

WATER-SHARING OF TEESTA, 7 OTHER RIVERS

Dhaka, Delhi to jointly collect info

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Bangladesh and India have agreed to work on water sharing and basin management of eight common rivers, including Teesta, officials said yesterday, adding that it was a significant progress on river talks between the two neighbours.
"We have prepared a framework of interim water sharing agreements on Manu, Muhuri, Khowai, Feni, Gumti, Dharla, Dudhkumar and Teesta rivers, as well as on enhancement of cooperation in flood forecasting and basin-wide river management," Bangladesh's Water Resources Secretary Kabir Bin Anwar said after a secretary-level meeting between the

two countries yesterday.
Bangladesh and India will jointly work on water sharing as well as on dredging, fighting pollution, constructing dams and embankments by the border rivers, he told reporters after the meeting, held after eight years, at the State Guesthouse Meghna in the capital.
"A technical committee has been formed in this regard. We've made a time-bound plan," said Kabir, who led the Bangladesh team at the meeting.
The Indian team was led by the country's Water Resources Secretary Upendra Prasad Singh.
The meeting also discussed pollution of Bangladesh's Churni river in Darshana, which is affecting its Indian part. It also discussed water pollution of C&B Canal and Jazi Canal of Agartala, which is flowing into Akhaura, Kabir said.
A joint technical team will immediately visit and collect samples from these rivers. Based on the findings, the two countries will come up with a joint plan, including setting up effluent treatment plants, he said.
The officials of the two countries also decided to conduct a feasibility study on the proposed Ganges Barrage project, especially its impacts on environment and livelihood both in Bangladesh and India.
Indian Water Resources Secretary Upendra Prasad Singh told reporters that any intervention in the river had implications, and it was important to assess that.
"We need to see how to maximise the benefits of the Ganges Barrage project proposed to be constructed in Bangladesh territory. We need to assess if it will have impacts on environment and livelihood -- both in Bangladesh and India," he said.
Therefore, a joint technical committee comprised of two officials from Bangladesh and two from India was formed in that regard.
Some primary studies were done on it earlier, but a number of aspects were not incorporated there. The technical committee will finalise the terms of reference for the study by September 30.
The official said the Teesta deal, a much-awaited issue for Bangladesh, is a matter of how West Bengal responds to it. There has been a stalemate on it, but the two countries will discuss it. There are other windows of cooperation, and it was evident in the meeting, he added.
Upendra Prasad Singh said water is a top agenda in India, but its management was a huge issue.
He assured Bangladesh that India would not take up any river inter-linking project on the transboundary rivers.

Heavy rains to cause flash floods again

Met forecasts for northern districts
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The country's northern and northeastern regions may witness flash floods in the middle and at the end of this month due to heavy rainfall.
Floodwater may stay from one to three days in the northeastern districts -- Sylhet, Sunamganj, Moulvibazar, Habiganj and Netrakona -- in the middle of this month.
It may last for three to five days in Kurigram, Gaibandha, Bogura and Jamalpur towards the end of this month, the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre (FFWC) has said in its weather forecast report of August.
"Moderate to heavy rain may continue in the country's different regions due to ongoing depression in the Bay of Bengal. It will contribute to the rise in water level in different rivers," said Arifuzzaman Bhuyan, executive engineer of Bangladesh Water Development Board and duty officer of FFWC.
It is likely to rain heavily in the country's northeastern region and its adjacent Meghalaya and Tripura regions of India. It may contribute to the increase in water level in northern rivers. As a result, a short-term flood may occur in some northeastern districts, he told The Daily Star yesterday.
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SEE PAGE 17 COL 5



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina exchanges greetings with Awami League leaders at the Gono Bhaban after she returned home from the UK yesterday.

PM returns home after 20 days

FROM PAGE 1
mosquito-borne dengue fever, reports BSS.
"Just after returning home from abroad, she asked the authorities concerned to intensify the cleanliness programme further to prevent the outbreak of dengue... Now, checking the life-threatening dengue is our only task," he said while addressing a programme at Dhanmondi-32 in the capital.
UNB reports, Hasina left Heathrow International Airport in London at 6:55pm (London time) on Wednesday. Bangladesh High Commissioner to the UK Saida Muna Tasneem saw her off at the airport.
The PM had gone to London on July 19. During her stay in the UK, she joined

a conference of Bangladesh envoys in European countries on July 20.
Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland QC and Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon separately called on Hasina in London.
On July 22, the PM underwent a successful surgery on her left eye at a London hospital.

