

Lightning kills 8 in 5 districts

BDNEWS, Dhaka

Lightning killed eight people and injured 15 others in Panchagarh, Nilphamari, Rangpur, Cox's Bazar and Chandpur districts yesterday.

In Panchagarh, two separate incidents of lightning left three people killed and three others injured. The first incident took place at Dalupara village under Tentulia upazila of the district and the second at Kaleswarpara village under Sadar upazila.

Genda Napit, 65, and his family members were struck by lightning while they were asleep at their house at Dulapara village in Tentulia upazila. Genda died on the spot and his grandson Naibul Islam, 16, succumbed to his injuries on the way to hospital.

Nazma, 20 of Kaleswarpara village in Panchagarh Sadar upazila was killed by lightning. Fazar Ali, Nazmul Haque and an unidentified woman of the same village were

injured and admitted to Panchagarh Modern Hospital.

In Rangpur, Sofia, 45, wife of Hafizuddin of Char Ishwarkul village in Gangachara upazila, and her daughter Arjina, 10, died when a thunderbolt hit them. Police recovered the bodies.

Fatima Akter, 18, was killed and her husband and a child were injured by lightning in Kalamarchhara area under Moheshkhali upazila of Cox's Bazar. In Nilphamari, Kaltu Mahmud, 35, son of Osman Ali, was killed at Chaoradangi village in Jaldhaka upazila of the district. He was struck by lightning while working in his paddy field in the morning.

Lightning killed Delu Mollah at Damadi village in Sadar upazilla of Chadpur district when he was working in the paddy field near the river Meghna. Housewife Fatema Begum, 40, and Razia Akter, 12, of the village received burn injury in the incident.

Former judge goes

FROM PAGE 1

report. He also urged him to take action against the chief justice in accordance with the constitution and appealed for justice.

The Supreme Judicial Council consists of the chief justice and two next senior judges. If there is any allegation against any of the three, the judge next in seniority will be made a member.

Mamun made the appeal with the president after the High Court on April 17 rejected his April 9 plea to issue a rule upon the chief justice "to show cause under what authority he was holding the office of the chief justice of Bangladesh and why it shall not be declared that the office of the chief justice of Bangladesh has become vacant upon his disqualification".

The HC Division Bench of Justice Shah Abu Nayeem Moinur Rahman and Justice Moeenur Islam Chowdhury said in its observation that the president is the authority to remove a sitting judge. The president has to initiate proceedings against a judge for the removal and act on the information received from the (Supreme Judicial) Council or from any other source that include any petition or representation, it said.

Yesterday, Mamun went to the President's office in Bangabhaban around 10:00am and submitted his eight-page application. He also attached a copy of his writ petition, the High Court judgement on it and some other documents.

Asked whether he submitted his application to the President, Mamun told The Daily Star: "I received the High Court order on my writ petition yesterday (Tuesday). Since there is no alternative following the High Court verdict, I submitted my application to the president today, informing him about my grievances."

President Iajuddin Ahmed appointed Mamun along with 10 others as additional judge on July 29, 2002 for a two-year term, but services of all except Mamun were confirmed on July 28, 2004. Mamun had his job extended for further six months the same day, but he was not confirmed on expiry of the period.

ALLEGATIONS

Mamun alleged that the chief justice did not process his case for his appointment as a permanent judge 'out of ill will and malafide

intention' even though there was no allegation of incompetence or inefficiency against his functioning as a judge.

"...Thus the learned Chief Justice disqualified himself to continue as judge of Bangladesh, inasmuch as he has violated his oath, to do the right without ill will."

Mamun said while serving as additional judge, he had applied for an old official car only to be refused. After some days, the chief justice allotted the car for Justice Syed Dastagir Hossain. Mamun was told then the car was allotted on the basis of seniority.

That Justice Syed Dastagir Hossain is a first cousin of the chief justice is not the grievance of the petitioner (Mamun), but the grievance is that the chief justice has deliberately violated his own standard in the instance of allotting residential accommodation, Mamun said in his petition.

