Plus 16-page Star Insight



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People's Right to Know

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Khaleda Zia is exercising extra-

newsmen when the meeting was

Appointment of

army, alleges AL

BHADRA 18, 1413 BS SABAN 8, 1427 HURL 24 PAGES PLUS STAR INSIGHT PRICE: TK 10.00

Garment workers bring out a procession from Muktangon in the capital yesterday demanding immediate declaration of their minimum wage.

RMG workers PM trying to influence resume agitation

DU CORRESPONDENT

Different labour organisations launched agitation programmes in the capital and other adjacent areas as the three-month deadline for fixing the minimum wage for garment workers ended Thursday without any agreement on the issue.

guidelines to the army about its Following a severe labour unrest role in the next election. in the garment sector, the government formed a board on May 31 government will fix the army's role and asked it to recommend a pay in the next election, the prime structure for workers within three minister has started giving direcmonths but the board's meeting on tives to the army about its electoral role," the ALCWC observed at a August 29 ended without any decimeeting yesterday.

The National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF) and Bangladesh Poshak Shilpo Sramik Federation (BPSSF) held separate demonstrations in the city yesterday demanding immediate declaration of a new minimum wage. Otherwise they would go for tougher movements including

The meeting chaired by party chief Sheikh Hasina was held at SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

adjourned.

Hasina, also leader of the oppo-The Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC) has sition in parliament, in her speech blasted the BNP-Jamaat coalition alleged that Prime Minister government for appointing constitutional powers by giving another election commissioner on 'political grounds '. This is part of its conspiracy to hold election as "Though the next caretaker per a blueprint, ignoring the people's demand for electoral reforms.

"We have been demanding reconstitution of the Election Commission (EC) to ensure that the next parliamentary election is held in a free, fair and impartial manner. But they (government) As the prime minister and BNP chief has no confidence in her party leaders and workers for their have appointed another election commissioner, proving that they massive corruption, she (PM) is using the army in distributing VGF do not want a free, fair and neutral election held in the country," cards among the poor, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil said, briefing Hasina said.

The AL chief said caretaker government system was formulated to ensure a non-party and neutral government, which would create a congenial atmosphere for

a free and fair election. "But Justice KM Hasan (who will head the next caretaker govt) is not a neutral person since he was international affairs secretary of the BNP. And for this, no free and fair polls can be held under him," Hasina said.

On the issue of government opposition dialogue on reform proposals, Hasina said while BNF Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan speaks of one-to-one talks (Mannan Bhuiyan - Abdul Jalil), the prime minister opposes the reforms and says the next election will be held as per the constitutional process. This proves that she (PM) neither wants dialogue nor election, she added.

The AL chief said the government even did not reply to the opposition's latest letter on dialogue. Because of dwindling public support for it, the government is dilly dallying over the reform proposals. Mentioning the PM's

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29 die in Iran air disaster, 148 survive

AFP, Tehran

Twenty-nine people were killed yesterday when an Iranian airliner caught fire after landing in the northeastern city of Mashhad, Iran's civil aviation chief said lowering earlier reports of up to 80

Talking to state television, the Civil Aviation Organization's Nurollah Rezai Niaraki said 29 bodies had been recovered from the plane, 43 people were injured and the rest of the 148 people on

He added that some of those injured had been treated as outpatients at Mashhad hospitals.

State television had earlier said the death toll on the flight to Mashhad from the southern port city of Bandar Abbas was at least 80.

Niaraki also said that since the flight crew survived the crash, a better understanding on the cause of the accident will surface.

Previously state media reported that the Russian-made Tupolev 154, on an internal flight from the southern port of Bandar Abbas, SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

BSF, BDR trade fire in Satkhira

Zakiganj tense

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) fired on two camps of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) in sadar and Kalaroa upazilas early yesterday, triggering fresh tension across the border between the two countries.

Situation also was tense along the Zakiganj borders hours into a high level meeting between the two border guards as the BSF opened fires on some Bangladeshi farmers on Thursday while they were returning home from cropland.

Shabana, 12, daughter of Majnu Miah of Aior village, was seriously injured in the firing.

UNB reports: Official and local sources said the BSF men of Tarali camp fired a shot targeting the Kakdanga BDR camp at about 5:00am yesterday. The BDR jawans replied the unprovoked firing with fourshots.

