Magurchhara

for further course of action

The environment ministry has

also claimed Tk 609 crore in com-

pensation for the damage done to

the environment of Magurchhara.

Unocal agreed to make the com-

pensation by determining the amount of damages through a third

The Magurchhara blowout took

place in June 1997 when another

the US company, Occidental, was

drilling there. Later, Unocal took

over Occidental also shouldering

In our vesterday's issue, the

ambassador of North Korea

was mistakenly identified as

that of South Korea in a

photo caption on page 11.

We regret the inadvertent

the judge going by the words of

lawyers would often felt embarrassed

to hear the case without assigning

Appellate Division judges felt embar-

rassed to hear the case on March 27.

former chief justice Mostafa Kamal

told the BBC the same day that the

case had repeatedly been stalled as

has political implications, and no

judge wants to get involved in poli-

tics... but ultimately the judges have

to be bold enough to deal with the

issue," the former chief justice

As all these hoopla takes place,

the prosecution keeps its fingers

the hearing was adjourned till 11 am

tions regarding his (Rahman) prop-

erty and appointment of Shahid as a

Rahman told the court that there

was no family feud over his ances-

During the cross-examination

domestic help at his residence.

The defence lawyer asked ques-

crossed over the fate of the case

Trial resumes

observed.

FROM PAGE 1

This is an important case which

the judges have felt embarrassed.

When the two newly appointed

any specific reason," he added.

ts responsibility.

Erratum

## **Ministry probe**

"Storage of a huge volume of wheat in a short period seems to me quite illogical," Islam told journalists at the Pabna circuit house vester-

"I have learnt that wheat was also procured for an extended period last year and heard from some locals that late procurement had been a normal phenomenon over the last four years. Setting fresh targets in July when our growers have no storage of wheat to sell to government silos was quite unnecessary."

Islam said irregularities in this regard at the higher level of the ministry concerned "is not unlikely".

"We are likely to recommend that the procurement process should be discussed and brought to attention of the district procurement committees."

Earlier, Deputy Commissioner of Pabna Ashraful Makbul alleged that the district controller of food Fazlur Rahman did not consult with him or any other member of the district procurement committee about target revision.

Earlier, Islam had talks with the district administration officials and food officials Tuesday night. Nurul Huda, senior assistant secretary of the civil aviation and tourism ministry and Mahmuduzzaman, the chief chemist of the food ministry were accompanying the one member committee. In the morning, he went to

Muladuli CSD, BADC warehouse, and Iswardi LSD in Iswardi upazila, Atgharia upazila LSD and Sadar LSD and collected wheat samples from nine warehouses. He had talks with several mem-

bers of the procurement committee, suppliers and journalists in the afternoon. During his meeting with suppli-

ers, he wanted to know who had been directly involved with cultivation of wheat, but did not get any The suppliers told the committee

that all the supplied wheat was 'very well' in quality and procured from different markets in the country.

They also denied the allegation of supplying of any imported low quality wheat or poultry feed. "It is not hard to conclude that in

most cases the growers were not given priority and price support," Islam later told journalists. "There are differences in colour

and size of wheat procured before and after June 30," he added. On allegation of wheat procure-

ment after expiry of date, he said, "We cannot say the procurement was done after the deadline." Islam tried to clear confusion

over his statement at Bogra.

"I said that the imported wheat was found only in one warehouse in Bogra Sadar LSD and the imported wheat was not procured. However, the storing of non-procured wheat in a government warehouse is a gross violation of official rules."

"At every step, it appears to me that the things are changing. For example, when I saw the wheat sacks bearing Punjab Agro Industries Corporation of India

#### 123 more FROM PAGE 1

an aggrieved father of a patient at

Most of the private clinics and hospitals are not able to offer beds to patients.

At the Dhaka Shishu Hospital and Holy Family Red Crescent Hospital, special dengue units have been opened recently to deal with the crisis despite the bed crisis.

