NEWS

ence gathered from the cases of the

western embankment and DND

(Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra)

project before the eastern bypass

October last year, Rajuk was given

the responsibility of 'macro level'

planning of the area. But it is yet to

being dumped to fill up the low-lying

areas to accommodate housing

projects every day. Miles of natural

canals and ponds have been filled

up. In Khilgaon, the Ministry of

Housing and Public Works is filling

up a big area under a rehabilitation

programme to compensate those

who lost their land to Kamlapur

railway station more than 50 years

ago. Housing companies have

embarked on filling up whatever is

left of the flood plains in Boather,

Gaoir, Joarsahara, Baiderter,

Meradia, Goran, Madartek and

According to experts at

Bangladesh Meteorological

Department, the volume of average

rainfall in Dhaka is between 1.400

mm and 1.600 mm during the four

months of monsoon beginning in

June. The monsoon rain, in addition

to flood water and other liquid

wastes, generates so much water

within the embankment that many

parts of the city goes under water

"If you are thinking of encom-

passing such a large area with a

dyke, the first thing you have to think

of is drainage." said one expert

The 30-km western embank

inside the embankment becomes

impossible due to rise in water level

outside, serious water logging takes

place in parts of Mirpur. Shvamoli

Mohammadpur, Rayer Bazaar

Hazaribagh, Nawabganj, Lalbagh

and Imamganj. The water that gets

logged for months is mainly tannery

and other industrial wastes, and i

arranging some special flights so

that at least 4,000 more could be

Chittagong reports that 555 pil-

grims, who are facing uncertainty

over their hajj flights, yesterday also

called off their programme of laying

siege to Biman regional office in the

port city following assurance from

"We have withdrawn our

assured us of resolving the prob-

Parishad and also a leader of Haab

JC Barua said they have made

arrangements for flights for the

remaining hajj pilgrims in

Chittagong. "They will be able to go

to Saudi Arabia by January 1 and no

pilarims will be left in uncertainty,

he told The Daily Star.

told reporters yesterday noon.

the authorities

Our Staff Correspondent at

flown to Jeddah by January 4.

due to lack of proper drainage.

requesting anonymity.

Manda areas.

Billions of cubic metres of sand is

At an inter-ministerial meeting in

project is launched," he said.

do so.

cost by holding mock elections

He urged the people to launch

a tougher movement to realise

their 23-point demand to establish

a poverty-free country through

reconstruction of the state.

People expected that the prime

minister will declare stern mea-

sures to uproot militancy to save

the country's independence and

democracy. But instead of taking

those initiatives, she declared a

war against the country, its people

sible comments prove the BNP-

Jamaat wants the path of conflict

instead of solving the present

coalition of being the actual

patron of the militants in the coun-

try as the bombers admitted their

BNP-Jamaat leaders termed the

opposition movement against the

militants a conspiracy hatched to

the coalition between BNP and

anti-Liberation War Jamaat, but

we are anxious about the rise of

militancy in the country," Jalil

Abdur Razzak, MP, Tofail Ahmed,

Matia Chowdhury, Suranjit

Sengupta, MP, Mainuddin Khan

Badal, Saved Jafar Saiiad, Nurul

Islam, Dilip Barua, Bimal Biswas,

Senior leaders of the 14-party

"We are not concerned about

split the ruling coalition, he said.

But the prime minister and the

nvolvement with Jamaat.

He accused the BNP-Jamaat

crisis."

added

"The prime minister's irrespon-

and the opposition, Jalil added.

administration and society

like that of February 15, 1996.

Mirpur traders

FROM PAGE 1

11 months for refusing to pay tolls to criminals, alleged that gang leader Shahadat and his men called over 100 traders in Mirpur for tolls in the last two days.

"Shahadat called me yesterday and demanded toll. He said they have killed Aftab and it will be my turn if I refuse to pay the money." a trader seeking anonymity told The

Daily Star yesterday. A number of traders claimed to have received similar threats from the gang.

A business leader said their members are receiving such phone threats every day, but few dare to inform the police.

The business community in Mirpur burst into protest and shut down their shops when another business leader Kazi Shahidullah was killed allegedly by the same gang on August 12.