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Regional dialogue in Tangail today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 14th regional dialogue on "National Election 2007: Civil Society Initiative for Accountable Development" will be held in Tangail today.

It is being held as part of a series of programmes jointly organised by Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Prothom Alo, The Daily Star

Eminent academics and professionals, development and cultural activists, public representatives and political leaders and civil

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28 on Cox's Bazar land grabbers' list

Offshore forest depleting fast

MUAZZEM HOSSAIN SHAKIL,

The Chittagong Coastal Forest Department has published a list of 28 land grabbers featuring some local union parishad (UP) chairmen and political leaders, and sought the administration's intervention in its drive to recover the public lands and forests

Paraban, a manmade forest along the offshore areas of Kutubjom, Baro Moheshkhali and Ghatibhanga, is among the forestland grabbed.

Shahidullah, Baro Moheshkhali UP chairman and brother of local ruling party lawmaker Alamgir Mohammad Mahfuz Ullah Farid, Anwar Pasha Chowdhury, president of Moheshkhali upazila AL, among others, figure in the list that upazilas of the district. Court

came out on August 17, official sources said.

department, land grabbing in the district continues unabated mainly to set up enclosures for shrimp cultivation The wholesale land grabbing and destruction of forests have

Despite cases filed by the forest

stirred up anger among the local environmentalists, journalists, lawyers and citizens' groups. Concerned especially over rapid destruction of Paraban, the locals had earlier staged demonstrations for a government move declaring

the area an exclusive tourist zone. They had also submitted memorandums to the local administration seeking immediate measures to conserve the forest.

The lands and forests close to and Sharif Badsha, former UP the coast are being grabbed at an chairman of Baro Moheshkhali, outrageous pace across five

orders for recovery of the lands could not yet be enforced, as most of the encroachers are influential leaders of the ruling party, said sources at the forest department. In the last four and a half years,

the land grabbing has exceeded all previous records when the forest epartment officials had to play a mere onlooker's role. According to forest officials, out of 27,293 acres forestland in the

district, 12,000 acres have already fallen into the hands of grabbers during that period. These 28 people have grabbed a total of 1,435 acres public lands and

forests, forest department sources The department has filed 458

cases against 1,843 encroachers in the last four years, they added."

have ordered recovery of 912 acres SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Ahab to float 'Insaf', contest next election

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ahle Hadith Andolon Bangladesh (Ahab) will soon float a new politi-cal party styled 'Insaf' and field candidates to contest the next general election from at least 65 constituencies that are widely considered as the ruling alliance strongholds.

Addressing a grand conference at Muktangan in the capital, leaders of Ahab yesterday said they have already agreed in principle to target those seats in Rajshahi and Chulna divisions that were won by the four-party alliance in the last

launch of Insaf (justice) and put up candidates in 60 to 65 seats. We'll go all-out to win 20 to 25 seats defeating the BNP-Jamaat alliance," said Acting Ameer of Ahab Shaikh Abdus Samad Salafi, speak-

ment, he said three crore Ahab followers will strive to exact a terri-Courts on different occasions | ble revenge on the four-party alliance by making sure they lose

new EC seen as pressure tactics strengthen the EC for holding a free

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

The appointment of a new election commissioner is meant to keep pressure on Awami Legue (AL)-led 14-party opposition coalition while an influential section of the government is currently planning to appoint another commissioner soon to ensure the ruling alliance's control. on the Election Commission (EC), sources within the government said.

Meanwhile, opposition leaders and civil society personalities expressed their fears that the latest decision of the government to appoint a new election commissioner, while ignoring the opposition's demand for electoral reforms, will deepen the present political crisis by making it more difficult to hold a free and fair election accepted by all.

believe that the decision will

and fair election. In a sudden move on Thursday

the government decided to appoint Mahmud Hasan Monsur, a former secretary to the defence ministry, as an election commissioner. He is likely to take oath tomorrow.

Hafiz Uddin Khan, former adviser to a caretaker government said, "It is a wrong decision to appoint a new commissioner when there is no alternative to restructuring the EC for holding an acceptable election."

The opposition leaders strongly condemned the appointment of Monsur saying he had been promoted to the post of a secretary under the 'presidential quota' and he is not a neutral person at all. But the ruling party leaders dispute the claim.

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14-party to lay siege to EC on Sept 6, PMO Sept 12

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 14-party opposition combine will lay siege to the Election Commission (EC) Secretariat on September 6 and the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on September 12, seeking to force the ruling alliance to accept the proposals for electoral reforms.

