Govt to ban import

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

But since late July 2005, High Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) virus H5N1 has spread in the northwesterly 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 this region, including Bangladesh, to stay during the upcoming winter or to rest on their way to Africa and

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 infec-

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

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

"Selling of wild bird heron proves that wild bird traders and trappers 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

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.

The PDB should immediately

dissolve the current tender evaluation

committee for misleading the board

and higher authorities, with an erro-

neous evaluation report concerning a

dozen press reports on the project

came out, but "not a single befitting

rejoinder was published by the PDB

on the allegations reported. There is

no satisfactory answer to this ques-

tion. It asked PDB to evolve a system

of regularly informing the truth

through press releases on sensitive

issues," it read, adding, "This will help

improve the image of BPDB in public,

which is needed so badly to uphold."

bid beating its nearest competitor

CMEC by \$11 million and Indian

required, Harbin did not submit any

technical bidmaking its offer invalid.

Yet the PDB's TEC accepted the offer.

lar action neither conforms to the PPR

2003, nor BPDB's own regulation and

In the June 28 bid, Harbin filed a

mpetitor Bhel by \$24 million. But as

The panel observes, "This irregu-

To cover up this major flaw, the

project's director on July 9 sought

Harbin's technical evaluation after-

wards, although the bid was already

here. First, as per the regulation, such

a letter must be signed by the

Chairman of TECnot the project

director. But a more serious flaw is

that Harbin was given the opportu-

nity to improve its bid by submitting

the missing documents in violation of

on an erroneous interpretation of

rules, deliberately biased and there-

fore unacceptable. The irregular

Harbin offer was wrongly identified as

the lowest bid. Harbin's price related

to a phantom technical offer and does

The TEC in a meeting did identify a

'shortcoming' in the Harbin offer, and

concluded that the Harbin proposal

may be acceptable subject to accep-

tance of the shortcoming by the

cabinet committee on economic

affairs. "TEC in turn passes the thorny

question of approving an irregular

tender to the cabinet committee,

asking essentially to by-pass the

relevant rules and regulations. It is

not understood how and why the

cabinet committee should deviate

rules. It is unfortunate that the law of

the land does not take precedence in

projects were already under the

purview of the review committee, the

PDB last week hurriedly sent Harbin's

proposal to the cabinet purchase

committee for approval. The cabinet

committee returned the files, saying

that the review panel must at first

present government have seen a

series of complaints of irregularities.

Currently the government has okayed

the phase 2 Meghnaghat 450 mw

project to be awarded to Orion-

Belhasa, although the original bidder

was different. It is holding an unsolic-

ited and secret negotiation with a

attention to any of complaint.

All the tender practices under the

resolve it

Sources said that although the

TEC report," the panel observed.

not deserve any merit in evaluation.

The evaluation reports were based

The panel observed two flaws

The panel also observed that half a

major infrastructure project.

Harbin's \$41m offer

professionalism in the way it handled complaint letters from the bidders. Coupled with this, the PDB's illegal practices "do not uphold the national image". If they were professional, the officials could have handled this complaint themselves and saved national prestige.

The Daily Star had been reporting on the highly irregular handling of the PDB in selecting Harbin in this bid. Harbin was earlier given the contract of the 80 mw simple cycle Tongi plant, which has been stumbling from the beginning of operation from earlier this year, and the 90 mw Fenchuganj combined cycle plant, for which Harbin does not have the necessary experience to qualify as a contractor.

The CMEC on September 29 filed the first ever complaint under the PPR to the review panel following a series of complaint letters to PDB, the power ministry and the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). None of these offices responded to these complaints.

The panel, headed by ex law secretary Mohammad Asaduzzaman, ordered the PDB to immediately start negotiations with the first available. lowest and technically compliant bid of another Chinese company, CMEC, which quoted a price of \$56.68 mil-

This negotiation will be completed within two weeks and the PDB will take another two weeks for the final signing of the contract, the panel said PDB's ex chief engineer, CJ Kabir, and FBCCI ex vice president Abul Qasem Haider are the two members of the

In case the negotiation with CMEC fails, the PDB will negotiate with the second lowest bidder, Indian Bhel, which quoted a price of \$63.69 million, the panel said.

But PDB is not allowed to hold a retender of this project as the first option, because it is already holding two technically compliant offers and there is no guarantee that a re-tender will bring down the price level or that there will be enthusiastic participa-

 $tion\,of\,bidders.$ "There is no guarantee that it will be possible for BPDB to overcome by then, the lack of transparency, in yet another tender evaluation process that will follow, which could frustrate the administrative system and result in another re-tender," it said, citing the example of the 90 mw Fenchugan power project, which was awarded to Harbin through a fifth re-tendering.