At the Nibedita Children's Hospital, Shamorita Hospital and Central Hospital, most of the newly admitted patients were given

accommodation on request. "We cannot admit too many dengue patients since they need special care and isolation," said an official at the Central Hospital yes-

At the Samorita Hospital, a doctor said he had to refuse a number of dengue patients, as there was no vacant beds for dengue patients.

## Sandhani offers

free dengue test STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka Medical College unit of Sandhani announced yesterday that it would do dengue confirmatory and

blood grouping tests for free. It also launched began blood cell separation services at its office on

the DMC premises yesterday. "We have decided to open the

services in the face of tremendous public pressure," said Shahana Begum, president of the Dhaka unit

"People can come to Sandhani for platelet any time between 9:00am and 3:00pm everyday. We have set up our cell separator at the Dr M A Mansur serology laboratory of

the DMC microbiology department. "The machine can prepare four units of platelet every three hours. Each unit of platelet will cost Tk 450 including screening for transmittable

diseases and others.' In the meantime, the organisation has also opened two 'hotline' telephones to help people with information related to blood and donors. The numbers are 9668690, 018-284878.

seals. I became confident that these are of Indian origin. But when Parimal Kumar Shing, supplier of the wheat, told me that these sacks were bought from local markets and he showed me the money receipt for buving the sacks. I became con-

In another development, several sacks full of wheat (with the hallmark of the Indian company) were shifted from an abandoned granary of Bogra to another godown under Bogra Sadar LSD Tuesday night, just few hours after Islam's visit.

Islam had earlier instructed all food officials not to shift wheat of one godown to other till further

However, official sources in Bogra said, some sacks were shifted under the DC's supervision Tuesday night to save the stock from torrential rains that flooded the oor of the granary.

In another development Agriculture Minister Motiur Rahman ijami, who was in Pabna yesterday to chair the district law and order meeting at the deputy commissioner's conference room, refused to make any comment on the wheat scam on the ground that it was under investigation.

Our correspondent from Khulna adds officials in Khulna acknowledged detection of low-quality wheat in Khulna central food godown.

Officials said that there were insect-infested wheat stocks in the godown. There are 1,755 MT of wheat in the godown. Sixty percent of the stock was imported while the rest was procured from north Bengal, sources said

### Armed attack leaves 15 hurt in N'ganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

At least 15 people were injured, six with bullets, in an armed attack allegedly by the hired goons of a garment owner at Masdair in the town yesterday morning. The miscreants also ransacked

several houses in the area during an hour-long attack. According to sources, a gang of

armed miscreants led by Sumon, son of the owner of Shovan Garments and Dyeing Factory, attacked the local people when they brought out a procession in the area demanding a smooth supply of water and gas. They blamed Shovan Garments

for excess consumption of gas and

The bullet injured persons are Aslam, 30, Malik, 25, Swapan, 28, Monir, 28, Ripon, 25 and Ibrahim 25. They were admitted to different clinics in the town. When contacted, owner of the

factory and vice-president of Bangladesh Knitwear anufacturers 8 Association (BKMEA) Hazi Siddiqur Rahman denied involvement of his son in the attack.

He said some local mastaans led by Sabuz, Monir, Swapan opened fire in front of my factory at about 11:30 am. The employees of the factory chased them," he added.

No case was filed till filing of this report at 6:30 pm.

### **BNP** divisional

FROM PAGE 12 schedule on August 24.

More than 1,000 leaders and activists of the BNP and its front organisations from the thana, district and city committees of the two divisions are expected at the meeting. The meeting aims at enhancing the party's organisational strength and getting feedback from the grassroots on the tennonth rule of the ruling party.

Dates for representatives' meetings of Dhaka, Rajshahi, Khulna and Barisal Divisions have not been finalised yet. There will be a joint meeting of the Barisal and Khulna representatives. Dhaka and Rajshahi representatives will have

The meeting of the Dhaka representatives will be the last one in the

Unlike previous years, all the representatives' or extended meetings will be held in the capital this rear and not at respective divisional eadquarters.