The decision came at a meeting of the combined parties following an Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC) meet yester-

The ALCWC meeting held at the party's Dhanmondi office was presided over by Leader of the Opposition and AL President Sheikh Hasina. Resolutions adopted at the nine-hour long discussion will be issued today, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil told journalists after the meeting that started at 10:00am and continued till 9:30pm with a three-hour break SEE PAGE 15 COL 7



Remains of fast depleting manmade Parabon forest in Moheshkhali upazila under Chittagong district. Influential people are encroaching on the forests along the coastal areas to make shrimp enclosures.

Tehran won't give up an iota of its nuclear rights Says Ahmadinejad reacting to IAEA report

AFP, Tehran

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad sent a curt message to global powers yesterday vowing Iran "will not give up one iota" of its nuclear rights, in the first official reaction to critical International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report.

"The enemies should know Iranians are standing firm on obtaining their rights and will not give up one iota of their nuclear rights," Ahmadinejad told a rally in the northwestern city of Makou, state media reported.

On Thursday, the UN nuclear watchdog concluded in a confibeen no deviation" towards any

dential report that the Islamic military purpose, he said. republic had not suspended its enrichment-related activities, as demanded by the Security Council's five permanent members along with Germany.

The deputy chief of Iran's nuclear agency insisted the report was "not negative" and vowed to continue uranium enrichment for research purposes while keeping open negotiations with the international community. "The report is very factual and

adds that the Iranian nuclear

programme is under the supervi-

sion of the IAEA and that there has

Iran insists it is exercising a right to develop civilian atomic energy. On Friday, Russia expressed

regret that Iran did not fulfill the demands of (UN) Resolution 1696 , and did not stop work on uranium enrichment", foreign ministry spokesman Mikhail Kamynin said. Russia and China have consis-

tently resisted calls for sanctions against Iran in connection with its nuclear enrichment work however. preferring a diplomatic solution to In a speech to university

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

"We'll soon announce the

ing as the chief guest. Blasting the alliance govern-

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

4 bullet-hit as shop owners at Fulbaria clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Twenty-five people were injured, four by bullets, in a clash between two groups of shop owners at Fulbaria near Gulistan in the city vesterday.

Witnesses said the clash ensued when some people of the former committee of Bangabazar Hawkers' Samity Market (BHSM) Owners' Association swooped on the members of the new committee during a meeting at around 11:30am.

The new committee arranged the meeting on the rooftop of the newly constructed Dhaka Trade Centre, which was built demolishing shops of earstwhile Bangabazar Hawkers' Samity Market to allocate 637 shops housed in the fourstorey trade centre.

Bullet-hit Ruhul Amin, Azam Hossain, Ratan Chandra Shil and SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Criminal killed in Bagerhat 'shootout'

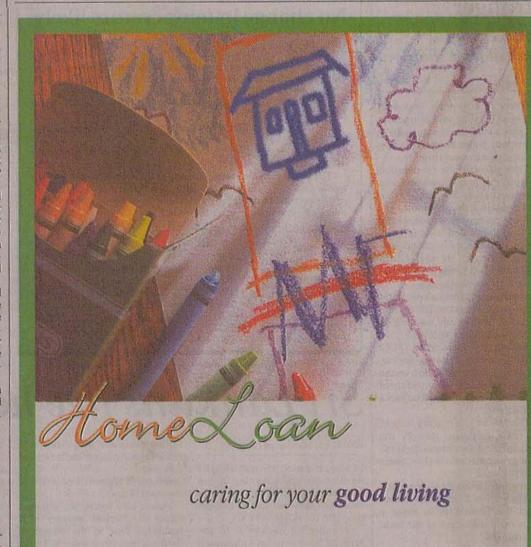
STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A notorious robber of the Sundarbans was killed in an encounter between members of Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) and his accomplices at West Bisharighata under Morrelganj Police Station of Bagerhat district early yesterday.

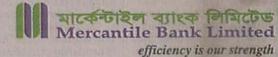
Acting on a tip-off, a team of Rab-6 arrested Mujibur Aratdar, 50, also an illegal arms trader, at Tafalbari Bazar under Swarankhola upazila of the district on Thursday

On his confessional statement, the Rab men along with Mujibur set out for Bisharighata at about 2:40am to arrest his cohorts and recover illegal firearms.

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