Re-tendering will also delay the project implementation by a year, the cost of which will outweigh the cost of

unserved power. The PDB has also been asked to pay Tk 3 lakh, as per the PPR, to CMEC

for expenses for the review On rejecting the PDB's Chandpur

bid evaluation, the panel declares, "The recommendation of the TEC (the PDB's technical evaluation committee) and its sub-committee, being far from transparent as well as lacking direction, professionalism and respect for law, are hereby rejected."

The TEC is blamed for producing an erroneous and misleading tender evaluation report and PDB must initiate a departmental investigation and actions against the culprits.

On canceling Harbin's bid it notes, "With the given option to choose between the rules and regulations and apparent financial benefit shown in arithmetic that may be derived by accepting an irregular tender, the PPR Review panel has no hesitation to uphold the law of the land and classify

the HPE offer... as informal and void.' The panel recommended that the members of the PDB's technical committee and subcommittee should undergo further training in handling procurement procedures at the Central Procurement Technical Unit

Hasina hails TIB

FROM PAGE 16

Hasina lambasted the government, saving 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)

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 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

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

unearth how much money the prime

Minister

to control the market.

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 situa-

facing electricity crisis in the month of Ramadan," BNP lawmaker and committee member Habibul Islam Habib The power division should inform people of the real situation about electricity, another BNP lawmaker

tion. People become angry as they are

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 Prodhanmontri 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 warntion, 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 fulfil 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 subcommittees are working round-theclock 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

eams from India and other countries, he said "We all are working together

The foreign minister informed that Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives in last couple of days.

PM asks for top security | AL to rid TI

It was the 9th regular meeting with secretaries, held in the conference room of the Cabinet Division at Bangladesh

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 terrors 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 bring ing 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 projectimplementation 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

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 under lining 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

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 FROM PAGE 16

December 2004. In yesterday's three-and-a-halfhour-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.

them, 24 secretaries spoke on the

occasion. The last meeting of the prime

minister with the secretaries was held in

"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 govern has become the centre of all corruption ment," 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 sug-

necessary action plans and their imple She stressed the need of introduction of e-governance in all ministries, divisions and subordinate offices to

increase transparency and accountabil-

gested taking initiative to face any

disaster like tsunami, hurricane and

earthquakes through formulating

ity 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

the newspapers of those countries are not free to publish whatever they

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

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

Bomb materials

with financial and technological assis-

tance in carrying out five blasts in the During 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 Hedayet.

According to the register book records of the rest house, the room had been rented to one Delwar from Austadhar 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 mam 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

Police sources said the former Shibir activist, who appeared in Dakhil examinations in 2001 and 2003 from Sharishabari Dakhil 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 yester-

day 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

"He has given some significant information while admitting to his links with the JMB," Sylhet Superintendent of Police (SP) Ansar Uddin Khan told The Daily Star last night.

Meanwhile, Abdus Salam, driver of Judge Goswami, filed a case against Akhtar in connection with Tuesday's

TANGAIL PROBE

The Janajuddha, a faction of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party, assisted the IMB financially, technologically and by providing information in carrying out the five bomb attacks in Tangail town, police said in the charge sheet submitted before a magistrate yesterday.

Janajuddha had earlier verbally agreed with the JMB and Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (IMIB) to extend its help, Sub-Inspector (SI) Khoda Newaz of Tangail Sadar Police Station, also the investigation officer (IO) of the Tangail serial bomb blasts case, mentioned in his report, quoting JMB militants arrested in

Newaz accused 15 Islamist militants including IMB chief Abdur Rahman and IMIB operations commander Siddigul Islam alias Bangla Bhai, in the chargesheet, reports our Tangail correspon

The other accused in the chargesheet are Enayet Ullah, Shahidul Islam Delwar Hossain, Yameen Miah, Shoeb, Arman-bin-Azad, Russel, Rustam Habib, Habil, Ahad, Mizan and Tareq Among them Delwar, Yameen and Shahidul are now in police custody while the rest are still evading arrest. Mentioning Abdur Rahman and

Bangla Bhai as the "masterminds" of the serial bomb blasts, SI Newaz said Delwar of Araihazar of Narayanganj was in charge of the "operation" in Tangail and received directives in this regard from JMB leader Enayet Ullah on August 14. Delwar engaged five activists to carry

out the attacks at different points while he himself exploded a bomb at the judge's court. SI Borhan Uddin of Tangail Sadar

Police Station filed a case under the Explosive Substances Act and Special Powers Act on August 17. Delwar told police that Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai gave them month-long training on military opera-

tions and bomb-making at Delduar and Shakhipur a few months prior to the countrywide bombing. Delwar had been carrying out mili-

confessional statement before the court on September 6 and 7.

