

‘Address water-related challenges’ PM calls for Asia-Pacific action

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged Asia Pacific countries to combine forces to share good practices, knowledge and technologies to help address common water related challenges.

She made the call in a video statement, which was played at the Fourth Asia-Pacific Water Summit, held at Kumamoto in Japan.

“We attach importance to regional or sub-regional cooperation, including for hydro-power generation and transmission,” she said.

“We need to ensure sound water management to ‘build back better’ from the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic,” she added.

The prime minister also mentioned that more than 85 percent of Bangladesh has access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation facilities.

“Our fight against water-borne diseases is a continuous effort. From next month, we shall administer 2.3 million cholera vaccines in the capital city.”

The PM also said Bangladesh has drawn up a cross-sectoral Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 to work towards a resilient and prosperous delta.

“We look forward to using the sediment loads flowing into the Bay of Bengal for reclaiming and elevating lands in our coastal areas. Bangladesh also stands ready to harness the untapped potentials of blue economy,” she said.



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As Eid inches closer, congestion has become the norm even more so. Hundreds of city folk flock to the malls and markets in search of their perfect clothes. This photo was taken yesterday in front of Gawsia Market.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

There’s a new strategy out there Drug dealers using elderlies as carriers to avoid suspicion, say law enforcers

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

In an attempt to escape the prying eyes of law enforcers, drug peddlers across the capital have come up with a new strategy. They are now using the elderly as their carriers to transport consignments from one place to another.

A group of transport workers and expatriates have also joined hands with them in their smuggling of Phensedyl and heroin from India and Yaba from Myanmar.

Every week, they bring around 20 to 30 thousand yaba pills into Dhaka’s Mohammadpur area from Cox’s Bazar. The pills are then sent to Narayanganj, Munshiganj, Savar and Gazipur.

Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit has claimed to unearth the information and learned the new strategy of the syndicate following the arrest of three people from the capital’s Mugda on April 17.

The arrestees are Md Mukul (57), Md Harun Or Rashid (50) and Nasir Uddin (56).

The CTTC team has seized around 120 grammes of heroin and 300 yaba pills from their possession, Tohidul Islam, additional deputy commissioner of CTTC, told this correspondent.

He said that the syndicate is using the elderly, as they are seldom suspected by police officers.

“We have some intel on heroin smuggling. We are currently trying to locate its source,” said Tohidul.

ADC Touhid has also mentioned that a suspect named Md Shamsu is working as a dealer for the yaba smuggling syndicate in Cox’s Bazar.

He used to live in Saudi Arabia and has recently moved to Bangladesh.

Shamsu used to visit Dhaka by air and go back after collecting the payment for the pills. Police are now conducting a drive to arrest him, said the ADC.

Meanwhile, DB officials said the smuggling of narcotics recently increased ahead of Eid. Along with yaba, the demand for marijuana has also increased.

An organised syndicate is smuggling marijuana, which is entering Bangladesh through four bordering districts – Brahmanbaria, Cumilla, Habiganj and Moulvibazar, said detectives.

Most of the marijuana consignments are entering

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RANA PLAZA TRAGEDY Years pass by, but trauma still remains



People gathered at the memorial in front of Rana Plaza yesterday to pay their respects to those who have lost their lives in the tragedy.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

AKLAKUR RAHMAN AKASH, Savar

Nine years have passed since the collapse of Rana Plaza, and yet majority of the survivors are still reeling from the traumas, both physical and mental, of that fateful day.

Although some survivors have gotten their simple lives back, the bulk of them are facing hardship every day, due to losing their ability to work or mental distress.

Rupali Begum, a survivor who worked on the building’s fifth floor, was rescued a day after the incident. She had injured her head, back, arms and legs. After a long period of treatment at several hospitals, Rupali can finally move and work at home, she told The Daily Star.

“I’m still not fit for factory work, as I’m still traumatised,” said Rupali, mother of two children. “My husband can’t manage the living costs of our four-member family. We’re struggling.”

