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PHILIPS **TRANSTEC** **CHANGHONG**

DCC stops felling trees in Gulshan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) yesterday backtracked on its plan to cut down trees to improve drainage system in Gulshan, Banani and Baridhara neighbourhoods, amid strong protests from locals and environmentalists.

The Daily Star on July 23 reported the city corporation's move to chop down 52 old trees. Six trees, including a decades-old one, have already been felled.

"We've decided not to cut down any trees in the areas except for those already dead," the DCC's Chief Executive Officer Md Alauddin said at a press briefing at Nagar Bhaban.

He said the city corporation went for felling the trees in

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MODHUPUR SAL FOREST
Indigenous people should get to manage forest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over the years, flawed policies have destroyed a large part of the Modhupur forest instead of preserving it, speakers at a seminar said yesterday.

The speakers urged the government to ensure forest dwellers' right to their native land and make them a party to manage natural forests on certain conditions.

They said in the name of saving the forest the government has snatched the rights of forest dwellers who are living there for generations and turned it into shooting range, rubber plantations and gardens of alien species.

The speakers said this at a national workshop on "Protect the Sal Forest of Modhupur and Rights of Forest Dwellers" jointly organised by Bangladesh Environment Lawyers Association (BELA) and Joyenshahi Adivasi Unnayan Parishad.

Raja Devasish Roy, special assistant to the chief adviser for environment and forest, attended the workshop as the chief guest, while Khushi Kabir, coordinator of Nijera Kari, chaired the session held at the Cirdap auditorium.

The speakers presented a dire situation of the use of Modhupur forestland. They said the government has used the 45,000-acre forest in various ways, destroying

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Donor agencies with the help of the government distributing food among people of Baghahat in Rangamat after rats invaded the area destroying crops. A man, right, holds a trapped rat as people of the area try to reduce the number of rodents.

Court raps cops for failure to arrest Huji men

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday expressed dissatisfaction over negligence in duties by police personnel in executing arrest warrants against seven absconding Harkatali Jihad (Huji) members accused in the August 21 grenade attack case.

Metropolitan Sessions Judge Mohammad Azizul Haque asked the Public Prosecutor (PP) to take actions against the policemen who failed to comply with the court order.

The court said it had issued arrest warrants against the absconding accused on June 23 and directed the authorities concerned to send copies of the arrest warrants to their addresses the same day.

But the officers-in-charge (OC)

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Children sit dangerously close to the water under their home near the embankment at Mohammadpur in the capital yesterday. Waterlogging in the area and their inability to afford safer homes complicate these people's sufferings.

Accused in fake Zia Orphanage case held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) personnel yesterday arrested an accused in the Tk 2.10 crore Zia Orphanage Trust fund embezzlement case and handed him over to Ramna Police Station after preliminary interrogation.

The arrestee was identified as Sharifuddin Ahmed.

Detained BNP Chairperson and former prime minister Khaleeda Zia and her eldest son Tarique Rahman were shown arrested in the case and they were quizzed at the jail gate in this connection Wednesday afternoon.

ACC's Deputy Assistant Director (DAD) Harunur Rashid, also the investigation officer of the case, told The Daily Star, "We called Sharifuddin Ahmed to the office for interrogation and after quizzing him for over three hours we

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EDIBLE OIL
Wholesale price fall yet to pass on to retail market

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Falling prices of different varieties of edible oil on wholesale markets are yet to have any impact on retail prices of the commodity in the port city.

The wholesale prices of different non-brand edible oil ranging from soybean to 'super' palm and palm came down by Tk 250 to Tk 300 per maund (37.32 Kg) over the past week as their prices fell on the international market significantly.

Yesterday at Khatunganj wholesale market, a maund of super

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RAT INVASION
Hill people still suffer from food shortage

PINAKI ROY, back from Bandarban

Indigenous people in many remote villages in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) will have to suffer from lack of food grains for at least two more months until the next harvest if the government does not provide them with food.

Many families in the CHT districts including Bandarban, Khagrachhari and Rangamati are now living on wild potato, arum and green leaves after rats invaded the areas last year and early this year and destroyed all their crops leading to this famine-like situation.

The government and donor agencies provided them with rice immediately after the rat invasion.

but that was adequate for only a month or two, they said, adding that the next harvest is due in October.

"It has become very hard for us to buy rice at Tk 30 per kg as we do not have any income here," said Thiam Khub, a Bowm from Ruma Thanchi village.

People in Darjeelingpara, a Bowm village at the foot of the Keokradong, are living on boiled pumpkin leaves and rice. The family of Karbari (the village chief) said none in the villages can afford boiled leaves and rice more than twice a day.

