

## Govt to ban import

**FROM PAGE 1**  
broke out in the region.

Following the warning of UN agencies, the government two days ago instructed the upazila livestock officials to monitor and check the killing of migratory birds.

"We have instructed our livestock officials. We will request the home ministry to check the netting and selling of wild birds," said the fisheries and livestock secretary.

Until recently, the outbreak of avian influenza was limited to the poultry of some southeastern countries, including Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and China.

But since late July 2005, High Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) virus H5N1 has spread in the north-westerly direction and both Russia and Kazakhstan are reported to have outbreaks of bird flu in poultry as well as in wild birds.

Some of those birds are currently nesting in the newly HPAI-affected areas of Novosibirsk and Altai in Russia and will migrate to the south, including Bangladesh, to stay during the upcoming winter or to rest on their way to Africa and Europe.

Being a densely populated country situated on one of the major migratory bird routes, and a harbour of domestic ducks, Bangladesh is vulnerable to the avian influenza, agency reports say.

The FAO website says Bangladesh has the potential to become a new large endemic foci of H5N1 infection.

Experts think the government should take proper steps to prevent the killing of wild birds. Different

kinds of waterfowl, including bar headed geese, great black headed gulls, brown headed gulls, ruddy shell ducks, and great cormorants, are the carriers of H5N1 that causes HPAI and may spread the virus when they come to Bangladesh.

Meanwhile, open selling of wild birds was observed yesterday in Elephant road and Panthapath in the city.

If the avian influenza is transferred to the human body from wild birds, the trappers, traders and hunters will be the first victims, experts say.

"Selling of wild bird heron proves that wild bird traders and trappers are active. They will start trapping wild ducks, which carry the avian influenza virus, as soon as the birds land here," said bio-diversity expert Prof Anwarul Islam.

"We need to send all forest officials and law enforcers to the field so that nobody can catch the wild birds. A central cell regarding it should be formed," he said, adding that the good will of political leaders is also needed to tackle the avian influenza problem.

Like the trappers and traders of wild birds, poultry farm workers are under the risk of avian influenza but the farm owners are not taking any precaution against it, experts say.

"As we don't have any vaccine in our country, we are not taking precaution. The government has banned importing chicks from the bird flu victim countries and we think we are comparatively safe," Bangladesh Poultry Industries Association Secretary General Syed Abu Siddique said.

## Hasina hails TIB

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Haina lambasted the government, saying that its "unbounded corruption" led the country to the top of the list of corrupt countries for the fifth consecutive time in the Transparency International (TI) report.

About her assets, Hasina said the only house they inherited has already been handed over to a trustee board and the people of the country are now the owner of that house. "Now I am residing in my husband's house."

She urged the TIB to find out the actual assets of the prime minister, her sons, her relatives and ministers and MPs of the alliance government.

"How much bank interest has been waived for the prime minister's sons (for loans taken)? And how much principal money (amount) of the bank loans has been waived for her son?"

Also alleging that the Malaysian government confiscated Tk 7,000 crore of the prime minister's son, she said the answer to these questions should also come out.

Hasina further wanted the TIB to unearth how much money the prime minister's sons transferred to Bangkok, Australia and Singapore.

About the price-hike of essentials in the holy month of Ramadan, she said the government has totally failed to control the market.

## Minister

**FROM PAGE 16**  
minister said, apparently in a bid to satisfy the concerned lawmakers.

To improve the power and energy sector, the government earlier formed a high-powered committee headed by the Prime Minister's Principal Secretary Dr Kamal Siddiqui. The prime minister is herself in charge of the ministry.

Criticising the power division for not implementing any of the 15 listed power projects,

the ruling BNP lawmakers asked the state minister to project the real picture of present power situation.

If implemented, the 15 power projects would generate 2,910MW of electricity by this time, the meeting was informed.

The parliamentary committee members said if the projects were implemented on time, there would not be any power crisis in the country whereas the country now faces daily power shortage of 750 to 800MW.

"We as the lawmakers can not make people understand the situation. People become angry as they are facing electricity crisis in the month of Ramadan," BNP lawmaker and committee member Habibul Islam Habib said.

The power division should inform people of the real situation about electricity, another BNP lawmaker and committee member Sardar Shakhawat Hossain Bakul said, adding, "Don't make people be hopeful by false assurances."

It should be examined whether some officials are engaged in conspiracy to make the government failure in tackling power crisis, he said.

The power division officials who attended the meeting, however, said the power situation is not so bad as projected by the media. 230MW of power will be added to the national grid by March 2006, they added.

The situation will improve soon as the government has initiated various measures, Committee Chairman Shahidul Islam told reporters.

Earlier the grassroots level leaders of the ruling BNP in pre-election discussions at the Prodhannontri Bhaban on last Saturday and Sunday also blasted the government for the unbearable electricity crisis.

## Saarc members

**FROM PAGE 16**  
all-out preparation to make the summit a complete success."

The foreign minister said the 13th summit would greatly focus on how to tackle the future natural disasters jointly and strengthen the early warning system through effective cooperation, among other issues.

Four agreements relating to the expansion of trade and investment in South Asia are likely to be signed during the summit, he added.

On a question about certain disputes that apparently prevent the Saarc negotiators from reaching conclusions on some agreements, he said the Saarc leaders are expected to make directions in the Dhaka meet to take the association forward.

Asked about the major task before Bangladesh as the next chair of Saarc, he said the new Saarc chairperson would spell out the roadmap on how to steer the seven-member forum forward after assuming the chair.

"What we can say at this point of time, Inshallah, you will not be disappointed with the leadership. But all the seven pillars of Saarc will have to work unitedly to fulfill the aspirations of the people in the region," he said.

On the summit preparation, Morshed said the advisory committee headed by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, national committee and 12 sub-committees are working round-the-clock to make the summit a complete success.

He said the officials of the foreign ministry and other line ministries have no weekly holiday or Eid vacation because of the increased workload due to the summit preparation.

Asked about the advance security teams from India and other countries, he said "We all are working together for doing our best to make the summit successful."

The foreign minister informed that he has regular contact with his counterparts of the member states and talked to the foreign ministers of India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives in last couple of days.

## PM asks for top security

**FROM PAGE 1**  
It was the 9th regular meeting with secretaries, held in the conference room of the Cabinet Division at Bangladesh Secretariat.

At the meeting, the prime minister directed the authorities to expedite the disposal of bomb-terrorism cases through speedy trial tribunal to ensure punishment of the real terrorists arrested in connection with the recent incidents.

She asked the officials concerned, especially the home secretary, to make sure that none of those already arrested for "bomb-terrorism" can go scot-free.

The prime minister also gave important instructions for "strategic market interventions" in arresting the price hike of essentials.

She asked the secretaries of the ministries concerned to address the difficulties responsible for pushing up the prices of essential commodities.

In this context, she asked for bringing goods from north Bengal under special arrangement by Silk City express train, strengthening buffer organisations like BADC, TCB, and civil supply to control prices of essentials.

Mentioning the allocation of Tk 25,273 crore in development budget, the prime minister stressed the need for more attentiveness in project-implementation work from the first quarter of the current fiscal year for proper utilisation of the funds.

"Spending will have to be ensured in proportion to the real progress of the projects. Development projects also have to be implemented in stipulated time and within the approved cost limit," she said, asking for regular monitoring of the progress of the projects.

Khaleda cited the ongoing drive against production, sale and marketing of adulterated food harmful to public health that earned praise from all quarters.

Stressing the need for such mopping-up operation against malpractice in offices, the prime minister said the same "built-in-vigilance system" will have to be set up in all ministries and departments against irregularities and misuse of public property.

Spelling out another directive, she said the dependence of field-level offices on the secretariat will have to be reduced in case of taking minor decisions regarding implementation of government programmes.

"A work that can be done at local level will have to be finished there," the prime minister said, apparently underlining the imperative of devolution of power in such cases.

She asked for speeding up work through ensuring more responsibility and decentralisation of duties. The monitoring activities of departments and offices will have to be strengthened, she said.

Khaleda mentioned that her government completed four years this month and stepped into the fifth year by fulfilling most of the election pledges. "In some cases, we are advancing and some pledges are in the process of implementation. Hopefully, it will be possible to fulfil all pledges in the remaining period with the cooperation of all," she said.

Cabinet Secretary Saadat Hussain conducted the meeting attended by 46 secretaries of different ministries. Of

them, 24 secretaries spoke on the occasion. The last meeting of the prime minister with the secretaries was held in December 2004.

In yesterday's three-and-a-half-hour-long meeting the prime minister told the government officials to be frugal in the use of electricity and fuel in offices and emphasised logical usage of government transport pools.

"Unnecessary expenditures and misuse at all levels of government works should be stopped and you have to ensure propriety in spending as principal accounting officers of the government," she told the secretaries.

She said the successes of the government in the social sector have been praised by all quarters and the present effort to alleviate poverty and become self-reliant will have to be continued.

The prime minister further suggested taking initiative to face any disaster like tsunami, hurricane and earthquakes through formulating necessary action plans and their implementation.

