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WATER SHARING FROM 54 COMMON RIVERS

Let's find a mutually acceptable formula

Jaishankar says after meeting Momen; 'Assam NRC an internal matter of India'; hands over Modi's invitation letter to Hasina

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh and India want a "mutually acceptable formula" for sharing the water of 54 common rivers, said Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar yesterday.

"We are ready to start from anywhere," he said, adding, "We look forward to making progress in finding a mutually acceptable formula to share water from 54 upper riparian rivers."

Jaishankar was speaking at a joint press briefing after a meeting with Bangladesh Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen at the

state guesthouse Jamuna.

Asked about signing of the Teesta water-sharing treaty, the Indian minister said, "We've a position. You all are aware of it. We've a commitment to that position. And there's no change in that regard."

A fair share of the Teesta water is crucial for Bangladesh, especially during the dry season (December to March), and the two countries failed to sign a deal during the then Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Bangladesh in 2011. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had opposed the deal. SEE PAGE 2 COL 6



Safe, speedy and sustainable return of the displaced people from Myanmar is important in the national interest of all the three countries – Bangladesh, Myanmar and India

ROAD CONSTRUCTION
Don't block natural flow of water: PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday asked the authorities concerned to be careful about the construction of roads so that the natural flow of water was not obstructed by those during the rainy season.

She also directed them to work in coordination with the water resources ministry.

The PM gave the directives at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) at the planning ministry. Planning Minister Abdul Mannan briefed reporters after the meeting.

Hasina's directives came at a time when experts blamed poor planning for construction of roads and ignoring the impacts of climate change for the extensive damage to roads caused by recent floods.

According to experts, floods usually cause more damage to roads in Bangladesh as roads and

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DENGUE OUTBREAK

Dhaka-dwellers join in the fight

HELEMUL ALAM, MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

A section of Dhaka dwellers has voluntarily taken measures to kill mosquitoes and prevent them from breeding, aiming to curb further spread of dengue in the capital.

Locals are spraying mosquito repellents in their respective areas; cleaning their localities by destroying possible mosquito breeding grounds and sources; monitoring activities of under-construction buildings; and running awareness programmes.

They are also collecting and destroying unnecessary containers -- such as plastic jars, bottles, cans, tyres and buckets -- that can store stagnant water in which Aedes mosquitoes can lay eggs.

"Destroying possible sources [of the spread of mosquitoes] by members of the community is effective when done regularly to control Aedes and subsequently the spread of dengue fever," epidemiologist of Dhaka Shishu Hospital Kinkar Ghosh said.

The local community came forward as this year's dengue spread is already the worst the country has seen, with at least 56,369 cases detected and at least 106 dead so far.

The number of reported infections is five times that of last year, and the actual figures are likely to be higher as many cases go unreported.

Meanwhile, four more people have died after being infected with dengue in Dhaka, Barishal, Shariatpur and Faridpur.

WHAT LOCAL COMMUNITIES ARE DOING
City dwellers said they took the initiatives to help the city corporations' anti-mosquito drives, as dengue fever has spread all over the country.

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UNHCR talks to Rohingyas cleared for repatriation

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

The UNHCR started repatriation discussions yesterday with the Rohingyas selected to return to Myanmar starting from tomorrow.

The UN Refugee Agency interviewed the 3,450 Rohingyas cleared for return by the Myanmar government. The engagement, officially called an intention survey, is a key part of the voluntary return of the refugees.

The survey conducted by the UNHCR began at 9:00am at the Shalban Rohingya Camp in Teknaf. Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commissioner (RRRC) officials were also present during the sessions.

Workers from both the organisations, however, refused to say the number of Rohingyas who appeared for the survey which continued till 5:00pm.

Shalban camp in-charge Khaled Hossain said that

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Jannatul Ferdous, 5, cries at the city's Mughda Medical College Hospital yesterday, three days after she was admitted to the hospital with dengue fever.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

AUGUST 21 GRENADE ATTACK 2004



A horrific scene in front of the Awami League's central office on Bangabandhu Avenue after the grisly grenade attack on an AL rally there on August 21, 2004. *Top left*, a shocked Sheikh Hasina, then leader of the opposition, after the attack. Hasina and late president Zillur Rahman, *bottom left*, grieve for the victims at a rally on October 3 that year. Zillur had lost his wife Ivy Rahman, a Mohila Awami League leader, in the blast.

