

Harvest rainwater, save rivers: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday stressed the need for rainwater harvesting and river water conservation.

The premier said this while opening the newly-constructed Sheikh Hasina Water Treatment Plant-II of Chattogram Wasa.

Hasina joined the event virtually from Gono Bhaban in Dhaka. The programme was held at a hotel in Chattogram.

The new plant will raise overall water supply capacity of CWasa to 50 crore litres a day, an increase by 14.30 crore litres. The plant has been constructed at Rangunia.

Hasina said water reservoirs should be kept in every place while constructing any structure. “We’ll have to bring down our dependency on ground water,” she said, adding that her government constructed the water plant based on surface water.

She said her government has been taking measures to ensure pure drinking water supply up to grassroots levels. The PM also asked the authorities of different industries and factories to pay attention to waste management to protect rivers and land from pollution.

Noting that Chattogram is the main commercial city, she said her government has prioritised its development. “If we can develop Chattogram, the entire country will be benefited,” she said.

Referring to problems, including water crisis, in Chattogram, Hasina said, “Efforts are on to solve those.”



With the hike in soybean oil price showing no signs of slowing down, people are reaching deep into their pockets to buy the daily essential. Those who can afford it are trying to buy in greater volumes, because the bigger the bottle, the lesser the price. This photo was taken yesterday at Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

A HOME-MADE SCAM

Ahsan Group embezzled at least Tk 130cr from thousands through MLM scheme using religious clout, says CID

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN and HABIBUR RAHMAN

It was corruption at a massive scale, undertaken by a single family.

Ragib Ahsan and his four brothers embezzled at least Tk 130 crore from thousands of people by establishing an MLM company named “Ahsan Real-Estate”. Soon after, Ragib’s wife and brother-in-law also got involved with the fraud.

They used to entice people into making interest-free investments following “Shariah” with promises of lofty returns.

Against their Tk 1 lakh investment package for customers, they promised to pay back at least Tk 1,200 and maximum Tk 2,000 in monthly payments.

Falling into the trap, at least 50,000 people have lost their deposits, many of who are now spending hard times with their families.

In a case filed over embezzlement, Rapid Action Battalion arrested Ragib (40) and his brothers Abul Bashar Khan (35), Khairul Islam (35), Shamim Hasan (37) and Mahmudul Hasan (31) from

AT A GLANCE

- 5 brothers used MLM company to embezzle at least Tk 130cr
- Collected interest-free investments promising lofty returns
- At least 50,000 people lost their deposits
- Appointed imams, muazzins as agents, who also became victims of fraud

Ragib Ahsan

Pirojpur on September 9 last year.

However, his wife Salma Ahsan (32) and brother-in-law Nazmul Islam (33) are still on the run.

Several cases were filed against the family, of which, four are under investigation by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), while one is being dealt with by the Police

Bureau of Investigation (PBI).

On December 23 last year, CID filed another case against them under the money laundering act.

Humayun Kabir, special superintendent of CID, said, “Ragib and his brothers’ bank accounts have been frozen. We’re now looking into properties brought under Ahsan Group. Once completed, we will submit the charge sheet, hopefully within the coming month or two.”

FRAUD AND LAVISH LIFE

Just 15 years back, Ragib used to work as an Imam at a mosque in Pirojpur, sources said. He also worked for a multi-level marketing (MLM) company as a staffer, against a paltry salary of Tk 900.

But within two years, in 2009, Ragib opened an MLM company of his own and dragged his brothers into it, all of whom used to work as teachers at different madrasas for salaries ranging from Tk 6,000 to Tk 10,000 per month, according to CID investigators.

Just within a year, Ragib established around 17 business, including a madrasa, under the name of “Ahsan

Group”.

Some of his businesses includes Pirojpur Bostraloy, Allah’r Dan Bostraloy, Madina International Hotel and Nur-e Madina Madrasa, said investigators.

He used to pay interest to the clients between 2012 and 2018, but then it stopped and the company’s issues started coming to the fore.

Based on this dubious earnings, the family started leading a lavish life, which included buying luxury cars and flats in Dhaka.

The indulgence didn’t stop there. The family even started importing deer meat for their family parties and only consumed imported dates from Saudi Arabia, said a CID official involved with the investigation.

PROPERTY EVALUATION

CID has so far only found property worth approximately around Tk 30 crore bought in the company’s name, sources said.

The property includes two-acre land and three four-five storey buildings in Pirojpur, couple of bighas of land in

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

It began with gambling, ended with murder

Driver kills employer after running into debt: DB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hridoy Bepari (34) used to drive a car for a private company, getting paid a decent salary for it.