### Infighting

The hardliners have meantime made some achievements in sensitising the issue and tightening their hold on the wheat scam investiga-

On the contrary, their opponents with a liberal line are trying their best to protect the food minister. This oup led by one of the most powerful ministers will stop at nothing to keep Noman in the cabinet, no matter what his portfolio will be.

However, an elderly minister belonging to the liberal group said they are not going to defend the food minister and are all for action against those responsible for the scam. "But we cannot let them (hardliners) cash in on the issue.

## **BCL** enforces strike at CU protesting attack by Shibir

**CU CORRESPONDENT** 

Classes at the Chittagong University (CU) were not held yesterday due to the strike enforced by Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) protesting the attack on its leaders and activists by Islami Chhatra Shibir on Tuesday.

Some cadres of ICS assaulted leaders and activists of BCL CU unit including its president Mahbub Elahi, general secretary Kazi Mahzarul Islam, social welfare secretary Ahsanul Haq Manik, office secretary Abedin Al- Mamun, vicepresident (VP) Shahjahan Khan Samrat, joint secretary Aminul Islam Sumon. science and technology affairs secretary Biddhut, vice president Taslima Akter Shirin, law secretary Sabina Nur Aakhi at the university Though the train service to and

from the university was normal, but the buses carrying the university teachers could not ply till 2 pm due to resistance by BCL activists.

The BCL brought out a procession and held a rally at the university gate no. 1 at noon protesting the

Presided over by Mahbub Elahi, president of BCL CU unit, the rally was addressed, among others, by Zahiruddin Mahmud Lipton, vice president of BCL central committee, Kazi Mazharul Islam, and Nasir Haider Babul. They demanded expulsion of the ICS cadres from the university. Meanwhile, Bangladesh Chhatra

Union (BCU) has condemned the attack on BCL leaders and activists and demanded exemplary punishment to ICS cadres.

In a statement here yesterday president of BCU CU unit Rupayan Barua and general secretary Dev Prasad Devu expressed their concern over the attack and blamed the university authorities for not taking any action against the ICS cadres.

## Bappi's body

from his Becharam Deuri residence on august 5. Shipon took him to a hideout. At about 5:00pm the same day, he called Bappi's father to his shop and demanded Tk 20 lakh. Shipon told him that Bappi was confined in a staff quarter at Jatrabari and would be killed unless the money was given.

Alfu Mia agreed to pay but asked Shipon to hear his son first before handing over the money. But Shipon refused to do so. A shattered Alfu Mia could not take any decision and went to his shop to talk to his friends. Later, he informed the Kotwali police.

Shipon and his gang decided to kill Bappi after failing to get the noney. They first took the residence of their friend Ranjet at Demra Dellapara and later to the residence of another gang member, Shankar, at Chanpara and confined

him there. In the evening, Shipon and his accomplices took Bappai on a boat ride on the Shitalakhya. Sometime after, a starving Bappi fell asleep on the lap of Sharif, another accomplice of Shipon. He was then stranaled and thrown into the river.

Police arrested Shipon and two of his accomplices, Ripon and Zahid Hasan, when they were returning home after the killing. Before that, police arrested the parents of Shipon -- Rafiqul Alam and Hena Begum-- from their Demra residence. Another accused in the case Sharif is absconding.

Shipon, Ripon, Shankar and Sanieet confessed their involvement in the killing of Bappi before the magistrate.

#### Extradition FROM PAGE 12

The taskforce came to know from detectives both from home and abroad that the killers are staying in the USA, Zimbabwe, Canada, Pakistan, India and some Middle Eastern countries. It sent copies of the court verdict

to the governments of these countries and initiated extradition treaty with them.

