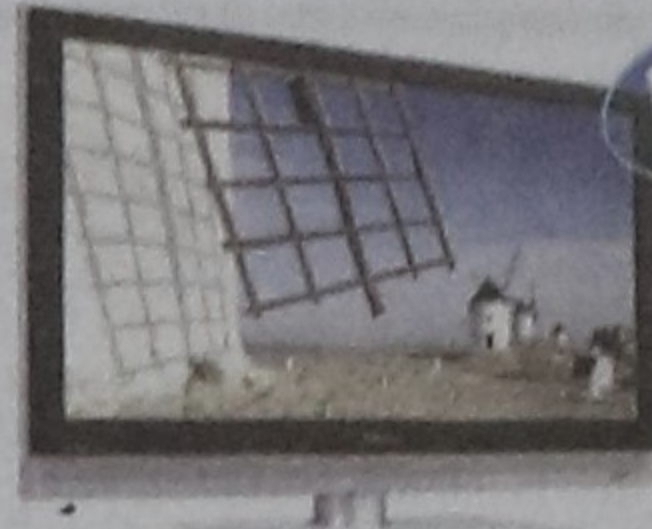


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## Rejoinder, our reply

In response to a news item titled "Aman may miss target for fertiliser shortage" published in The Daily Star on July 19, Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) Rajshahi Region Additional Director Abul Bashir said he was misquoted in the report.

"When I was asked about alternatives to TSP (triple super phosphate), I said use of compost, smashed bones and FYM (farm yard manure) helps improve soil health and impacts the improvement of yield. I had no discussion with the reporter concerned on the possible fall in Aman yield in the northern region if the required TSP is not supplied," Abul Bashir said in the rejoinder.

Another rejoinder issued by the agriculture ministry on the same news item said the report was not informative about the supply of all kinds of fertilisers during the Aman season.

"There is enough fertiliser stock in the country to meet the demand in Aman season. According to district demand, the Ministry of Agriculture is supplying urea and non-urea fertiliser on a continuous basis," it said.

**OUR REPLY:** According to DAE Bogra office under DAE Rajshahi region, for current need it requires 18,942 tonnes of TSP, but it was supplied 4,757 tonnes of TSP for the Aman season (July-September).

This short supply speaks for itself.

# DND area braces for waterlogging

## Rise in fish farms, canal encroachment responsible

HELEMUL ALAM

Despite the emergency measures taken by the government, including excavation and cleaning of canals in the Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra (DND) dam area, to check severe waterlogging, the region looks set to suffer from waterlogging for some time more.

Indiscriminate fish farming and encroachment of canals are contributing to the continual waterlogging in the area.

About 20 lakh residents of the DND dam have to live with the risk as the authorities concerned fail to take long-term measures to improve the situation.

Local people blame the continual growth of fishing farms in the area, including Matuail, Dakshinpara, Muslimnagar, Mogolpara and Medical Road, for the waterlogging.

Another factor contributing to the problem is the encroachment

of canals that are being filled up to set up gas and petrol filling stations in the area.

Over the years several hundred fishing farms have mushroomed in this area. Azim Uddin, a resident of Medical Road in south Matuail, said there are at least 50 such farms in the area he lives.

The fishing farms block openings for flow of water into the canals to maintain their ponds, leading to waterlogging. The government last year removed the barricades put up by local fish farmers in north Matuail but not south Matuail, Azim said.

Another resident of the area, Nasrin said, "We were almost marooned in our homes in waist-deep water for around four months last year. We live in continuous fear that the situation might repeat anytime, especially during the monsoons."

Like her, all other residents blame the government for not

taking any effective steps to improve drainage system in the area.

The 31.162 km of canals in the DND area, which have been excavated and cleaned, are now being filled up again due to garbage dumping. In places, encroachment has led to narrowing of canals.

Eleven gas and petrol filling stations have been given permits to set up along the road from Rayerbagh to Saddam Market during the last BNP-led four-party alliance government.

The canal, adjoining Dhaka Chittagong highway, is being illegally occupied to set up these stations.

"The canal, which was over 100 feet wide has been narrowed down at points to only 12 feet," Mostafiz, a resident of Paradaga told The Daily Star.