When house No. 12 in the Judges' Complex, Dhaka became vacant due to the shifting of Justice Syed JR Mudassar Husain to the official residence of the chief justice, Mamun was likely to get it on the basis of seniority. But the chief justice allotted it to Justice Zinat Ara in breach of his own standard and utter violation of the constitution 'in an act of favour and affection', Mamun further alleged.

While Mamun protested the allotment of the house to his junior, he pointed it out to the chief justice that gender discrimination is prohibited in the constitution and that an additional judge of the High Court 'is not a distress woman'.

In another allegation, Mamun said the chief justice has awarded former registrar of the Supreme Court Kamrul Islam Siddiquee office of additional judge of the Supreme Court for his participation in carrying out illegal orders."

He also alleged that Advisor to the Prime Minister on Parliamentary Affairs Salauddin Qader Chowdhury had informed him that the chief justice tried to persuade him over the telephone to ensure appointment of Kamrul Islam Siddiquee as additional judge 'which tarnished the impartiality and image of the chief justice's office'.

Jalil again rules out polls

FROM PAGE 16

this parliament now that 60 to 70 percent of the parliamentarians are either black money holders or godfathers of criminals?" Jalil asked.

Asked if they will join the next parliament session, he said the AL always wants to go back to the parliament but the government's unfriendly attitude forces it to stay away from the House.

Jalil referred to a meeting BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and he attended last year and said, "In that meeting we both agreed not to harbour those who own black money and godfathers of criminals in the party, but since then we have not got any positive response from the BNP on the issue."

Turning to the reforms, Jalil said, "It is typical of (Prime Minister) Khaleda Zia to oppose any sorts of reforms although she finally give in to the pressure created by the opposition parties."

Asked about the BNP secretary general's refusal to discuss caretaker government reforms and appointment of new chief election commissioner (CEC), Jalil said, "What Mannan Bhuiyan has said bears no significance. What Khaleda Zia says matters."

The AL general secretary said appointment of a new CEC has nothing to do with the reform proposal being drafted by the opposition regarding caretaker government system and the EC.

Asked if the AL would launch a street agitation if the new CEC, he replied, "Let the time come and you will see it in future."

On Chittagong City Corporation election scheduled for May 9, Jalil said the AL-backed candidates would secure 60-70 percent of the ballots at stake if the election were

free and fair. He warned however that if the elections were rigged, the opposition parties would launch a movement from Chittagong to bring down the government.

On the recent border skirmishes, the AL leader said the government let those happen to fan anti-Indian sentiments ahead of the national election to reap political benefits.

Mohiuddin

FROM PAGE 1

The letter was written in the name of a 'Moulabadi' (fundamentalist), trained in Dhaka and sent by M o h a m m a d S h a h a b u d d i n (Chowdhury) of Sohrawardy Hall, Room-212, Chittagong University. Shahabuddin was a student of journalism department. He died nine months ago, his relatives and friends said.

The letter reads, "Mohiuddin, you have been mayor for long. Now submit your resignation immediately before any action by us. Otherwise, your body will float on the river Karnaphuli on May 7/8."

Written in an official pad of forest department, the letter also contains a slogan for Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

Provost of the hall S M Shafiqul Islam told The Daily Star that there is no student named Shahabuddin in Room-212.

Obaidul Quader, AL joint secretary and a member of the party's election monitoring cell, gave photo copies of the letter to journalists. "This is all you see in the letter, we know nothing more," he said.

A general diary will be filed with the local police station, he added. Mir Nasir could not be contacted. But Aminul Islam, his political secretary, said, "It is just a stunt by the opposition party for electoral gaggins."

Swiss arrest Russian ex-minister

BBC ONLINE

A former Russian atomic energy minister has been arrested in Switzerland at the request of the United States, where he is wanted for money laundering.

Yevgeny Adamov, a nuclear physicist, was detained while on a visit to Bern, the Swiss justice ministry has said.

He is accused of diverting up to \$9m (£4.7m) the US gave to Russia to improve security at its nuclear facilities, the Swiss added.