Moreover, the Interpol rang a red alert throughout the world to hunt down the killers. The taskforce representatives went to the US in end-2000 and completed the preliminary procedures for an extradition treaty. The government also appointed two legal advisors in the

However, the move ended after the BNP led four-party coalition assumed power in October last. Fifteen former army officers

were awarded death penalty in the Bangabandhu Murder Case on November 8, 1998.

Later, the High Court upheld the death sentence of 12 killers, four of whom are now in the Dhaka Central Jail. The rest eight are hiding in foreign lands. They are Lt Col (rtd) Abdur Rashid hiding in the Middle East; Lt Col (rtd) Shariful Haque Dalim in Pakistan; Major (rtd) AKM Mahiuddin and Lt Col (rtd) Rashed Chowdhury in the USA; Lt Col (rtd) Aziz Pasha in Zimbabwe; Lt Col Nur Chowdhury in Germany; and Captain (rtd) Abdul Mazed and Risaldar (rtd) Moslemuddin in India.



The City Awami League brought out a procession in the capital yesterday demanding restoration of official security for Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina.

## **Death anniversary**

for immediate implementation of the verdict against the killers of Bangabandhu.

On this day in 1975, some disgruntled army personnel launched a late-midnight foray in which Bangabandhu and most of his family members were killed.

Bangabandhu's wife Fazilatunnesa Mujib, sons Sheikh Kamal, Sheikh Jamal and 10-yearold Sheikh Russell, daughters-inlaw Sultana Kamal and Rosy Jamal were among others who were killed on the dreadful night. Bangabandhu's two daughters

Sheikh Hasina and Sheikh Rehana survived as they were abroad at that In observance of the day, the national flag and the party flag will

be flown half-mast atop all AL offices including its headquarter in Dhaka, said a party press release yester-The national flag and the party flag will also be lowered at the

Bangabandhu Memorial Museum

and the city residence of the party

chief Sheikh Hasina, the press release added. The AL will also hoist black flags everywhere to mark the national mourning day, observed officially during its stay in power from 1996 to

But the coalition government of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia after coming to power in October last year scrapped the day and all its official programmes. Last week, the government banned hoisting of the national flag half-mast on any day

other than February 21 and the government-announced special However, the government is

unlikely to go for any legal action against the defiant opposition to avoid political tension, sources said vesterday. Law Minister Moudud Ahmed,

talking to reporters yesterday, pointed out that the flag rules do not provide for any punishment for keeping the national half-mast. But, he said, the authorities could

tors of the flag ban. The minister, however, refrained from commenting on the opposition move, adding, "The authorities concerned would look into the

take legal action against the viola-

Returning to power 21 years after the assassination of Bangabandhu, the AL scrapped the infamous Indemnity Act that blocked trial of his killers.

The trial court awarded death

sentences to 15 for killing Bangabandhu in November 1998 but the higher court later spared three of the convicts. The case is still pending with the Supreme Court. As part of their mourning

programme, the AL, its front organi sations and different socio-cultural organisations will hold milad mahfil, destitute feeding, blood donation and discussion meeting in the capital and elsewhere in the country. Besides, special prayers will be arranged at mosques, temples and

Hasina, also the opposition leader in the parliament, along with

slain leader at the Bangabandhu Museum at 12:30pm. She will then visit the Banani graveyard where other victims of the August putsch were laid. Similar programmes will be arranged at Bangabandhu's grave

her senior party colleagues will

place wreaths at the portrait of the

colleagues. Awami League will hold a public meeting at Paltan Maidan on August 18 as part of its elaborate program.

at Tungipara, which will also be

attended by Hasina and her party

Meanwhile, the AL has taken allout preparation to enforce today's half-day shutdown while the police also braced themselves with preparation for tackling the hartal activists, particularly in the capital.