The killers have vet to be nabbed although after the murder on August 12 Deputy Commissioner (West) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police Kahinoor Miah assured the businessmen of hunting down Shahidullah's killers "If the killers of Shahidullah and

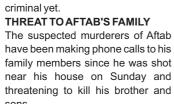
other businessmen were arrested and brought to book. Aftab would not have been killed." Manik Miah president of Co-operative Super Market at Mirpur-1, told The Daily Star vesterday

Another businessman said besides the businessmen, every individual owning multi-storey building in Mirpur has to pay tolls to the criminals regularly.

Traders accuse local political leaders of sheltering the criminals. They also alleged that police and Rapid Action Battalion seem reluctant to arrest the goons due to pressure from an influential guarter.

Officer-in-Charge of Mirpur Police Station Abdur Rob, however, denied the allegation and said,

They have so far arrested 50 criminals since the killing of Shahidullah." He, however, admitted that they could not arrest any top-notch



FROM PAGE 20

identified.

looted arms.

involvement in the attack, but did not

give any information about the

the police fear more attacks from the

PBCP and said they have found a

list of probable targets of the out-

Law enforcers have identified

several police stations and outposts

as vulnerable and deployed addi-

tional forces there. Sources said

Atrai and Raninagar police stations

and several outposts in Naogoan,

Pinhazari outpost in Nandigram

upazila and Kumira Panditpukur

investigation centre in Bogra.

Tarash and Royganj police stations

in Sirajganj, and Naldanga Police

Additional contingents of Armed

Police Battalion, Range Reserve

Force, Rapid Action Battalion and

Bangladesh Rifles have been

deployed to step up security at the

police stations and outposts in the

None of over a hundred firearms

looted by the outlawed communist

outfits from the northern police

bases since 1973 could be retrieved

so far. Sources said the retrieval has

become difficult as some of the

people accused of the looting

have close links with lawmakers

Gurudaspur arms looting in Natore

in 1987 is a close associate of a

Several years ago, communist

outlaws undertook a move to 'free'

northern region

Station in Natore are on the list.

lawed communist outfit.

A police official vesterday said

sons "I received a call on Wednesday night. The caller identified him as Shahadat and threatened to kill my children if the four people who have been arrested are not released,' Aftab's wife Jahanara Begum told

The Daily Star vesterday. "I have lost my husband and now passing days fearing for my children," a sobbing Jahanara said.

Besides, the criminals have threatened to kill Aftab's brother Afroz if the family does not withdraw the case filed for the murder. PROTESTS

The businessmen in Mirpur yesterday brought out a procession in the area with the body of Aftab. The body was taken to his residence at Block-E in Mirpur Section-2 at about 11:00am

Later, Aftab was buried at the Martvred Intellectuals' Graveyard. They also held a rally at Mirpur-1 and demanded arrest and punishment of the killers

In the evening, the business leaders sat down with Dhaka City Shop Owners Association and decided to withdraw the indefinite strike, which was announced on Wednesday after Aftab had breathed his last after fighting for life for over four long days. The meeting decided that all

traders will wear black badges today and tomorrow to mourn the death of their slain leader. They will hold a meeting on

Sunday and announce the next course of programmes to protest the killing of Aftab.

Eastern bypass Outlaws target Mofiz, 28, was caught at Karnoghos FROM PAGE 1 village of Tarash upazila.

resulting in permanent waterlogging They also recovered the bulletand other hazards. ridden body of the outlaw killed in

Most of the low-lying land in the Wednesday's attack from under a bypass project area is now in the culvert in Bhagail area under Tarash grip of private housing companies upazila yesterday morning. As of and individuals. From Khilkhet to last night, the dead could not be Kanchpur along the river Balu, massive signboards have been Sources said the arrestees installed announcing the start of during interrogation confessed their

mega housing projects. The 30-km bypass-cumembankment would encompass the 124 square km area from Tongi railway bridge to Kanchpur bridge.

The project would be implemented by seven ministries with the water resources ministry in the lead A UK- based consultant and its associates are now updating all previous studies on the project, officially called Dhaka Integrated Flood Control Embankment Cum Eastern Bypass Road Multipurpose Project, for a fee of Tk 2.9 crore. The company is likely to submit its final report by March next year.

An inter-ministerial meeting in July classified the project as the second most important one in terms of national priority to reduce poverty.

Minister for Water Resources Hafiz Uddin Ahmed told The Daily Star that his ministry could not intervene to save the canals and other wetlands on the eastern fringe of the city until the study reports were submitted and the project was officially launched. Moreover, funds for the project are yet to be procured fully, he said.

