

Dev plans must not ignore environment: PM Hasina

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Online Desk: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Monday urged the authorities concerned to keep preservation of environment in mind while taking any development plan.

“Since I came to power I asked all to sketch plan for all cities. Whatever plan we take there should be emphasis on waste management and proper maintenance of flow of water,” she said.

The prime minister was speaking at a meeting on the presentation of the survey report and the policy decision for the adoption of the related project in the light of the master plan designed to prevent pollution and protect the navigability of the rivers around Dhaka at the cabinet room of her office (PMO).

She said that this is very regrettable that country’s development programmes were not taken in a planned way in the past.

Those who grabbed power illegally on August 15 in 1975 violating the constitution with arms did not pay attention on overall coordinated and planned development of the country, she said.

“As a result the environmental issues were neglected and rivers were grabbed,” she said.

She mentioned that After assuming power the aim of her government was to protect the rivers, return the navigability and save those from pollution.

“In the name of river training it was a normal phenomenon to build embankments that heavily harmed fertile crop lands,” she observed.

Hasina recalled that during the first tenure her government started river dredging and used the silts for land reclamation.

“We have to do dredging and maintain navigability. We have to go for river dredging to stop river erosion,” she added.

She said that the industries that were constructed beside the rivers usually dump its wastes in the rivers.

“All wastes of the sewerage lines also are dumped in the rivers. There is no plan for waste treatment. As a result the pollution has increased,” she said.

The PM said that It is very much painful that the Buriganga River stinks due to pollution.

“Whatever we do, we have to keep in mind first the waste management,” she said.

She also suggested to setting up small treatment plants in different parts of Dhaka city to save the rivers around the capital.

“We have to save our rivers if we want to save Bangladesh. We have to live with the floods. We have to always keep that in our mind. We need silt that comes with flood water,” she said.

For river training, the prime minister said that depth of a river has to be considered.

“We must create a buffer zone beside the river aiming to preserve the water that comes during the rainy season,” she said.