

**BDR, BSF trade fresh gunfire**

AGENCIES, Dhaka

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) again traded gunfire at Poladanga frontier in Sadar upazila on Thursday night.

BDR sources said the Indian border guards of Char Benuka border camp suddenly opened fire at about 8:30pm without any provocation, prompting the BDR to retaliate.

Both sides exchanged 60 bullets during the skirmish that continued for 25 minutes.

Lt Col Lutfur Rahman of the 6th Rifles Battalion told the BSS that exchange of fire between the BDR and the BSF took place at Hakimpur and Poladanga frontiers in Sadar upazila and Kironganj Telkupi and Wahedpur frontiers in Shibganj upazila of Chapainawabganj district on June 8, 16, 18, 19, 23 and July 1 and 3.

In Sathkira, BDR personnel have been put on high alert as BSF deployed additional troops on its

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

**FAKE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**

**BNP men eat up 500 ton rice in Bogra**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

At least 500 metric ton rice was lifted against some 150 fake development projects mostly submitted by ruling BNP leaders and activists in different upazilas and municipality areas in Bogra during the last financial year, sources said.

District administration sources said most of the development projects were taken in the name of youth clubs and organisations run by the ruling BNP men. They alleged that some projects were implemented for personal gain.

An official at the sadar upazila project implementation office told The Daily Star that almost all development projects were approved upon recommendations from the Bogra municipality chairman, sev-

eral ward commissioners, special representative of prime minister and local lawmakers.

Ward Commissioner Nilufa Quddus undertook the earth-filling work under the Majibur Rahman lane development project at Shibbati in the town although the road already has bituminous carpeting.

She said she implemented the project in "public interest" but there are allegations that she actually aimed at filling the lowland shown in the plan and owned by her family members with the project money.

In another project named Shaheed Zia Smriti Sangha development project at Katnarpara under Bogra municipality, two metric ton rice was withdrawn showing the

completion of the project.

However, no club with that name was found in the area although a signboard bearing the club's name was seen hanging from a tree. Locals also said there is no such club in the area.

A resident of the area said he heard that some BNP men were sanctioned rice for the "development work" of the so-called club.

Another two metric ton rice was sanctioned for the work under Malotinagar Dakkhinpara earth-filling project in Bogra town headed by the local female ward commissioner.

A BNP leader and the commissioner of the ward concerned alleged that the project was not

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

**3 Ahab leaders get bail in Brac office robbery case**

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

Three top leaders of Ahle Hadith Andolon, Bangladesh (Ahab) are about to be released from Naogaon jail soon as they were granted bail on Wednesday in the case for Brac office robbery at Kotalipara in Gopalganj.

They are militant kingpin Asadullah Al Galib's second-in-command and Ahab Nayeb-e-Amir Abdus Samad Salafi, General Secretary Maolana Nurul Islam and Organising Secretary ASM Azizullah.

Eleven militants, including kingpin Galib, were named as accused in the case. Galib, however, was denied bail.

An investigator said the militants would be released from jail as they were granted bail in two NGO office robbery cases while the four others of the six cases filed against them were dismissed.

Sources said the release is taking place at a time when Inspector General of Police Abdul Quaiyum, who played a vital role in the countrywide militant busting drives, has been transferred.

Abdul Aziz Khalaf Malullah, Bangladesh chief of Revival of Islamic Heritage Society (RIHS), the top suspect donor NGO of the militants, is also visiting the country at the time, they said, adding

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

**BNP move to resolve party feuds, select candidates**

*Khaleda to sit in phases from today*

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

The ruling BNP today initiates steps to solve intra-party feuds and select suitable candidates for the next parliamentary election alongside its move to expand the four-party coalition led by it to ensure victory in the polls.

BNP Chairperson and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will sit in phases with grassroots level leaders of different district, upazila, thana and municipality units of the party facing longstanding intra-party feuds and other organisational problems.