A lawyer for Mr Adamov has been quoted as saying the charge is "baseless".

Adamov, who was minister from 1998 until 2001, is due to appear before a Swiss court to say whether he agrees to be extradited.

He reportedly travelled to Bern to discuss with Swiss authorities the freezing of some of his daughter's bank accounts.

Adamov currently jointly owns a consultancy firm based in Pennsylvania.

Before serving as minister, he headed Moscow's NIKIET nuclear research institute, which developed nuclear weapons.

He has been criticised by a Russian parliamentary committee for illegally setting up companies inside Russia and abroad.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, the US has helped Russia recover nuclear material from outdated warheads and improve safety at its nuclear reactors.

Twelve new moons for Saturn

BBC ONLINE

Astronomers have discovered 12 new moons orbiting Saturn, bringing its number of natural satellites to 46.

The moons are small, irregular bodies - probably only about 3-7km in size - that are far from Saturn and take about two years to complete one orbit.

All but one circles Saturn in the opposite direction to its larger moons - a characteristic of captured bodies.

Jupiter is the planet with the most moons, 63 at the last count. Saturn now has 46. Uranus has 27 and Neptune 13.

The latest ones were found last year using the Subaru telescope in Hawaii. Confirmation observations were made last month using the Gemini North telescope also situated in Hawaii.

Dave Jewitt of the University of Hawaii, co-discoverer of the objects, told the BBC News website that they were found as part of a detailed survey of the outer planets in order to better understand their origin.

The newly-found satellites were probably formed in the main asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter, and scattered out of it by the tug of Jupiter's gravity.

"The key question is how they became captured by Saturn. The current models devised to explain how such bodies are captured are unable to explain why they reach the orbits they do," said Dr Jewitt.

"The new discoveries should improve our knowledge of satellite systems in general and should, eventually, lead to an understanding of how such small, irregular bodies are captured by the gravity of giant planets".

"Having more satellites to study will give us more data to plug into our computer simulations that may tell us what happened", he added.

Astronomers have found that all four giant planets - Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune - possess about the same number of small irregular satellites irrespective of the mass of the planet, the orbit of the satellites, or if they were captured or formed in orbit. This observation remains unexplained.

Bangladeshi

FROM PAGE 16

Embassy in Jordan of the matter but to no effect."

Kabir said 121 Bangladeshi workers went to Jordan through 'Golden View', a Bangladeshi travel agency, in November-December last year.

"The 121 workers had to huddle in four small rooms and the Al Shahed authorities used to give us inadequate food and water. They put us under lock and key in our rooms and factory so that we could not contact with others," he added.

"As I, along with five other workers, protested the inhuman torture, the authorities forcibly sent us back," he said.

Kabir alleged that Ohiduzzaman Razu, owner of Golden View ignored them when they informed him of the matter after returning home.

He demanded compensation from the travel agency and urged the government to take action in this regard.

Fisherman

FROM PAGE 16

Family sources said Abu Taleb was seriously injured in the head, hands, chest and back. He was immediately taken to Shyamnagar upazila health complex and was later shifted to Sathkira sadar Hospital as his condition deteriorated.

MCCI rallies against

FROM PAGE 1

frustration in the business community, they reported to the premier.

They said the International Monetary Fund and perhaps also the Bangladesh Bank mistakenly consider that private sector credit has grown at an excessive rate, which might aggravate the inflationary situation. But, according to a central bank analysis, the credit growth has not been excessive at all, they pointed out.

UNB adds: The 14-member MCCI delegation included its Vice-President AKM Rafiqul Islam, Secretary General CK Hyder and members M Shamsul Alam, M Anis Ud Dowla, Steve Banner, M Nurul Islam, Obaidur Rahman Khan, Syed Nasim Manzur and Rokia A Rahman.

Former presidents of the chamber Syed Manzur Elahi, Samson H Chowdhury, Latifur Rahman and Laila Rahman Kabir were also present.

