

### Question leak Test for cop promotion postponed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Written test for promotion of police constables to assistant sub-inspector (ASI) scheduled yesterday was postponed following question paper leaks.

"We postponed the test with proof in hand that the question papers were leaked," Inspector General of Police (IGP) Shahudul Haque said yesterday. A fresh date will be announced soon, he added.

A four-member body headed by Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Special Branch of Police Anwarul Iqbal has been formed to probe the question leaks, he said.

"We launched an investigation Sunday and found the allegations of leak true," he said. "Immediately, we postponed the test Sunday night."

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8



PHOTO: STAR

Neighbours of Shakil Ahmed Chowdhury Sumon burn tyres near his home at Meradia in Khilgaon yesterday during a demonstration against his death allegedly in police custody last Saturday.

## Diarrhoea dogs nine districts

193 die, 2.27 lakh affected since January

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thousands of people are suffering from diarrhoeal diseases in nine districts that claimed 193 lives and attacked 2,27,109 since January this year, official sources said.

In the last seven days, the number of attacks in five northern districts were 1,631 in Rangpur, 762 in Nilphamari, 415 in Gaibandha, 212 in Panchagarh and 667 in Naogaon. The cases of attacks totalled 659 in Comilla, 56 in Feni, 797 in Sunamganj and 841 in Netrakona.

Unofficial estimates however put the number of attacks much higher.

The situation in the five northern districts worsened since mid-

September with hundreds seeking emergency treatment in hospitals and private chambers of doctors. In some places, the diseases broke out in an almost epidemic form, the sources mentioned.

The health directorate has set up 854 medical camps - mostly in remote areas -- with one medical officer and one health assistant in each to deal with the situation.

"The attack is nothing unusual in the post-monsoon period. At this time every year scores of people are attacked with such diseases. The reason for such attacks is taking contaminated food and water," said Dr Kanak Ranjan Talukder, director

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

## Hasina urges German entrepreneurs to invest in Bangladesh

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League President Sheikh Hasina has urged German investors and entrepreneurs to invest in small and medium industries in Bangladesh.

"Germany is an industrially developed country that can invest in and extend its technical assistance to Bangladesh," she said adding, "there is a huge scope for investment in Bangladesh."

The former prime minister was addressing a banquet in her honour at a castle in Frankfurt in Germany Sunday night. Leading German industrialists, businessmen, bankers, economists and eminent personalities were present at the banquet, according to a press release issued in Dhaka yesterday.

She also urged the German government to set up a technical training institute in Bangladesh that would help develop Bangladeshi human resources.

Hasina urged German entre-

preneurs to employ skilled manpower from Bangladesh.

At the banquet, she said the previous Awami League government had attracted foreign investment into the country and adopted a liberal industrial policy in line with open market economy.

Earlier in the noon, Hasina visited German agro-based industry Erbacher where its owner briefed the Bangladesh opposition leader about the company's different sections.

German industrialists and entrepreneurs, according to the press release, expressed their interest to invest in Bangladesh during an exchange of opinion meeting with Hasina.

AL Presidium member Kazi Zafrullah MP and AL leaders Hasan Mahmud, Sadeq Hossain Chowdhury, Shahed Reza, Mahbubul Huq Shakil, Nasrul Hamid Bipu and Shamsul Al Amin Kajal were present.

## Prices go higher

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prices of essentials on the city's retail market are still soaring far above the low-income group's reach, with a fresh rise in the prices of onion and vegetables.

"The government cannot determine the prices in an open market economy," Additional Secretary of the commerce ministry Abdus Salam said, when asked why the recent government initiatives proved futile in bringing the price hike down to a tolerable level.

"It's the market force that will determine prices. The government has undertaken all facilitating measures like duty exemption and speedy import to ensure reasonable prices of onion," he added.

"The government has every right to intervene in the market to protect people," said a journalist of a leading national daily, preferring anonymity.

Till yesterday, home-grown and imported Indian onions in Hatirpool, Fakirpool, and Karwan Bazaar kitchen markets were found selling at Tk 27-30 per kilo, up from Tk 18-20 about three weeks ago.

Following a finance ministry decision to waive L/C margin and

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

## Traffic police pocket quick bucks over CNG confusion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Traffic police are cashing in on the confusion over a suspended gazette notification, apprehending CNG autorickshaw to harass drivers for quick bucks in the city.

Drivers of three-wheelers alleged traffic police are asking for money and suing owners on non-payment over the fixed rate of meter fare.

Traffic police referred to a gazette notification that says three-wheelers must charge Tk 10 instead of Tk 12 for the first two kilometres.

"We know nothing about fare chart rescheduling. But a traffic policeman yesterday stopped me and said of the rate rescheduling. He however let me go off without a case after I gave him a Tk 100 bribe," said Mohammad Din Mia, an autorickshaw driver from Mirpur.

The government formulated the fare chart for the four-stroke three-wheelers in October 2002, with Tk 12 fixed for the first two kilometres for six months initially, said officials of the Bangladesh Road Transport

Authority (BRTA).

The notification however said the rate would come down to Tk 10 from 16 April, but the communications ministry issued another notification to suspend the previous one for indefinite time upon a request from vehicle owners. The BRTA officials however could not tell the date of the latest notification.

The manager of a CNG autorickshaw fleet also pointed to police harassment. "Traffic police filed case against three of our vehicles. We did not know of any circular about rate rescheduling as yet," said Sahjahan, who requested not to name his organisation. "We don't have any right to doctor the meter. It is the meter distributors who are authorised to refix it. But we need to know first if there is any change in government notification first."

The autorickshaw drivers also claimed traffic police and vehicle owners always take advantage of them. A top BRTA official also confirmed the plight of drivers.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

## Red tape, tussle of offices stall health plans

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Red tape and a tussle between the health ministry and the Planning Commission are delaying approval of 15 annual operational plans (OPs) of the ministry involving a revised expenditure of Tk 578 crore.

Health ministry sources said the National Steering Committee of the ministry in August okayed the 15 OPs, seeking the funds for essential expenditures in the health sector this fiscal year. But the Planning Commission is yet to approve them.

The Annual Development Programme (ADP) allocated Tk 250 crore for the OPs.

Against this backdrop, the ministry is now seeking funds from other sources on an urgent basis to meet their immediate needs like purchase of drugs. Due to fund crisis, drug purchase for government hospitals remains suspended since July 1, the sources said.

There are more than 450 government hospitals in upazilas and districts.

Funds are also needed immediately mainly for salaries of about 80,000 family planning employees

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



### Sehri, Iftar timing

Ramadan	Oct	Sehri	Iftar
1	28		5-25
2	29	4-42	5-25
3	30	4-42	5-24

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Oct 28		5-23 pm
Oct 29	6-03 am	

### Prayer Timings

October 28		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-41	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-25	5-30
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

## Emergency declared as US wildfires kill 13

AFP, San Diego

Violent wildfires ravaging California have killed at least 13 people, forced tens of thousands of from their homes and sparked chaos in air travel across North America, officials said Sunday.

Governor Gray Davis declared a state of emergency in four counties in the south of the most populous US state as a giant new blaze began invading the city of San Diego, forcing thousands more residents to flee.

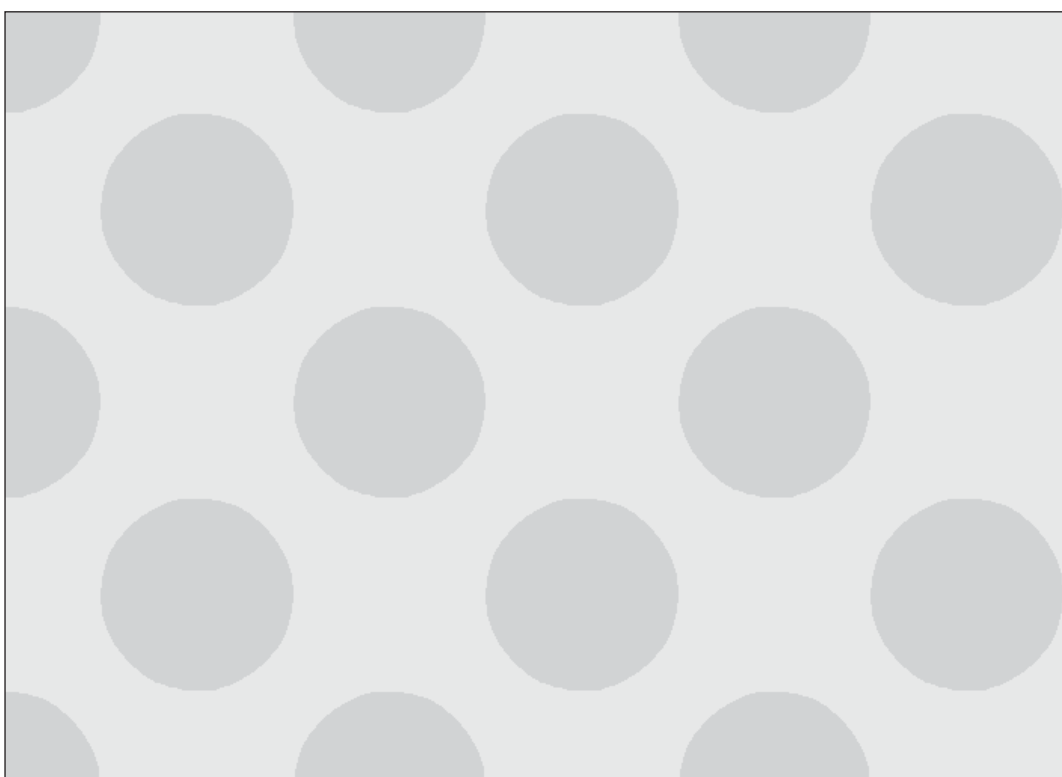
The latest inferno is one of at

least seven in the state fueled by treacherously-high winds and tinder-dry forests that have destroyed at least 610 homes and devoured 80,000 hectares (200,000 acres) of land.

"I know this is a difficult time," Davis told the tens of thousands of people forced out of their homes by the blazes by flames or the threat of flames. "These are the worst fires we've faced in California in 10 years."

"We are ensuring that every available resource -- state, federal, and local -- is dedicated to protect

SEE PAGE 11 COL 8



## Biman staff protest as senior pilot suspended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hundreds of Biman staff and pilots yesterday protested suspension of a senior pilot of the national flag carrier.

The staff under the banner Biman Steering Committee gathered in front of Biman's headquarters and gave a 72-hour ultimatum to withdraw the suspension.

Capt. SM Nasimul Haque, commander of Airbus and president of Bangladesh Airlines Pilots' Association (BAPA), was declared unfit to fly aircraft on health grounds yesterday.

When the news spread, the staff came out of office and chanted slogans against Biman high officials.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2