She stressed the need of introduction of e-governance in all ministries, divisions and subordinate offices to increase transparency and accountability in government function.

Listing various measures already undertaken she mentioned that the poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) has been approved in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of the United Nations.

An Independent Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) has been set up to ensure good governance and transparency in all sectors. And step has been taken to appoint tax ombudsman to ensure transparency and accountability in tax administration and to solve the complaints of taxpayers within a short period.

The prime minister said the government introduced new pay scale for the government officials as per election pledges despite resource constraints.

## Fair probe

**FROM PAGE 16**  
the newspapers of those countries are not free to publish whatever they want.

In reply to a question, the minister said united effort of all sections of the society is a must to curb corruption in the country.

## Dhaka wants

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Experts fear that Bangladesh may miss out on this international road network because of its dilemma. Besides, New Delhi has also been wooing Myanmar, promising helps in building roads.

The experts also say that Bangladesh may also lose significant foreign currency that could be earned by providing port, road and railway services for international traffic across its territory.

If Bangladesh is not linked to the highway, the investors would think twice before they bankroll, because of difficulties in carrying in raw materials and marketing finished goods," said an expert.

## Bomb materials

**FROM PAGE 1**  
with financial and technological assistance in carrying out five blasts in the town on August 17.

During the preliminary interrogation by local police, JMB activist Akhtar also admitted to his involvement with the JMB since 2001, reports our Sylhet correspondent.

Acting on his information, police raided the rest house of Bhangatikor Haji Buru Mia Jame Masjid in the city's Sheikhghat area yesterday afternoon and seized bomb materials and some books, including an Islamic magazine, from one of the rooms of the rest house.

The bomb materials include a dice, batteries, electric wires, small shards of iron nuts and bolts. Among the books seized are college texts and an issue of the Islamic magazine Al Hedayat.

According to the register book records of the rest house, the room had been rented to one Delwar from Austadar of Muktagachha upazila of Mymensingh district. The law enforcers were looking for Delwar and one Obayed, who owns the books.

Police arrested Imam of the mosque Moulana Saifuddin in the evening. They also arrested Habibur Rahman, a former student of Shahjalal Dargah Madrasa, suspecting his involvement in the attack.

The rest house authorities said they rent out eight of the 10 rooms while the imam and muajjin of the mosque live in the two others.

Meanwhile, Akhtar admitted that he had been an activist of the Jamaat-e-Islami's student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir from 1996 to 2001 before joining the JMB.

Police sources said the former Shiber activist, who appeared in Dakhlh examinations in 2001 and 2003 from Sharishabari Dakhlh Madrasa in Jamalpur but could not pass, admitted that he had been staying in Sylhet since September 20. Two local JMB leaders in Sylhet arranged the lodging at the city's Bankolapara's Baitul Falah Mosque, Akhtar told police.

"But he [Akhtar] declined to give details in this regard," the sources added.

Police arrested the imam of Bankolapara mosque who, according to Akhtar, rented out a room to him.

Magistrate Habibur Rahman yesterday afternoon went to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College and Hospital, where Akhtar was undergoing treatment, to record his statement but could not due to the latter's ill health.

Akhtar was seriously injured as pedestrians had beat him up after catching him.

Later, police produced him before the magistrate in his courtroom at around 8:30pm for recording the statement.

## AL to rid TI

**FROM PAGE 16**  
investment, making lists for distribution of VGF cards and relief, even tenders for construction of toilets in the city--none has escaped their corruption," Jallil said.

He said the ministers of the coalition are engaged in corruption in purchasing textbooks, wheat, fertilizer, sugar and jet fuel, smuggling gold, running hundi business and illegally allocating land for setting up CNG stations.

Describing the government as "completely failed", Jallil said the coalition has given corruption "an institutional shape".

He also alleged that a certain Bhaban has become the centre of all corruption now as projects, businesses, bank loans, promotion and posting in government jobs cannot secure approval without giving "a percentage" to them.

Mentioning the name of a son of the prime minister, Jallil claimed that the top brass of the ruling coalition has been siphoning thousands of crore taka abroad, plundering the taxes paid by the people.

He said cases have been filed and notices for seizure of property have been issued against poor farmers in the name of collecting repayment of agriculture loans, while Tk 250 crore, including Tk 40 crore of interest against bank loans, of the PM's family members is exempted.

Jallil said, "The allegation is not ours alone. The MPs and grassroots level leaders of BNP have several times alleged that their ministers are embezzling people's money. BNP ministers and MPs have locked in altercation in parliament, blaming each other for corruption," he said.