Khaleda exchanges views with the leaders of Barisal and Pirojpur district units and upazila, thana and municipality units of the BNP today. The closed-door meeting would be held at state guesthouse Jamuna in the evening, sources said.

The BNP has already finalised selection of its candidates in several constituencies, and Khaleda will only take initiative to resolve problems where the party faces troubles, sources said.

"The party chief will talk to the grassroots level leaders on organisational matters as well as preparations for the next election. She will also seek to know from the local leaders about prospective candidates from their respective areas," BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan said yesterday.

On the ruling four-party alliance's nomination of candidates, Bhuiyan said they would discuss this with their coalition partners after finalising selection of the BNP candidates.

Sources mentioned that while facing the opposition's oust government movement politically, the

prime minister is now trying to expand the BNP-led alliance to face the next election.

She already had talks with Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman and former president H M Ershad and JP (Manju) chief Anwar Hossain Manju. The BNP high command is also making efforts to bring a number of leaders of opposition parties to the ruling coalition ahead of the election, party insiders said without giving details.

They mentioned that a number of party high-ups, specially those at Hawa Shaban led by Senior Joint Secretary General Tarique Rahman, have long been working on drafting the election manifesto and preliminary selection of deserving candidates. They are activating the organisational network and stepping up mass contact.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

**Italy to grant citizenship to legal immigrants after 5 years**

AFP, Rome

Italy's new centre-left government plans to give Italian citizenship to immigrants who have lived in the country legally for at least five years, Interior Minister Giuliano Amato said on Thursday.

"I see no reason why we should not grant citizenship to those who acquire a residence permit and thus demonstrate their commitment to this country," he said during a public debate in Rome.

Amato said his ministry was currently study the project.

But he rejected proposals to grant immigrants citizenship after only two years. "I think that's too short because many immigrants come to Italy to earn some money, then leave for home again," he said.

The minister's proposal prompted a sharp reaction from the Northern League, a minority party with a populist and xenophobic line.

**Raid on criminal groups hiding in Sundarbans**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Security forces including the coast-guard have cordoned off different vulnerable points in the Sundarbans since Thursday night to arrest over 200 armed members of eight criminal groups who threaten lives and property of nearly five lakh Bawalis (honey collectors), and fishermen working in the Sundarbans.

Combining operations in the Sundarbans have been intensified in the wake of alarming rise in crimes including rampant abduction of fishermen and Bawalis for ransom, Commander of the West Zone Coastguard Md Anwar Hossain said yesterday.

On Wednesday night, several people were injured in an hour-long gun battle between the coastguard and pirates at Narkelbari near Dublarchar where pirates escaped leaving 31 empty bullets, three daggers, three torchlights and a rifle carrier on the riverbank, he said.

Hundreds of fishermen and Bawalis have left the Sundarbans fearing abduction for ransom.

Criminals have taken over the forest where forest guards are quite helpless, said fish traders Abul Hossain and Anis Fakir, who bought freedom from pirates for two lakh taka on June 26.

Sixteen fishermen kidnapped on June 30 from the Sundarbans also returned to Sharonkhola on Thursday after paying Tk 3 lakh as ransom to Motaleb Bahini ring-leader Motaleb, who resides in Khulna city, sources said.

**Road accident in Habiganj kills 12 of a bridal party**

UNB, Habiganj

Twelve people, including three children, died and 15 others were injured in a road accident on the Dhaka-Sylhet highway in Bahubal upazila of the district yesterday.

Police and locals said the accident occurred at about 2:30 pm when a Habiganj-bound microbus, carrying a bridal party, collided with a bus in Kamaichhara area, killing 11 people on the spot and injuring 16 others.

One of the injured died at Habiganj Sadar Hospital, while the remaining 15 are undergoing treatment at the hospital.