Around five thousand police and paramilitary BDR patrols will be deployed during the hartal in Dhaka

The AL will organise a public meeting at Paltan Maidan in the capital on August 18 with Shaikh Hasina in the chair. Hasina is expected to announce fresh agitation programmes on the day. Meanwhile, Sheikh Hasina, in a

statement on the eve of the national mourning day yesterday, called for united efforts for restoration of the spirit of the liberation war, rule of law, human rights and secular social belief, and institutionalisation of democracy.

"Let this be our pledge of the national mourning day," she urged.

#### Too 'embarrassed' to hear the case, and in so doing rassed to hear it in August last folavoiding their responsibility. lowed by two other of his colleagues. "I've even seen that when the Since then, the division has been a hearing of the case was about to end,

the letter asking for Unocal's expla-

The letter was sent to Unocal

after Prime Minister Khaleda Zia at

a high-level meeting on Tuesday

asked Mosharraf to get explana-

tion from the international oil com-

Earlier, Unocal turned down a

claim of Petrobangla for US\$ 685

million equivalent to Tk 3.900 crore

in damages for burning 245 billion

cubic feet of gas of Magurchhara in

In refusing Petrobangla's claim,

the Unocal sent a short letter

saying the compensation issue

was resolved through a supple-

mentary agreement for two other

blocks by awarding Bangladesh

Since there were no explana-

tions by the Unocal as to how the

issue was resolved, the govern-

ment is now seeking clarification

five per cent extra gas.

nations.

the explosion

judge short of hearing the leave to appeal petition. In October last, the then Chief Justice Mahmudul Amin Choudhury asked the government to temporarily assign a High Court judge to the Appellate Division to hear the case. However, the government remained

indifferent to the need though Law Minister Moudud Ahmed kept saying that the government was very much willing to see the case take its own At the time, the Appellate Division comprised five men and now that it has been strengthened by two more members, it is still shy of one man to hear the case. At least three mem-

bers are needed to dispose of the

leave petition. Interestingly, the two

new additions had earlier felt embar-

rassed. The government's insensibility reinforced by its repeated request for more time to initiate a hearing on the case prompted Chief Justice Mahmudul Amin Choudhury to blast it in January. "

If you do not want to continue with

the case, then do let us know. please... I don't get it why every government tries to pull the trigger resting the gun on the shoulder of the court.' Former chief justice and ex-chief advisor to the caretaker administra-

embarrassed to hear the

Bangabandhu Murder Case, the

(Supreme Judicial) Council was of

the view that the judges are unwilling

tral property. He further said he could not tion Latifur Rahman in his recently exactly remember when Shahid was published book, " The days of careappointed a domestic help. He taker government and my say", said (Shahid) was about 20 at that time, when most of the senior judges felt he (Rahman) added.

> Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, 15, was the youngest daughter of Latifur Rahman, Chairman of Transcom

## **Donors find CHT**

CHT," the report said.

UNDP Resident Representative Jorgen Lissner presented the report

to Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan at the ceremony attended by Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, State Minister for Foreign Affairs Reaz Rahman, Deputy Minister for CHT Affairs Moni Swapan Dewan and Foreign Secretary Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury.

After brief statements by the UNDP resident representative, Michael Heyn explained the overall situation in the hilly region and the steps required for socioeconomic development.

He suggested that the risk management be enhanced in the CHT by setting up monitoring and reporting mechanism, strengthening local police and involving communities.

On the basis of assessment of

both risk and development situa-

tions, the mission reached a conclusion that the risk to development workers and equipment in the CHT is at an acceptable level. About the development, the report said that 25 years of insur-

gency along with other factors resulted in stagnation of the economy in the CHT. It observed that low income and local investment capacity, inaccessible production areas, highest cost of transport, low literacy levels and

constraints to economic development in the region. The pervasive poverty has affected tribal and non-tribal people alike. Scarcity of cultivable land, low-level of education and health,

lack of safety in certain areas are the

## Judicial body

Monjur Morshed, former OC of the

Ramna station Lutfur Rahman, and Sub-inspectors Rokeya Begum and Sattar, who had earlier testified. The resident student of the hall

who was arrested on July 24, told journalists after her deposition that Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal leader Halima Begum Lucy had instructed police to arrest her.

"The police arrested me at 9:00am at Lucy's instruction when I was leaving the hall for my local guardian's residence," she said on condition of anonymity.

and weak development institutions characterise poverty, the report defined The report has provided a clear

high unemployment, low incomes

opportunities in the CHT for a new era of peace and development. To seize the opportunities and achieve long-term stability and

picture of problems, needs and

development, the report suggested both long and short-term programmes and coordination.

#### M-16 case

FROM PAGE 12 Russel and Lablu confessed before

the magistrate that five AL leaders were directly involved with the poaching of M-16. But according to sources in

police, Lablu and Russel are not

directly involved with the arms trafficking. They are associates of the other two arrested people who are the main dealers. "Their confession is thus shrouded with controversy," one DB official said. Additional Deputy

Commissioner of Police Kohinur Mia, better known for his controversial involvement in the Shamsunnahar Hall incident, is investigating the M-16 case. Although transferred outside Dhaka last month following the DU incident. Kohinur Mia is staving back in Dhaka and probing into the case. His link with the ruling party has made the confession of the two arrested controversial and given rise to suspicion about political intrique, sources observed.

Meanwhile, police have raided houses of some AL leaders, most of whom have already gone into

#### NGO loan

FROM PAGE 12

issue to the Bank Reform Committee headed by Professor Wahiduddin Mahmud for its opinion if necessary. LGRD Minister Mannan

Bhuiyan, Industries Minister MK Anwar, Agriculture Minister Motiur Rahman Nizami, Social Welfare Minister Ali Ahsan Mujahid among others were present at the meeting held at the Bangladesh Secretariat.

# Noman tells The Daily Star

more days for completion of its

When asked whether he would make the report public once he received it, the food minister evaded a direct reply. "First, we'll review the report. Besides as another high-level probe committee is now working at the prime minister's directive, we would remain cautious about cre-

ation of any misunderstanding. On the question of procuring a huge amount of wheat at the fag end of the extended period of internal wheat procurement drive, Noman said, "I don't like to make any comment. Let's see what the probe report

Noman was also critical of making statements publicly on quality and origin (local or imported) of wheat by Civil Aviation Secretary Shafiqul Islam after visiting six Bogra godowns on Tuesday. "Such statements may misguide the investigation process.

It was reported in many national dailies that Islam-led one-man secretarial probe body found presence of imported wheat in Bogra.

Talking to journalists in Pabna yesterday, Islam, however, refuted his Bogra statement (published in the newspapers) that he had found imported wheat in all Bogra ware-"I said that the imported wheat

was found in one warehouse at Bogra Sadar LSD only and that the wheat was not procured by the government. "However, storing of nonprocured wheat in a government

official procurement rules. Asked about demand raised by different quarters for resignation, Noman refused to make any com-

warehouse is a gross violation of

Meanwhile, a high-level source in the food ministry told The Daily Star that in May last when food officials at districts and thanas were still struggling to meet the three-lakh-MT target, the target was raised by another one lakh MT at the decision of an inter-ministerial meeting on

The source suspected that lastminute upward revision in target

paved the way for imported Indian wheat to get room in government silos at the fag end of the procurement season. The source, speaking on condition of anonymity, wondered what prompted the government to go for

national production target was 16 lakh MT only. He pointed out that the government was buying only six lakh MT of rice against 270 lakh MT of rice grown in the country.

four lakh MT of wheat, when the

The source also claimed gross irregularities in allocation of fresh wheat quota. When many food officials at the grassroots were struggling to meet their respective procurement target for nonavailability of local wheat, imposition of fresh target by higher authorities actually created the scope for imported wheat to sneak through, he



Waterlogging has resulted in inundation ofvast areas in the old town, leaving residents with the unsavoury proposition of spending days in stenchy water.