

Law soon to ban structures on estuaries of rivers, canals

UNB, Dhaka

The government will enact a law soon banning building structures on the estuaries of rivers and canals, wetlands and floodplains as those block normal course of water.

Blocking flow of water in the monsoon causes deluge and waterlogging, as happened in the just-over rains when devastating floods hit the country recurrently.

Water Resources Minister Hafiz Uddin Ahmed yesterday told reporters at his ministry that various installations of this sort are creating an adverse impact on environment and aggravating people's sufferings by causing severe floods.

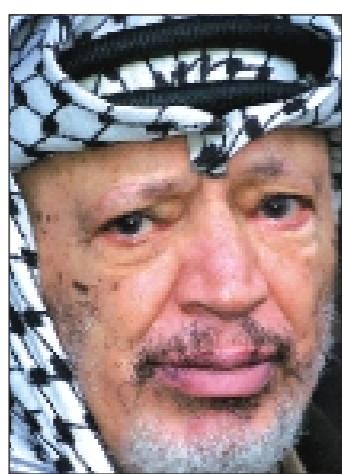
Under the law aimed at controlling floods, the construction of any permanent structures on embankment-sides will be banned, the minister said following a cabinet committee meeting drafting the law.

Anyone doing conservation, earth-filling or taking control of areas for fish research or conservation in rivers, canals, haors,

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

## Arafat gravely ill

Doctors weigh hospital move; Israel shifts gears on his travel



REUTERS, Ramallah, West Bank

Foreign doctors have rushed to Yasser Arafat's side to tend to the seriously ill Palestinian leader, who for decades has symbolised his people's struggle for statehood.

A senior aide said yesterday the Palestinian, Tunisian and Jordanian physicians recommended Arafat, 75, be moved to hospital but a final decision would be made only after the arrival later in the day of an Egyptian medical team.

The ex-guerrilla, loved by most of his people and reviled by many Israelis, has had stomach pains since last week.

Arafat's health took a dramatic

turn for the worse on Wednesday and officials said he had been slipping in and out of consciousness, though on Thursday he had also been able to eat, talk and say prayers.

"He is still in a very serious condition and he is calling for his wife," one official said at Arafat's headquarters, where he has been effectively confined by Israel for the past two years.

Arafat's slide into illness has raised fears of chaos among Palestinians, whose 4-year-old uprising for a state has stalled. His departure from the scene could also bring changes from Israel and its

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

## Uproar in Florida as ballots vanish

The Economist favours Kerry

AFP, West Palm Beach

Four years after the "Florida fiasco", the battleground state is back in the spotlight as thousands of absentee ballots went missing and campaigners traded claims of vote rigging.

Fears of renewed electoral chaos mounted in the key battleground state this week as authorities in one of the 67 counties said they were trying to track down some 58,000 missing absentee ballots.