Nilufar Begum, who worked on the fourth floor, told The Daily Star that she had injured her head

and backbone during the incident. Although she got free treatment for some years, Nilufar is yet to fully recover. “I couldn’t return to factory work because of my condition.”

“I had gotten some money through bKash from BGMEA after the incident, but did not get compensation. My head needs an operation, but I can’t go through with it due to my financial crisis,” said Nilufar, a mother of two school-going daughters.

“My construction-worker husband can’t even arrange our daily essentials. Then how will he manage my treatment cost? I need financial support,” she said. “My two daughters are very talented students, but I’m worried about how I’ll continue their education.”

After Rana Plaza collapsed on April 24, 2013, survivors, victims’ family members, and several rights organisations, had held several programmes with several demands, including Tk 48 lakh compensation for each of those affected in the

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HAOR DAM GRAFT CASE Little progress amid fear of another disaster

MAHBUBUR RAHMAN KHAN

Back in 2017, when a flash flood ravaged crops and caused untold sufferings in the haor areas, people flared up, seeking punishment of those involved in the graft centring construction of dams.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) took up the matter and filed a case in July 2017.

It submitted a charge-sheet on March 13, 2019 before the Senior Special Judge Court of Sunamganj.

But the case has seen little progress.

“The court is yet to frame charges,” said Paritosh Chandra Roy, public prosecutor of ACC in Sunamganj.

The matter came to the fore again when another flash flood submerged around 7,083 hectares of cropland with Boro harvest in Sunamganj, Sylhet, Netrakona and Kishoreganj this year. Locals of Sunamganj were the worst affected, as 4,900 hectares of land was inundated by the flood, originating from the torrential rain in India’s Meghalaya.

Five years ago, the flash flood submerged more than two lakh hectares of agricultural land, causing a loss of nearly a million tonnes of Boro crops, and nearly three lakh people required immediate relief.

In its investigation, ACC found that the accused, being well aware of the timing of flash floods, had not constructed the dams at the right time and misappropriated Tk 8.14 crore of government funds.

“Their negligence and embezzlement had triggered the floods that caused immense loss and suffering to the people of this region,” it stated.

Fourteen officials of Water Development Board (WDB) and 19 contractors who were involved in the construction and maintenance of the dams in haors at that time were made accused in the charge sheet.

Paritosh said an accused, WDB’s assistant director Lincon Sarkar, did not show up before the court. “As a result, the court could not frame

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Investing in edu more crucial than ever: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jakia Akter was a ninth-grader at Rayerbazar Fulkoli School. Her father, a shopkeeper, had made huge losses due to Covid-19. This ultimately led to her joining a factory to support her family.

The dropped-out student joined a seminar yesterday and said she wants to join school once again and complete her education.

Another former student, Tanjima Akter, said her father is a rickshaw-puller, and he married her off, so Tanjima could never sit for her SSC examination.

“I’m now studying but couldn’t get support from the government, as married girls can’t get stipend,” she said at the programme titled “Lessons from Our National Budget for Education: Where Do We Stand”.

The seminar was jointly organised by Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), Education Watch, and Center for Policy Dialogue (CPD) at a convention centre in the capital.

CAMPE Executive Director Rasheda K Choudhury said it is bad policy that a married girl cannot get a government stipend, as it should be for all girls.

She demanded changing the policy and initiating a

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While visiting Manik Mia Avenue, this photojournalist came across a scene that’s somewhat hard to come around nowadays in a loud, busy city. To pass the long hours waiting in gridlock, this commuter found solace by immersing herself in a good read. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Police covering up its failure, BCL involvement Says Mirza Fakhrul on New Market violence

UNB, Dhaka



BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday alleged that police are trying to cover up its failure and indifference to contain the violence in the capital’s New Market area and the involvement of Chhatra League.

“BNP thinks that this illegitimate government is resorting to its old game. While people are blaming the police inaction, they [police] are busy covering up their failures and Awami cadres’ involvement by arresting innocent BNP leader Makbul and filing politically motivated cases against others,” he said.

Speaking at a press conference at BNP chairperson’s Gulshan office, the BNP leader also said their party is deeply concerned and

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