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Govt's bank borrowing in check



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Plastic recycling inadequate: UN environment chief



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An afternoon with Farooki and Tisha



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'Our rivers, our responsibility'



FILE PHOTO

Chattogram city CONDEMNED TO WATERLOGGING

ARUN BIKASH DEY, Chattogram

It is often said that if we hurt Mother Nature, we end up hurting ourselves. This saying could not be truer than in the case of Chattogram, the commercial capital of Bangladesh, during monsoons, when it goes under water for the most part.

Once dotted with hills, hillocks and canals, Bangladesh's second-largest city is now full of concrete buildings and has become the poster child of indiscriminate and ruthless urbanisation.

The result has been an alarming environmental degradation that makes the lives of its 5.2 million residents virtually unbearable during the monsoon every year.

"A city should have 25 to 30 percent green space so that the earth can soak the rainwater, but as much as 85 percent of Chattogram city is filled with concrete establishments or bitumen," said Muhammad Rashidul Hasan, a professor at the department of urban and regional planning at the Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology (Cuet).

As the green space has shrunk to less than 15 percent, there is very little place for the retention of rainwater.

Hill cutting is a major reason for waterlogging, he said.

When it rains, soil and stones from the hills flow down and clog up the drains and canals and obstruct the flow of water.

Then in the past 50 years, 70 percent of the

city's water bodies were filled up. Apart from ponds, many canals have disappeared from the city due to illegal occupation.

The city once had 72 canals, but Chattogram Wasa's existing drainage master plan shows 56 canals, according to Hasan.

Even those are clogged up by silt, polythene and plastic wastes.

This raises the question: where will the rainwater go?

Hasan went on to blame the predatory role of the Chattogram Development Authority (CDA) for the ever-shrinking green space and water bodies.

It has approved building construction in vast swathes of low-lying areas that used to play a key role in retaining rainwater, according to Hasan.

The CDA itself has gone for land development by filling up low-lying areas in Kuaish, Oxygen, Chandgaon and Bakalia.

"The Kalpolok Residential Area and Ananya Residential Area are two glaring examples of this," Hasan added.

In a flagrant violation of the Natural Water Reservoir Conservation Act 2000, the CDA in 2012 decided to approve the filling up of waterbodies between 30 katha and 15 katha by taking permission from the Department of Environment. And those below 15 katha can be filled up taking permission from the CDA.

No waterbody can be filled up as per the Natural Water Reservoir Conservation Act 2000, said Shahinul Islam Khan, a former chief town planner of the CDA.

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KEY REASONS FOR CONTINUED WATERLOGGING

- ➔ Cutting of hillocks
- ➔ Disappearing canals
- ➔ Filling up low-lying lands
- ➔ Indiscriminate urbanisation by CDA
- ➔ Slow progress of four projects

CDA MEGA PROJECT

Project cost
Tk 5,617cr

Deadline
Jun'23

Progress
76%

WDB PROJECT

Project cost
Tk 1,620.73cr

Deadline
Jun'24

Progress
17.5%

CDA SECOND PROJECT

Project cost
Tk 2,310cr

Deadline
Jun'24

Progress
65%

CCC PROJECT

Project cost
Tk 1,362cr

Deadline
Jun'24

Progress
50%

People won't accept move to foil polls from outside: PM

STAR REPORT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said the Bangladeshi people would not accept any move to thwart the upcoming national election from outside.

Pointing at those who say there will be sanctions for attempts to foil elections, she said, "I want to say there shouldn't be any move also from outside to thwart the election. If the election is foiled from outside, people of Bangladesh too will impose sanctions."

Hasina, also president of the ruling Awami League, added there is nothing to fear about sanctions, report BSS and UNB.

The premier, who is currently in New York to attend the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly, was addressing a press conference at the

Bangladesh Permanent Mission in UN and a civic reception hosted by the New York Metropolitan chapter of the Awami League on Friday.

She reiterated her firm resolve to hold a free, fair and credible election, where people can cast their votes properly.