Terminating the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) an "ineffective institution", Jallil said the government has set up the ACC with their loyalists.

On Bangladesh's being branded the most corrupt country during the final year of AL's term also, Jallil said the Transparency International Bangladesh was influenced by the then opposition chief to publish that report to tarnish the image of the then government.

Among others, AL Presidium members Matia Chowdhury, Tofail Ahmed, Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, AL Joint General Secretary Obaidul Hossain, city AL General Secretary Mofazzal Quader Chowdhury Maya were also present at the press briefing.

## 5-day remand

**FROM PAGE 16**  
before the court said as per direction of the OC a gang of criminals killed Momin. He needs to be quizzed to find out vital clues about the killing and the whereabouts of his other accomplices, the report said.

After the hearing, Metropolitan Magistrate Rafiqul Islam set October 23 for hearing on the issue in presence of the OC. The court directed the authorities concerned to take necessary steps for OC's presence before it on that day.

Dhaka Commerce College student Kamrul Islam Momin, 22, was gunned down in front of his Ibrahimpur house on September 13. Abdur Razzak, Momin's father, filed a murder case with the Kaurful Police Station accusing Rafiqul and 27 others. Police have so far arrested 13 people.

Harisul Haq Johnny, one of the accused, made a confessional statement before a magistrate on September 22.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police closed Rafiqul on September 15 and suspended him on October 2 for not reporting to the Rajbargh Police Lines.

## JS body

**FROM PAGE 16**  
lambasted TIB for branding his ministry as the most corrupt. He sought the intervention of a parliamentary body to take legal action against TIB for tarnishing the image of the government.

The TIB in a corruption report released on September 15 said the country had incurred a financial loss of about Tk 415 crore last year due to corruption.

The communication sector turned out to be the most corrupt of all the sectors, says the TIB database, which was prepared on the basis of the corruption reports published in 25 national and regional dailies last year.

Endorsing the minister's demand, the parliamentary standing committee on the communications ministry formed the subcommittee headed by Syed Manjur Hossain, the chairman of the committee.

The parliamentary body that raised allegation of irregularities against the communications minister in importing CNG-run autorickshaws and against the state minister of the ministry in the allocation of lands to set up CNG filling stations failed to probe the allegations in the last 19 months.

## Delhi welcomes

**FROM PAGE 1**  
signal" from New Delhi.

He informed Indian High Commissioner in Dhaka Veena Sikri on October 17 that Dhaka is ready with the relief, Morshed said, adding that the envoy said she would convey it to New Delhi and give feedback soon.

The relief aid may include warm clothing, medicine and food.

Bangladesh on October 12 sent a C-130 air force plane loaded with blankets, medicine and dry food for the quake victims in Pakistan. Later, more relief materials were sent to Islamabad through the Bangladesh and Pakistan airlines.

## Kanchpur turns

**FROM PAGE 1**  
about 7:30am for the trivial matter.

The workers claimed the worker had the identity card in his pocket but the security guards denied the claim. Several workers told this correspondent that the guards had been bossing them for long, which made the workers aggrieved.

The workers alleged when a female worker protested the torture, the guards attacked her too. But the textiles group authorities and the security guards claimed a female worker was caught while going out of the factory after stealing.

Witnesses said the workers then locked into an altercation and scuffle with the guards. At one point the guards rang the alarm bell and the Ansars opened fire on the workers.

The workers, armed with sticks, rods and bricks, attacked the guards' room. "I was resting in the barracks when the workers swooped on us," a guard, Sanilul Islam, told The Daily Star. "We injured around 35 guards, including me," he added.

As the news spread through the industrial complex, several thousand workers attacked almost all the factories in the complex. They vandalised rooms, furniture, window panes, computers and damaged 14 vehicles.

The textile group has 20,000 workers, 200 security guards and 10 armed Ansars deployed in more than a dozen industrial units.

Meanwhile, rumours spread among the workers that the clash left three workers dead.

The workers then laid siege to the factory complex and started demanding "return of the 'bodies' of the victims.

At one point the workers came out of the mills and barricaded the Dhaka-Chittagong and Dhaka-Sylhet highways. They damaged some 40 buses, trucks and private cars, triggering panic among the commuters stranded on the road.

Police charged batons on the protesters, lobbed 15 teargas shells and fired 20 blank shots to disperse the workers, who pelted bricks and stones at the law enforcers. Chased by the police, the workers moved towards Rujanji and vandalised factories in the area.

Police took control of the area around 1:30pm.

Around 20 policemen including Assistant Superintendent of Police (Circle A) Noor Mohammad, officers-in-charge of Sonargaon and Araihaaz police stations Shahidul Islam and C Halim were injured.