"Here we are talking about very influential developers who are widely known as land grabbers. There seems to be no way to stop them." Hafiz said

became elected people's represen-Asked about the environmental tatives at local governments and impact of such indiscriminate land filling, he said, " In a country where For instance, the prime accused the home minister has to file a of looting firearms from the police at general diary with police station for Atgharia in Pabna in 1986 later protection from land grabbers, we became a union parishad chairman, can do little.' while another key accusee of

Unless the government moves in immediately to demarcate the canals and flood retention ponds. the entire eastern fringe is set to be "an environmental nightmare" as soon as the embankment-cumbypass is completed, experts at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology and Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) said.

Prof Nazrul Islam, chairman of the Centre for Urban Studies (Cus) and vice president Bapa, said the project must be implemented keeping in view the Detailed Area Planning Project and the Strategic Transport Policy under Dhaka Urban Transport Project (DUTP), which are now being completed.

"We have formally asked the authorities to demarcate at least 40 percent of the 124 square kilometre area as retention ponds and canals. without which the city would become unliveable." Nazrul said.

without a feasibility study on the existing western embankment that causes serious waterlogging due to ack of flood and waste water reten

Militancy FROM PAGE 20

year in their respective fields. Ahmed said, "People from various

professions have come to me; they said if the political situation have been a bit more stable they could have made still better progress

According to the central bank governor's estimates, the economy will see a 6.5 to 6.8 percent GDP growth and a 9 percent industrial growth in the current fiscal year. Most of the banks have made good profits and the amounts of their default loans have also come down, he said, adding, as the businessmen are making good profit the loan repayment rate is also very good

But, the governor observed, "The people in the financial sector don't want uncertainty. Now, if the uncertainty is not removed, if the noneconomic issues can't be resolved, the achievements made so far can't be sustained."

Turning to the macro-economy Ahmed said in the first week of January the BB will make an advance policy statement on the steps it will undertake in the coming months so that both the public and the private sector can adjust themselves accord-

ingly. On the recent rise in government borrowing from the banking system, the governor said the pay hike of government employees and the delayed disbursement of the World Bank's Development Support Credit (DSC) forced the government to do

But, after the release of the DSC instalment this week, the borrowing has started to come down. Besides, he said, the government also has increased the interest rate on saving instruments to scale it down.

The governor admitted that the ever-increasing borrowing has been flaring up the inflation and said the central bank has repeatedly advised the finance ministry to abstain from excessive bank borrowing.

Ahmed said, apart from monetary ment, protecting an area of 136 sq policy, there are some other reasons for the inflation flare-up. "But, he said km from Tongi railway bridge to "those are beyond our jurisdiction and Kellar Mor in Lalbagh was comwe have informed the commerce pleted two years ago. During the ministry about these issues rainy season, when drainage from

The production of rice has been good, he said, and other consumer products have also been imported adequately. "But, for some reasons, these are not coming to the market. Perhaps they are being hoarded," he remarked.

Commission (JRC) in Dhaka last The governor said inflation is less in September, Bangladesh voiced India, because the business people concern over desertification of the there do not hoard. Greater Sylhet region due to the

Gulistan-Jatrabari FROM PAGE 1 this regard within a week.

The meeting was told that the construction of the flyover would need less time, money and space if it is done without removing the existing settlements.

"If the settlements are removed it will take more time, additional cost and space for constructing the proposed flyover," Bhuiyan told iournalists after the meeting.

Vice Chancellor of Buet Prof Dr Mohammad Ali Mortuza told BDNEWS that the proposed flyover could be built keeping the existing settlements of the area intact.

Replying to a question he said Surma and Kushiyara are the sources of its water. approximately Tk 700 crore will be needed to implement the flyover

PM's speeches

FROM PAGE 1

giving provocative speeches against the opposition," AL General Secretary and 14-party coordinator Abdul Jalil said.

The opposition leaders urged the people to stay alert to any "evil designs" made by the government to prop up its "unavoidable" fall and its "ill efforts" to hang on to power at any cost.

Jalil said. "We will force the government to meet our demands of reforms in the caretaker government and in the Election Commission.'

He said the prime minister has declared a war against the people and the opposition by keeping the BNP's alliance with Jamaat-e-Islami intact.