But all of this money went into gambling online, something that he was almost addicted to. He was always in need of more money to gamble with, eventually falling deep into debt.

This is when Hridoy devised a plan. He targeted his employer Afroza Sultana (31), deputy manager of Seven Circle Bangladesh Limited’s MIS department, for whom he worked for the last seven years. On Sunday evening, Hridoy entered her house, killed Afroza by slitting her throat and looted whatever valuables he could get.

Two days later on Tuesday, he was arrested by the Detective Branch of police from Madhya Badda. The DB team also recovered a knife and looted gold ornaments, AKM Hafiz Akhter, additional commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told a press briefing yesterday.

Hafiz said Afroza was killed between 5:45pm and 7:30pm on Sunday at her house in Madhya Badda’s Gudaraghat while her husband was at work. The DB official said they were able to identify Hridoy by analysing CCTV footage.

During interrogation, Hridoy told the investigators he used to earn Tk 17,000 as monthly salary. But as he got hooked to gambling, whatever he earned he would be spent on his destructive habit. Hridoy used to borrow money from Afroza and her husband, and yet he found himself unable to pay his house rent for three months. After a point, it was becoming increasingly difficult for him to run his five-member family, the DB chief added.

This is when Hridoy thought of killing Afroza and looting her money and ornaments.

However, Hridoy could not get his hands on a lot of money or that many gold ornaments as most of it was kept at Afroza’s mother’s house and at the bank, said another DB official.

CHAKTAI KHAL, RAJAKHALI

Evict 126 illegal structures: HC

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to evict all the 126 structures built illegally on the land of Chaktai Khal (canal) and Rajakhali Khal in Chattogram in 90 days.

The court, however, gave two weeks to the land grabbers to relocate the structures from the canals at their own costs.

Also, the government has been ordered to take necessary action against the grabbers.

The HC bench of Justice Zubayer Rahman Chowdhury and Justice Md Kamrul Hossain Mollah delivered the verdict following a petition filed by Human Rights and Peace for Bangladesh (HRPB) in 2016 seeking necessary directives.

Deputy commissioner of Chattogram has recently submitted a report to the HC saying that there are total 126 structures including houses, tin-sheds, business houses and depots on the land of the two canals.

Lawyers Manzill Murshid and Ripan Barai appeared for the petitioner while Deputy Attorney General SK Saifuzzaman represented the state during the hearing.

A window into world literature

DIPAN NANDY

Literature can leave a lifetime impact in our mind. It helps us understand ourselves and the world around us.

And it transcends boundaries through translation.

Like every year, this year’s Ekushey book fair saw a large number of translated versions of world literature by prominent authors.

Curious booklovers were seen buying, flipping pages, and searching for books to satisfy their literary palate at Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday.

Although the readers’ interests have peaked, both the quality and quantity of translations is something to think about.

Shahadat Hossain, Annesha Prakashan’s publisher, said although readers are interested in translation books, authors depend more on literal translations. Shahadat emphasised the need for proper editing on both the writer and publisher’s end.

“Our own literature needs to be translated into other languages. Bangla Academy and International Mother Language Institute will have to take responsibility in this regard,” he added.

Unmesh Roy, a

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



With the Amar Ekushey Boi Mela nearing the end, readers from across the capital spent a busy second last day at the fair yesterday. All throughout the day, they were seen making last-minute purchases to satisfy their literary cravings. PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

Deworming campaign from Sunday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will run a weeklong deworming campaign in all primary and secondary schools across the country from Sunday.

During the campaign, four crore schoolchildren — aged 5-16 — will get one deworming tablet.

The tablets will be distributed in around 1.2 lakh primary level and 33,000 secondary level educational institutions countrywide.

Health Minister Zahid Maleque announced the campaign during a press conference at the health directorate yesterday.

At the event, Dr MM Aktaruzzaman, deputy programme manager at the centre for disease control at the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), shared the details of the campaign.

“The tablet has no side effects if it is taken after meal. We urge guardians to send or bring in their children after breakfast,” said Dr MM Aktaruzzaman.

“The prevalence of worm in children’s stool has reduced to around 8 percent in 2018-19 from around 80 percent in 2005,” he said.

The DGHS has been conducting the campaign twice a year since November 2008.

PRAYER TIMING MAR 17



| | Fazr | Zohr | Asr | Maghrib | Esha |
|--------|------|-------|------|---------|------|
| Azan | 5:00 | 12:45 | 4:30 | 6:14 | 7:45 |
| Jamaat | 5:35 | 1:15 | 4:45 | 6:18 | 8:15 |

SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION