NEWS

Saarc summit

FROM PAGE 16

the meet. A well-equipped media centre will be set up in Hotel Sonargaon during the summit. The foreign ministry will set up a Saarc Facilitation Desk at the Zia International Airport for the delegates. Strict security measures will be taken

in respect of all baggage of the guests.

The beautification and other preparations were geared up since Pakistan confirmed that it would take part in the summit despite the devastating earthquake that killed thousands of people in the country, officials said. They said the 13th summit has

special significance for Bangladesh on three counts -- it coincides with the 20th anniversary of Saarc, it is being held on the eve of the third decade of the organisation, and Bangladesh is the first country to host the meet for the third time.

Saarc represents the largest regional cooperation organisation of the world as South Asia is home to one-fifth of the world population. South Asian nations are endowed with immense geographical advantages, considerable natural and human resources and a large economic space with a vibrant market of some 400 million middle-class consumers Officials said the region needs to

make great strides in the areas of poverty alleviation, intra-regional trade, attract ing Foreign Direct Investment, expanding communication and transport network, adopting an energy policy, increasing investment in human resources development, ensuring quality education, better management of natural disasters, stabilising population growth and eradicating illiteracy.

The implementation of South Asian Free Trade Area (Safta) is still uncertain, as the meeting of the Saarc Committee of Experts (CoE) held in Kathmandu on October 18-19 ended inconclusively, while the scheduled October 21-22 meet of the Saarc commerce ministers in Islamabad was postponed due to the earthquake.

Safta is due to be implemented from January next year.

The 13th summit will usher in a new era of regional cooperation, to build a more peaceful, prosperous and forward-looking South Asia, the officials added.

drawn a lot of flak for the poor skill of its

Top police officials said they had to cut

the training period due to a huge number

of vacancies in the police, which forces a

massive workload on the rest. They,

however, deny having shortened the

ministry has already issued orders to lop

six months off the training period for the

SIs. Some 850 SIs, who are now taking

Well-placed sources said the home

men.

course

According to the programme, the inaugural session will take place on November 12 at the Bangladesh-China

Friendship Conference Centre (BCFCC

at 11:30am. AFP, Kandahar/ Khosi Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat

Aziz will open the summit as current chairperson. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will give her inaugural speech. Then the Saarc leaders will adopt the agenda of the

summit and confer Saarc Award 2004 Late president Ziaur Rahman was the first winner of the Saarc Award for his outstanding contribution to the initiation of the regional co-operation in SouthAsia.

The election of the chairperson will also take place at the inaugural session when the current chairperson of Saarc will hand over the chair to Prime Minister Khaleda Zia. The secretary general will address after the speeches of the leaders.

The session will be preceded by a visit to the National Memorial at Savar and the mazar of late president Ziaur Rahman.

Khaleda Zia will host a state banquet in honour of the Saarc leaders at the BCFCC hall in the evening of the first day ofthesummit

On the second day, the leaders will discuss reports of the Council of Ministers, reports of ministerial meetings on environment, information health, energy and commerce at the State Guest House Jamuna before the

The leaders will also discuss the Declaration of the 13th Saarc Summit. known as Dhaka Declaration. Then they will proceed to Bangabhaban where they will pay a joint call on President Iaiuddin Ahmed.

Four agreements will be signed by the foreign ministers of the Saarc countries at the concluding session at the International Conference Centre The Saarc leaders will then approve

the reports of the Council of Ministers, reports of the ministerial meetings and declare the date and venue of the 14th Summit.

about two months.

the home ministry.

The Saarc heads of the state and government will then adopt the declaration of the 13th summit. Khaleda Zia, the new chairperson of Saarc, will make the concludingspeech.

Station. She will also address at a press Shahidullah will be produced briefing as the new Saarc chairperson. before the court today, the OC said.

BNP stagnates

killed in ambush FROM PAGE 1 members.

9 Afghan cops

Faliban government.

AFP.

he said.

told AFP.

violence.

