



VANISHING FLOOD FLOW ZONES



2014

Gone are the lush green low-lying paddy fields that served as the flood-flow zone on the Turag in Birulia on the western edge of the capital. In just a decade, the height of the land has been raised and several businesses have sprouted there. The restaurant in the fore of the photo, taken this month, has also encroached upon the Turag, which has been demarcated by pillars sticking out of the ground.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

'SHARIFA'S STORY' DEBATE What does the chapter actually deal with?

AZMIN AZRAN

"Similarities and Difference between People" – a chapter in this year's class seven social science textbook focuses on different communities within society and what ties them together, along with the differences and similarities between them.

Over the last week, a section of this chapter has caused tremendous uproar on social media, leading to protests in front of BRAC University.

It began with a video going viral on social media.

In it, an individual named Asif Mahtab Utsha, speaking at a seminar hosted by Jatiyo Shikkhok Forum, was seen tearing up two pages from the

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8TH FIVE-YEAR PLAN

Health, education got way less than outlined

Shows planning commission's study

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government has made lesser allocations for the education and health sectors than what is projected in the 8th five-year plan, raising questions about its commitment to these critical areas.

The 8th five-year plan is being implemented from fiscal 2020-21 to fiscal 2024-25.

Several sectors including health, education, agriculture and social protection got less allocation in the last four fiscal years than what is projected in the five-year plan, according to a document placed in the planning commission meeting on Wednesday.

For instance, the health sector got 6.16 percent ADP allocation this fiscal year against the projection of 11.1 percent, while education got 13.38 percent against the projection of 16.5 percent.

Less budgetary allocation for health and education can lead to substandard healthcare and human resource development and also

INADEQUATE BUDGETS

- Health got 6.2pc ADP allocation against need for 11.1pc
- Education got 13.38pc against projection of 16.5pc
- GDP allocation in health less than 1pc, in education less than 2pc
- Out-of-pocket expenses 72pc in healthcare, 71pc in education

increases out-of-pocket expenditure, said a midterm review report of the 8th five-year plan that was also placed at the meeting.

Education and healthcare are two of the most vital factors for a well educated and healthy

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8.3kg cocaine seized at HSIA in biggest haul

Malawi woman held at the airport; gang transporting drugs to India from Africa via Bangladesh: DNC

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

Drug traffickers have been transporting cocaine through Bangladesh from certain East African countries to India for years, said officials at the Department of Narcotics Control.

The trafficking gang has two to three suspected members from Bangladesh, and several others from some East African countries, a DNC official told The Daily Star.

Tanvir Momtaz, director (operations) at the DNC, told a briefing yesterday that the DNC along with the Airport Armed Police Battalion (APBn) on Wednesday night seized 8.3kg of cocaine, a record bust in the country, at Dhaka airport.

They also arrested a 35-year-old Malawi citizen named Nomthandazo Towera Soko who was in possession of the cocaine which has a street value of Tk 100 crore, said Tanvir.

Last night, the Airport APBn and DNC raided the hotel, where Towera was supposed to stay, and arrested

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the BUSINESS

Teletalk's losses pile up

Teletalk, which began its journey in December 2004, managed to make a profit only in 2010-11 and 2012-13 as the state-run mobile phone operator could not live up to expectations.

Its cumulative loss amounted to Tk 1,337 crore in the last financial year that ended on June 30.

The company's condition, marked by a significant decline in subscriber numbers, revenue and service quality during its journey, worsened to such an extent that an auditor cast doubt on its ability to continue operations.

STORY ON B1

More areas to feel the chill

Nighttime temperature may fall from tonight

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mild cold wave is sweeping over several districts and is expected to spread further.

The areas affected are Naogaon's Badalgachi upazila, Saidpur district in Rangpur division, Panchagarh's Tentulia upazila, Nilphamari's Dimla upazila, and Kurigram's Rajarhat upazila.

"The cold wave sweeping over these places and will spread as night temperatures in those areas may dip further from tonight [last night]," said Halizur Rahman, meteorologist of Bangladesh Meteorological Department.

The country's lowest temperature yesterday was recorded at 8.3 degrees Celsius in Dinajpur.

Even though the temperature in Dhaka had risen a little to 14.2 degrees Celsius yesterday, cold gusty wind was present.

Schoolchildren are having to suffer the cold as educational institutions



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As night temperatures keep plummeting due to the ongoing cold snap, people from the low-income group are suffering from a lack of adequate warm clothes. With no other option in hand, these two women, living on the street near the Alia Madrasa ground in Sylhet city, yesterday resorted to wrapping themselves in discarded plastic bags to retain as much of their body heat as possible. The photo was taken around 1:00am – when the night temperature was 13.5 degrees Celsius.

PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

NBR considering duty waiver for essential imports

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Board of Revenue is considering waiving the duties on essential commodity imports as part of the government's efforts to keep the prices affordable for Ramadan, said its chief yesterday.

"We have received a proposal from the commerce ministry [on this] – are working on it," said Abu Hena Rahmatul Muncem, chairman of NBR, at a press briefing at the NBR's headquarters in the capital.

However, he didn't disclose any product list.

On Monday, the commerce ministry sought a waiver of import duties on edible oil, sugar and dates as the newly-formed Awami League government looks to make good on its top election promise of reining in inflation, which has stayed above 9 percent for nine months in a row.

Asked about the possibility of meeting of the International Monetary Fund's revenue collection target, Muncem said: "This is really a challenging for us. We have taken some specific strategies in all three wings – income tax, VAT and customs – to meet the challenges."

The revenue collection target set for this fiscal year by the IMF is Tk 394,530 crore, meaning the NBR's collection must increase 20.4 percent year-on-year.

The government has set a Tk 430,000 crore collection target for the NBR.

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