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

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

Describing the government as completely failed", Jalil said the coalition has given corruption "an institutional shape' He also alleged that a certain Bhaban

now as projects, businesses, bank loans, promotion and posting in government jobs cannot secure approval without giving "a percentage" to them. prime minister, Jalil claimed that the top

brass of the ruling coalition has been abroad, plundering the taxes paid by the 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. Jalil 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 Terming the Anti-Corruption

institution". Jalil said the government has set up the ACC with their lovalists. On Bangladesh's being branded the most corrupt country during the final year of AL's term also, Jalil said the Transparency International

Bangladesh was influenced by the then

opposition chief to publish that report

to tarnish the image of the then govern-

Commission (ACC) an "ineffective

Among others, AL Presidium members Matia Chowdhury, Tofail Ahmed, Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir, AL Joint General Secretary Obaidul Quader, city AL General Secretary Mofazzal Hossain 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 filled a mi with the Kafrul Police Station accusing Rafigul and 27 others. Police have so far arrested 13 people.

Hasibul 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 Rajarbagh Police

IS 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 govern-

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

Kanchpur turns about 7:30am for the trivial matter.

ers aggrieved.

textiles group authorities and the

Witnesses said the workers then

Ansars opened fire on the workers.

computers and damaged 14 vehicles.

The textile group has 20,000 work-

ers, 200 security guards and 10 armed

Ansars deployed in more than a dozen

Meanwhile, rumours spread

The workers then laid siege to the

among the workers that the clash left

factory complex and started demand-

ing "return of the "bodies" of the

At one point the workers came out

of the mills and barricaded the Dhaka-

Chittagong and Dhaka-Sylhet high-

ways. They damaged some 40 buses,

trucks and private cars, triggering

panic among the commuters

protesters, lobbed 15 teargas shells

and fired 20 blank shots to disperse

the workers, who pelted brickbars and

stones at the law enforcers. Chased by

the police, the workers moved

towards Rupganj and vandalised

Police took control of the area

Around 20 policemen including

Assistant Superintendent of Police

(Circle A) Noor Mohammad, officers-

in-charge of Sonargaon and Araihazar

police stations Shahidul Islam and C

Meantime, police rescued the

ansar and security personnel detained

in their barracks and quarters at

guards, Liton, Jalal, Shahjahan,

Anwarul, Chanchal Kumar, Dulal

Miah and Anju Miah were sent to local

Around 100 workers were admit

ted to four different clinics in the

Farid claimed valuables worth Tk 1

crore were damaged during the

The workers barricaded the two

highways, which link around 100

routes, disrupting communications

Highway, the longest ever 15-

kilometre-long traffic congestion

stretching from Jatrabari in Demra to

Meghna Ghat in Sonargaon was

About eight-kilometre-long traffic

am from the Kanchpur Bridge

towards Narsingdi victimised the

passengers on the Dhaka-Sylhet

standstill on the highways for long six

hours. Around one million people

were trapped during these hours and

thousands were seen waling towards

Akhra to cross the six-kilometre jam-

packed road," said Saiful Islam,

employee of Kanchpur New Dhaka

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

Rab officials said Titas, caught in

Two shutter-guns and 30 bullets

The body was sent to Kushtia

Police said Titas, who had long

been absconding, was accused in four

In Chuadanga, police arrested

PBCP cadre Asadul Islam Palash at

Jalsuka village in sadar upazila on

Later police took him to a village to

recover firearms at about 4:30am

yesterday following his confessional

statement. As they reached a grave-

yard of the village, Palash's accompli-

ces ambushed the law enforcers,

Police said Palash died on the spot

triggering an hour-long gunfight.

stations in the district.

crossfire during the gunfight, died on

were retrieved from the spot.

General Hospital for autopsy.

Women and children suffered

"I walked to Kanchpur from Shanir

destination or back home.

BCL leader

Thousands of vehicles remained

created due to the blockade.

On the Dhaka-Chittagong

MUGGING, LOOT, SUFFERINGS

Opex Group Director Mohammad

Among the injured ansars and

Police charged batons on the

the factory after stealing.

including me," he added.

industrial units.

three workers dead.

stranded on the road.

factories in the area

Halim were injured.

1:30pm after six hours.

clashes and attacks.

among 18 districts

Highway.

Jute Mills.

FROM PAGE 16

retaliate.

the spot.

murder cases.

Monday night.

Hospital.

hospitals.

around 1:30pm.