FROM PAGE 1

Khulna

Taliban fighters ambushed a police

hideout, provincial administrative

deputy chief Ghulam Moheedin told

fighters were also killed, he said,

there were dozens of rebels in the area.

wo Taliban who later told us that

there was a big Taliban hideout in the

region," spokesman Yousuf Stanizai

late 2001 in a US-led campaign.

some of their targets in near-daily

Investigators focus

cases," said Abbas Uddin, officer-in-

charge (OC) of Sonadanga Police

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, who was last elected party chairperson in Nine policemen and a journalist were 1997, leads the BNP into the sixth year killed in troubled Afghanistan, offiwithout any mandate. The party consticials said yesterday, in the latest tution lays down that the national council will directly elect party chairattacks in a deadly insurgency blamed person for a two-vear term. on militants loyal to the ousted

On the other hand, four out of 11 front organisations of the party are now headed by acting presidents. Three of convoy in a remote district of southern the organisations do not even have any Helmand province as the officers were executive committee and are being run ooking for a suspected militant by convening committees.

The remaining four front bodies have presidents but none of them was elected. The party chairperson selected them.

Nine policemen, including the unit BNP sources pointed out that to commander, were killed in a fierce hold a new council meeting of the party, battle that followed. Four Taliban the party first needs to have new committees of its union, thana and district "The fighting lasted for two hours," units. Most of these units do not have valid elected committees.

The party started formation of unit An interior ministry spokesman in committees 18 months ago. But it has so Kabul said the policemen had been far formed new committees of thana searching for militants after being and union units mostly on the basis of tipped off by captured Taliban that understanding. Only a few of them were elected. "Some two days ago we captured

At the district level, the party has constituted committees of 43 out of 78 units on the basis of consensus and selection. The process could not be completed due to intra-party feuds.

At the front organisation level, Helmand is one of several provacting presidents are heading the nces in southern and eastern Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal for 15 months, Afghanistan that are a focus of the Krishak Dal for more than four years. Shechchasebak Dal for two years and insurgency launched by the Taliban Iativatabadi Samajik Sangskritik after they were removed from power in Sangstha (Jasas) for 15 months.

The Shechchhasebak Dal does not Government officials, aid workers even have an acting president. Rajshahi and foreign security forces have been Krishi Unnayan Bank Chairman Rizvi Ahmed, who had been its president for long, is occasionally seen plaving some role for the Dal. Rizvi's tenure expired in 2003.

Abdul Malek has been given temporary responsibility of Jasas since the reports our staff correspondent from death of its president and actor Wasimul Bari last year. The Krishak Dal "His information will help us to is in crisis as its president Mahbubul make a major breakthrough in the Alam Tara ioined the Awami League in investigation of Khulna bomb blast

to Kuwait last year. The Jatiyatabadi Tanti Dal and Matsya Dal are being run by a convening committee as the original committees have been dissolved. The

2001. Sramik Dal President Nazru

Islam Khan was appointed ambassado

Jatiyatabadi Mahila Dal never had any committee since its inception in the mid-eighties. The Tanti Dal's committee was dissolved last month for corruption of its president.

The ruling party recently appointed a new committee of the Iativatabadi Olama Dal on the basis of selection. which virtually became leaderless as its convenor Nazibul Bashar Maizbhandari resigned recently. The Olama Dal was being run by a convening committee for the last one decade

and is still riven by intra-party feuds The Jatiyatabadi Muktijoddha (freedom fighter) Dal is now run by a committee whose tenure expired several months ago.

The Jativatabadi Jubo Dal and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) committees were formed regularly on the basis of selection. These front bodies do not have serious intra-party conflicts. Both the Jubo Dal and the JCD,

which are regarded as the major front bodies of the BNP, however badly lack fresh blood and suffer from crisis of policy guidelines. Jubo Dal President Barkatullah

Bhulu, who is also adviser to the commerce ministry, is over 50. He is not supposed to lead the youth front.

President of the party's student front ICD Azizul Bari Helal is around 40 and was not a student for around 15 years. A couple of years ago, he took admission in a department of the Dhaka

University. BNP Secretary General and Minister for Local Government Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan admitted some lapses within the party but said none of these is major. The party is now forming committees

from the grassroots level to top level. The party will hold national council when this process is completed, he added

have been working at Zia International

He said he was earning a living. Two

Airport carrying luggage.'

3 lost kids end

Talking to The Daily Star Sharmin said, 'My employer Jibon Nahar brought me here in the name of treatment. She left me here and never came back. I started crying after several hours of her departure and some hospital staff took me to a

She is still staying in a ward of the hospital without being registered as admitted. She is from Bhola but she couldn't recall the name of her village. She said she studied up to class three and that her father is poor.

