

## Repair roads, lanes fast

PM visits city, gives instructions

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday directed all concerned to quickly complete the repair and construction works on roads and lanes in the capital wrecked by recent floods and downpour.

The prime minister gave the instructions as she went on a surprise visit in the afternoon to have a firsthand view of the wrecks left on the city thoroughfares by the natural calamity and see progress in the post-flood renovation work.

"Complete the repair and reconstruction of the damaged roads urgently," she told the authorities during the drive along the road from Zia International Airport to Mohakhali.

She also saw the progress of work

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

## Move to free schools of political clout

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government has moved to free at least 30 percent of the school management committees (SMCs) and college governing bodies (GBs) of political clout by the next fiscal year to get rest of the \$300 million education sector adjustment credit of the World Bank.

It also plans to introduce a grants-based financing system under which schools would not directly receive salaries for teachers but would get grants that they can use to pay teachers.

The World Bank has hinted at providing Bangladesh \$300 million in proposed Programmatic Education Sector Adjustment Credit

through its soft-lending window International Development Agency (IDA). The credit comes in the form of budgetary allocation.

It has already released \$100 million and would release the rest of the sum in two tranches on the government's fulfilling the conditions, including the two, in the next three years.

Sources said more than 90 percent of the schools and colleges are for secondary level, but the quality of teachers and the standard of education are very low. The conditions for the credit put emphasis on raising the quality of the teachers and standard of education at the higher and lower secondary level.

Education Minister Osman

Farruk in a letter to the World Bank has expressed the government's commitment to fulfil the conditions.

The government has amended 1977 Regulations on Managing Committees of the Registered Non-government Schools and Colleges, stipulating that only the deputy commissioners (DCs), upazila nirbahi officers (UNOs) or retired government officials nominated by them can chair the SMCs and GBs.

No individual other than DCs and UNOs can chair any more than four committees, according to the amended regulations. Other members of the SMCs and GBs would need to be elected.

Sources said the new provision is

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

## Hasina didn't accuse army of grenade attacks: AL

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) yesterday made it clear that it does not believe the army had a hand in the August 21 assassination attempt on Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina.

"The BSS news, based on a column of Kuldip Nayar, is an fabrication done with an ill motive to create confusion among people," Saber Hossain Chowdhury, political secretary to the AL president, said in a statement.

He once again protested the news item released by state-run news agency Bangladesh Sanghat Sangstha (BSS) that quoted Hasina as saying that the army was involved in the August 21 grenade attacks.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

## Another elite anti-crime force starts operations

New force Cheetah will act like Rab

STAR REPORT

Another crime-busting elite force, the fourth in a row, has hit the road in plainclothes in a bid to contain widespread crime.

The force, renamed Cheetah and originally dubbed as Panther, is now gathering intelligence about the hardened criminals.

Home ministry sources said this new force will act like the other elite force, Rapid Action Battalion, with similar kinds of weapons and power by next week. But this force will act under Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) and will not have any members of the armed forces.

A top police official said high-

performing policemen who had received special anti-crime training from time to time have been cobbled under the elite team. The members will undergo more training in course of time.

This undercover team will strike criminals and their lairs and will be equipped to face 'any kind of tough situation'.

Initially, four such teams, each composed of 10 members, will swing into action in the crime-prone capital expectedly from Monday. Each team will be led by an officer equivalent to the rank of an assistant police commissioner.

The authorities felt the need for another elite force, as the previous

special police outfits proved mostly ineffective in fighting crime. Only three months ago, a force styled Cobra was launched to gather information on and arrest criminals and seize illegal arms.

The government felt the need for special forces, as the law and order situation deteriorated fast since the coalition came to power.

As the situation was spinning out of control, the government called out the army and launched a drive styled Operation Clean Heart with army at the helm. The operation started on October 17, 2002 and ran through January 9, 2003 after seeing custodial deaths of 54 people, many

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

## AL to assist CID in grenade probe

Decides against helping judicial commission

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The main opposition Awami League (AL) yesterday decided to cooperate with the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to probe into the August 21 grenade attack but it would not budge on not assisting the one-member judicial enquiry commission.

The AL presidium, the highest policymaking body of the party, at a meeting with party President Sheikh Hasina in the chair took the decision responding to the CID letters that asked some senior AL leaders to appear at the CID office.

The main opposition ruled out any possible dialogue with the BNP-led alliance government and decided to gear up the one-point movement to oust the government forging greater unity among the opposition political parties.

The next course of agitation will be declared from the October 3 grand rallies that the opposition parties will hold in and outside the capital.