As the chamber leaders discussed a number of business issues, the prime minister reaffirmed to the delegation that hers is a business-friendly government and, at the same time, is aware of the importance of ensuring the welfare of workers and employees.

She urged the industrialists to upgrade safety and security measures and the working condition in their mills and factories. In this context, she requested the authorities to ensure due compensation for the victims of the garment factory building collapse at Savar.

She also asked some industrialists to pay their arrears with bill payments for utility services like power, gas and telephone as well as the value-added tax (Vat) so that the government can reinvest more for expanding the utilities.

MCCI leaders termed the recent launching of a world-class hospital in the city by foreign investors a success of the government's policy to attract foreign investment. They also lauded the government measures that have led to an improved law and order and posted a positive impact on industrial growth.

During the meeting, Khaleda wanted to know about the progress of work on the BGMEA hospital, the foundation stone of which she had laid earlier.

The MCCI leaders invited the prime minister to a function they will organise to celebrate the hundred years of the chamber this year.

Pro-govt lawyers

FROM PAGE 16

of the SC' on the court premises.

At the meeting, SCBA leaders reiterated their demand to the chief justice to withdraw Faizee from judicial function.

Former SCBA presidents Abdul Baset Majumder and Ozair Farooq, former law, justice and parliamentary affairs minister Advocate Abdul Matin Khasru, SCBA Secretary Enayetur Rahim, Mamtajuiddin Mehedi and BA Rashid, among others, addressed the meet.

lapse at Savar.

General Recording Officer (GRO) SI Saiful Islam opposed the bail petitions, saying the charges were primarily proved.

He said the fake passport holders in their professional statements to a magistrate also revealed the names of other arrestees involved in the incident.

The defence lawyers submitted separate bail petitions, saying their clients were falsely implicated in the case as part of a conspiracy.

Senior Advocate Mahabubul Haque told The Daily Star he wonders how a magistrate grants bail to the accused within such a short time. Even if the charges are bail-able, they should not be bailed considering their offences, which have tarnished the country's image, he added.

Police in separate drives on April 29 and May 1 arrested the cops, security officer, brokers and the fortune seekers.

Later, Gen Jahangir visited the Fakimura border outpost and gave necessary directives to his force to ensure full time border patrol and curb cross-border crimes, an official handout said.

He also exchanged views with the officials of the paramilitary force and asked them to face any situation with patience and wisdom.

Our B'baria correspondent reported that the BDR chief also visited the border village, Hirapur, in Akhaura and talked to the people affected during the BDR-BSF confrontation on April 16.

Talking to newsmen, the BDR chief said the probe report on the Akhaura incident found no offence on the part of his force.

He told the villagers that the BDR men would help them harvest crops in their fields near the frontier.

The BDR DG also visited the family of the 10-year-old Nahid Akhter who was killed in BSF firing on April 16.

Talking to newsmen, the BDR chief said the probe report on the Akhaura incident found no offence on the part of his force.

He assured that the Japanese government will make effective contributions in this regard, including equipment, and training for the police and that Japan may help set up a forensic research institute in Bangladesh.

The Japanese envoy noted that the Bangladesh government has taken several steps to ensure stability, such as banning the extremist Islamic organisations and

arresting their leaders, arresting the suspects of Kibria assassination case and the arms smuggling case in Chittagong. But the real picture behind these crimes is yet to emerge.

"I request the government to continue investigations into the unsolved cases and bring the suspects to trial under a due process," he added.

The ambassador observed that in the context of the expiry of the MFA (Multi-Fibre Agreement), Bangladesh is faced with the challenge of enhancing its competitiveness in the global market and diversifying its exports.

"Promoting investment, including the FDI would be the most effective solution. However, infrastructure development...has shown little progress. For example, few tenders and contracts for power plant construction have been successful in recent years, which would lead to serious power shortage in the near future," he said.

In recent months, Japan has committed \$107 million for construction of roads in Chittagong and Sylhet, \$50 million for overhauling some units of the Ashuganj power plant, and \$78 million for the Rupsha bridge besides cooperating in conducting the feasibility study of the Padma bridge.

The Japanese envoy noted that since 1994, Bangladesh has supported Japan's interest in becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Being the biggest bilateral donor, Japan provides support in 12 priority sectors in Bangladesh -- infrastructure development, transportation, bridges, rural development, education, health, water, private sector development among them. Bangladesh exports to Japan stand at around \$400 million and imports from that country at around \$100 million.

arresting their leaders, arresting the suspects of Kibria assassination case and the arms smuggling case in Chittagong. But the real picture behind these crimes is yet to emerge.

"I request the government to continue investigations into the unsolved cases and bring the suspects to trial under a due process," he added.

The ambassador observed that in the context of the expiry of the MFA (Multi-Fibre Agreement), Bangladesh is faced with the challenge of enhancing its competitiveness in the global market and diversifying its exports.

"Promoting investment, including the FDI would be the most effective solution. However, infrastructure development...has shown little progress. For example, few tenders and contracts for power plant construction have been successful in recent years, which would lead to serious power shortage in the near future," he said.

In recent months, Japan has committed \$107 million for construction of roads in Chittagong and Sylhet, \$50 million for overhauling some units of the Ashuganj power plant, and \$78 million for the Rupsha bridge besides cooperating in conducting the feasibility study of the Padma bridge.

The Japanese envoy noted that since 1994, Bangladesh has supported Japan's interest in becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Being the biggest bilateral donor, Japan provides support in 12 priority sectors in Bangladesh -- infrastructure development, transportation, bridges, rural development, education, health, water, private sector development among them. Bangladesh exports to Japan stand at around \$400 million and imports from that country at around \$100 million.

arresting their leaders, arresting the suspects of Kibria assassination case and the arms smuggling case in Chittagong. But the real picture behind these crimes is yet to emerge.

"I request the government to continue investigations into the unsolved cases and bring the suspects to trial under a due process," he added.

The ambassador observed that in the context of the expiry of the MFA (Multi-Fibre Agreement), Bangladesh is faced with the challenge of enhancing its competitiveness in the global market and diversifying its exports.

"Promoting investment, including the FDI would be the most effective solution. However, infrastructure development...has shown little progress. For example, few tenders and contracts for power plant construction have been successful in recent years, which would lead to serious power shortage in the near future," he said.

In recent months, Japan has committed \$107 million for construction of roads in Chittagong and Sylhet, \$50 million for overhauling some units of the Ashuganj power plant, and \$78 million for the Rupsha bridge besides cooperating in conducting the feasibility study of the Padma bridge.

The Japanese envoy noted that since 1994, Bangladesh has supported Japan's interest in becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Being the biggest bilateral donor, Japan provides support in 12 priority sectors in Bangladesh -- infrastructure development, transportation, bridges, rural development, education, health, water, private sector development among them. Bangladesh exports to Japan stand at around \$400 million and imports from that country at around \$100 million.

arresting their leaders, arresting the suspects of Kibria assassination case and the arms smuggling case in Chittagong. But the real picture behind these crimes is yet to emerge.

"I request the government to continue investigations into the unsolved cases and bring the suspects to trial under a due process," he added.

The ambassador observed that in the context of the expiry of the MFA (Multi-Fibre Agreement), Bangladesh is faced with the challenge of enhancing its competitiveness in the global market and diversifying its exports.

"Promoting investment, including the FDI would be the most effective solution. However, infrastructure development...has shown little progress. For example, few tenders and contracts for power plant construction have been successful in recent years, which would lead to serious power shortage in the near future," he said.

In recent months, Japan has committed \$107 million for construction of roads in Chittagong and Sylhet, \$50 million for overhauling some units of the Ashuganj power plant, and \$78 million for the Rupsha bridge besides cooperating in conducting the feasibility study of the Padma bridge.