Extortion stalks cattle trucks

FROM PAGE 1
officer, who provides them with "a pass for free movement" in any district.
If stopped by any traffic police anywhere in any district, they have to show that pass to drive ahead, he said, without disclosing any name.
On Tuesday evening, this correspondent got on the cabin of the truck in Saatmile Bazar, one of the largest cattle markets in the region, with two cattle traders alongside a helper and the driver.
He was allowed on the truck on request of a local chairman though the traders said they don't accept any outsider for safety of their cattle. The 18 oxen the truck was carrying were priced at Tk 23 lakh.
On the road, the truck was first stopped before the Navaron bridge in Sharsa. Some people collected Tk 300 from the trucker giving two slips -- one was titled "contribute for development of Navaron Bazar" and the other "Driver's Transport Agency".
As it reached Jhikargachha after about 20 minutes, the driver had to pay Tk 100 to some people who claimed to be from Jashore District Truck, Trunk-lorry, Tractor and Covered Van Workers' Union.
He also paid Tk 50 each to three groups in Palbari and Newmarket points in Jashore and Goalondo intersection of Rajbari. They claimed it was for Jashore Municipality, Jashore District Truck Owners' and Workers' Joint Welfare Fund and Rajbari District Road Transport Workers' Union respectively.
Around 12:30am on Wednesday,

the truck had to join an around six-kilometre queue of vehicles up to the Daulatdia ferry terminal.
The driver paid Tk 20 for weighing the vehicle though it is supposed to be free. The helper then left for the toll booth to pay the ferry charge of Tk 1,060.
There the ferry tickets were not given by the employees of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation but some local goons, according to the helper.
When he went to collect the ticket, they asked him what the truck was carrying. As he said they were transporting sacrificial animal, those men charged additional Tk 500 without providing any slip.
They, however, gave a ticket for the ferry charge.
Around 5:30am, after five hours of wait, the truck could board the ferry. After crossing the river, there was no interruption for any illegal toll collection.
WHAT AUTHORITIES SAY
On July 31, IGP Mohammad Javed Patwary instructed police officials not to stop any truck carrying sacrificial animals on the highways unless there is a specific allegation. He gave the instruction at crime conference at the Police Headquarters.
About the extortion near the Navaron bridge, Moshir Rahman, officer-in-charge of Sharsa Police Station, yesterday said they removed an illegal toll booth, operated by some truck workers' union leaders, in the area.
When told that two days ago this correspondent witnessed toll collection at that point, he said he

would look into the matter.
Half an hour later, the OC called back and said two persons of Jhikargachha Truck Workers' Union were collecting the toll and they were asked to stop it immediately.
Tajul Islam, president of Bangladesh Inter District Truck Drivers' Union, said illegal toll is being collected in the name of different transport workers' unions in different areas.
"We informed it to police and they asked for a written complaint from us. I will file the complaint after this Eid."
Md Abdul Maleque, additional inspector general of police (highway), said he was not informed about these allegations and he would ask the district police to take steps.
Zillur Rahman, assistant general manager of BIWTC Aricha office, denied that local goons were collecting the ferry charge at Daulatdia.
But Rajbari Superintendent of Police Mizanur Rahman said they got complaint about illegal toll collection by some outsiders at the ferry terminal and asked the BIWTC authorities to ensure sale of the tickets by their staffers.
The Daily Star tried to reach Jashore Municipality Mayor Jahirul Islam Chaklader Rentu for his comment about the allegation of illegal toll collection from trucks in the name of his municipality.
But he did not receive any calls yesterday evening.
[Our Benapole and Manikganj correspondents contributed to the report]

Modi praises Hasina's zero tolerance policy on terrorism

BSS, New Delhi
Describing Bangladesh as a role model in maintaining religious harmony, India yesterday highly praised the "zero tolerance" policy of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina against any forms of terrorism and religious extremism.
Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said experts should visit Bangladesh to witness how the Bangladeshi people were living together in peace and religious harmony.
His comment came when Bangladesh Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan paid a courtesy call on him at his official residence in New Delhi.
The minister arrived in the Indian capital on Tuesday to attend the 7th Bangladesh-India home minister level talks.
During the meeting, Modi congratulated Hasina for becoming the prime minister of Bangladesh for a third consecutive term.
He appreciated Bangladesh's policy of not allowing use of its territory by extremists and insurgents for perpetrating violence in other countries, including India.
About the Rohingya issue, Modi said India already raised the issue with the Myanmar authorities as his country thought that the crisis must be resolved.
He assured the Bangladesh minister of discussing the issue again with Myanmar to ensure smooth and peaceful repatriation of the Rohingyas.
About the border management issue, the Indian PM assured Asaduzzaman that the two countries would work together for a secured and effective border by fighting drug smuggling and cross-border terrorism.
He also said the BIMSTEC could play a crucial role in maintaining peace and development in the region.
Modi expressed his country's eagerness to be a partner of programmes taken up by the Bangladesh government to observe the birth centenary of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Home trips turn chaotic

FROM PAGE 1
Ferries are taking 20 minutes more than in normal time to cross the river due to strong current, said Alam.
Rafiqul Islam, a private service holder, said his bus of Tungipara Express was supposed to start from Gulistan at 12:00noon but started at 2:30pm, because of huge jam at Shimulia-Kathalbari.
The disruption at Shimulia-Kathalbari eventually affected the ferry services at Paturia-Daulatdia terminals.
At 3:00pm, some 300 light vehicles, 100 buses and 400 trucks were waiting at Paturia end, although the situation improved a little in the evening, said Azamal Hossain, deputy general manager of BIWTC at Aricha office.
He said they were operating 17 ferries and that three more would join their fleet soon.
Several bus operators at Gabtoli terminal said they were facing problems to maintain schedule as buses were taking more time to return to Dhaka because of the gridlock at ferry terminals.
Rifat Hossain, a private university student, said, "I came to the terminal at 9:00am defying rain, but my bus has not arrived yet [at 11:00am]. I don't know how much longer I will have to wait."
JAM ON HIGHWAYS
People heading for northern districts faced traffic jam after crossing the Bangabandhu bridge for hours in the morning due to the sorry state of the road at different points and poor condition of Nolkha bridge.
Vehicles have to cross the bridge very slowly due to its poor condition, causing traffic jam from Bangabandhu bridge west zone to Nolkha point, said Sayed Shahid Alam, officer-in-charge of Bangabandhu bridge west zone police station.
Besides, repair work was underway on Dhaka (Hatikumrul)-Bogura and Dhaka (Hatikumrul)-Bonpara highways for the last day before Eid, causing traffic congestion.
Vehicles heading for 22 districts of north, west and south have to cross Hatikumrul point, said Akteruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Hatikumrul highway police station.
People also faced problem on the 13km stretch from Tongi Bridge to Joydevpur Chowrasta on Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway because of construction work of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).
Under this project, the government would construct a 20.5km dedicated

bus lane from Dhaka to Gazipur.
But in the absence of a proper drainage system, parts of the four-lane highway were submerged after rain, disrupting traffic movement, said Osman Ali, general secretary of Bangladesh Road Transport Workers Federation.
The Gazipur City Corporation Mayor had assured of deploying 500 volunteers to control the situation, but that gave little relief due to rain, he added.
CROWD AT KAMALAPUR
Commuters travelling on trains to northern and north-western regions continued to suffer as all but one intercity trains were late by one to three hours.
According to the Train Tracking Monitoring System, Chilahati-bound Nilsagar Express, Rajshahi-bound Silkiya, Rangpur-bound Rangpur Express, Panchagarh-bound Ekata Express, Rajshahi-bound Dhumketu Express and Silkiya Express and Khulna-bound Sundarban Express were late by about two hours to nearly three and a half hours.
Chapainawabganj-bound Banolata Express was 20 minutes late to depart Kamalapur. Operations of trains on other routes were on time.
Asked about the delay, Station Manager Aminul Hoque told reporters that holidaymakers usually took a long time to embark and disembark trains, resulting in such delays.
Meanwhile, train service through Santaher-Lalmonirhat route that connects Dhaka and northern districts resumed yesterday, 22 days after it was suspended due to flood.
WATERWAYS
Pressure of passengers at the country's largest launch terminal at Sadarghat increased in the evening.
"Some 80 launches are being operated during normal time. Around 25 more launches will run tonight [Thursday]," said Alamgir Kabir, joint director of BIWTA.
Usually, 7,080 launches ply 40 routes, mostly to the country's southern region from Dhaka's Sadarghat. Some 130 more will join the fleet to carry 8-10 lakh people, who travel by waterways during Eid vacation, according to transport operators.
Meanwhile, the BIWTA said it would not allow motorcycles on any passenger-carrying vessels from Sadarghat terminal during Eid rush.
[Our Correspondent from Munshiganj, Pabna, Manikganj and Gazipur contributed the report.]