"We will hold the October 3 grand rally at Paltan Maidan at any cost

and overcoming all conspiracies of the government to foil it," AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil told reporters emerging from the three-hour meeting held at Sudha Sadan.

He accused the government of planning to arrest hundreds of opposition leaders and workers ahead of the grand rally.

Asked what the main opposition would do if its activists were arrested in the way they were arrested ahead of the April 30 deadline for ousting the government, Jalil replied, "Situation is not the same...it has changed a lot".

The meeting observed one-minute silence to show respect to the victims of Bangabandhu Avenue carnage that killed 20 people and injured over 200. Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina, who was the prime target, escaped the attacks.

The presidium however rejected CID's request to the AL leaders to come to its office for depositions and decided that the party leaders who were present at the August 21 rally would talk to CID only if they (investigators) come to AL office.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

## GONE WITH THE WATER



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Rain-swollen Buriganga has freshly devoured as many as 10 houses on its banks at Basila in the last two days.

## Hasina set to fly to S'pore for treatment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leader of the Opposition and Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina was scheduled to fly off last night to Singapore for better treatment of her hearing problem caused by the explosions of August 21 grenade blasts.

This would be her first foreign trip after the assassination attempt on her that killed at least 20 and wounded over 200. "The Awami League chief will return as early as possible, maybe four to five days later," said senior AL leader Kazi Zafarullah.

The former prime minister went to Zia International Airport from her

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

## 3 of a family stabbed to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Three of a family were killed and another seriously hurt in Borochapor Para village in Dhanu upazila Wednesday midnight.

Witnesses said up to 25 criminals led by Abdur Rashid broke into Abdul Baki's house and stabbed dead Baki, 55, his two sons Yasin Ali, 24, and Abdul Aziz, 21. Critically injured Dalal, 22, was shifted from Dhanu to Bogra Mohammed Ali Hospital in an unconscious state yesterday morning.

Family sources said Rashid and

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## DCC needs over Tk 559cr for road repair

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The recent floods and water-logging caused by the torrential rainfall have damaged 588 kilometres road, 175 km roadside drain and 9.5 km foot-path in the capital, which will require more than Tk 559 crore to repair, officials at Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) said.

The commuters have been suffering a lot due to the run-down roads and footpaths throughout the city. In many areas, roads especially the lanes and by-lanes are totally damaged, causing serious traffic congestion.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

## Basila sees Buriganga fury again

10 more houses washed away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Buriganga devoured ten more houses in Basila in the last two days leaving several others at high risk.

With the fresh spell of erosion, the Buriganga has swept away nearly 50 houses in the last 40 days and put the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority's (BIWATA) pontoon at Basila under risk.

## England target Lara

REUTERS, London

England will target Brian Lara in the ICC Champions Trophy final after the West Indies captain was felled by a delivery from Shoaib Akhtar in the semifinals.

Coach Duncan Fletcher, asked at a news conference on Thursday whether his strike bowlers would seek to exploit Lara's perceived vulnerability to short-pitched bowling, replied with a smile: "We'll discuss that at our team meeting."

But he made it clear that England, who beat world champions Australia to reach the final, would have to be ready to adapt their tactics in Saturday's final at The Oval against Lara and his side.

"We can't just say we will attack him with bouncers. We have to bowl intelligently, think on our feet out in the middle."

"Lara is a great player and he's probably been hit before and it

hasn't affected him."

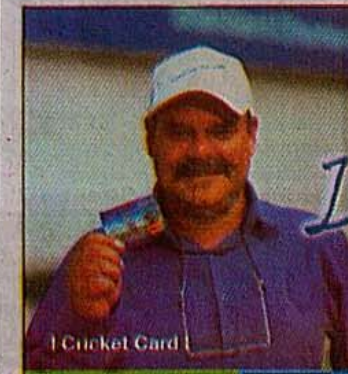
The 35-year-old Lara was forced from the field during West Indies' seven-wicket victory over Pakistan on Wednesday after being struck on the side of the neck by a delivery timed at around 91 miles per hour (146.4 kph).

He took several minutes to regain his feet before retiring hurt but his teammates later said he would be ready for the final.

England strike bowler Steve Harmison, who combines high bounce with express pace, peppered Lara with short deliveries in a Test series in West Indies earlier this year. England won the four-match series 3-0.

Lara was restricted to 100 runs in six innings during the opening three defeats, with a highest score of 36, before hitting back with a world-record 400 not out in the drawn final Test. He has also only managed one

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6



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