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FLOOD IN NORTH 49 villages in need of drinking water

STAR REPORT

About 35,000 people of 49 villages in Kurigram's Roumari have been suffering from shortage of drinking water and food since flood hit the upazila on June 11.

For many people, the only option now for using a stove to cook food is putting it on a bed. A large number of people are surviving on cooked food provided by their relatives, said flood victims.

The overall flood situation in Roumari remained unchanged yesterday as the Jinjiram, Kalur and Dharani rivers were flowing above the danger levels.

According to the upazila administration, crops on 592 hectares of land and a 57-kilometre stretch of road were submerged by the flooding while 37 schools were closed.

Tariqul Islam, 48, a fish

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Wastes from shrimp hatcheries polluting the sea in Cox's Bazar, harming nature, and ruining the experience of tourists at the beach. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: STAR

AB BANK LOAN SCAM

HC blasts ACC, cops for failure to make arrests

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday blasted the Anti-Corruption Commission and the police for their failure to arrest the 15 accused of a case filed for the embezzlement of Tk 176 crore from AB Bank.

"We have directed more than six months back to arrest all the accused of the Tk 176 crore embezzlement case. But why they were not arrested? We want to know the reasons," the HC bench of Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Kazi Md Ejarul Haque Akondo said during the hearing of a bail petition filed by accused Md Shahidul Islam and Abdur Rahim.

The bench ordered the ACC, inspector general of police (IGP), additional IGP of immigration to submit reports on what steps they have taken to arrest the accused.

The court also fixed June 26 for further hearing on the bail petition of Shahidul and Rahim.

Earlier in the day, ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan told the court that Ershad Ali, an accused, has been handed over to the police when he came to the HC for bail in the case.

Deputy Attorney General AKM Amin Uddin Manik informed the HC bench that four accused of the case, including Ershad, are in custody.

Lawyer Touhidul Islam appeared for Shahidul and Rahim.

On December 7 last year, the HC directed the ACC and police to arrest 14 former officials of AB Bank Ltd and a businessman in seven days in connection with the Tk 176

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COX'S BAZAR

Shrimp hatchery wastes invade the sea

ZYMA ISLAM

It is the beach holiday you have been waiting for. You have your swimming gear ready, and the waves crashing upon the Kolatoli beach in Cox's Bazar are calling out.

You run down the sand dunes only to find reddish-brown water rushing to greet you. Large foamy globs of brown swirl around your ankles, leaving a dirty stain on your clothes.

That reddish-brown water stretches on ominously for several yards, and depending on the tide, comes in from the direction of Marine Drive.

These cesspools, made up of shrimp hatchery sewage, dot the length of the coast from Marine Drive up to Najirartek.

Cox's Bazar and its surrounding areas are home to about 40 shrimp hatcheries.

A shrimp hatchery is an aquaculture farm where shrimp fry are cultivated until adulthood.

Each day, the five-tonne tanks in these hatcheries have

to change their water, which consists of moulted exoskeletons, uneaten feed and excrement.

One hatchery can have 30 or more active tanks where shrimp cultivation goes on, said hatchery owners.

Some have up to a hundred five-tonne tanks each. Asheq Ullah Rafiq, a parliamentarian and president of

some have effluent treatment practices, but many don't, he said. "The larger, older hatcheries treat their effluent."

He could not immediately say how many hatcheries dump raw wastewater without any treatment.

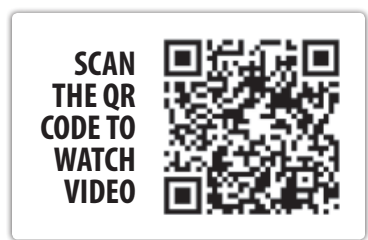
Right where the Marine Drive starts, two long pipes go out into the sea, pumping out effluent -- a frothy sludge that created a reddish-brown layer of water within the blue of the sea. The sea-current would then pull the water upstream.

There at least two hatcheries in the immediate vicinity, and several nearby -- none of them said they pollute the environment through the pipes.

Jisanuddin, the proprietor of Zamzam Hatchery located adjacent to the pipes, said he drains out the water from his tanks after treatment into the main sewage line.

Lutfur Rahman Kajal, ex-parliamentarian and owner of Niribili Fisheries, which is also located in the vicinity of the

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the Shrimp Hatchery Association of Bangladesh, said, "All hatcheries have pipes to the sea. They draw in water during high tide and release effluent during low tide.

"There is nothing of a chemical nature in this effluent. All of this is biological waste". Of the 40 shrimp hatcheries,

BLACK MONEY AMNESTY

ACC unsure of its impact on probes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission is not sure whether the finance minister's recent proposal for giving money launderers the scope to legalise money they laundered out of the country would hamper investigations against money launderers.

"We are yet to have any gazette or final decision. Once we have it, we'll see whether anything in it conflicts with the ACC [law]. At this stage, we have nothing to say on this matter," said ACC Secretary Mahbub Hossain at a press briefing at its Segunbagicha headquarters yesterday.

While placing the national budget for 2022-23 fiscal year in parliament, Finance Minister AHM Mostafa Kamal on June 9 said if the proposal is endorsed, money laundered out of the country and assets amassed abroad would be mainstreamed into the economy. He said no authority, including the income tax authority, shall raise any question about the source of any asset if a taxpayer pays tax against such assets.

Yesterday, the ACC secretary was responding to a question on whether the proposal would hamper its probes against money launderers.

He said the ACC will take measures on crimes which fall under its jurisdiction. "If we have a gazette in this regard, we will take decisions based on the gazette."

His attention was drawn to the fact that the ACC is an independent organisation and that it

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Govt taking steps to close dodgy news portals

Info minister tells House

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Information and Broadcasting Minister Hasan Mahmud yesterday told parliament that a letter was sent to the Department of Posts and Telecommunications to block the links and cancel the domain registrations of 179 online news portals that spread confusion among people.

The letter was issued on October 5, 2021 as per the instruction of the High Court and on the basis of information provided by the government's intelligence agencies.

The minister, however, didn't say whether these sites have been shut down following the letter.

In reply to a question from ruling Awami League MP M Abdul Latif, the information minister also told the House that the process was going on to shut down several other news portals for allegedly spreading false news, rumours and engaging in immoral activities.

In a scripted answer, he said the government has already taken various steps to shut down unregistered online news portals.

Replying to another question of AL MP Benazir Ahmed, the Information Minister said at present there are 1,126 daily, weekly and monthly newspapers publishing from Dhaka district.

Of these, 499 are daily newspapers, 345 weekly and 262 monthly.

Take holiday to grow food

Crisis-hit Sri Lanka tells civil servants

AFP, Colombo

Crisis-hit Sri Lanka is asking civil servants to take an extra day off each week to grow crops in their backyards in a bid to forestall a looming food shortage.

The island nation's unprecedented economic downturn has left several staple foods in short supply, along with petrol and medicines, and rampant inflation is ravaging household budgets.

"It seems appropriate to grant government officials leave for one working day of the week and provide them with the necessary facilities to engage in agricultural activities in their backyards," a cabinet statement said yesterday.

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Ex-Ducusu VP Nur sued under DSA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former Ducusu vice-president Nurul Haque Nur has been sued under the Digital Security Act in Chattogram for allegedly making "derogatory remarks" about Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Deputy Education Minister Mohibul Hassan Chowdhury Nowfel.

Lawyer Shahriar Yasir Arafat Tanim, former law affairs secretary of Chittagong University unit of Bangladesh Chhatra League, filed the case with the Cyber Tribunal in Chattogram yesterday.

Talking to The Daily Star, Yasir said the court, taking the case into cognisance, asked Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to probe

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As soon as the monsoon starts, the number of dengue patients goes up at city hospitals. Recently, healthcare facilities are reporting an increase of such cases. The photo was taken at a ward in Mugda General Hospital yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

13 UPs go to polls in Banshkhali

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Thirteen union parishads in Chattogram's Banshkhali upazila are set to hold elections today.

Besides, two union parishad by-polls would take place in Patiya and Anwara upazilas.

The Election Commission and law enforcement agencies remained on alert to prevent any untoward incident at the poll centres.

Police, Rab and BGB personnel will be deployed to maintain law and order, said Faisal Alam, elections officer of Banshkhali upazila.

Meanwhile, police were conducting special drives to recover illegal firearms and arrest listed criminals,

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