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## Preserve war memorials, historic sites

HC asks govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday in a judgment directed the government to identify and preserve all the important historic places related to the republic's Liberation War.

The court asked it to set up memorial monuments at the historic places at Suhrawardy Udyan in the capital maintaining international standard so that people from home and abroad can pay homage to martyred freedom fighters.

The court also observed that Bangabandhu was underlined by the 'Swadhinata Padak' (Independence Award) conferred on him posthumously by Awami League in 1996, as Bangabandhu is the Father of the Nation and he remains

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## Habiganj hostages freed in cop action

Militant suspect held after 3½ hrs siege of BTCL office

SHARIFUL ISLAM

A suspected militant yesterday laid siege to the BTCL Habiganj office for three and a half hours and threatened to blow it up holding two people, including a child, hostage.

The nerve-racking standoff came to an end when police got the hostages free and captured Shaheen, 35, during his bid to flee by exploding bombs. Law enforcers had to shoot him in the leg to make the arrest.

The militant suspect Shaheen around 4:00pm stormed the building at Shayastanagar with six bomb-like devices wrapped around his body and Akash, a young boy, in his lap. He went to the switch room on the first floor where he held the boy and Sub-Assistant Engineer Arab Ali hostage, police said.

Shaheen asked all other staffers to vacate the building threatening to blow it up. He also held a knife on Akash's throat.

He demanded to speak with the deputy commissioner (DC) and superintendent of police (SP) of Habiganj. The DC and the SP rushed to the spot hearing the news of the standoff.

As Shaheen insisted on talking to the SP, a policeman posing as a journalist asked him to take a cellphone and talk to the SP. When Shaheen tried to get the phone through the switch-room door using Akash, the policeman pulled the child away to safety around 5:00pm.

Akash told police that the man brandishing a knife took him hostage at a nearby playground on the Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Ltd (BTCL) Habiganj office premises and brought him to the building.

Meanwhile, loosing Akash, Shaheen held the knife on Arab Ali's throat and told him to turn all the equipment in the room

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



PHOTO: KAZI AN HOSSAIN

Wholesale encroachment on and dumping of garbage in the Kutub Khali canal in Jatrabari narrows it and in some places clogs the storm water drainage rendering the canal almost useless.

## Over 50 canals near death

Govt's bid to recover 26 canals from grabbers shows little success

HELEMUL ALAM

Although over 50 affluent canals once used to flow through the capital and added to its lifeline, most of the water channels have been fully or partially choked, while the rest are under serious threat thanks to unabated encroachment.

The Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) had earlier taken initiatives in line with a decision of the last caretaker government to recover 26 out of 43 canals from encroachers.

However, the initiatives have so far yielded very little success. Besides, once the recovery drive is over, many of the canals again get encroached due to lack of

excavation, proper demarcation and monitoring, experts say.

A list of 43 canals was prepared by a committee formed in 2004 to come forward with recommendations to identify, recover and reopen the canals. The committee identified 26 canals under Wasa as recoverable, says an official.

The 26 canals are Kalyanpur main canal, Kalyanpur Ka, Kha, Gha, Uma and Cha canals, Katasur, Ramchandpur, Abdullahpur, Diyabari, Digun, Gulshan-Banani, Mohakhali, Hazaribagh, Begunbari, Khilgaon-Basabo, Manda, Sutivola, Badda-Shahjapur, Rupnagar, Baisteki, Kalshi, Bouniya, Ibrahimpur canals, Housing canal in Mirpur-14 and

Jirani canal.

The other canals on the list which are not under Wasa are Char Kamrangir Khal, Begunbari-Meradiya-Gajariya, Dakkhingon-Nandipara, Rajarbagh-Nandipara, Nasirabad-Nandipara, Nandipara-Trimohoni and Boufar (Boualiya) canals.

The Institute of Water Modelling (IWM), which prepared a map of drainage canals of Dhaka city in 2007-2008, mentions 50 canals in the city. Five additional canals that IWM lists are Kuril-Boaliya, Khilkhet Boaliya, Koshabari-Boaliya, Boaliya-Bowfar, and Kashibari-Uttara Railway Boropit canals.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

## Demarcate 43 Dhaka canals

JS body asks land ministry to sue encroachers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary committee yesterday asked the land ministry to demarcate 43 canals in the capital city to recover them from grabbers who built various establishments on the canals.

