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## Land in many city areas about to cave in?

Setting up of water pumps around BB banned, similar steps in 2 other areas soon

Morshed Ali Khan

Fearing a 'land subsidence and perched landscape', Dhaka WASA has declared half a kilometre area around Bangladesh Bank (BB) at Motijheel a 'red area' and banned setting up of new water pumps there. Sources concerned said, WASA also plans to impose similar ban on Khilgaon and Bashabo areas of the city

shortly. Managing Director Dr Azharul Haq told The Daily Star.

Haq said maximum quantum of ground water is now being extracted from the area near BB and no new pumps would be allowed there. If the allowable quantum is surpassed, there are chances of land subsidence which means the sub-terrain

vacuum might cause the surface to cave in within weeks. Due to extensive extraction of ground water, land subsidence occurred in Bangkok and Mexico City a few years ago, he mentioned.

"Another big effect of excessive extraction of ground water is that land gets perched and barren and no tree could grow there," Haq said.

A ground water expert of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Chairman of Environmental Studies department at North South University Dr I M Faisal said the city areas having 'concentration of large buildings are most vulnerable' to such land subsidence. Excessive and long term extraction of ground

water causes land subsidence and the city's total dependence on ground water makes it even more exposed to such disaster, warned Faisal.

Ground water level in the city cannot even get 'recharged' as canals, low-lying areas and open spaces are being replaced by concrete structures. In the

See page 11 col 7

## ICC to decide Bangladesh's Test fate today

By Sports Reporter

Bangladesh dates with destiny today when the executive committee members of the International Cricket Council (ICC), the game's governing body, meet in London to discuss the possible promotion of the South Asian nation as the 10th Test-playing country.

The entire nation is oozing with the expectation of a positive outcome of the all-important ICC meeting, which takes place at the historic Long Room of Lord's.

Although England, the only country among the nine Full Members, has remained tight-lipped about their stance, the unequivocal support of the other eight will definitely be a cause for comfort for Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) president Saber Hossain Chowdhury, however, is not going to sit back and relax despite the fact that the English Cricket Board (ECB) recently disclosed that they would be 'sympathetic' to Bangladesh's case.

It is understood that some member countries led by England are wary of a power block of four Asian nations in the offing, reported the Associated Press yesterday, indicating the role of a section of the British press, which launched vigorous campaign to oppose

See page 11 col 7

## 4 Opposition MPs enter JS for few minutes

By Nazmul Ashraf

The Jatiya Sangsad yesterday witnessed rare scenes when four Opposition lawmakers entered the House separately and sat for few minutes in the empty Opposition Bench.

They looked uncomfortable as all in the Treasury Bench cast a curious look — some smiling and others passing comments.

The Chair and the Leader of the House also cracked jokes, triggering laughter.

In line with the decision of the Opposition, the four MPs — three belonging to BNP and one to Jatiya Party — entered the house quietly, but not at a time. They signed the attendance registers, stayed for few minutes and then left.

They are among those Opposition lawmakers who failed to turn up when most of their col-

See page 11 col 7

## Inside Today

### Article

## Death in Dover Inhumane Approach to Asylum seekers?

By Harun or Rashid Page 4

### Focus

Doing away with drugs, and a visit to Phnom Penh's 'Genocide Museum' Page 5

June	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
26	5:13am	6:50pm
27	5:13am	6:50pm

## Prayer Timings

June 26		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:15	4:45
Zohr	1:00	1:20
Asr	5:00	5:15
Maghrib	6:50	6:55
Esha	8:15	8:45

Source: Islamic Foundation



**Stark contrast :** A traditional quack conjures a crowd of prospective customers at her roadside layout of so-called 'medicinal cures', right in front of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital in the city yesterday.

— Star photo

## Faulty supply of question papers Police-mob clash at Tongibari: 100 hurt

MUNSHIGANJ, June 25: A fierce clash between police and a mob left some 100 people including 17 policemen injured as protesters stormed Tongibari upazila headquarters today following failure of many local students in the SSC examination, reports UNB.

Bullet hit school teacher Ibne Salam, 40, and student Monir Hossain, 15, were sent to Dhaka in a 'critical condition'. Seriously injured students Jewel, Sazal, Russel, Shamsul Islam, Imu, Anis and teacher Abdul Hye were admitted to local hospitals.