"The threats given by the prime minister in a discourteous manner have created a danger of pushing the country's political future to violence in a planned way," he added

Jalil said the government even did not file any sedition cases against the militants, who declared war against the state, constitution, the judiciary and the rule of law.

Jalil said the premier gave four clear messages to the nation through her speech. First of all, she hinted that the BNP is determined to hold "another controversial election" by rejecting the opposition's reform proposals. Secondly, she said the BNP

will not leave Jamaat under any circumstances; thirdly, she will not take any effective steps against the militancy; and finally, she hinted that the entire administration is with the BNP, Jalil said.

construction of the dam on the

Barak, the main feeder to the

venture, not an irrigation scheme,

and it would not affect Barak's flow

o Kushiyara and Surma adversely.

But the water experts at home are

n Bangladesh, the Meghna is

Water Resources Minister Priya

Ranjan Dasmunsi was replaced by

Meanwhile. Dhaka is not offi-

cially aware of any fresh develop-

ment over the Tipaimukh plan.

There are indications from Delhi

that the new Indian water minister

might come to Dhaka soon to

discuss the Tipaimukh project

Fulertal on the Manipur-Assam-

Mizoram border as part of the

Tipaimukh project, possibility of

regulating Barak's water remains

there and that's a major concern for

Bangladesh," said Dr Ainun Nishat,

water expert and a former JRC

Water Resources Minister

Hafizuddin Ahmed, who was in

Bhola yesterday, could not be

reached over phone for comments.

Earlier, he had told The Daily Star

that India gave assurance that it

would not build any barrage at the

Barak confluence and divert

As Dhaka is anxiously waiting

Earlier, a 10-member delegation of

teachers summoned to the PMO

where it met with Harris Chowdhury

and Nazimuddin Alam. MP for over

native proposals at the meeting to

nationalise their jobs in phases. The

proposals include provision of 100

percent salary, house rent, medical

working in some 19,000 non-

government primary schools across

the country and they have been

rallying since 1992 to realise the

300 asst secys

As many as 327 assistant secretar-

ies were promoted to deputy secre-

taries in May this year and 493 more

Several assistant secretaries

would be deprived of promotion

despite having the requisite qualifi-

cations, the sources added.

Around 78,000 teachers are

allowance and festival bonus.

The leaders offered some alter-

Barak's water adversely.

leachers

FROM PAGE 20

an hour.

demand.

FROM PAGE 20

n 2003.

"If India builds a barrage at

Santosh Mohan Dev.

among other issues.

member.

Of the three main river systems

ministry and

not assured about such guarantee.

FROM PAGE 1

He said the BNP-Jamaat alli-Abdus Samad, among others ance wants to retain power at any were present.

Experts meet today

for the detailed plan on Tipaimukh to be submitted before the next JRC meeting early next year in New Delhi, rights activists from Manipur, the site of the dam, join experts and activists in Bangladesh at the two-day confer-

country's Meghna river system. ence India, however, expressed its Engineer Muhammad Hilal willingness to go ahead with the Uddin, one of the key organisers of project, agreeing to provide the conference, yesterday told The Bangladesh with a detailed plan of Daily Star, "India has already the dam beforehand. If sanctioned Rs 6.000 crore for the Bangladesh finds any problem Tipaimukh project. But as crossupon reviewing the plan, India will border rivers have environmental take that into account, the Indian and ecological bearings on all coside agreed at the JRC meeting riparian countries, we have always India also dispelled said construction of any dam. Bangladesh's concern, saving barrage or reservoir on an interna-Tipaimukh is a power generating

tional river has to be on a consensus among the countries sharing India is building the Tipaimukh dam at the confluence of a river

that originates from Myanmar and flows through lower-riparian Bangladesh. Various indigenous groups and

considered a major lifeline and the local inhabitants in Manipur of India also had long been expressing concerns over massive dissources in Dhaka yesterday told placement of human livings in case The Daily Star that a few weeks the dam is constructed. after the Dhaka meeting, Indian

Move to list most voters

FROM PAGE 1

register, yesterday gave rise to further questions He has been refraining from talking

to the press for the last month. But yesterday at about 1:00pm he assured the journalists through the secretary that he would talk to the media about the preparation of the voter list scheduled to begin on January 1.

In line with the decision, officials at the EC secretariat had invited state run BTV, three private channels and journalists to cover the CEC's press briefing But on consultation with the EC secretary for about half an hour, MA Aziz declined to speak to the journalists waiting at the EC office since 12 noon.