The walking children faced severe The workers claimed the worker drinking water crisis. had the identity card in his pocket but Snatchers cashed in on the situa-

the security guards denied the claim. tion by stealing valuables from pas-Several workers told this corresponsengers of the stranded vehicles. dent that the guards had been bossing A mob held two muggers -- Al them for long, which made the work-Amin, 25, and Imran, 22, -- for snatch

ing valuables from a passenger The workers alleged when a female around 11:00am. Around 12:00noon worker protested the torture, the goons looted all the valuables of a taxiguards attacked her too. But the commuter, who returned from security guards claimed a female 3 KILLED, A RUMOUR? worker was caught while going out of The district administration, police

ocked into an altercation and scuffle during the clash with ansars and with the guards. At one point the security men. guards rang the alarm bell and the Additional Deputy Commissioner Alamgir Hossain told reporters no

and Sinha authorities declined allega-

tion that three workers were killed

The workers, armed with sticks evidence was found in this regard. rods and bricks, attacked the guards' The additional superintendent of room. "I was resting in the barracks police said the rumour spread in the when the workers swooped on us," a morning, but no proof was found so guard, Saniul Islam, told The Daily far in its favour.

Star. "They injured around 35 guards, Director (Administration) of Opex Group Delwar Hossain said, "I have As the news spread through the visited many places inside the mills industrial complex, several thousand with the workers but nobody was workers attacked almost all the factofound dead. The workers were prories in the complex. They vandalised voked to spread the rumour.' **PROBE COMMITTEE** rooms, furniture, window panes,

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

"We wholeheartedly extend the assurance that all necessary steps would be taken for treatment of the workers injured during the incident

people to bring the situation under

and also compensation, if necessary." The management would take stern action against those responsible for the unfortunate incident," the

statement added PROTESTS AND CONDEMNS Bullet-hit Rahim, Rubel, Saidur, Different employees unions, labour Al-Amin, Biplab, Masud, Mominul, rights organizations and left-leaning Ruma, Sazal and Mamun were admitted to Dhaka Medical College and

ere killed and more than 200 workers were injured in the incident. Sinha Textiles Limited Employees Union, five left-leaning parties, Gonotantrik Majdur Party, Workers Party of Bangladesh, National Sramik Federation Bangladesh, Garments Sramik Oikya Forum and others protested and condemned the inci-

Defiant Saddam

Baghdad.

a dark jacket over an open-necked shirt and carrying a copy of the Koran. with the chief judge when proceedings began at about noon (0900 GMT) in

where he was born, Saddam and seven other members of his now-defunct Baath Party are being tried for events stemming from a failed attempt on the former leader's life in 1982. He was the last to enter the marble-

Nearly two years after he was found

hiding in a hole in the ground near

floored courtroom and asked the ailers escorting him to slow down as he walked to a chest-high white metal pen facing the five-judge panel. Chief judge Rizgar Mohammed

Amin, a Kurd, presided over the court

from a dais looking down on the

defendants. Bronze-colored scales of justice hung behind the judges. "This is the first session of case number one, the case of Dujail," Judge Amin told the court after the defen-

Saddam, 68, refused to respond and then challenged his questioner, demanding: "Who are you? What does this court want?" He and seven of his former cohorts

Asked his name by the judge,

are on trial for crimes against humanity over a 1982 Shiite massacre. After entering the courtroom Saddam, who was not handcuffed and wore a grey suit and open necked shirt, sat in the front pen along with one other defendant. The remaining defendants were spread among the

Trial on 'faulty'

clear stand against the state, the constitution and the judiciary. "But the people don't know if there

is any sedition charges brought

hide the conspiracy of destroying the

against any of the accused," the statement reads. The SCBA leaders said charges have been pressed against the accused under the Explosive Substances Act in an apparent bid to

other two pens.

state and the judiciary. Exemplary punishment of the accused cannot be ensured under the Explosive Substances Act, as no-one of them were arrested on the crime spots, the statement read.

The senior lawyers said exclusive possession of explosives is the major fact for punishing the accused in a case filed under this Act.

Even if the lower courts hand down punishment on the accused under this Act, it will be very difficult to uphold the verdict in the High Court. The culprits will get released through the loopholes, the statement added.

British company, Cadogen Manning, pedestrians had beat him up after catchwhen he was caught in "crossfire." for Meghnaghat 3. The government tant activities in Tangail, using different for doing our best to make the summit clothing, medicine and food. Police recovered a shutter-gun names, including Rahamatullah and also signed two other unsolicited Later, police produced him before Bangladesh on October 12 sent a Cfrom the spot. projects the highly overpriced 250 mw the magistrate in his courtroom at Maulana Samad, sources said. The body was sent to Chuadanga 130 air force plane loaded with blan-He disclosed the names of 15 IMB around 8:30pm for recording the state-Barapukuria coal fired power project he has regular contact with his counkets, medicine and dry food for the Sadar Hospital for autopsy. activists, but police failed to arrest any of and the overpriced 70 mw third phase quake victims in Pakistan. Later, more Police said Palash was accused in terparts of the member states and After recording his statement under Mymensingh power plant. Till now, Both Delwar and Yameen gave several cases, including seven for talked to the foreign ministers of India. Section 164 of Code of Criminal relief materials were sent to Islamabad the government has not paid any through the Bangladesh and Pakistan murder, filed with different police Procedure, the court ordered to send