The Broward supervisor of

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

Tigers close to yet another huge innings defeat

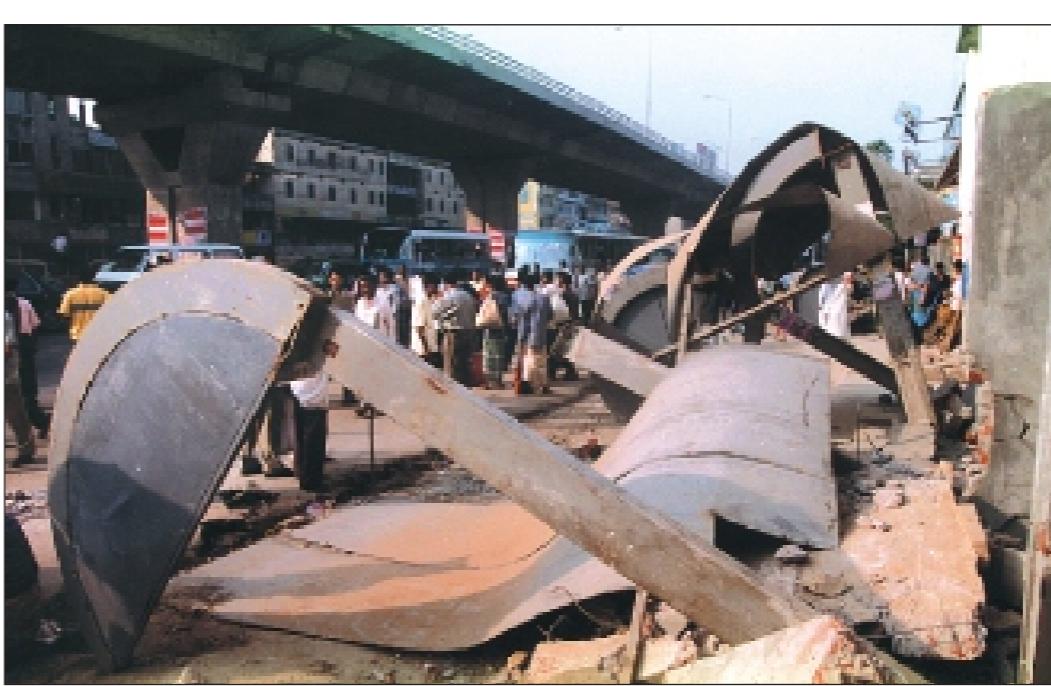
SPORTS REPORTER

Yet another pathetic batting display by Bangladesh put the hosts on the verge of a second successive innings defeat against New Zealand in the two-match Test series yesterday.

Democrats, who claim President George W. Bush stole the controversial 2000 elections and who have deployed 2,700 lawyers to Florida, jumped on the scandal.

"It looks like they're trying to steal the vote again," Dianne Glasser, vice chairwoman of the Florida Democratic Party, told AFP.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



Knocked-down passenger sheds installed illegally by local influential people lie along the VIP Road at Mohakhali after Dhaka City Corporation dismantled them in a drive yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

RAB KILLING IN BARISAL  
Mehedi's family blames mayor, Jubo Dal leader

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

The family members of Mehedi, a Barisal City Corporation (BCC) ward commissioner, who died reportedly in Rab custody, blamed the BCC Mayor and a central Jubo Dal leader for the killing.

At a press conference held in their house yesterday noon, the family alleged that the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) team as part of a conspiracy murdered Mehedi cold-bloodedly.

Besides, the Rab members looted the house and took away Tk 4 lakh in cash and valuables worth around Tk 10 lakh.

The family members demanded a judicial enquiry into the killing. They said they were preparing to file a murder case in this connection.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

2 wild elephants caught in electric traps, die

AGENCIES, Sherpur

Angry villagers killed two wild elephants with electric traps on Monday and Tuesday as some 150 giant animals from across the Meghalaya State border of India ravaged several thousand acres of Aman crops and a number of households in the remote villages here.

Police and officials said villagers in the Nalitabari area of the district set electric traps to save their cropland in a desperate attempt to protect their Aman crop and vegetables, already damaged by this year's devastating floods.

Villagers said one male elephant was killed and another

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

## 9 more controversial appointments at RU

Syndicate sits today to approve recruitment amid protest

ANWAR ALI and ABU KALAM,

Rajshahi

Rajshahi University is recruiting nine teachers in the Language department against four advertised posts amid allegations of 'massive politicisation'.

Political cadres of the ruling coalition parties BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, criminals accused in violence related cases and relatives of

teachers were included in a sealed list of selected candidates submitted last week to the syndicate for approval, said sources adding that the number of the selected might rise.

The RU syndicate will sit in the morning today to approve the choices of the department's selection committee dominated by pro-government teachers.

"The recruitment will tarnish the

image of the university and decrease quality of education if criminals and political cadres are selected as teachers," said Progressive Teachers' Association convenor Prof Entajul Haque.

Expressing his concern, Haque said that meritorious candidates were ignored in the recruitment process as there were hard lobbying and political pressure behind

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3