Of the deceased, eight were identified as microbus passengers Alaaddin, 25, Monir Mia, 30, Sohel Mia, 20, Waresh Mia, 20, Suleman, 9, Hamdu Mia, 36,

Mohid Mia, 18, and Didar Mia, 40. The identity of four others--driver and helper of the microbus and two children--could not be known.

The microbus carrying the bridal party was on way to Habiganj from Laharpur village in Srimangal upazila.

In Keraniganj of Dhaka district, one person was killed and eight others were injured when a three-wheeler tempo with a bridal party on board collided with a bus at Nazirerbagh at around 11:30am yesterday.

The dead was identified as Robu Mia, 60. The injured--Eva, Nurjahan, Taherun, Maria, Monir Hossain, and tempo driver Chunnun Mia--were first admitted to Midford Hospital and then shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

JESSORE BLAST CASE

**Udichi to stage protest for fresh probe**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cultural activists and civil society members under the banner of Movement for the Reinvestigation and Trial of Udichi Murder Case will form human chains across the country for one hour on July 20 to press home their demand for reinvestigation into the Jessore Udichi blast case.

Bomb blast at a cultural programme of Udichi Shilpi Goshthi in Jessore on March 6, 1999 left 10 people killed and over 100 injured.

Forming a 101-member national committee for the movement, cultural activists and civil society members also announced a series of programmes protesting the recently pronounced verdict of the murder case where all 23 accused were acquitted.

District and upazila committees of Movement for the Reinvestigation and Trial of Udichi Murder Case will arrange views exchange meetings on July 17 to make people aware about the Udichi murder case.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

**Skop threatens strike, road-rail blockades**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (Skop) yesterday threatened to enforce countrywide 24-hour strike and 12-hour road and railway blockades on July 31 if the government does not implement the agreement signed between the government, garment owners and workers by July 30.

They also demanded immediate release of the arrested workers and leaders and withdrawal of all "false" cases filed against them.

Addressing a rally at Muktangan in the city, Skop leaders said the government should have taken necessary steps to implement the tripartite agreement signed on June 12 for maintaining peace in the garment sector.

Some vested quarters in the country and abroad are hatching conspiracy to foil the agreement, the Skop leaders said, urging all garment workers to be united to resist the conspiracy to save themselves and the industry.

Cautioning the government and garment owners, the leaders said they will go for a tough movement again if any condition of the agreement is violated.

They alleged that the government has continued arresting

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

**800 mobile sets seized at Ctg airport**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Over 800 mobile phone sets worth Tk 40 lakh were seized while being carried illegally through Chittagong Shah Amanat International Airport yesterday.

According to sources, customs officials recovered 820 mobile sets of Nokia model No. 1100 from a passenger of a Hong Kong-Dhaka-Kolkata flight of GMG Airlines around 1:00pm.

The passenger was identified as Abu Rustam from Mirpur in Dhaka. Sources said the phone sets were brought by another passenger from Hong Kong on his way to Kolkata via Dhaka and Chittagong.

The unidentified passenger handed over the luggage containing the mobile sets to Abu Rustam who boarded the same flight from Dhaka to deliver them in Chittagong evading tax.

Rustam was trying to get the consignment out of the airport through the flexible customs check-up for domestic passengers, said the sources.

Acting on a tip-off, a customs team led by Assistant Commissioner Mostafizur Rahman intercepted Rustam after the flight landed at the Chittagong airport at 12:45pm and recovered the mobile sets.

The other passenger involved, however, escaped safely by the same flight.

**Go door to door to make people aware of vote stealing**

*Hasina asks grassroots leaders*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed her party's grassroots leaders to go door to door and make people aware of the BNP-Jamaat alliance government's move to steal votes in the upcoming general elections.

"If votes are protected, then the rights of the people will be protected, accountability of the government will be ensured and economic freedom will follow," Hasina, also the Awami League (AL) president, said addressing a views-exchange meeting with grassroots leaders of Dinajpur.

