



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Beginning of an end... A bamboo fencing sets the stage for illegal river filling on the Turag river near Kamar Para Bridge at Tongi on the fringe of the capital. A government ban on river encroachment is there, but such offences go almost unchallenged.

POLLS IRREGULARITIES EC to summon Bhola officials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) has decided to summon top officials of the local administration and election officials concerned of Bhola at its secretariat on October 25 to probe into the alleged irregularities in Daulat Khan municipality polls.

The EC yesterday asked its secretariat to send letters to the deputy commissioner (DC), superintendent of police (SP) of Bhola, returning officer and other election officials asking them to be present before the EC on that day, sources said.

Officials of the secretariat said they would send letters to the officials concerned tomorrow.

"We also asked them to come up with all relevant polls documents. If we find anything wrong in the polls process we will take action," Election Commissioner AK Mohammad Ali yesterday told The Daily Star, adding, "Tampering the election process is a criminal offence; if such irregularities happened in the polls, criminals must be punished."

In the Daulat Khan municipality of Bhola, chairman and ward commissioners, all of whom belong to the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), were elected uncon-

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Tk 393cr summer vegetables lost to rain, deluge

REAZ AHMAD

Repeated floods, heavy rain and a prolonged monsoon this year played havoc with summer vegetables causing a loss of Tk 393 crore, Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) officials said.

Officials and agriculture marketing experts point out that an immediate bailout programme is required for winter vegetable cultivation to bring down prices and help farmers recoup their losses.

Before the floods came, growers

could reap vegetables from 2.27 lakh hectares, but crops on 1.35 lakh hectares were damaged by the deluge, according to a DAE report sent to the Ministry of Agriculture recently.

The ministry now plans to provide one kilogram of vegetable seeds and 20 kilograms of mixed fertilisers to each of 1.29 lakh small and marginal vegetable farmers who lost their produce to rain and flooding.

The ministry requires at least Tk 67 crore for this assistance package. Besides, it requires Tk 780 crore

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

to

Sources said the agriculture

ministry took the alleged insurgents of Indian State of Tripura to a magistrate's court seeking seven-day remand of the three -- Yasaf Barma, Bakar Barma and Pingnai Barma -- who were carrying Indian currency.

Magistrate Shafiqur Reza Biswas granted three-day remand.

Paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) arrested them from the house of tribal headman and former UP member Jogesh Barma in

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Plan for mass promotion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is planning to promote a good many officials at top level vacancies to defuse frustration in the civil administration on the basis of reports of intelligence agencies and the prospective officers' political allegiance, said highly placed sources of the government.

Some 100 officials will be given promotion. The posts of secretary and additional secretary will be filled up first and then the promotees will occupy mid-level of the administration, the sources said.

The sources also said that names of the prospective officials to the posts of secretary and additional secretary have been sent to different intelligence agencies and the

Bureau of Anti-Corruption (Bac) to inquire into their track records.

A preliminary scrutiny has already been started to find out "skilled and efficient" officials for promotion, the sources added.

"Political allegiance will get top priority in the process of the scrutiny," said an important official of the civil administration adding "officials having dubious track record will not be promoted."

Though the government tries to find out skilled and efficient officials, ultimately political allegiance becomes the only criterion of promotion, said another official preferring anonymity. Besides, strong lobbying and connection with ruling party are prerequisites for promotion, he added.

He also said that past promotions in the administration clearly proved that a good number of officials at different tiers were not given promotion because of their non-allegiance to the ruling party and having no strong lobby in their favour.

Sources at the Ministry of Establishment said that a list of 83 officials has been prepared for promotion to the post of secretary and additional secretary. Of them, around 60 will be elevated to the post of additional secretary and the remaining officials will be upgraded to the post of full-fledged secretary.

The issue came up for discussion when Bangladesh Navy chief Rear Admiral Shah Iqbal Mujtaba met his Indian counterpart Admiral Arun Prakash here, a defence ministry spokesperson said.

This is the first visit by a Bangladesh Chief of Naval Staff since 1998.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

3 held Indians remanded, rest sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Three of the 18 Indian nationals arrested from Habiganj Monday for their suspected links with All Tripura Tiger Force (ATTF) were remanded and the rest sent to jail yesterday.

Police took the alleged insurgents of Indian State of Tripura to a magistrate's court seeking seven-day remand of the three -- Yasaf Barma, Bakar Barma and Pingnai Barma -- who were carrying Indian currency.

Magistrate Shafiqur Reza Biswas granted three-day remand.

Paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) arrested them from the house of tribal headman and former UP member Jogesh Barma in

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Dhaka, Delhi discuss joint navy exercise scope

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

India and Bangladesh yesterday discussed the possibility of conducting joint exercises between their navies soon.

The issue came up for discussion when Bangladesh Navy chief Rear Admiral Shah Iqbal Mujtaba met his Indian counterpart Admiral Arun Prakash here, a defence ministry spokesperson said.