The secretary told the reporters at 2:30pm that the CEC was feeling sick and he would soon be leaving the office. He said a press release with nut the prepa ration of the voter list would be issued. Later a press release with only some statistics was distributed among the journalists. Still they opted to wait in front of the CEC's office The CEC left the office at about 7:45pm under police escort. The law enforcers shoved the journalists out of the way while CEC Aziz declined to respond to any query. EC secretariat officials said he (CEC) was busy preparing himself for the hearing on the writ petitions. Meanwhile, BNP lawmaker Kazi Shah Mofazzal Hossain Kaykobad met the CEC at about 5:00pm at his office. But he declined to say anything about the meeting Awami League (AL) lawmaker Advocate Rahmat Ali who met the EC secretary in the afternoon told reporters that the CEC is scared of facing the iournalists as everything he is doing for the voter roll is 'unlawful The CEC has not convened any meeting of the EC to discuss the preparation of the voter list since last August. He had forwarded several files to Election Commissioners M Munsef Ali and AK Mohammad Ali for their consent on recruitment of about three lakh manpower to prepare the voter list. The two however did not give consent to the recruitment. They suggested that the manpower could be recruited only for revising the existing voter roll

decision to have a fresh electoral

Secretary SM Zakaria, who joined the EC secretariat on April 1, 2002. had been engaged in a bitter and

lingering dispute with former CEC MA byed and boycotted the EC meetings for about two years. Irked by his role, Syed had requested the government to withdraw the secretary and appoint a new one to the post. But his request was not entertained, instead the secretary was given a one-year extension in last

Februarv Aziz last month introduced a procedure that said journalists would have to submit written questions to the CEC first. They would not be allowed to ask any supplementary question as well. The CEC spoke to journalists in this way twice--on November 23 and

Besides, the EC secretariat had imposed restriction on the two election commissioners last August when the commissioners started disagreeing and bullet proof vest on with the CEC's decision on preparation of the voter list.

drive

Sunny remanded FROM PAGE 1 (CMM) Court at 3:30pm with helmet

some northern districts including Naogoan, Natore and Rajshahi, and since have been raiding the police outposts in the region to gather arms and ammunition.

ruling party lawmaker.

Mobile courts FROM PAGE 20 Environment Act, said a govern-

ment release. The courts have realised Tk

16.76.400 in fines and sentenced 15 people to different terms in the previous two days of the ongoing

They will continue the drive today also to strengthen the law and order as well as to ensure safe food for the city dwellers, the release said.

The project is also planned

exposes millions living in these areas to health hazards. Hajj flight FROM PAGE 1 the national flag carrier has so fai sent 30,664 pilgrims by operating 70

flights and foreign airlines ferried 6.500 more. Biman is still trying to negotiate with Saudi Arabian Airlines for

The EC secretariat has completed recruitment, training and printing of voter forms and manual.

On orders of the CEC, they even declared the timetable for preparing the voter list without consulting the two election commissioners

Munsef Ali and Mohammad Ali have repeatedly said they are not aware of the activities towards the preparation of the roll and what have been done in the name of the EC is illegal.

Meanwhile, AL General Secretary Abdul Jalil and two AL lawmakers Rahmat Ali and Asaduzzaman Noor on December 12 filed two writ petitions with the High Court. The petitions challenged the CEC's unilateral decision to go for a fresh roll and recruitment of the manpower

The division bench of Justice MA Matin and Justice M Rezaul Hague on December 15 fixed the date for hearing on January 2 while the enumeration work begins on January 1.

Since assuming office on May 23 this year, the CEC failed to run the commission as a whole and the rift between him and the two election commissioners centring the voter list made him dependant on the secretary, officials at the EC secretariat said.

Wetland bird FROM PAGE 1

Bazar), northeast Haor basin (Hakaluki), central inland freshwater wetland and south and southwest inland freshwater wetland.

Presenting the report on 'Bangladesh Mid-Winter Waterfowl Census-2005' at a press briefing at the Jatiya Press Club, Sajahan, also the general secretary of NCC, emphasised 'wetland management' to conserve birds, especially the waterfowls.

