

FERTILISER IRREGULARITIES

# Speaker, MPs unhappy over distribution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad and a number of lawmakers yesterday drew attention of Industries Minister Matur Rahman Nizami about the irregularities in distribution of fertilisers among farmers in remote areas.

The lawmakers alleged the dealers appointed during the previous Awami League government are involved in irregularities. They wanted to know whether the ministry would cancel these dealerships.

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar, who was chairing the session, joined the lawmakers and told the industries

minister that none of the upazilas of his Panchagarh district has got a single tonne of fertiliser so far.

He urged the minister to look into the matter and take necessary steps.

During the question-answer session, Jatiya Party (Ershad) lawmaker Hafizuddin Ahmed raised the issue of irregularities. BNP lawmakers Helaluzzaman Talukder Lalu and AKM Selim Reza Habib supported his allegation.

In reply, Nizami said it is not correct that all dealers were appointed during the Awami League government. Rather, every government had appointed some of the

dealers.

He said a five-member committee has been formed to review the matter for ensuring smooth distribution of fertilisers in remote areas.

The committee will examine the appointment of dealers and file a report by the end of this month. Further steps would be taken on the basis of the report, he said.

**POWER SITUATION**

The speaker yesterday requested State Minister for Power Iqbal Hassan Mahmood to ensure uninterrupted supply of electricity during the upcoming SSC examinations.

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## Hasina leaves for Spain Mar 7

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Leader of the Opposition and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina will go to Spain on March 7 to attend an international conference of the former heads of states and governments.

AL General Secretary Abdul Jaill said UN Secretary General Kofi Annan will be present at the two-day conference.

An AL source said Hasina will place wreaths at the portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Bangabandhu Bhaban early in the morning on March 7 prior to her flight to Spain. She will also take part in a few other programmes in the morning.

She will return home on March 11. SEE PAGE 11 COL 2



PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

Encroaching into Buriganga river continues unabated, despite repeated media reports and civic demands to put an end to the environmentally dangerous malpractice. The photo was taken near the bridge at Kamrangir Char yesterday.

## Tata firm on investing \$2b

UNB, Jamshedpur, India

Tata, India's industrial giant, will go ahead with its plan to invest in Bangladesh, as several projects involving an initial capital of about \$2 billion remained under study.

"We are committed to taking investment to Bangladesh...when I say we want to invest, we really mean it," said Ratan Tata, chairman of the corporate house, talking to a group of visiting Bangladeshi journalists here yesterday.

"We have warm feelings for your country," he added.

Talking briefly and exclusively to the Bangladeshi newsmen at the Founder's Day ceremony marking the 166th birth anniversary of Jamshedji Tata, the founder of the Tata Group, Ratan said his company has been seriously studying the proposed projects for Bangladesh.

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# Quit for failure to deliver

Dr Kamal asks govt before Kibria family's 'blue for peace' programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Oikya Mancha President Dr Kamal Hossain yesterday said the government should step down immediately for its 'failure to deliver'.

Addressing a rally beside Dhanmondi Lake to express solidarity with Asma Kibria in protesting the killing of former finance minister SAMS Kibria in a grenade attack, Dr Kamal said, "We should not limit ourselves only to demanding trial of

the culprits, rather we should realise the trial at any cost."

Kamal, also the president of Gono Forum, said, "those who are involved in extra-judicial killings would be tried one day in people's court."

"Extra-judicial killing is against the constitution and the civilisation of the country," the eminent lawyer remarked, adding if unnatural death

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CTG UNDERWORLD

# 'Crossfire' kills 22, scares away 25

SHAHIDUL ISLAM, Ctg

'Crossfire' death has scared away most of the local listed top terrors into hiding or shelters at home and abroad.

Sources said almost all the underworld lynchpins of the district and the port city, who have managed to survive the Rapid Action Battalion's (Rab) crackdown on terrorists, are now lying low in Dubai, Kolkata, Dhaka or somewhere far away from Chittagong.

According to them, at least 25 die-hard gangster are now in hiding or leading underground life, after 22 terrorists including 'Gittu' Nasir have died one after another in 'crossfire' since the elite anti-crime force launched its operation here on May 22 last year.

They said Rab-7 stationed in Chittagong is determined to root out the terrorists on its hit list.

"We know what we're supposed to do and will continue our anti-terrorism operations," said Rab-7

Acting Commander Major Sharif Hasan yesterday afternoon.