The parliamentary standing committee on the land ministry also asked the ministry to file cases under the land law against the encroachers who occupied lands and built various structures on the bank of the rivers showing false documents.

The meeting was informed that a committee was formed with the officials of land records and survey department, Dhaka City Corporation, Rajuk and WASA to identify the canals. The

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## Muggers go reckless

Shoot two in city to rob them; violent snatchings spiral despite special drive

MUKHLESUR RAHMAN

Armed muggers yesterday in broad daylight shot two persons and made off with around Tk 4 lakh in separate incidents in the capital's Shyamoli and South Keraniganj areas.

Police said three muggers on a motorbike shot Acme Laboratories' Accounts Officer Mostak Ahmed, 35, and snatched Tk 3.78 lakh from him when he stepped out of a CNG run auto rickshaw in front of Dutch-Bangla Bank Ltd on Ring Road around 2:45pm.

Mostak said "I withdrew the amount from Satmasjid Road Branch of National Bank, and was carrying the money to deposit in Dutch-Bangla Bank there."

The other victim Golam Ferdous, 32, a junior officer of Sakti Foundation at Kadamtali in South Keraniganj said, "I and my colleague Saiful Islam

were collecting money from clients of the foundation in the area around 1:30pm, when five to six muggers encircled us, shot me, and snatched around 10 thousand taka from me."

Incidents of mugging have been on the rise in the city, in which favourite targets seem to be clients of banks coming out of the financial institutions, sales representative of different cellphone companies, moneychangers, travel agents, and traders carrying money.

Despite an ongoing special drive of police in the city since May 13, muggers using small firearms are continuing to rob people, putting the residents in a state of constant panic.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) sources said over 81 incidents of mugging took place in the capital in June, while the figure for the first eight days of July is not yet available.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

## Core cell to initiate intelligence action

PM tells JS of move to coordinate activities of agencies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will form a committee at the Prime Minister's Office to coordinate the activities of intelligence agencies and initiate actions based on their information.

"The committee will collect information from intelligence agencies and decide the next course of actions," Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said in reply to a query from Awami League lawmaker Golam Dastagir Gazi in parliament yesterday.

Questions have arisen in recent years on the role and efficiency of the country's intelligence agencies as they have repeatedly failed to prevent terror attacks.

Hasina said her government has also taken steps to form industrial police to maintain law and order in industrial areas.

She alleged that the recent unrest in garment factories at Ashulia was a planned move by a large group of conspirators to create anarchy in the country's chief export sector.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

## Mijarul acting foreign secy

Several officials senior to him set to retire soon

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Ambassador to the Russian Federation Mijarul Quayes was made the acting foreign secretary yesterday superseding a number of senior officials of the foreign ministry.

Official sources said most of those who have been bypassed will retire in the next few months. "Foreign secretary is a post where a selected person is appointed... He (Quayes) is competent. So, the government has chosen him for the post," an official said.

Quayes succeeds Md Touhid Hossain, who has been made principal of the Foreign Service Academy.

Foreign ministry sources said the tradition of maintaining seniority in appointing foreign secretary was broken when Touhid was given appointment during the rule of the last caretaker government superseding more than 15 officials.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## Clouds hang over Test series

WI cricketers threaten boycott over contract

SPORTS REPORTER

In the face of unusual circumstances Mashrafe Bin Mortaza will start his journey as a captain when the Tigers meet West Indies in the first Test of the two-match series at St Vincent today.

The Test will however go ahead despite the West Indies players threatening to boycott the series following a financial dispute with the West Indies

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

## First Tipai info, then site visit

Roundtable stresses analysis of detailed project information

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Visiting Tipaimukh dam site by the parliamentary committee will in no way be wise without having adequate information about the project, Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (Bapa) President Professor Muzaffer Ahmad said yesterday.

"Enjoying India's hospitality will bring no notable benefit for the country without having detailed information. So, first get information about the dam, get analysis of the experts and then talk to India," he said.

Professor Muzaffer was speaking at a roundtable titled "Tipaimukh Dam Prevention: United Movement" held at the National Press Club. International Tipaimukh Dam Prevention Committee and Sylhet Division Development Action Council jointly organised the roundtable.

This is not a matter of political debate or being anti-Indian, he said, adding "We must have national unity and clear idea

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

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