'The presence of birds indicates the sustainability of eco-system and for that reason census of bird is important," Sajahan said explaining the necessity of bird census. Jointly organised by Bangladesh

Bird Census Committee, NCC, National Committee of Welcome Festival for Birds and Bangladesh Bird Watchers' Society, the programme was also addressed by Mehrin A Mahbub of Nishorgo Support Project, Sadat Salim of Society for Nature Photography and

Jonaed Saki of Nagorik Committee. Speakers at the briefing recommended immediate measures to control trapping, killing and selling of waterfowls and stressed the need for protection, monitoring and awareness to conserve wetland birds and their habitats

The bird watchers of NCC following the direct visual method with the help of powerful telescopes managed to cover 60 percent of the total wetlands of the country and counted 3,81,538 birds, both resident and migratory, during January-February

this vear. Of the 70 species of waterfowls found during the study, 30 are resident and 40 migratory species, the researchers said.

Sadat Selim, the joint convener of the National Committee of Welcome Festival for Birds announced the programme schedule of the festival that will be held at Mirpur Ceramics Lake on December 31, 2005.

Investigation Office (IO) Sub-Inspector Afsar Uddin of the Rab-3 placed Sunny before the court on completion of a seven-day remand in connection with arms case. seeking a further 14-day remand in two cases. Metropolitan Magistrate Shamsul Alam granted the prayer after hearing.

The investigation officers of 15 other cases, filed with different police stations in the city, simultaneously submitted separate petitions to different courts and got their prayers granted.

The forwarding reports placed before the courts by the IOs stated that Sunny was directly involved with serial blasts on August 17. So, he needs to be quizzed to find out vital clues about the bombings and whereabouts of his accomplices.

Mufti Hannan, operations commander of the banned Harkatul Jihad's (HuJi) Bangladesh chapter. was remanded for the thirteenth time and Abdul Awal, son-in-law of the JMB chief, the seventh time.

They were remanded in one of the August 17 blast cases filed after an explosion near the Jativa Press Club

The Detective Branch (DB) of police, accompanied by the Rab, produced Hannan and Awal, also in helmets and bullet proof vests, before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court. Dhaka at 3:30pm on completion of their 10day remand.

The forwarding report of the IO stated that the two were directly involved with the August 17 countrywide bomb blasts, including the one at the press club. They need to be interrogated further, it said.

Dodging arrest for several years, Mufti Hannan was already shown arrested in four other blast cases filed with the Tejgaon, Ramna, Motijheel and Demra police stations.

JMB's Rajshahi region chief Awal (Ashique) was another Majlish-e-Sura member and captured from a Dinajpur-bound bus at Thakurgaon on November 18.

Meanwhile, Sunny's close associate Fariduzzaman Swapan, an accused in a case filed under the Explosive Substances Act, was sent to the Dhaka Central Jail as the IO did not pray for further remand on expiry of a 14-day interrogation.

tion ponds. Unabated unplanned urbanisation on the western part of the city has engulfed all canals and water retention ponds. leaving a vast area from Tongi to Kellar Mor most vulnerable to waterlogging. Dhaka Wasa's Drainage Section resolving the crisis. spends crores of taka in vain to pump out water from different areas within the western embankment. which get waterlogged during the rainy season.

Architect Igbal Habib, membersecretary of the Urbanisation and City Governance Sub-committee of Bapa, emphasised immediate demarcation and protection of the water bodies and channels in the eastern part of the city to avert an environmental disaster

"We suggest applying the experi-

In sugar trap

FROM PAGE 1

products to the mill?" another farmer from Khoksa upazila questioned. Sources said sometimes the sale of sugarcane is profitable, but the farmers do not want to sell their products to the mill.

Official sources said the mill has counted Tk 6 crore and Tk 9 crore losses in the last two seasons due to lack of sugarcane.

In the season of 2003 and 2004. the mill got only 74,000 and 82,000 tonnes of sugarcane against its demand of 1.3 lakh and 1.4 lakh tonnes, they added.

To improve the situation, the local government at the directive of higher authorities stepped in.

Sugar mill sources said the government had earlier declared 'illegal' the use of power crushers in mill zone areas. The zone includes entire Kushtia district and some parts of Chuadanga, Jhenidah, Meherpur and Raibari.

The local administration in the mill zone formed a mobile court led by a first class magistrate to take action against the use of crushers. In Kushtia, the mobile court started its vigilance on November 10, a day after the sugar mill went into production

According to local administration, the mobile court during its month-long operation seized 40 crushers and filed case against 25 farmers

As the leaders of Hajj Jatri Kalvan Parishad and Haab went to project.

the regional office in the morning to Post and Telecommunications stage demonstration for immediate Minister Barrister Aminul Haque State Minister for Power Igbal arrangements of hajj flights for the 555 pilgrims, Biman's District Hasan Mahmud and Energy Adviser Manager JC Barua assured them of Mahmudur Rahman, the Buet vice chancellor and officials of the ministries concerned, officials of Dhaka City Corporation (DCC). Water and programme as he (Biman manager) Sewerage Authority (Wasa), Dhaka Electricity Supply Authority (Desa) lem," AH Mujibul Haque Shukkur, were present at the meeting. chairman of Hajj Jatri Kalyan

DU teacher FROM PAGE 20

our job difficult. Your research about militants creates problems for us."

The letters even threatened his son and daughters, "You can hide yourself in any country in the world. We will find you. You cannot escape. But how will you save your daugh ters? Or your son?"

Expressing their concern Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta) demanded immediate steps against the people responsible. "We demand proper security for Gias," Duta President AAMS Arefin Siddique told The Daily Star.

"We informed the vicechancellor of the incident. He assured us of taking all-out measures in this regard," he added.

Whale shark FROM PAGE 20

Bay, observed District Fisheries Officer Shahadat Hossain on hearing the news. The previous two whale sharks were caught here on December 17 and 21.

The scientific name of the species, the largest of all sharks and the largest fish, is rhincodon typus and is called Bagha Hangor in Bangla Although the white-spotted dark body of a whale shark can be as long as 50 feet, they are not aggressive. Whale shark is the least fearsome among the sharks, harmless to people and usually indifferent to

This enormous shark, which lives a solitary life, is a filter feeder and sieves enormous amounts of plankton to eat through its gills as it swims. Its mouth is at the very front of its head, not on the underside of the head like most of the sharks. It has a wide, flat head, a rounded snout, small eyes, five very large gill slits, and two dorsal and two pectoral fins. Its tail has a top fin much larger than the lower fin. Its life span ranges from 100 to 150 years.

US undersecretary FROM PAGE 1

issues in meetings with government officials and political leaders. He is also expected to pay courtesy call on Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and Leader of the Opposition Sheikh Hasina and discuss the prevailing political scenario in Bangladesh.

Issues related to resolving political impasse, next general election and militancy may be taken up for discussion

A highly placed government source, however, said that Bush administration is sending the under secretary to discuss with government officials President George W Bush's possible visit to Bangladesh during his India tour in February or early March next year.

Sources said both Bandladesh and Pakistan are engaged in hectic lobbying to bring the US president to their respective countries during his South Asia tour.

Foreign ministry officials said the relations between US and Bangladesh are excellent. These relations were boosted in March 2000 with the visit of President Clinton to Bangladesh, the first visit ever by a sitting US president, as well as with the visits of the then Secretary of State Colin Powell in June 2003 and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in June

Relations between Bangladesh and the United States were strengthened earlier by the participation of Bangladeshi troops in the 1991 Gulf war coalition, and their working alongside US forces in numerous UN peacekeeping operations, including Haiti in 1994, as well as by the assistance of a US naval task force after a disastrous April

2004

1991 cyclone in Bangladesh. Most recently, Bangladesh has become a valuable US ally in its global war on terrorism. As part of the war efforts, the Government of Bangladesh has been prompt to address problems of money laundering, weak border controls etc. to ensure that Bangladesh does not turn into a safe haven of the terrorists.

The court also faced farmers' wrath and came under attacks twice on December 6 and December 28. On December 6, farmers attacked the mobile court members including the magistrate and police at Daulatpakhali in Daulatpur

> to a police vehicle and assaulted Magistrate Abdullah.

In the second incident, the same court raided South Bhurkapara and was attacked by the angry farmers. Three farmers were killed and at

least 50 including policemen and a magistrate injured as the cops opened fire on the mob.

After the last incident, the farmers in the zone have expressed their shock and demanded their rights of sale or supply of their products. This season, they have cultivated sugarcane on 15,000 acres of land and expect to harvest about 3 lakh tonnes, while the sugar mill requires

only 1.4 lakh tonnes. Contacted, MA Rafiq, general manager (administration) of the mill. claimed the entire environment of

the mill is now much satisfactory. "Unlike the past, now we are paying cash to the farmers.

Besides, we have launched some special packages for them," he added.

upazila. Angry farmers also set fire