Bullet-hit Rahim, Rubul, Saurid, Al-Amin, Biplab, Masud, Mominul, Ruma, Szal and Mamun were admitted to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital.

Meantime, police rescued the ansar and security personnel detained in their barracks and quarters at 1:30pm after six hours.

Among the injured ansars and guards, Liton, Jalal, Shahjahan, Anwarul, Chanchal Kumar, Dulal Miah and Anju Miah were sent to local hospitals.

Around 100 workers were admitted to four different clinics in the town.

Opex Group Director Mohammad Farid claimed valuables worth Tk 1 crore were damaged during the clashes and attacks.

**MUGGING, LOOT, SUFFERINGS**  
The workers barricaded the two highways, which link around 100 routes, disrupting communications among 18 districts.

On the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway, the longest ever 15-kilometre-long traffic congestion stretching from Jatrabari in Demra to Meghna Ghat in Sonargaon was created due to the blockade.

About eight-kilometre-long traffic jam from the Kanchpur Bridge towards Narsingdi victimised the passengers on the Dhaka-Sylhet Highway.

Thousands of vehicles remained standstill on the highways for long six hours. Around one million people were trapped during these hours and thousands were seen wailing towards destination or back home.

"I walked to Kanchpur from Shanir Akhra to cross the six-kilometre jam-packed road," said Saiful Islam, employee of Kanchpur New Dhaka Jute Mills.

Women and children suffered

## BCL leader

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Following his statement, Rab took him to Alampur in sadar upazila to retrieve firearms at about 4:00am yesterday. As they reached the village, the accomplices of Titas opened fire on the Rab team, prompting them to retaliate.

Rab officials said Titas, caught in crossfire during the fight, died on the spot.

Two shutter-guns and 30 bullets were retrieved from the spot.

The body was sent to Kushtia General Hospital for autopsy.

Police said Titas, who had long been absconding, was accused in four murder cases.

In Chuadanga, police arrested BPCP cadre Asadul Islam Palash at Jalsuka village in sadar upazila on Monday night.

Later police took him to a village to recover firearms at about 4:30am yesterday following his confessional statement. As they reached a graveyard of the village, Palash's accomplices ambushed the law enforcers, triggering an hour-long gunfight.

Police said Palash died on the spot when he was caught in "crossfire."

Police recovered a shutter-gun from the spot.

The body was sent to Chuadanga Sadar Hospital for autopsy.

most while walking under the sun. The walking children faced severe drinking water crisis.

Snatchers cashed in on the situation by stealing valuables from passengers of the stranded vehicles.

A mob held two muggers -- Al Amin, 25, and Imran, 22, -- for snatching valuables from a passenger around 11:00am. Around 12:00noon, goons looted all the valuables of a taxi-commuter, who returned from the district administration, police and Sinha authorities declined allegation that three workers were killed during the clash with ansars and security men.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Alamgir Hossain told reporters no evidence was found in this regard.

The additional superintendent of police said the rumour spread in the morning, but no proof was found so far in its favour.

Director (Administration) of Opex Group Delwar Hossain said, "I have visited many places inside the mills with the workers but nobody was found dead. The workers were provoked to spread the rumour."

**PROBE COMMITTEE**  
District administration has formed a one-member committee comprising Additional District Magistrate Saber Hossain to probe the matter.

**OPEX GROUP REGRETS**  
The Opex Group deeply regretted the incident, reports UNB.

In a statement, Chairman of Opex and Sinha Textile Group Anisur Rahman Sinha said the undesirable situation was triggered by a rumour regarding detention of a worker by security personnel on charge of theft.

"A large group of unruly people comprising outsiders by taking advantage of the situation entered the mill premises and resorted to arson and caused huge damage to mill property. This led to temporary closure of production," he said.

The statement added: "The management of the Group appreciates the sincere efforts of the law enforcement agencies, local administration and the people to bring the situation under control.

"We wholeheartedly extend the assurance that all necessary steps would be taken for treatment of the workers injured during the incident and also compensation, if necessary."

The management would take "stem action against those responsible for the unfortunate incident," the statement added.

**PROTESTS AND CONDEMNNS**  
Different employees unions, labour rights organizations and left-leaning parties claimed at least two workers were killed and more than 200 workers were injured in the incident.

Sinha Textiles Limited Employees Union, five left-leaning parties, Gonatantrik Majdur Party, Workers Party of Bangladesh, National Sramik Federation Bangladesh, Garments Sramik Oikya Forum and others protested and condemned the incident.