Hasina said there is no scope for anyone to grab power illegally and if anyone wants to come to power by violating the constitution or through alternative ways, they will face punishment.

Referring to the electoral reforms made by her government, she said ballot boxes are now transparent and there is no room for filling the boxes with fake votes. The electoral rolls now include photographs and these

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AL not worried about US visa curbs

Say party leaders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League leaders yesterday said the ruling party is not concerned with the US visa restrictions.

Speaking at a peace rally in the nation's capital, AL leaders also said that there are local and foreign conspiracies afoot to foil the upcoming election, but that the party will thwart them and clear the way for free and fair polls.

They came up with the remarks a day after the US State Department said it is taking steps to impose visa restrictions on Bangladeshi individuals responsible for, or complicit in, undermining the democratic election process in Bangladesh.

While talking to reporters at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport following his

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WORLD RIVERS DAY

77 rivers in grip of greedy sand traders

Study finds sand being illegally extracted from 132 sites



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Defying the law, locally influential people are illegally extracting sand from many sites of different rivers and seashores across the country, affecting biodiversity and upsetting ecosystems in the country's waters.

This has recently been revealed in a new study conducted by River and Delta Research Centre (RDRC), an organisation that researches different aspects of water resources.

Currently, there are 707 government-announced sand extracting sites, known as "Balumahal", of which 382 have been leased out to different individuals.

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BUSINESS

BB plans measures to fight crisis

The Bangladesh Bank is going to take a series of policy measures to tackle inflationary pressure, volatility in the foreign exchange market and growing non-performing loans in banks and give a much-needed boost to the forex reserve.

As part of the move, the banking regulator is preparing a policy stance on how to address the four areas.

The BB has already framed a draft policy and started to take opinions from economists and other stakeholders on it, officials of the central bank said.

STORY ON BI

Heavy defeat leaves Tigers with lot to ponder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh's 15-year unbeaten streak in ODIs at home against New Zealand came to a crushing end with an 86-run defeat against the visitors in the second match of the three-match series at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday.

The Black Caps, who had last won an ODI in Bangladesh against the hosts in October 2008 before losing seven matches on the trot, set up an imposing total of 254 all out after deciding to bat on a tricky Mirpur surface. And then leg-spinner Ish Sodhi wreaked havoc on the Bangladesh batting, scalping six wickets for 39 runs as the hosts were skittled out for 168 runs in 41.1 overs.

Playing with largely a second-string batting line-up, the visitors had found themselves in early trouble, losing three wickets for 36 runs against Mustafizur

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BNP leaders and activists at a in a brief rally at Barishal's Bangabandhu Udyan before commencing the party's road march to Pirojpur yesterday.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

People will soon oust this govt

BNP leaders say during road march in Barishal

STAR REPORT

BNP Standing Committee member Nazrul Islam Khan yesterday said none of his party's demands will be realised without the resignation of the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina-led government.

The BNP demanded keeping the prices of essentials down, investigating and punishing those involved in corruption in banks, stock markets, and mega projects, he said.

"The Awami League had not fulfilled any of the demands. Instead, the government engaged in more corruption. They murdered people, made them victims of enforced disappearance, filed false cases, and oppressed people," he said addressing a rally at Shialkhati Chourasta in Pirojpur's Kawkhali upazila where BNP's road march in Barishal division concluded in the afternoon.

He reiterated that no fair election is possible under the current government.

Another BNP Standing Committee member Selima Rahman said, "All the people are united today. With the people, we will soon oust the Awami League government."

Earlier in the day, Nazrul told a rally at Bangabandhu Udyan in Barishal before commencing the road march that people have lost patience with the rapidly rising prices of essentials and they do not want the AL in power.

Meanwhile, 11 BNP activists were injured in an attack allegedly by ruling party men in Gournadi upazila of Barishal around 9:00am.

The road march commenced from Barishal's Bangabandhu Udyan with thousands of supporters even though it rained in the region yesterday.

Hundreds of them began to arrive at the venue in the morning with banners and flags from the small towns in Barishal division.