He said the canal adjoining the Dhaka-Chittagong Highway was

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Indiscriminate fish farming in Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra dam area is one of the reasons for continual waterlogging there. This photo of a few fish farms was taken at Demra.

## BAKHRABAD GAS 12 officials to return Tk 2cr illegal money

UNB, Comilla

Twelve officials of the Bakhrabad Gas Systems Thursday have agreed to return ill-gotten money amounting to Tk 2 crore to the state exchequer.

They made the promise in an affidavit submitted to a first-class magistrate court, set up at the Bakhrabad Gas office.

Collective Bargaining Agent (CBA) leaders were among the officials making the affidavit.

Those who signed the affidavit are former CBA president Abul Kashem, general secretary Alamgir Patwari, organising secretary Akhter Hossain, joint secretary Shahidul Islam Khandker, Chittagong unit CBA president Abdur Rab, Chandpur unit CBA president Rehan Mily, engineers Tajul Islam and Obaidur Rahman, manager Dibakar Sen Gupta, assistant manager Jasimuddin, technician Khaled Saifullah and employee Mainul.

Joint forces and taskforce teams unearthed the Bakhrabad officials' illegal wealth following investigations since last April.

## Case proceedings against RHD official quashed

ACC lawyer fined for 'suppressing fact'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday quashed all proceedings of a corruption case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) against Abul Kalam Shamsuddin, former administrative officer of Roads and Highways Department.

An HC bench comprising Justice Mohammad Abdur Rashid and Justice Md Ashfaque Islam also revoked the trial court judgment on July 17 sentencing Abul Kalam Shamsuddin to 13 years' imprisonment in this case.

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Prayer Timing		
July 21		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-54	6-58
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation



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The wooden ceiling of the gate of Ahsan Manzil in Old Dhaka collapsed yesterday indicating the authorities' lack of proper maintenance of the historic palace.

## Iran given 2 weeks to answer nuke queries

### Ahmadinejad says talks a 'step forward'

AFP, Tehran

Iran was yesterday facing a two-week deadline to give a final answer to world powers seeking a breakthrough in the nuclear crisis, after talks with the EU foreign policy chief ended in stalemate.

Iran's top nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili and EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana hailed their latest talks in Geneva on Saturday as "constructive" but Solana lamented that Tehran had still not given a final response.

Iranian President Mahmoud

Ahmadinejad described the talks as a "step forward" in the nuclear standoff, which has raised fears of regional conflict and sent oil prices spiralling.

"All negotiations are a step forward and the negotiations yesterday were negotiations that were a step forward," said Ahmadinejad, according to the official IRNA news agency.

Solana, who presented Iran with a major package aimed at ending the standoff on behalf of world powers last month, said he was

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## GATCO CASE Trial court asks for copy of HC order by Jul 24

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The trial court dealing with the Gatco corruption case against detained BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia and 23 others yesterday asked the defence lawyers to submit the certified copy of the High Court (HC) stay order by July 24.

Judge Shahed Noor Uddin of Special Court-3 set up on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban premises fixed the date after the defence appealed for a long adjournment.

The former premier was not produced before the court yesterday due to her 'illness'. The jail authority submitted a report to the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## BNP hails AL move to resist polls under emergency

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday asked the government to announce schedule for the national election and withdraw the state of emergency without further delay.

He also lauded Awami League (AL) Acting President Zillur Rahman's comment on Saturday when he said that the AL would resist any election under the emergency.

"If the AL sticks to its decision over boycotting elections under the emergency, it would facilitate the holding of the elections and the people would be its beneficiary."

Delwar made the comments while talking with reporters following a meeting with leaders and workers of the party's Dhaka city

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## Army man's money stolen in cantonment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pickpockets stole Tk 97 thousand from an army sergeant in the Dhaka Cantonment Post Office yesterday.

Police detained two persons Abdul Khaleq and Mohammad Yusuf in connection with the incident.

Cantonment police said the pickpockets stole the money from a bag Sergeant Nasir Uddin was carrying around 2:00pm when he went into the post office to send the money to Jessor.