Rafiq, a rickshaw-puller, brought her work as a domestic help for her.

Sharmin said, "I could manage all the household work of the employer

West Bengal floods maroon thousands

10 killed in 3 days

REUTERS, Kolkata Tens of thousands of people were marooned by flooding in West Bengal yesterday after three days of torrential rains that killed at least 10 people,

officials said. The unseasonal rains came after the June-September monsoon, which this year triggered severe flooding in other parts of the country such as the states of Gujarat and Maharashtra in the west and Assam in the northeast.

"The situation is bad in four southern districts, but we are doing every thing necessary," West Bengal state Finance Minister Asim Dasgupta said. Officials said at least 10 people had died in the coastal eastern state due to wall collapses and electrocution in the rains and some 50,000 people were cut offbyfloods

Relief officials warned the situation could get worse for hundreds of thousands of people living in the Sunderbans region, where two rivers were close to bursting their banks.

Rains also hit life in Kolkata, eastern India's main trading hub, which was flooded for a second day after the city's century-old drainage system failed to cope with the water.

Cars and motorcycles floated in waist-deep water, while people waded their way around the city and residents of some low-lying areas used boats. Many shops and business establishments were closed and road traffic was thin.

Filth from overflowing sewage canals entered homes and shops in many low-lying areas, witnesses said. "It's sickening the way garbage washes up our door," said Ratna Das, a mother of two who used huge mops to

keep out the water. Weather officials said the downpour was likely to continue for another

During the monsoon season, floods and mudslides killed more than 1,000 people in western India. The country's financial hub. Mumbai, was brought to a standstill for four days when a record 94 cm of rain fell in 24 hours.

Ex-JCD leader FROM PAGE 16

When Mohammad Shahjahan, a former JCD leader and the vice president of the Dhaka Metropolitan unit of the Swechcha Sebak Dal was going out from Bangladesh Kriva Shikkha Pratisthan (BKSP) at Savar where the tender papers were available, a group of JCD activists assaulted him and snatched his schedul accident at Kamalapur and being papers. treated in the DMCH. He said, "I left

Responding to Shahjahan's call, police rushed to the spot and arrested Sanaul Kabir Russell, former literature and publication secretary of the DU SM Hall unit and an MBA student of the university, after Shahjahan filed a case against him.

JCD activists went to the BKSP to buy

On that day at least three groups

Call for UN resolution

FROM PAGE 16

juvenile justice in the Commonwealth were some of the major issues that came up at the meet, attended by over 160 delegates who included the law ministers or their representatives from the 53 member countries of the organisa-

The communiqué said, " ... frequently their families, and others who aid them were subjected to loss, damage or injury and that they may, in addition, suffer hardship when assisting in the prosecution of offenders".

The meeting reaffirmed the principles that such victims must be treated with courtesy, compassion and respect for their personal dignity. It called upon member countries to consider implementation of the measures designed to give practical effect to these principles.

The ministers also agreed that they would consider passage of egislation that would assist in the realisation of adherence to the basic principles.

They further agreed that ground realities should be considered for evolving appropriate mechanisms to assist the victims, and recognised that such mechanisms must remain a matter for national decision, taking into account economic, social and

sibilities for civil and criminal justice, the progressive development and reform of law, the role of law and legal profession in supporting democracy and good governance, as well as certain areas of international law.

would be paid directly by the cable

COAB leaders said the Nationwide

Mirpur Digital, Star Trek and

authorities also threatened to shut

down cable operation of those who

continue to transmit channels oper-

ated under Star Group, such as Star

Movies, Star Sports, Star World, Star

The COAB said it would however

continue to relay channels like

They alleged that the NWCL

Technovision.

Plus and Star Gold.

Channel and HBO.

cultural norms of each member

work on 'Juvenile Justice', which had

already been undertaken by the

Commonwealth Secretariat, and

asked that the Secretariat should

They urged the Commonwealth

Secretariat to continue to support

member countries in complying with

the United Nations Convention and

to make further suggestions on

juvenile justice at their next meeting.

development of the Commonwealth

Legal Information Institute, which is

an internet research facility providing

free access to legal information from

They recognised the importance

of enacting and enforcing laws for the

achievement of gender equality and

resolved to play their part in imple-

menting the Commonwealth Plan of

covered many important contempo-

rary issues touching on their respon-

The ministers' deliberations

all Commonwealth countries.

Action for Gender Equality.

The ministers welcomed the

explore the issues further.

The law ministers welcomed the

country, the communiqué said.

Star channel blackout

23) in protest against recent increase operators themselves in charges for subscribing to Star **COAB STATEMENT** Group channels run by local company The Cable Operator Association of MGH and demanding withdrawal of Bangladesh (COAB) in a press release all false cases against our members."

yesterday strongly protested a recent He went on, "We would then decision by a leading cable channel suspend nationwide transmission of operator to stop transmission of all pay channels operated under the certain channels. Star Group (MGH) if they fail to withdraw the additional subscription fees, Communication Ltd (NWCL) without and criminal charges lodged against any prior notice on October 21 sussome of our members and beg unconpended transmission of pay channels ditional apology within the next fifteen to different cable network operators days" like Chittagong Multi Channel Ltd,

He announced a series of programmes for demonstration to realise their demands. These included a human chain at the city's Muktangan tomorrow to press for 'arrest of the miscreants and begin prosecution'.

Later, memorandums would be submitted to the ministries of information and home on Thursday for speedy acceptance of their demands, he said.

They also demanded that from National Geography, The History now on, all Value Added Tax (VAT) bills

Bird flu found in Britain Scientists have said east African Rife

contracted the disease, but they said the Tanzania, as well as Uganda, were particu-

farmer who died of bird flu had also Valley countries Ethiopia, Kenya and

Earlier, Biman's domestic flights did

supply due to Biman's failure to pay the

dues. The international flights however

BPC and the Energy Division, State

Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism

So how can Biman survive?" Nasir

points saying Biman is eligible for 20

percent rebate only when the BPC gains

profit. "But how can it provide rebate to

Biman on its fuel proceeds when the BPC

itself incurred Tk 2,700 crore loss last

He also did not subscribe to the state

The energy adviser contested Nasir's

Reacting to the 'rigid' position of the

operated as usual.

argued.

months ago he got on a train to go to Kamalapur with his friends. On the way he fell down from the running train and was severely injured. Pedestrians rushed him to the DMCH where he is staying still. Sayed Rony, 8, is from Mymensingh He lost his legs eight days ago in a train

One day when I was playing with my friends, I was hit by a running train and except giving baths to her children. For folld

Half-trained cops compound.

> ful bomb kept in front of a house at The Sardah and district-level police Monirampur in Shahzadpur upazila of authorities said the orders are now with Sirajganj district on Friday night.

> > facilities.

farms.

BDNEWS adds: Following the Many senior police officials have rumour of planned bomb attacks on expressed deep concern over the cut in the Gazipur court premises, authorities training. "We've already come under yesterday beefed up security measures severe criticism for the poor skill and there. efficiency of our men. The decision to

Govt to seek

FROM PAGE 16 proposal, now being prepared by the ministry. He said donors' assistance will be

sought to finance various compo

included in the taskforce, he added.

The Food and Agricultural

Organisation (FAO) earlier said

Bangladesh, being the host of migra-

tory bird, has the potential risk of

being affected by the bird flu virus.

The virus has already spread across

The short-listed firms are HPC

Hamburg Port Consulting of

Germany, Royal Haskoning of the

Ltd of Australia, Pacific Consultants

International of Japan, BCEOM of

France, CPCS Transcom Ltd of Canada

to collect documents and submit their

be awarded the contract for conduct

participation model, assessment of

potential market and business oppor-

tunities, site selection, survey and

investigations, planning and cost

estimates, project appraisal and

project management model and other

and Nathan Associates of the USA.

ministry officials said.

ing the study.

ence for the study

ancillary services.

Europe and many Asian countries.

Tender floated

FROM PAGE 1

companies.

Police will also produce JMB cadre FROM PAGE 16 Hafez Jalil before a court today seeking seven-day remand in connection with bomb explosion on the judges' court Meanwhile, police defused a power-

to Dhaka with a promise of a job about three to four months ago and found the

training at Sardah Police Academy, have already completed about two months' The length of their two-year practical

training in districts has also been reduced to only six months.