The eight-hour-long meeting was held at the AL's Dhanmondi office with Hasina in the chair and attended by other senior AL leaders.

Hasina directed the party leaders to take sticks in hands if necessary to protect their constitutional

voting rights. Hasina reiterated that they would not participate in any elections before reforms in the caretaker government and the Election Commission (EC) are implemented. The AL chief said they have proposed the reforms in electoral system only to protect the people's right to vote.

Urging the party leaders to work together and forget internal feuds to ensure victory in the upcoming elections, the AL president warned leaders of stern organisational actions against them if they did not work in favour of the chosen candidates. Hasina also said the grassroots workers will resist the party's rebel candidates in the elections.

The grassroots AL leaders of Dinajpur urged Hasina to take effective measures to quell internal feud of the party as soon as

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

**NAYAN 'MURDER' IN SAVAR**

**Family to go to court as police refuse to take case**

JU CORRESPONDENT

Family members of Nayan Banu, who was allegedly killed by police on July 2, will go to court tomorrow for filing a case as Savar police refused to record a murder case against the accused policemen as of yesterday.

Male members of the family, meantime, are staying outside home fearing police arrest and in the face of threat by local BNP activists.

Only female members of the family are now staying home. Four policemen went to the house of Nayan Banu yesterday to arrest Badsha Miah, son of Nayan, and six others as they are accused in an abduction case filed earlier by Montu Miah.

Montu Miah, a resident of Nikrail in Bongram in Savar, filed the

abduction case accusing seven including Badsha Miah on June 16 after Montu's daughter Tumpa eloped with Badsha Miah's son Jewel and got married on June 14.

The six other accused in the case are Jewel, Zaman, Almas, Nurul Huq, Muzammel and Shama.

On July 2, police went to Badsha's house to arrest him and got furious not finding him. At one stage police kicked and beat Badsha's mother Nayan Banu, leading to her death on the spot.

Sub-inspector Mukhlesur Rahman of Savar Police Station was suspended shortly after the incident as preliminary investigation found him guilty of murdering Nayan Banu, a resident of Bagnibari in Birulia in Savar but Savar police refused to record any 'murder case'

as of yesterday. Sub-inspector Murtuza Kabir of Savar Police Station filed an 'unnatural death' (UD) case on July 3 following the incident.

As a UD case has already been filed, no more case could be filed in this connection, police said, adding that two cases could not be filed on a single incident.

The autopsy report of the dead was not published as of yesterday.

"There is no scope for arguments on the issue. If we have done anything unlawful, the family has the opportunity or place to seek justice. They can go to the court," said Akhtaruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Savar Police Station.

"Investigation into the UD case is being conducted," he added.

"I have eaten one [Nayan Banu]

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

**Israel presses Gaza assault, 26 killed**

AFP, Gaza City

Israel pressed on with its bloody offensive against Gaza yesterday a day after reoccupying land and waging multiple air strikes in the deadliest 24 hours in the Palestinian territories for four years.

Three Palestinians, one of them a teenager, were killed as Israeli artillery and aircraft pounded the northern Gaza Strip for a second day. Twenty-five Palestinians and one Israeli soldier have been killed

since the offensive began late Wednesday.

Faced with the mounting death toll and the worst Middle East crisis in months, the UN Security Council debated a draft resolution demanding Israel withdraw from Gaza, immediately and release detained Palestinian officials.

But the United States, Israel's closest ally, described the text as "unbalanced" and troops continued their ground assault aimed at securing the release of a soldier captured

by Palestinian militants 12 days ago.

A Palestinian teenager, a deaf man and militant were killed by Israeli tank fire and an air strike on the town of Beit Lahiya, the main battleground in northern Gaza, medical and security officials said.

In a refugee camp in the occupied West Bank, another Palestinian militant was shot dead in clashes with Israeli forces in

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Prayer Timing		
July 8		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-10	4-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-55	7-00
Esha	8-17	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation