



Waste and earth have been piled up on a road after re-excavation of a canal inside the DND (Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra) Embankment. Water Development Board is conducting the canal clean-up drive in the area.

300 Khasias in Sylhet live on nerves

PORIMOL PALMA

The forest department officials aided by several hundred Bangla-speaking people destroyed betel leaf gardens on some100-acre land inhabited by indigenous Khasias at Notul Choilta punjee (Khasia village) in Karmadha union of Kulaora upazila under Moulovibazar district on Wednesday.

Following the incident, some 300

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Bidisha granted bail in cheque dishonour case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday granted ad interim bail to former dictator HM Ershad's divorced wife Bidisha in a case filed by Ershad's personal staff three days ago.

The High Court also issued a rule on the government asking it to explain in two weeks why Bidisha

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Robber killed, 3 cops hurt in gunfight

UNB, Pabna

A robber was killed and seven, including three policemen, were injured in a gunfight at a village in Sujanagar upazila early yesterday.

Police said gang leader Rezaul Karim alias Reza 'Dakat' of Sadullahpur village died on the spot. Four other robbers held with bullet

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PADMA BRIDGE Foundation stone to be laid next March

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The foundation stone of the Padma Bridge, which is going to be the country's longest river bridge, will be laid in March next year.

This was told at a high-powered

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PVT UNIVERSITIES Ministry fails to take actions on probe body suggestions

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

The education ministry could not take any action recommended by a judicial probe body against the sub-standard private universities due to its lengthy investigation procedures.

The ministry has however made a set of recommendations and is going to send those to the prime minister for taking action against the sub-standard universities.

"We have completed the hearing of the private universities and are now preparing to send our findings and recommendations to the higher authorities," Education Secretary Faruq Ahmad Siddiqi told The Daily Star.

The ministry issued show cause

notices to six sub-standard private universities in late February following recommendations by the one-member judicial body.

A high-powered evaluation committee formed to evaluate performance of the privately run universities had earlier blacklisted eight out of 52 universities.

The judicial body of Justice M Fazlul Huq in January recommended shutting down at least seven universities for their failure to fulfil certain criteria.

The universities recommended for closure are Green University of Bangladesh, Queens University, America Bangladesh University (Amban), Central Women's

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Rejoinder

The Nestle Bangladesh Limited (NBL) responding to a story head-lined "Baby health in danger" carried in The Daily Star on August 1 said that all 13 brands of its Breast Milk Substitutes (BMS) products have up-to-date registration.

In another letter of explanation, the Dauphin Ubique Trade Ltd said its BMS products have also been registered with the Institute of Public Health Nutrition (IPHN) since 1997.

"Such registration is given by the IPHN for a period of three years and much before the expiry of the deadline we duly applied to the IPHN for the renewal. But they made unusual

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Prayer Timing		
August 7		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fair	4-20	4-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-47	6-50
Esha	8-15	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		

Lobbying on to get nod for new banks

50 applications received, a few referred by PMO

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Though the central bank has no plans to give go-ahead for setting up new banks, lobbying by the ruling party-blessed quarters for the permission has been going on, said a government source.

Pressure from the highest level of the government may eventually force Bangladesh Bank (BB) to allow at least three new banks at the end of present government's rule, added the source.

The BB and the finance ministry so far have received about 50 applications for permission to open new banks. Some of those were referred by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), said a finance ministry source.

One very influential man in the PMO and a senior cabinet minister's son may win approval for the banks

they have proposed to open.

The finance ministry last year rejected a number of applications. But recently, pressure from the government high-ups has put the ministry and BB in dilemma again regarding the permission, the source said. The lobbying is so intense that the central bank might finally give in to the pressure.

Though the authority to grant permission to establish new banks lies with the central bank, many investors are lobbying the PMO and the finance minister's office for the permission.

As the provision for whitening black money has been extended in the current fiscal year, many of the black money holders are pressing the government for permission to establish banks. Some of them have even promised the ruling party leaders hefty contribution for the

upcoming national elections.

WHO HAS THE AUTHORITY TO GIVE NOD

Establishing new banks would require PMO's approval in the past, but amendment to the Bangladesh Bank Order had put the authority entirely on the central bank.

According to section 31 of Bank Company Law, 1991, BB has the power to grant permission for opening a new bank. But in a circular on December 2000, the government formed a permanent committee to examine the applications for permission to establish commercial banks or branch of foreign banks or financial institutions before awarding licence.

So far, BB has been providing licence on this committee's recommendations. But when Bangladesh

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FARIDPUR BY-POLLS BNP rebel, 6 others file nomination

BDNEWS, Faridpur

Seven candidates, including rebel BNP leader Shah Mohammad Abu Zafar, submitted their nomination papers yesterday for contesting the August 30 Faridpur-1 by-election.

Failing to get the party ticket, Abu Zafar submitted his nomination paper as an independent candidate.

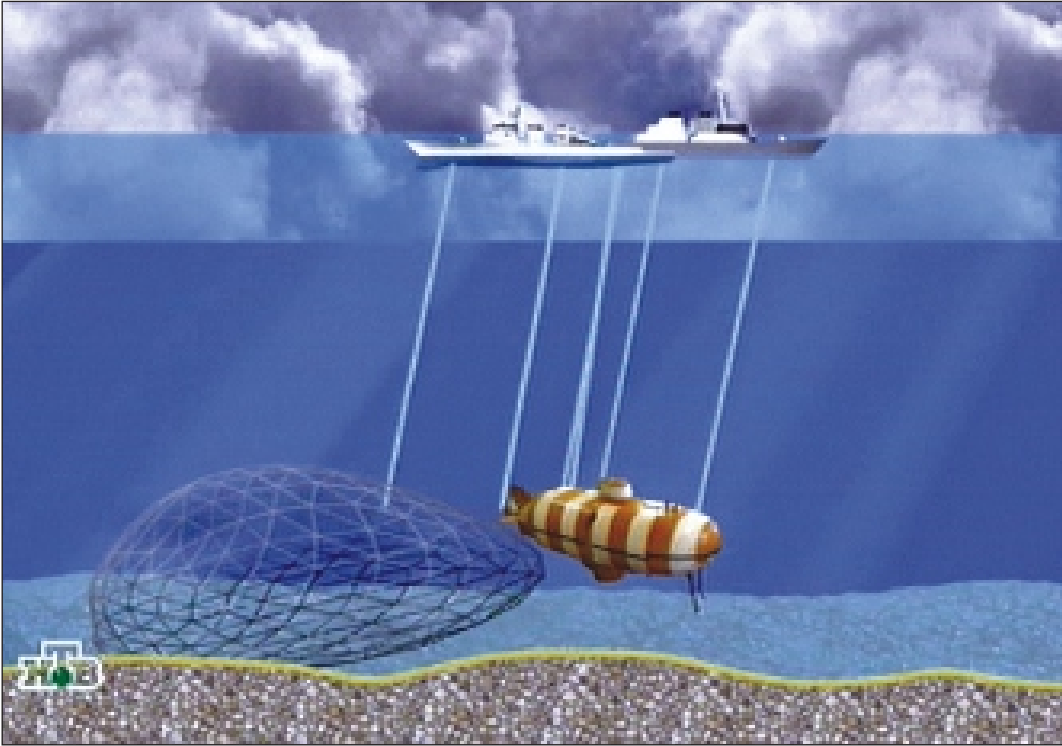
The BNP Parliamentary Board on Thursday nominated Kazi Sirajul Islam for contesting the by-polls.

The six other candidates who also submitted their nomination papers are Kazi Sirajul Islam (BNP), Islami Oikya Jote's Mufti Sharafat Hossain (independent), AKM Jamaluddin Nannu (independent) Moulana Mujibur Rahman (independent), Mohammad Nurul Abedin (independent) and Krishak Mohammad Sadek of Krishak Mukti Andolan.

The nomination papers will be scrutinised today and the last date for withdrawal of candidature is August 14.

The seat fell vacant after Kazi

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A computer generated picture of the attempts to save the AS-28 Priz mini-submarine, stranded 190 metres below the surface, as shown in Russian NTV yesterday.

Time ticks away as US, UK join hands to rescue Russian sub

AFP, Vladivostok

British and US teams joined the Russian navy yesterday in a desperate race to save the seven crew members of a Russian mini-submarine trapped with dwindling oxygen supplies on the Pacific Ocean floor.

One British and three US military transport planes flew into the far eastern regional capital Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky with Scorpio and Super Scorpio unmanned submersibles, capable of operating at great depths and armed with cable-cutters.

However, the Russian navy said it would be about 1600 GMT before the robots set off for the crippled Priz AS-28 mini-submarine, stranded for a third day 190 metres (625 feet) below the surface about 70km out into the Pacific.

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