Usually, the SIs have to undergo twoyear practical training after one-year training at Sardah Police Academy to have their jobs confirmed. Many have to take an additional few more months' training if the superintendents of police are not satisfied with their performance.

"The authorities have cut their academic and practical training in a way that they will be confirmed in their jobs by next August after one year of academic and practical training instead of three years and be able to work during the election," a senior police officer said, adding that such a cut in the syllabus would 'definitely make them poorquality cops'.

Over 200 ASPs who got the jobs through the 25th BCS examinations have completed about 15 weeks of their oneyear training at Sardah. But the Sardah academy authorities on verbal orders from the top administration have already cut the syllabus to make it suit a nine month period. Sources said a decision in this regard

has been taken in principal and written orders will soon reach the academy Meantime, some 500 constables who

have completed two months of their sixmonth training at Sardah will complete their course in four months. The decision was taken after they had already begun their training.

Some 2,000 constables, now undergoing training at police training centres (PTC) in Khulna, Noakhali, Rangpur and Tangail, will also have training of a similar length. They have been in training for

Japan national

FROM PAGE 1 room and took Faruk's cellphone number. Other abductors called Faruk and

demanded Tk 1 lakh in ransom for Masaharu's release, threatening him not to inform the police.

However, a joint team of Rapid Action Battalion and police on information raided the guesthouse in the pre dawn hours yesterday.

The law enforces arrested Ali of Purba Chandarpur in Kaliakoir, Gazipur, Ershad Ali, owner of the guesthouse, and Shahidul Islam, his employee. Ershad and Shahidul hail from Nagarpur in Tangail.

police officer said

"It is very common that courts across the country reprimand police officers for poor investigations, leading to the release of many criminals even if it is evident that those are guilty. The investigators' (SI in most cases) failure to collect evidence against the criminals gives the courts no alternative but to release

shorten training periods and the aca-

demic syllabus will result in reduction in

field-training and limited scope for the

policemen to have a good training before

they start their jobs," a senior retired

The taskforce will work mainly to them," he said. Some police officials said recruitment create awareness among the people about the disease so that they keep of new ASPs will cause frustration among themselves from making contact with the recruits as there is no increase in the migratory birds, he said. posts of additional SP. "It will take a long The taskforce has included repretime for the new ASPs to have a promosentatives from the ministries of tion. It will obviously give birth to frustrahealth, environment, education, and tion and we all know frustration breeds information. The stakeholders of the corruption," observed a senior police poultry industry have also been

official. Inspector General of Police Abdu Quayum, meanwhile, said the decision to cut the training periods will be in effect for the time being as was in 1973.

"There is a huge vacuum in the administration. Many policemen are working for 12 to 14 hours a day. We need to solve the problem at the earliest."

Four hundred and fifty ASP posts 1,000 SI posts and 3,500 constable posts remain vacant. Besides, many are going

to missions while many are working with the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) on deputation, he said while talking to The Daily Star last night.

On whether the cut in training will affect efficiency, he said, "The syllabus will remain the same and will be completed by the newly-fixed time. The rest of the training will be completed later during their service period."

Companiganj OC

FROM PAGE 16 Basurhat Bazar of Companiganj upazila. Police opened fire on the procession killing five and injuring many.

The district administration initiated a three-member investigation committee led by Additional District Commissioner (ADC) Abdul Jalil to look into the incident

The police formed a separate three member investigation committee. Both committees, officially launched yesterday, are reportedly working in full swing. Meanwhile, four of the five bodies

were handed over to the relatives after an autopsy on Friday night. Businessmen of Basurhat Bazar wore black badges vesterday and hoisted black flags protest ing the killing.

this she used to beat me every day.

nents, such as vaccination, decon-Tutul, 9, is a boy from Magura. He tamination, training of workers and said, "One day I was loitering at the local officials, and laboratory and testing train station about a year ago when a man asked me if I wanted to go to Dhaka Karim said a taskforce headed by and put me on a train. But the train took Iqbal Mahmud, joint secretary of the me to Chittagong. From there a woman ministry, has already started working brought me to Dhaka and since then I to ensure bio-safety in the poultry

UN rejects

FROM PAGE 1

country," a source told The Daily Star citing the UN peacekeeping policy on the appointment of force commander. Foreign Ministry Secretary Hemayetuddin during his visit to the US this month met the head of UN peacekeeping operations and submitted the replacement proposal.