PHOTO: STAR FILE

In agony, they wait for JUSTICE

SHARIFUL ISLAM and ASHUTOSH SARKAR

With about 1,800 splinters in her body, including two in her brain, what Mahbuba Parvin wants is quick completion of all the procedures paving the way for execution of those involved in the August 21 grenade attacks in 2004.

"Living has been a curse for me. Those who were injured in the grenade attacks feel like dying every moment," she said.

"I don't know when I will die but I want to see implementation of the lower court verdict before my death," Mahbuba, now a senior vice-

president of Dhaka North Swachchhasebak League, told this newspaper on August 15.

In the photos that appeared in newspapers after the gruesome attacks on an Awami League rally, she was seen in a blood-stained sari lying among the dead on Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital. People initially took her to be dead.

She first moved her limbs after three days in coma, and regained full consciousness after 25 days.

Like her, Rashida Akter Ruma, who is carrying 700 grenade splinters in her body, too wants quick completion of all procedures at

higher courts and punishment of the convicts.

Ruma, a member of Dhaka City Mahila Awami League, said she was saddened as Tarique Rahman, who was the "key planner", was not awarded capital punishment.

Mahbuba and Ruma at least saw the verdict being delivered in the two cases filed over the grisly attacks that left 24 people, including Ivy Rahman, wife of late president Zillur Rahman, killed, and over 300 wounded.

AL chief Sheikh Hasina, then opposition leader, narrowly escaped death with injuries to her right ear.

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LOOKING BACK ■ AS WE REPORTED EARLIER

One man shame for judiciary

RASHIDUL HASAN

A day after the gruesome grenade attack on August 21, 2004, the BNP government formed a one-member inquiry commission comprised of a High Court judge that submitted its report to the home ministry on October 2.

Media reports at that time said Justice Joynul Abedin's probe hinted at links of "foreign enemies" with the attack but it stopped short of naming any country.

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A CLOSE SHAVE

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and WASIM BIN HABIB

The day before August 21, 2004, Dhaka city Awami League leaders had an informal meeting with party chief Sheikh Hasina for her directives on the next day's rally.

At the end of the meeting, Hasina, in a lighter vein, asked her party leaders to get a big truck so that most of her senior leaders could stand on it.

"Get a table in front of me at the edge of the truck so that no one would fall from the truck should there is any shoving and pushing from behind," Hasina said, laughing.

Never in their wildest dreams did the party leaders imagine that the small table, brought from the Jubo League office, would serve as a temporary shield to protect their party president when grenades would start raining

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Testimony to terror sponsored by state

SHARIFUL ISLAM

The dreadful memories of captivity still send shudder down his spine. Police tortured Joj Mia in custody to make him confess to a crime he did not commit.

He now tries hard to forget the terrifying ordeal but those memories still haunt him.

"My days in prison were a nightmare. I see the torture scenes often

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MATARBARI COAL POWER PLANT

Pollution to claim 14,000 lives in 30 yrs

Says a Greenpeace report on Japan-funded projects in South, Southeast Asia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over three million people from South and Southeast Asia, including Bangladesh, will be exposed to air pollution and face health hazards as the Japanese public finance agencies are funding 17 coal-fired power plants in the region, says a Greenpeace report.

It is estimated that the Japanese investment would cause a total of 148,000 to 410,000 avoidable premature deaths over the typical 30-year operation period of those plants, said the joint Greenpeace Southeast Asia and Greenpeace Japan report released yesterday in Singapore.

In Bangladesh, the number of premature deaths would be up to 14,000 due to pollution by Japan-funded Matarbari coal-fired power plant in 30 years since it goes into operation, the report estimates.

The report projected that the Japanese investments would lead to 160,000 premature deaths in India, 72,000 in Indonesia and 36,000 in Vietnam due to long-term exposures to fine particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide pollution.

All these deaths could be avoided by shifting the investments into renewable energy, the report said.

The report, titled "A deadly double standard:

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