On Sunday, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, while inaugurating the DC conference, gave 31 directives to them and stressed the importance of good governance for the country's development.