Police said Nasir Uddin is posted in Jessor Cantonment and came to Dhaka on a leave.

After the incident, police detained Khaleq and Yusuf from inside the post office on suspicion of their involvement.

A case was being filed at the time of filing this report in the first hour of today.

## Poll candidates' info to EC grossly inconsistent

### States good governance group

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shushashoner Janney Nagorik (Shujan) yesterday said the information provided to the Election Commission (EC) by the candidates contesting the city corporation polls was highly inconsistent and inadequate.

At a press conference at Dhaka Reporters Unity auditorium in the city, Shujan demanded the EC crosscheck the information and cancel candidacy of the ones who provided incorrect and incomplete information in their affidavit forms submitted to the EC.

Shujan accused the EC of not making public the candidates' income tax information and

sources of probable electoral expenses. It also blamed the EC for taking no action against candidates who have been violating electoral rules by using banners for campaigning.

Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, president of Shujan, said, "Our aspiration for honest and competent people's representatives will not be reflected if people cannot make informed decisions to cast votes."

Questioning the legality of returning officers accepting incomplete information from the candidates, he said the EC should urgently make a decision on the matter and, if necessary, it should ask the candidates to provide complete information on supple-

mentary affidavits.

Even though Shujan had earlier demanded that the EC publicise candidates' information as soon as the candidates file their candidature, the EC posted information of the final candidates on its website only on July 14. Prof Muzaffer said adding that the information posted on the website does not have information on income tax and sources of possible electoral expenses of the candidates.

All the information required by the electoral rules should be publicised through the media and other means, otherwise people will not be able to make informed decisions, he said.

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## WB to provide \$100m for food security

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The World Bank (WB) will increase its support for Bangladesh in facing the challenge of ensuring food security, new WB Vice President for South Asia Isabel Guerrero said yesterday.

"Assistance worth \$100 million will be provided for the government's food security programmes for the fiscal year 2008-09," she told reporters after meeting Finance Adviser AB Mirza Azizul Islam at the planning ministry.

Earlier, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has announced that it would give Bangladesh \$170 million in assistance for food security.

The WB high official also hinted at the possibility of doubling the soft loans to Bangladesh. According to sources in the Economic Relations Division, currently the country receives

about \$350 million as soft loan from the Bretton Woods institution.

Guerrero, who has replaced Praful C Patel as the WB vice-president for South Asia, wrapped up her first visit to Dhaka yesterday.

During her stay, she discussed with advisers and government officials the Bank's programmes here, and how it can help the country offset the effects of rising prices of commodities including oil, food and fertiliser.

"The rise in prices of foods, especially rice, has really hit the poor people here," Guerrero said. "We remain deeply committed to helping them overcome this urgent challenge."

She observed that the country at present is faced with three major challenges - climate change, impact of worldwide inflation and

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## Mob kills extortionist in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mob yesterday beat an extortionist to death as he tried to flee after throwing bombs at a garment factory official in the capital's Pallabi.

The deceased was identified as Bachchu alias Shahjahan, 26.

His two accomplices, however, managed to escape.

Witnesses said Bachchu threw three cocktails at Mohammad Israfil, assistant manager of Standard Group, in front of the company's garment factory on Kalshi Road at Pallabi at around 8:30am. One of the bombs exploded leaving Israfil injured.

Israfil received treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

"When Bachchu tried to flee after throwing the cocktails, locals

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## MONEY LAUNDERING CASE Salman granted 2-month bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday granted an interim bail for six months to Beximco Group Vice-chairman Salman F Rahman in a money laundering case.

Upon a writ petition filed by Salman F Rahman, the HC bench of Justice Sharif Uddin Chaklader and Justice Md Emdadul Haque Azad issued the order.

The HC, after the filing of the petition, had stayed proceedings of the case against him and also issued a rule upon the government to show cause as to why the proceedings should not be stayed.

Barristers Rafique-ul Huq and Ahsanul Karim appeared for Salman.

Salman has six cases filed against him and the proceedings of all of them have been stayed by the HC. He obtained bail in four cases and he is detained under two cases.

Joint forces arrested Salman at

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