The Japanese envoy noted that since 1994, Bangladesh has supported Japan's interest in becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Being the biggest bilateral donor, Japan provides support in 12 priority sectors in Bangladesh -- infrastructure development, transportation, bridges, rural development, education, health, water, private sector development among them. Bangladesh exports to Japan stand at around \$400 million and imports from that country at around \$100 million.

arresting their leaders, arresting the suspects of Kibria assassination case and the arms smuggling case in Chittagong. But the real picture behind these crimes is yet to emerge.

"I request the government to continue investigations into the unsolved cases and bring the suspects to trial under a due process," he added.

The ambassador observed that in the context of the expiry of the MFA (Multi-Fibre Agreement), Bangladesh is faced with the challenge of enhancing its competitiveness in the global market and diversifying its exports.

"Promoting investment, including the FDI would be the most effective solution. However, infrastructure development...has shown little progress. For example, few tenders and contracts for power plant construction have been successful in recent years, which would lead to serious power shortage in the near future," he said.

In recent months, Japan has committed \$107 million for construction of roads in Chittagong and Sylhet, \$50 million for overhauling some units of the Ashuganj power plant, and \$78 million for the Rupsha bridge besides cooperating in conducting the feasibility study of the Padma bridge.

The Japanese envoy noted that since 1994, Bangladesh has supported Japan's interest in becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Being the biggest bilateral donor, Japan provides support in 12 priority sectors in Bangladesh -- infrastructure development, transportation, bridges, rural development, education, health, water, private sector development among them. Bangladesh exports to Japan stand at around \$400 million and imports from that country at around \$100 million.

arresting their leaders, arresting the suspects of Kibria assassination case and the arms smuggling case in Chittagong. But the real picture behind these crimes is yet to emerge.

"I request the government to continue investigations into the unsolved cases and bring the suspects to trial under a due process," he added.

The ambassador observed that in the context of the expiry of the MFA (Multi-Fibre Agreement), Bangladesh is faced with the challenge of enhancing its competitiveness in the global market and diversifying its exports.

"Promoting investment, including the FDI would be the most effective solution. However, infrastructure development...has shown little progress. For example, few tenders and contracts for power plant construction have been successful in recent years, which would lead to serious power shortage in the near future," he said.

In recent months, Japan has committed \$107 million for construction of roads in Chittagong and Sylhet, \$50 million for overhauling some units of the Ashuganj power plant, and \$78 million for the Rupsha bridge besides cooperating in conducting the feasibility study of the Padma bridge.

The Japanese envoy noted that since 1994, Bangladesh has supported Japan's interest in becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Being the biggest bilateral donor, Japan provides support in 12 priority sectors in Bangladesh -- infrastructure development, transportation, bridges, rural development, education, health, water, private sector development among them. Bangladesh exports to Japan stand at around \$400 million and imports from that country at around \$100 million.

arresting their leaders, arresting the suspects of Kibria assassination case and the arms smuggling case in Chittagong. But the real picture behind these crimes is yet to emerge.

"I request the government to continue investigations into the unsolved cases and bring the suspects to trial under a due process," he added.

The ambassador observed that in the context of the expiry of the MFA (Multi-Fibre Agreement), Bangladesh is faced with the challenge of enhancing its competitiveness in the global market and diversifying its exports.

"Promoting investment, including the FDI would be the most effective solution. However, infrastructure development...has shown little progress. For example, few tenders and contracts for power plant construction have been successful in recent years, which would lead to serious power shortage in the near future," he said.

In recent months, Japan has committed \$107 million for construction of roads in Chittagong and Sylhet, \$50 million for overhauling some units of the Ashuganj power plant, and \$78 million for the Rupsha bridge besides cooperating in conducting the feasibility study of the Padma bridge.

The Japanese envoy noted that since 1994, Bangladesh has supported Japan's interest in becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Being the biggest bilateral donor, Japan provides support in 12 priority sectors in Bangladesh -- infrastructure development, transportation, bridges, rural development, education, health, water, private sector development among them. Bangladesh exports to Japan stand at around \$400 million and imports from that country at around \$100 million.

arresting their leaders, arresting the suspects of Kibria assassination case and the arms smuggling case in Chittagong. But the real picture behind these crimes is yet to emerge.