Declining to detail their plan about the terrorists on the run, he just said, "None of the terrorists accused in specific and grievous criminal cases would be spared."

According to sources, Mamunur Rashid, a Jubo League leader and a ward commissioner of the port city, tops the Rab list followed by top Shibir cadre Habib Khan convicted for life in the Nazirhat College

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# PM opens waterway around Dhaka

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday inaugurated the 26.5-km Swarighat-Ashulia circular waterway around the capital that will ease a nagging pressure on the city's communications network through providing cheaper and cleaner transportation facility.

In the first phase of the waterway project, people can now travel and carry goods from Ashulia to Swarighat trading heartland of Dhaka.

About one lakh people are expected to commute and 6,000 tonnes of goods to be carried on the new route of communications.

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) is implementing the Tk 35.99-crore Circular Waterways Project, which will particularly alleviate traffic load on the Narayanganj-Dhaka land route.

The total project will have 10 landing stations at Swarighat, Kholamora, Lalbagh, Basila, Rayerbazar, Gabtali, Amin Bazar, Shirmirtek, Berulia and Ashulia. The stations will be completed by the end of this year.

Khaleda inaugurated the waterway unveiling the plaque of the Ashulia landing station.

Addressing the opening function SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

# Embezzlement of dredging money alleged

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The circular waterway from Sadarghat to Ashulia would have no use in dry season as the project officials had allegedly misappropriated huge sums of money meant for dredging and dikes.

Funds had been misappropriated in the name of dredging and construction of dikes throwing the circular waterway project's future into uncertainty.

"How the authorities would maintain the navigability in the river Turag? Route from Sadarghat to Amin Bazar might be navigable throughout the year, but it would be

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PHOTO: STAR

Poet Shamsur Rahman, left, and Asma Kibria, centre, inaugurate the 'Shantir Pakkhe Nileema' programme launched by the family of slain finance minister SAMS Kibria by flying pigeons in Abahani Playground yesterday.

## Jamaat serves legal notice on Prof Sayeed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jamaat-e-Islami Bangladesh yesterday served a legal notice on Awami League leader Prof Abu Sayeed for making 'derogatory and disparaging remarks and unfounded allegations' in his book 'Aghoshito Juddher Blueprint' (Blueprint of an Undeclared War).

Barrister Abdur Razzak on behalf of the ruling coalition partner served the notice also on printer and publisher of the book, which came out last month, for 'aiding and abetting in making those defamatory statements'.

The notice called for 'a note of apology' to be published on the front page of Bangla daily

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# China blast kills 20 school children

REUTERS, Beijing

A dynamite explosion in a north China village killed 20 primary schoolchildren when their classroom collapsed on top of them, state media said on Thursday.

The dynamite, stored illegally in a coal mine owner's house in Puxian county, Shanxi province, buried the children and some of their teachers at the nearby school, the Beijing News said.

The mine owner was also killed in the blast, the Beijing News said.

Explosives or fireworks manufactured and stored illegally kill hundreds each year in China's rural areas.

Six thousand miners died last year in accidents and explosions that made the industry the world's deadliest and forced work-place safety on to the agenda at the annual session of parliament which starts on Saturday.

An official with the county government in coal-rich Puxian said many private coal mine owners

possessed large quantities of explosives.

"But it is illegal to keep the explosives at home," he said.

Local police said they were unable to give further details.

The New York-based rights group, Human Rights in China, reported another grisly breach of work-place safety in northern Hebei province where five child factory workers died from asphyxiation caused by a charcoal heater, two apparently inside coffins.

"Due to the substandard conditions in the factory dormitory, five girls were found unconscious from inhaling charcoal fumes at the end of last year," the group said in a statement.

"Sources say that without checking if the girls were actually dead, (the factory owner) put them into coffins for cremation, with the result that two of the girls who were apparently still alive died of asphyxiation."



## Chinese PM arrives on April 7

UNB, Dhaka

Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao will pay a two-day official visit to Bangladesh on April 7-8, said an official yesterday.

An advance team from Beijing is now in the capital laying the groundwork for the Chinese premier's planned visit.

Jiabao will attend the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) in Islamabad on April 5-6. After the ACD meeting, he will come to Dhaka on the second leg of his four-nation tour of South Asia.

Jiabao is also likely to visit Sri Lanka. SEE PAGE 11 COL 6