But Under-Secretary-General for UN Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Marie Guéhenno declined to consider the proposal as, he said, the UN policy does not provide for replacing the incumbent force commander by someone from the same country. He told the Bangladesh envoy that the UN rather wants the present force commander to continue, sources said.

The foreign secretary however denied having had any such discussion Netherlands, Kolen Gromit and Pvt with Guéhenno. "We talked about some general aspects," Hemayetuddin recently told The Daily Star, admitting his meeting with the UN top official.

Major General Fazle Elahi Akbar was The selected firms have been asked appointed the force commander in the UN peacekeeping mission in strife-torn proposals within 45 days, shipping Sudan last year. Bangladesh Army late last month asked him to return to Nepal Chandra Sarker told the Dhaka by October 30, sources in the news agency that only one firm would armysaid

A letter conveying the message has already been sent to Maj Gen Akbar, The government at an interadded the source.

ministerial meeting on October 12 Akbar's tenure as the force comshort-listed the seven international mander expired on September 3 and firms and finalised the terms of referthe UN has proposed to extend his service in the peacekeeping mission for The study will cover review and another nine months from September 4 analysis of the present situation, port toJune 4 2006. administration model, public-private

"The secretariat will be grateful if the government of Bangladesh intimates its approval for the extension for the period indicated," said a UN letter forwarded to Bangladesh government. "The Secretariat of the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity

n the tracks, the train ran ove mylegs."

home after having a spat with my

mother and came to Dhaka. I don't

know the exact date or the month. I used

to beg at Kamalapur railway station.

The three kids are staying in ward No 33 in the hospital. Sympathetic ward staffs are looking after them although they do not know where they will go after the hospital discharges them in a few days. Nobody knows.

assurance of its highest consideration,"

sources said quoting from the UN letter.

insistence from Bangladesh govern-

usually request for extension for such

high positions, whereas Bangladesh is

asking for something else.

schedule papers of the tender work, sourcessaid. Meanwhile, ICD central leader

Shamsuzzoha Sumon told The Daily Star that he along with Russell went to the BKSP to buy schedule papers, not for "tender manipulation".

"Police came to the BKSP gate where I and Russell were gossiping and arrested him without proper reasons," he added. Earlier, Savar police arrested former

ICD leaders Igbal Hossain Liton and Jahidul Kabir with a .22 bore revolver from the BKSP over tender manipulation Bangladesh to the United Nations, the on September 25.

The JCD leaders are not involved in tender manipulation, JCD General Secretary Shafiul Bari Babu said, adding, Explaining the UN interest in "I heard that some people who were extending the service of the present expelled from the Chhatra Dal earlier are force commander, sources said, the now engaged in tender manipulation. We will not take any responsibility of ment has raised concern at the UN those who are no longer attached to the peacekeeping operations department Chhatra Dal." since to their understanding countries

Sun may shine FROM PAGE 1

Rajshahi, 39mm in Sylhet, 37mm in Ishwardi, 32mm in Bhola and 29mm in Sandwip.

Meanwhile, the three major sea ports of Chittagong, Mongla and Cox's Bazar have posted a no-3 alarm signal, apprehending light storms with rainfall, while the inland river ports posted a no-2 alarm signal.

PBCP leader FROM PAGE 16

during interrogation, took him to Ghurka Thakpara area to recover illegal firearms early vesterday.

According to police, when the team reached the area at about 3:00am, accomplices of Hossain Ali opened fire on them, prompting the law enforcers to retaliate.

Hossain Ali was caught in the crossfire when he tried to escape during the shootout. He died on the spot.

Police recovered one shutter-gun four bullets and some sharp weapons from the shooting spot.

Three policemen were also injured in the shootout and are undergoing treatment at a local hospital.

The body of Hossain Ali was sent to Sirajganj General Hospital morgue for autopsy.

Police said Hossain Ali of Charia Kalibari village under Solonga upazila was wanted in eight criminal cases, including one for murder.

virus had not mutated and still cannot larly threatened as they host millions of pass easily among humans. migratory fowl that fly to warmer climes

The 48-year-old farmer -- the 61st during the European winter.human victim of the virus worldwide since On the other side of the continent late 2003 -- died after slaughtering and Senegal -- which has west Africa's largest eating a sick chicken. bird sanctuaries -- asked people to take any

"In this case the boy may have conpoultry found dead to the nearest vet for tracted the disease from the area where nspection. the chicken was dying. The boy had close contact with the virus (from being around sick chickens) and possibly from handling No jet fuel the birds' excrement," Siriraj Hospital FROM PAGE 1 director Prasit Watanapa said. not get fuel if it fails to pay in cash.

Doctors said the boy was expected to recover but would remain in hospital for not operate from Thursday midnight observation for three weeks. until Friday noon as the BPC stopped fuel

In Romania, officials said a suspected new case of bird flu had been detected in the northeast of the country, only hours after assurances that the outbreak of the deadly H5N1 virus had been contained to two locations in the southeast.

Mir Mohammad Nasir Uddin told The Even as governments tried to calm Daily Star yesterday Biman's dues, as people, fear spread. calculated by the BPC, was much inflated Stocks of flu vaccines in Spanish

because "they've stopped giving us chemists "are being exhausted", the rebate. Spanish general public health administra-"Besides, I can't raise Biman fares in tion said. tandem with skyrocketing jet fuel prices.

In France, a national federation of supermarket chains said sales of poultry had dropped 20 percent in five days

The World Health Organisation (WTO) warned against "scaremongering" but it also said each additional human case was making it easier to develop human-to-human transmission

week

birds in public places.

entire country.

and animals.

"While neither the timing nor the year severity of the next pandemic can be minister's argument that Biman could predicted, the probability that a pandemic not match its fares with the ongoing fuel will occur has increased," it said. price hikes.

The Czech Ministry of Agriculture

announced a ban on the sale of chickens in

markets and exhibitions or sale of other

south of the country to be placed indoors

to prevent contact with wild birds.

Switzerland issued a similar order for the

Ukraine's parliament slapped a six-

month ban on imports of poultry. Nepal

banned imports of European poultry.

Migratory birds believed to be carriers

may next take the virus to Africa, the UN's

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)

said this week, warning that the continent

would be an "ideal breeding ground"

because of close contact between people

Bangladesh formed a bird flu taskforce.

Norway ordered all poultry in the

The European Commission has He argued, "If the government can formally banned imports of pet birds and raise bus fares adjusting to the fuel price feathers from nearly all Russian territory in hikes, what's barring Biman from an emergency procedure after the discovincreasing its fares? ery of the disease south of Moscow this "The general public commute by bus,

but the Biman flights are taken either by the well-off or by government function arieslike me.'

Quoting phenomenal rise in iet fuel prices to 56 cents from last year's 26 cents a litre, Biman officials said the people would not be able to afford air rides anymore if Biman adjusts its fares with the price spikes.

The overstaffed national flag carrier now operates flights to 26 international and seven domestic destinations with a fleet of five DC-10s, four Airbuses and three F-28s.

Biman sources acknowledged its domestic flights on all routes excepting Dhaka-Sylhet and Dhaka-Chittagong more often than not fly with much less than capacity passenger.

On Thursday, an 80-seater aircraft of Biman carried only six passengers to Barisal from Dhaka and returned with four.

"One of the major reasons is that it is very difficult to establish working relations with the partners--the government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM). If someone new comes to the post, he will take at least another six months to establish the working relations with the

officer, who is observing the peacekeep ing mission in Sudan, told The Daily Star, wishing anonymity.

Deployment of the troops that Bangladesh has committed to Sudan mission has yet to be completed due to adverse situations in the largest country on the African continent.

Many say the government's move for replacement in Sudan peacekeeping mission might create negative image about the country though its contribution to peacekeeping performance has been lauded.

Currently, about 10,000 members of Bangladesh Army are serving in 12 UN peacekeeping missions in different countries. The air force and the navy are also participating in the peacekeeping operations.

In last 16 years, Bangladesh earned Tk 4,600 crore by contributing 40,793 soldiers --nearly half the total troops in Bangladesh Army --to to renew to the permanent mission of 31 UN peacekeeping missions.

top brass on both sides," a senior army