Police Inspector Fazlur Rahman, SI Hafizur Rahman, Abdul Halim and Rafiqul Islam, ASI Zafar and Jamir Uddin, constables Saidur Rahman, Ashraf Ali and Molnuil Haq

were also hospitalised. More than 1500 students and their relatives gathered to protest the 'mass failure' in Islamic Studies in the last SSC examination for 'faults' in supplying question papers.

The upazila headquarters looked like a battlefield as the agitated students and guardians gathered and were locked in a two-hour clash with police.

The UNO and some other officials remained gheraoed in the offices and some other officials fled as the area amid gunshots and cracker blasts.

The students, injuring all the 17 on-duty policemen, stormed into the residence of the UNO and ransacked household materials.

Over 1500 violent people be-

See page 11 col 5

## Confce of OIC FMs opens in Kuala Lumpur tomorrow

By M Anwarul Haq

A five-member delegation led by Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad is due to leave for Malaysia today to attend the 27th meeting of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM).

The four-day meeting of foreign ministers of the 55 member-states of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) begins tomorrow in Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur.

The ICFM meet will discuss political and economic issues confronting the Islamic world.

Election of a new Secretary General of the OIC for a four-year term tops the agenda of the

ICFM meet. The post is being vacated by Morocco's Azzedine Laraki. A triangular contest for the post is likely, sources concerned said.

Bangladesh is contesting for the post along with Egypt as well as Morocco, which is again vying for it by putting up a new candidate.

Dhaka's candidate for the post of OIC Secretary General is Speaker Humayun Rashid Chowdhury. Turkey's nominee is a senior diplomat-Ambassador Yasir Yakis and Morocco's new candidate is former Information and Foreign Min-

See page 11 col 4

## PDB management very poor, power plants in bad shape

By Sharier Khan

Deterioration of management in the Power Development Board (PDB) coupled with technical failure in some of the large power plants aggravated power crisis in the country in recent weeks.

Load shedding in the country is officially said to be between 150 MW and 300 MW now, but actually it is over 500 MW, said a highly placed source in the PDB.

"Actually the power supply situation is quite bleak. The plants are performing poorly and PDB management has nearly collapsed. In addition to these problems, the capacity of power distribution lines in Dhaka has decreased," he observed. "The situation is likely to worsen gradually."

Other sources said inter-departmental communication became irregular or absent in re-

cent weeks. Officials in general are showing no sense of urgency and so prompt action is not taken in case of any disruption due to lack of co-ordination.

The on-going power crisis started intensifying from April when the 210 MW second unit of Raosan power plant developed a massive mechanical trouble due to mishandling by operators.

In recent weeks, over 18 power plants including the two 210 MW units of Ghorashal power plant and the Shahjibazar power plant tripped due to mechanical failure. Generation at Ashuganj power plants also decreased drastically due to gas supply shortfall, they said.

"Given the present condition of power plants, these problems are not unusual. But PDB is failing to take prompt action. That

is why load shedding has shot up," one source said.

The first unit of Raosan power plant is now being operated "forcibly". It is generating only 120 to 130 MW, which is slightly more than half of its capacity. The unit may be shut down any day, aggravating the situation, he said.

Another official said the power supply scenario is poor in Dhaka as the demand exceeded the capacity of transmission lines long ago. "The Dhaka Electric Supply Authority (DESA) and Dhaka Electric Supply Company (DESCO) were equipped to supply a maximum of 1000 MW but the demand has exceeded 1100 MW. Some DESA lines need rehabilitation."

DESA is now in the process of signing two agreements, one with the Asian Development

See page 11 col 6

## Dock workers' strike worsens congestion at Ctg port

From Nurul Alam

CHITTAGONG, June 25: The congestion of vessels at Chittagong port for the past one month, worsened today following a wildcat strike by dock workers.

The dock workers refused to take gang-booking from last night, port sources said.

Consequently, 50 vessels loaded with about two lakh metric tons of imported cargo and over 5,000 containerised goods, floating both at the jetties and outer anchorage, were stuck up forcing them to incur huge demurrage.

Out of 50 vessels 25 loaded with import cargo, were waiting

at the outer anchorage for taking berth, port sources said adding rest remained stranded at the jetties.