This is the first visit by a Bangladesh Chief of Naval Staff since 1998.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Flash flood grips north districts

Thousands marooned, crops damaged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,
Rajshahi

Hospitalpara and Napitpara is

critical. Flash flood caused by onrush of water from upstream inundated fresh areas of Bagmara of Rajshahi, Manda, Niamatpur, Porsha and Mohadevpur upazilas of Naogaon during the last 24 hours.

Water level at Padma marked a sharp rise, causing serious erosion of its bank at Shibganj upazila in Chapainawabganj district and submerging vast areas of crop fields.

In Bagmara, flood-water affected

15 villages of eight unions, marooning several hundred people and damaging five small bridges. The affected unions are Sonadanga, Auchpara, Kachari Koalipara, Govindapara, Baspara, Nardas, Shuvodanga and Borobihani.

About eighty percent areas of Naogaon town has been inundated and about 50 feet area near the sluice gate of Choto Jamuna has been washed away.

Many areas of the town are now

under 2 to 3 feet water. The situation at Bangabari, Bihari Colony, Sultanpur, Masterpara, Chawkdepara, Kalitola, Par Naogaon, Eidgaipara, Ghoshpara, Hati Naogaon, Chawk Mukter,

Criminal killed in 'shootout'
with elite force

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged criminal of Demra was killed in a shootout between his operatives and a joint team of crime-busting Cobra and Cheetah in Mirhajirbagh in Demra in the early hours yesterday.

His family claimed his innocence saying it was a cold-blooded murder.

Police said the Cobra arrested Hafizur Rahman Wasim, 30, accused of a murder and robbery, from Pargendaria near Mirhajirbagh at around 11:30pm Monday for a revolver, a pistol and six bullets.

Up to eight of his accomplices at this stage hurled eight home-made bombs and opened fire on the Cobra to free him. The police immediately took position with Wasim in a nearby six-storey building.

Sub-inspector Giasuddin suffered splinter wounds in his ribs, hands and legs. He was admitted to Rajarbagh Police Lines Hospital.

On information, a Cheetah team

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

India denies dam cut report

UNB, Dhaka

India yesterday denied Bangladesh media reports that the BSF (Border Security Force) along with some Indian nationals had illegally entered Bangladesh territory and had deliberately cut an embankment causing fresh floods in Satkhira.

A press release of the Indian High Commission here said the reports were referred to the authorities concerned in India who have conducted an investigation into the matter. It said the media reports are baseless and untrue.

Neither the BSF nor any other Indian nationals entered Bangladesh territory. The allegation made in the media reports that the BSF or Indian nationals aided by the BSF entered Bangladesh to deliberately breach an embankment located 250 meters within

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Oil price breaks thru' \$54

REUTERS, LONDON

Oil prices have surged to yet new record highs, driving US crude above \$54 as global supply outages thwart efforts to build winter heating fuel inventories.

US crude set a record \$54.45 a barrel yesterday, marking a sixth successive day of all-time peaks, before easing to \$53.94, up 30 cents on the day.

In London, Brent crude hit \$51.50 a barrel, before retracing to \$51.54 cents.

Oil prices have leapt 66 percent this year as the strongest demand growth in 24 years caught producers by surprise, leaving a tightly stretched global supply system little leeway to deal with outages.

Worries now are focused on winter heating oil inventories.

"The fear is that there will not be enough heating oil and we are already seeing colder weather in the (US) Northeast," said John Brady, a broker with ABN AMRO in New York.

"If we get another fall in stocks, it will put further strain on prices."

In London, Brent crude broke the \$500 a tonne barrier for the first time.

Winter fuel is in short supply around the globe, with end-September European distillate stocks 3.4 percent below last year and kerosene supplies in Japan down 20 percent from 2003.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Kamrul Islam's contract cancelled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday cancelled the contractual appointment of Executive Director (ED) of the Dhaka Transport Coordination Board (DTCB) Kamrul Islam Siddique on charge of alleged violation of service discipline and conflict with superiors.

Mr Siddique, who served as chief engineer of Local Government Engineering Department, chairman of Power Development Board and secretary to the government in various ministries, was appointed as ED of DTCB on contract after his

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

US, Iraqi forces raid Ramadi mosques

5 killed in attacks

AGENCIES, Baghdad

India and Bangladesh yesterday discussed the possibility of conducting joint exercises between their navies soon.

The issue came up for discussion when Bangladesh Navy chief Rear Admiral Shah Iqbal Mujtaba met his Indian counterpart Admiral Arun Prakash here, a defence ministry spokesperson said.

This is the first visit by a Bangladesh Chief of Naval Staff since 1998.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

least four people.

US aircraft also rocketed a mosque northwest of Ramadi on Monday after insurgents opened fire from there on US Marines, the command said.

The seven mosques targeted in

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Prayer Timing		
October 13		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-45	5-20
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-15	4-30
Magrib	5-45	5-50
Esha	7-15	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation