

## Step up cooperatives movement to reduce poverty: Bhuiyan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday called for concerted efforts to strengthen the cooperatives movement, saying that it can play an important role in alleviating poverty and boosting productions.

He also called for promoting the cooperatives among the poor to make the movement a success. The low-income group can raise their earnings through cooperatives, he added.

Speaking at a discussion on 'Cooperatives in employment and alleviating poverty', the minister asked the officials to work sincerely to expand the cooperatives activities.

He also warned those who are responsible for anomalies in the cooperatives sector.

Bhuiyan also asked the dishonest cooperatives organisers to quit for the sake of greater interest.

State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Ziaul Haq Zia blamed the bureaucratic tangle for hampering cooperatives activities across the country.

He urged the unemployed youths to establish cooperatives to be self-reliant.

Khandakar Mizanur Rahman, registrar, Directorate of Cooperatives, presented a paper on the role of cooperatives in employment and reducing poverty.

At present, 1,41,000 cooperatives societies are operating in the country, he said, adding that over 13,000 of them have been registered in the two year of the present government.

Later, the LGRD minister gave away prizes among the winners of essay and painting competitions.

## Jamal's family

**FROM PAGE 1**  
believes abducted her husband.

"The home minister told us that a meeting with the prime minister may not be forthcoming due to her tight schedule but he nonetheless assured me of arranging an appointment with her as soon as possible," Nazma told The Daily Star on her return to Chittagong yesterday morning.

Meanwhile, acting on a tip-off that Jamal was being held hostage some 20 km from the city at Amuchia forest under Boalkhali upazila, a team from the Detective Branch of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) yesterday raided a suspected criminal hideout there but returned empty-handed, police said.

Police said efforts were on to arrest Abul Kasem, UP chairman of Fatikchhari -- the prime suspect -- as well as other suspects in the abduction of the business tycoon.

Sources said Abul Kasem has fled across the border and secretly visits his home at Fatikchhari.

Jamal, also a local leader of BNP, was kidnapped from the city's Chawkbazar area on July 24. His abductors have demanded a ransom of Tk 1 crore.

Jamal's family already gave Tk 25 lakh to police for his rescue but it remains a mystery as to what was done with the money.

## Price situation

**FROM PAGE 1**  
"Prices of some vegetables including brinjal came down slightly today (Sunday) due to increased supply," said Dulal, a trader at Karwan Bazaar, but predicted a rise if supply decreases.

Prices at city's Hatirpul and Mohammadpur kitchen markets remained more or less stable.

At Hatirpul kitchen market, per kilo cucumber sold at Tk 28-30, tomato Tk 40-42, locally-grown onion Tk 28-30, Indian onion Tk 22-26, beans Tk 67-70, local garlic Tk 40, soybean oil Tk 48-52, green chili Tk 30, dried chili Tk 90 and turmeric Tk 80.

"Prices seem to have come down a bit but are still way beyond the commoners' reach. Also, prices of essentials, especially vegetables, fluctuate every day," said Parvin Akther, a shopper at Hatirpul kitchen market.

Sources said a delegation of Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FBCCI) led by its president Abul Awal Minto called on Commerce Minister Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury at his office yesterday to discuss the price spiral.

During the meeting, a leader of Shop Owners' Association (SOA) severely criticised some political parties for blaming the businessmen for the price spiral.

SOA leaders said the rise in prices was triggered by supply shortage due to excessive demand during Ramadan.

On the other hand, different political organisations yesterday blamed the government for failing to check the price hike.

Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal (BSD) yesterday held a rally in the city protesting the price spiral. They blamed hoarders for creating artificial supply crisis

Hayatul Islam Chowdhury, acting secretary of Rural government and Cooperatives Division, Prof. Dr Tofael Ahmed of Chittagong University, Hasanat Abdul Hye, former secretary, Abdul Hye Mridha, president of Bangladesh Jatiya Samabaya Union, Sabir Ahmed, president of Kingshuk Samabaya Samity and Kazi Siraj, acting editor of Daily Dinkal, also spoke.

## BCL boycotts Sundarban College union polls

Staff Correspondent, Khulna

The Awami League-backed Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) boycotted yesterday's election to the Sundarban College Students' Union.

The BCL candidates left the polling centre at 10.30 am following threats by the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) cadres.

The BCL announced the decision of boycott at 11.30 am at a press conference.

City BCL Secretary Faruque Hasan Hitlu told the journalists that pre-election violence forced his party candidates to quit the race.

Hitlu said JCD cadres entered the campus and warned the voters not to cast votes in favour of BCL candidates.

The JCD cadres also snatched voter ID cards of students belonging to Hindu community, he said. He also blamed the JCD for creating panic on the campus.

On the other hand, JCD central Vice-President Asaduzzaman Murad told the journalists at the press club that election was held in a free and fair manner. JCD has won all 27 posts, he added.

Sixty-two candidates from three panels of JCD, BCL and Chhatra Union filed nomination papers for 27 posts.

## 1 held for 'killing'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mohammadpur police yesterday arrested one person for his alleged involvement with the killing of businessman Mizanur Rahman Minu on Saturday night.

Police held Mohammad Masud, whose name was not mentioned in the first information report, on suspicion.

Armed goons picked up Mizanur, 47, president of the Baitul Fazal Market Merchant Association, on his way home. They took him to nearby Balurmath and left him dead shooting in the chest and abdomen indiscriminately at about 11:45pm.

Resident at the Noorjahan Road area, Mizan owned a stationery shop and had a rivalry with some other businessmen over the leadership of traders' association.

and also the government for its failure to control the situation.

Bangladesh Krishak League (BKL) in a statement expressed concern at the ongoing price hike and blamed the government for the plight of ordinary citizens.

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) will hold rally tomorrow in the city protesting the price spiral.

## Child killed in stampede during Zakat distribution

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

A child was killed and several persons injured in a stampede due to heavy rush in collecting Zakat at Bhola Saturday.

Locals said an announcement of giving Zakat was propagated on behalf of MD Nizamuddin, proprietor of Karnafuul Insurance Company.

Hundreds of people began to assemble since the previous night. A crowd reportedly of 15,000 gathered in front of Nizamuddin's house and the donor had to cancel the programme due to shortage of alms.

Nizamuddin's people announced that they will distribute the Zakat home to home afterwards. They also called police to disperse the crowd.

A rampage followed the announcement and Rashida Begum of Char Sumaia could not hold her son Sumon, 3, who died on the spot.

Police expressed their ignorance in this regard but admitted that they were not informed about the Zakat.

## Defamation case Arrest warrant issued against Jugantor owner, editor, publisher

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A court yesterday issued a warrant for arrest of the owner, editor and publisher of daily Jugantor in connection with a defamation case filed by Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas.

The case accuses Jugantor owner Nurul Islam Babul, editor Golam Sarwar and publisher advocate Salma Islam of publishing defamatory news items on October 9 and 30.

Mirza Abbas filed the case with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka.

In his complaint, Abbas said a Jugantor news item on October 9 headlined "The housing and public works minister rebuked by PM" and another on October 30 titled "Extortion in the transport sector with connivance of a minister" damaged his reputation in the social and political arena.

After hearing, the Metropolitan Magistrate Emdadul Haq took the case into cognizance and issued an arrest warrant against the accused and fixed December 2 for the next hearing.

## HC stays public procurement rule for 3 months

BSS, Dhaka

The High Court Division yesterday stayed the effectiveness of the Public Procurement Regulations, 2003, for three months.

The court passed the order upon a writ petition filed by Salahuddin Ahmed, secretary general of Bangladesh Sangbadptra Parishad (BSP), a press release said.

Advocate Khandaker Mahbub Uddin Ahmed moved the petition on behalf of the petitioner. President of BSP Mainul Husain was present in the hearing.

## Thousands protest

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police despite having valid motor-cyclé documents.

Police also arrested Saiful and SI Abdus Salam of Boalia Police Station filed a case within 35 minutes of the arrests accusing the two of hindering state activities and threatening the magistrate with death.

The Rajshahi Press Club, Metropolitan Press Club, City Press Club and RU Press Club jointly staged a rally and a procession at Shaeb Bazar. Rajshahi Rakha Sangram Parishad, a citizens' forum, and Rajshahi Editors' Forum expressed solidarity with the protesters.

The demonstration fanned out to the local court premises when a junior metropolitan magistrate turned down the bail prayer of Selim.

## Mashrafe

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in England's second innings in the Chittagong Test on Friday afternoon.

Although Mashrafe had his first MRI at a private clinic in the port city on the same day, the 'Narail Express' came to the capital on Sunday morning for the second MRI.

However the result of the test could not be known from anybody in the Bangladesh Cricket Board including the bowler himself.

"I know nothing about the report. I have been told that the report will be sent to physio John Gloster," said Mashrafe over his cell phone from Zia International Airport.

But it seems that Mashrafe's injury is not a serious one this time and he is likely to be fit after a week's rest.

According to a Bangla newspaper on Saturday, the England team doctor saw the report of the first MRI in Chittagong and said that the injury was not serious.

## Dhaka, Colombo

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value addition of a product to be eligible for free trade. A negative list mentions the products which do not enjoy zero tariff facility.

The two countries will sit again in January in Colombo to discuss the FTA modalities, Elias added.

De Silva mentioned that trade, service and investment will increase once the FTA is signed.

"We are very optimistic about signing the FTA and can see prospect for increasing investment in Bangladesh," he said.

De Silva mentioned that Sri Lanka has agreed to consider Bangladesh as a least developed country for preferential treatment. "But it is still to be worked out what types of preferential facilities would be given to Bangladesh and we don't expect this to be a one-way thing."

Referring to the India-Sri Lanka FTA, she said it is very difficult to presume the benefits of free trade.

"The products we did not even dream of exporting to India are now going there after implementing the FTA," she observed.



Chinese Ambassador in Dhaka Chai Xi calls on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at her office yesterday.

## Jail Killing Day

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Lawyers involved with the case blamed the slow pace of the trial on the present government's neglect.

Of the accused, senior leader of the ruling BNP KM Obaidur Rahman MP, BNP candidate for the last parliamentary elections Nurul Islam Manzoor, Jatiya Party leader Shah Moazzem Hossain and Maj (ret'd) Khairuzzaman got bail after the coalition government took office in October 2001. The government also reinstated Khairuzzaman in his foreign ministry position this year.

Other accused Taheruddin Thakur, Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Faruk Rahman, Lt Col (ret'd) Sultan Shahriar Rashid Khan and Maj (ret'd) Bazul Huda are in custody. Twelve accused have been evading arrest, while three others died.

Special public prosecutors of the case have been removed by the present government and no-one was appointed to conduct the case on behalf of the complainant.

The hearing of the case was adjourned following a transfer petition filed by Syeda Johra Tajuddin, widow of former prime minister Tajuddin, with the High Court for concluding the trial by any judge of the High Court Division.

But the petition was turned down and the hearing resumed in the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka after an eight-month pause on October 20.

## Intelligence agencies

**FROM PAGE 1**  
lodged with the security cell of the police headquarters. After primary investigations, 63 sub-inspectors, assistant sub-inspectors and constables were forced to retire, 425 policemen suspended, 920 closed and 412 given minor punishment.

Khilgaon police officers recently came under fire after the death of a young man, Shakil Ahmed Chowdhury Sumon of Meradia, in police custody. He was arrested on his way home on the night of October 24 and OC Entear Rahman and second officer Mahbubur Rahman reportedly demanded Tk 1 lakh from his parents in return for his release. Later, he was allegedly tortured to death as his parents failed to pay up the money.

OC Entear was withdrawn on October 27 and Sumon's mother Nurjahan Begum filed a murder case against him and the second officer.

While locals were agitating against Khilgaon police, SI Shamsul Haq, SI Shajahan Sabuj, constables Azhar Hossain, Helal Uddin and Habib of Khilgaon Police Station, ansars Azad Hossain and police informant Delwar mugged Tk 2 lakh from two garment-by-product businessmen of Keraniganj Friday.

Minutes after the mugging, locals caught SI Shamsul Haq, constables Azhar Hossain and Helal Uddin and ansars Azad Hossain and recovered Tk 1.46 lakh from them. The court sent the four to Dhaka Central Jail. The rest three are on the run.

Many businessmen alleged regular police harassment and extortion, saying they dare not file any complaint fearing

## Business climate

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the past, said he would work to further enhance the bilateral ties and cooperation in his new role.

The Chinese envoy, who can also speak in Bengali, said green Bangladesh has become greener and achieved development in various fields.

Recalling the visit of president Ziaur Rahman to China, the ambassador said that his trip had played a pivotal role in establishing a good relationship between the two countries.

The primer minister urged the ambassador to convey her greetings to her Chinese counterpart.

Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Dr Kamal Siddiqui was present.

The court fixed November 11 for next hearing of the case, removed 12 state defence lawyers and appointed two new state defence lawyers.

The main opposition Awami League and its front organisations laid out a set of programmes in honour of the slain leaders, who led the War of Independence in the absence of Bangabandhu.

The AL will hoist the national and party flags at half-mast and black flags at party offices in Dhaka and elsewhere. Leaders and workers will wear black badges to mourn the day.

The programmes also include garlanding the portrait of Bangabandhu, placing wreaths at the graves of the national leaders at Banani graveyard and offering fataha and organising milad mahfils and special prayers.

The party will also hold a discussion at the auditorium of Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh at 2:30pm, with Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina in the chair.

Hasina issued a statement yesterday paying tribute to the four leaders and said: "Their sacrifice will never go in vain. It will continue inspiring people forever."

She recalled the glorious contributions by the leaders to the nation's struggle for independence.

## Enact freedom

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media materials ought to be removed.

Duties on newsprint, printing machinery and rates of electricity and telecommunications may be reduced to facilitate greater public access to information.

Steps should also be taken to ensure safety and security of media professionals in discharge of their duties.

The conference, first of its kind, called for setting up a training academy for journalists and promoting exchange programmes among news agencies of SAARC-member states.

A SAARC media-development fund with seed money of \$100,000 under the proposed SAARC Information Centre may be developed according to the agreed formula of contribution by the member states, it said.

The 10-point recommendation would be placed for consideration before the meeting of SAARC Information Ministers, scheduled for New Delhi this month.

Although delegates from India and Sri Lanka were absent, the conference hoped that the recommendations would get a unanimous nod. Both government and private media representatives from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Pakistan and Nepal and the SAARC Secretariat attended the conference.

Information Minister Tariquul Islam inaugurated the conference on Saturday. Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan was chief guest at the closing ceremony yesterday held at Hotel Sheraton.

## 'Godfather' list

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Motia Chowdhury and Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, advisory committee members ASHK Sadique, SAMS Kibria and leaders Abul Shahid and Obaidul Kader with the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka.

In the case 53 people including 14 lawyers were made prosecution witnesses.

Delwar alleged that the AL at a press conference at its Dhanmondi office on October 16 published a list of what they termed 101 godfathers run by newspapers the next day.

The list damaged his and his son Paban's personal, social and political image, Delwar claimed.

He said no case was filed against his son, who has long been sick, with any police station or court.

The chief whip said he would file a damage suit with a civil court claiming more damages.

Metropolitan Magistrate Emdadul Haq took the case into cognizance and issued summons upon the accused asking them to appear before the court on December 2.

Advocates Sanaullah Miah and Masud Ahmed Talukder appeared before the complainant.

## Anomalies rule

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in the dormitory on Thursday.

They alleged Nirmal Das, a former DACSU member, has been staying in the hall for 18 years because of 'utter neglect of responsibility' by the authorities.

Another outsider, Dulal, has been living in the hall for 10 years. Students alleged although he completed studies seven years ago, authorities allocated him Room No. 252 of the North Building a few months back.

The room was shown vacant on yesterday's list, they said.

They alleged seats were allocated to non-residents and in some cases first year students got seats over residential third year students.

Students who have already completed their master's degree, have also been allocated seats at the cost of 50 regular students like Palash and Ajit who have a year and a half to complete their studies.

Residential students also spoke of 'politically reserved' seats, saying some seats were earmarked for influential ruling party students, an allegation denied by JCD leader.

They said room nos. 323 and 425 were allocated to a student and many non-students were staying in the hall occupying seats at the blessing of JCD leaders.

Hall Provost Dr Nim Chandra Bhoumik said the allocations lists were corrected.

Some agitated students said they would launch a greater movement against the administration if their demands went unmet.

## DV lottery

**FROM PAGE 12**  
as many as 15 lakh people applied for the DV Lottery, the simplest way for anyone to become an American citizen.

The widespread enthusiasm contributed to the coffers of the postal department heavily despite its dubious reputation for poor service. Last year's DV lottery spree earned the department a revenue of over Tk 4 crore.

But the department had to come up with a counter initiative as the electronic filing system of forms this year put the department out of business.

"The reality is that a lot of interested people from rural or backward locations will have to depend on others to fill up

## Forest official accused of fund fraud

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A contractor accused a forest official at a press conference in Dhaka yesterday of embezzling his bills through forged documents and threatening him with death.

M A Jall of Mrs Asad Enterprise alleged that Md Anwarul Islam, then director of the Botanical Garden, did not pay him about Tk 23.37 lakh in bills despite completion of work.

He alleged Islam was now threatening him with death if he did not withdraw cases filed against him.

Jall said he got nine work orders of the Botanical Garden in 1999-2000 period involving Tk 23.37, 100 through open bids and completed the work that included building cactus house, erecting humidifier and mist spray and supplying orchids and cacti.

The contractor said as he filed nine arbitration cases with Dhaka sessions judge's court, Islam, now the deputy conservator of the forest department, was sending some unknown hooligans to threaten him to withdraw the cases, or face death.

He said he applied to the higher authorities seeking the bills, but did not get any response.

## Of men

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the 13-year-old contest, launched in Hofen/Enz, Germany, in 1990, had been held outside of Europe. Germans have dominated the trophies.

"In Germany we have the best knowledge of styling," said Jurgen Burkhardt of Leinfelden-Echterdingen, a former world champion.

Burkhardt, whose moustache, uncurled, spans 1.5 metres, rolls his hairs in large loops reminiscent of the Imperial Austria-Hungary era to compete in the freestyle moustache section.

But Americans, with their preference for full, natural styles, have the advantage in those categories, he said. About 30 Americans were among this year's contestants, but the majority are foreign, hailing from Germany, Switzerland, Austria, England, Italy, Sweden, Norway, the Ukraine, Turkey, and Mexico. Carson City, an old Wild West mining center, was chosen for the competition because of its own enthusiasm for beards.

Last year the city won the annual Nevada-wide "Most Bearded City" contest, though it ceded the title to nearby Virginia City this year.

The judges included Nevada Supreme Court Chief Justice Deborah Agosti, and Carson City Mayor Ray Masayko.

## 15 killed as US chopper

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Before the helicopter attack, 123 U.S. soldiers had died in hostilities in Iraq in the past six months, including one killed by an overnight roadside bomb blast in Baghdad and two killed by a bomb in the northern city of Mosul the day before.

UPSURGE IN VIOLENCE  
Rocket and bomb attacks have killed 12 U.S. soldiers in an eight-day upsurge in violence that began when guerrillas rocketed a Baghdad hotel where U.S. Defence Deputy Secretary Paul Wolfowitz was staying last Sunday.

The next day four suicide attacks killed 35 people at the offices of the International Committee of the Red Cross and three police stations.

The attacks prompted the United Nations, the ICRC and other aid agencies to pull more foreign staff from Baghdad and review their operations, in a fresh blow to reconstruction efforts, although the U.S. military commander in Iraq plays them down.

"The coalition has maintained its offensive focus in the face of what we regard as a strategically and operationally insignificant surge of attacks," Lieutenant-General Ricardo Sanchez told a news briefing on Saturday.

In Falluja, residents said a roadside bomb had hit a convoy of U.S. personnel in civilian vehicles. At least one vehicle was ablaze at the scene, where gloating crowds shouted anti-U.S. slogans.

Television pictures showed a gleeful youth wearing a U.S. Army helmet.

their forms. They will have to come to cities to avail the on-line system," secretary of the MoPT, Faruq Ahmad Siddiqui, told The Daily Star yesterday.

"There are chances that these people will fall victim to the greed of frauds. This is where the postal department can play a pro-people role and also make profit," he added.

The postal headquarters will send EDV forms along with return-envelopes to all post offices. The forms will be on sale in about two weeks.

The EDV forms will be filled up and e-mailed from five post offices in Dhaka, Sylhet, Khulna, Chittagong and Rajshahi. To equip these offices with computer networks facility, the postal department will float tenders and seek expertise from private companies.

Form plus envelope will be on offer at Tk 5 while Tk 100 will be charged for individual applicant and Tk 150 for family.

Private organisations have already made similar offers at Tk 40-60 for individuals in Dhaka.

The finance ministry last week approved the proposal of the MoPT, which estimates Tk 5 crore profit from the services.

Starting from November 1, the EDV applications will be received up to December 30.

## Fresh cops take over Khilgaon station