Some of the vessels were waiting at the outer anchorage for the last 12 days to take berth. Every ship was forced to stay here on average 15 to 16 days now due to congestion as against 6 to 7 days earlier in normal time.

The ships will face delay for more 4 to 5 days henceforth due to sudden strike by the dock workers last night, the harbour master of Chittagong port Gamrul Hossain told this corre-

See page 11 col 7

## Bangabandhu murder Hearing in death ref case likely by Wednesday

Death reference case of Bangabandhu murder is likely to come up for hearing in the High Court on or before Wednesday, reports UNB.

Only one death reference case is now left for hearing by the death reference bench before the Bangabandhu murder case, court sources said.

The death reference case No 29 of 1998 will be taken up today and the hearing is likely to be completed in a couple of days.

Meanwhile, the death reference bench yesterday refused a prayer of the counsel for Major (rtd) Bazul Huda for deferring hearing of the Bangabandhu death reference case for three days till June 27 when the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court is scheduled to hear a leave petition.

## Production at KNM comes to a virtual halt

From Quazi Amanullah

KHULNA, June 25: Production at the Khulna Newsprint Mill (KNM) has virtually stopped from this morning.

The production has reportedly come down to two metric tonnes a day. However, sources concerned said it is an "eyewash to fool the people." They said the production is as good as nothing.

The sources put down the reason to severe financial crisis, labour unrest and incompe-

tent administration.

Supply of newsprint was stopped again in this morning with no possibility to resumption anytime soon. The situation will not improve until sufficient funds are in place to pay the arrears of the workers and employees, and raw materials including pulp are purchased. The KNM also owes more than Tk 35 crore in outstanding bills to the Forest Department, the Power Development Board and

the Customs Authority.

Stock of pulp has already been exhausted, making it absolutely impossible for the mill to continue production even by slashing the output down to one tonne a day, said a highly placed source at KNM. There are no funds to either import pulp or buy it from Sylhet Pulp Mill. Sylhet Pulp Mill reportedly unwilling to sell pulp to the KNM on credit any more.

See page 11 col 6

## Flood water may roll down in 3-4 days

Flood situation in the northern districts is feared to take a severe turn within 3-4 days with water rolling down from upper riparian which is presently in grip of a severe flood, reports UNB.

"It usually takes 3 or 4 days to aggravate the situation on our side when the upper region in Assam is in the grip of floods," said a senior official of

the Flood Forecasting and Warning Centre yesterday.

Reports from across the border said the Brahmaputra was yesterday flowing more than 2 meters or 6.6 feet above the danger level flooding vast areas in the Indian state. It said four districts had gone under flood-water leaving over two lakh people marooned.

The officials of the Flood

Forecasting Centre told UNB that they were closely monitoring the four river basins, especially the Brahmaputra basin that posed a serious threat of floods.

The river close to the border in India was flowing 6cm above the danger level at Dhubri and 12 cm at Goalpara.

A report from Bogra says, the Baniajan flood protection

embankment is now under threat and may collapse any time flooding vast areas in Dhunat upazila and adjoining areas.

The embankment is under threat because of heavy current in the mighty Jamuna.

Meanwhile, several villages of Bhandarbari union in the upazila have been inundated by

See page 11 col 6

## Floods grip more areas in Assam

GUWAHATI, India, June 25: Flash floods triggered by heavy monsoon rains have hit more than 225,000 people in the Indian state of Assam and isolated the country's sprawling north-east, officials said today, reports AFP.

"Ten districts of Assam are reeling under flood waters which have affected more than 225,000 people. The situation is critical," a statement from the flood control room said.

"More than 1,000 villages were submerged with an estimated 20,000 hectares of paddy under water," it said.

An Assam official said road links between the seven north-eastern states, including Assam, and the rest of India were severed for a third day Sunday.

He said the Brahmaputra river was now flowing three metres (6.6 feet) above its normal

See page 11 col 6



A rickshaw driver pulls his vehicle through a flooded street in Guwahati yesterday after heavy monsoon rains triggered flash floods in India's north-eastern states. Over 100,000 people have been affected by the floods which have virtually severed the region's road links with the rest of the country.

— AFP photo

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