They said initially they bought rice selling their cattle and poultry. But now most of them have nothing left to sell.

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City, municipal polls to have foolproof security: IGP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Nur Mohammad yesterday said his department will deploy more police forces than the Election Commission (EC) expects to ensure foolproof security during the upcoming city corporation and municipality elections.

During a press briefing held at the Police Headquarters on police preparations for the polls, the IGP said personnel from joint forces and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) will remain vigilant and if necessary army personnel would also be called in.

Nur said drives to arrest wanted and listed criminals would be

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BDR, BSF exchange lists of criminals

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

The Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and the Border Security Force (BSF) of India exchanged lists of criminals of the two countries operating from across the border in a four-day biannual meeting ending in Kolkata yesterday.

BDR Deputy Director General Brig Gen MA Bari and BSF Inspector General (South Bengal Frontier) CV Murlidhar headed their teams at the border coordination meeting.

Unprovoked cross-border firings, trans-border crimes and women-and-child trafficking were discussed at the meeting, they said at a joint press conference.

The meeting also discussed smuggling in drugs and fake currency, illegal migration and illegal cultivation, with both sides agreeing to continue confidence-building measures.

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12,000 additional police deployed for Saarc Summit

29 killed in fresh Lankan fighting

AFP, Colombo

At least 25 Tamil Tiger rebels and four soldiers have been killed in fighting across Sri Lanka's northern region, the defence ministry said yesterday.

Sri Lanka is deploying 12,000 more police to guard South Asian leaders, who will also have their own heavy security, for a regional summit next week, officials said Thursday.

The ministry said the clashes between troops and members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) happened Wednesday and brought the number of guerrillas killed since January to 5,176.

The four troop deaths brought the toll since January to 454, according to the ministry tally.

Casualty claims cannot be independently verified as the ministry bars reporters from visiting the conflict-affected areas.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka warplanes Thursday carried out air strikes against a suspected rebel training centre in the guerrilla-controlled Mullaitivu area, the air force said.

Airforce spokesman Wing Commander Janaka Nanayakkara

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Saarc accord likely in Aug for dealing criminal issues

PTI, New Delhi

India and other Saarc countries are likely to firm up an accord next month in Colombo for mutual cooperation to deal with criminal matters.

The External Affairs Ministry was today authorised by the Union Cabinet to negotiate and finalise the text of the Convention for such cooperation so that it can be signed during the Saarc Summit on August two-three to be attended by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

"The Convention would provide a broad framework for Saarc member states to mutually cooperate and assist in the investigation and prosecution of crime and the tracing, restraint and forfeiture of the proceeds and instruments of

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Tk 1cr VoIP equipment seized in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) equipment worth around Tk 1 crore were seized from two places in the city early yesterday.

A committee formed to inspect and detect telecommunication installations conducted separate raids on two houses at Kanthalbagan and Paribagh from 12:30am to 4:00am and seized the equipment.

Officials of Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC) and Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) are the members of the committee.

The equipment include 120 tellular of various models, 7 gateways and one 32 port channel bank, says a BTRC press release.

57 Taliban killed in Afghan clashes

AFP, Kabul

Afghan troops killed at least 34 Taliban in battle after militants ambushed an army convoy in the country's south yesterday, while 15 Taliban and seven police were killed elsewhere, officials said.

The clash erupted after "enemy elements" attacked Afghan forces in Zabul province on the main road between the capital Kabul and the southern city of Kandahar, defence ministry spokesman Mohammed Zahir Azimi told AFP.

"A fierce battle started and the enemy were caught between the Afghan army on both sides," Azimi said. "At least 34 enemy dead bodies are at the battlefield, but we believe there are many more killed."

Azimi said dozens more militants were wounded or arrested in the clash while large numbers of weapons were left at the scene.

Zabul deputy provincial police chief Jallani Khan said: "Taliban left 37 dead bodies behind and five Taliban were arrested."

The bodies were carried to the Shah Joy district centre, he said. Two were foreign nationals accord-

ing to documents found in their pockets, he said.

He said there were no casualties to the army and police.

A spokesman for the insurgent Taliban movement, Yousuf Ahmadi, claimed however that 12 Afghan soldiers were killed in the battle and his group had not had any casualties. His previous statements have often proved exaggerated.

The Afghan army was deployed on the road this month after a surge in attacks along the route. Taliban have captured several Afghans travelling on the road and killed them, accusing them of working for the government and its allies.

Extremist activity has spiked in Afghanistan in recent weeks. It normally rises over the summer months but this year has seen an increase even over the same time last year.

In the central province of Ghazni meanwhile, a joint Nato-Afghan operation to take back Ajristan district had left 15 militants dead, a provincial government spokesman said.

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