Cattle markets may heighten risks

FROM PAGE 1
This view was echoed by other entomologists, who said if necessary cleaning works and spraying of insecticides were not properly conducted over the next one week, the risk of cattle markets becoming breeding spots for Aedes mosquitoes would become higher.
On the other hand, cattle traders will be most at risk during this time, as most either do not take proper protection against Aedes mosquitoes or may not know what precautionary measures to take against dengue.
Md Ariful came at the market on Monday with 20 cattle from Kushtia. He kept his cows amid ankle deep water.
"I raised the cattle for the last one year for this festival. ... I'm not worried about dengue," he said.
Cattle trader Fazar Ali brought five oxen from Faridpur in the market.
"I hope we'll return home without dengue," he said.
Another worry are the locals in the vicinity of cattle markets. Such markets have been set up on Gopibag, Kamalapur Balurmath and adjacent areas to Kamalapur Stadium.
Visiting some of them, no proper drainage system was found. Stagnant water had also pooled in certain parts of the markets and mosquitoes were seen hovering over those.
A resident of Gopibag, Akbar Hossain said, "Previously, the cattle market was limited to the playground.

But this year it has grown till the rail line and narrow streets, making us apprehensive of the dengue threat."
In some of the markets, wet hay was found scattered everywhere.
Former director of IEDCR Mahmudur Rahman said, "There is risk of the dengue virus spreading through different cattle markets," he said, adding it was a big possibility as the Aedes mosquito population had not been controlled so far.
"We are suggesting everyone to go to the cattle markets taking proper protection, like covering their body as much as they can," he said.
Kankar Ghosh, epidemiologist of Dhaka Shishu Hospital said cattle traders are very vulnerable during this time as the traders would remain busy with their cattle.
Many also do not have any idea about dengue, so the DGHS and city corporations need to raise awareness on the issue among them.
He also suggested to make sure the cattle traders use mosquito nets, spray aerosol or use mosquito repellent coils when they sleep.
"In every cattle market, city corporations of Dhaka [should] set up medical teams to provide necessary support to the traders and if they give advice through the team, it will be very effective," he said.
There are also fears of cattle traders taking the disease back to their homes with them, further spreading the disease.

Dhaka South City Corporation Mayor Sayeed Khokon said they were spraying cattle markets and doing campaigns about dengue prevention.
He said as Aedes mosquitoes were born in clean water, the risk was lessened at the markets, adding that nonetheless loudspeakers would be used to raise awareness.
At least 2,326 dengue patients got admitted to hospitals across the country in 24 hours since 8:00am Wednesday, taking the total to 34,666 this year, according to the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS).
The number of patients getting admitted every day has been increasing since August 3, except yesterday. This year, Bangladesh has seen a record 11,000 dengue cases.
Meanwhile, two people died after being diagnosed with dengue yesterday, taking the unofficial death toll to 73. Number of official deaths is now 29.
TWO DEAD
A college student died of dengue fever at Maghchami village under Meghchami Upazila in Faridpur around 8:30am yesterday.
The victim was Khaleda Parvin, 25. She was a student of Government Ainuddin College in Madhukhali.
Hasan Ali, chairman of Meghchami Union parishad said, Khaleda was infected with dengue seven days ago and taken to Madhukhali Upazila Health Complex, from where she was shifted to Faridpur Medical College

Hospital.
The doctors of Faridpur Medical College Hospital had referred her to Dhaka Medical College Hospital when her condition worsened. Khaleda breathed her last at the DMCH around 8:30 am, he said.
In Tangail, a college student died after being diagnosed with dengue at Kumudini Hospital in Mirzapur upazila on Wednesday night.
The deceased is Arif Khandakar Kajal, 22, a student of Mirzapur Government College and son of Alam Khandakar of Khoilsindur village under Warshi union.
Arif was admitted to the hospital on Sunday with fever and dengue was diagnosed after blood test, said Dr Prodig Kumar Roy, director of Kumudini Hospital.
His condition, however, deteriorated after his platelet count began to fall. He was declared dead at 10:00pm.
HEALTH MINISTRY CALLS OFF EID VACATION
The Eid vacation for the staff of all departments and other organisations under the health ministry has been cancelled, UNB reports.
Health Minister Zahid Malik yesterday directed all the workers to not leave work stations from August 9 to 17, a press release said.
Meanwhile, the dengue monitoring team formed by the ministry was instructed to supervise the situation round the clock.