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Today's issue 24 pages

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XIX No. 272

DHAKA MONDAY OCTOBER 19, 2009

www.thedailystar.net

KARTIK 4, 1416 BS

SHAWAL 29, 1430 HIRI

24 PAGES PRICE: Tk 10.00

Hasina cleared of 'misuse of power' charge

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission yesterday submitted final report clearing Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and three others of charges in a corruption case saying the charge of "misuse of power" against them could not be proved.

The case was filed against them for embezzling Tk 41.84 lakh in the construction of a grave complex of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Tungipara in Gopalganj.

ACC Deputy Director Mohammad Moniruzzaman Khan, also investigation officer in the case, submitted the final report to the Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court citing no instance of "misuse of power" by any of the accused.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Evict, sue river grabbers

PM asks to watch polluting industries; tells top bureaucrats not to bother about influences; demands sincerity, honesty, skill from them

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed the administration to free rivers and wetlands from the grabbers' clutches and take legal actions no matter how influential the encroachers are.

Addressing secretaries of different ministries and divisions, she also said, "Stay vigilant so the grabbers cannot reoccupy the rivers, canals and wetlands to be retrieved."

She observed that land-grabbing was encouraged in the past because the authorities took no action against the offenders.

"The narrowing of rivers, canals and beels not only hampers the livelihood of the people but also leave adverse effects on the environment."

The prime minister instructed the officials to bring legal proceedings against the industries that dump waste

into the rivers and canals and contribute to water pollution.

Noting that the subsoil water level has been going down alarmingly across the country, especially in the capital, she asked them to pay close attention to the issue.

Hasina warned the officials who would fail to deliver would face the axe. "Some of you may consider yourselves very close to the government high-ups and may think you can do anything. If that is so, you are living in a fool's paradise."

She said, "As a chief executive of the country, I must keep watch on all matters. I observe what you are doing too. And I demand sincerity, honesty



and skills."

Reiterating her commitment to rewards for good work and rebukes for bad, she said stern measures would be taken if anyone is found involved in attempts to sabotage the government's development campaigns.

The prime minister asked the bureaucrats to formulate a five-year plan, implement development projects in time, fight graft and money-laundering, improve law and order and work to ease power and gas crises.

She also directed them to fully appreciate the government policy and help implement Awami League's electoral pledges, which are among

other things to strengthen rural economy, generate employment opportunities, eradicate poverty, increase the purchase capacity of the people and raise domestic production.

Forty secretaries were present at the meeting at the secretariat. Of them, 16 apprised the prime minister of their ministries' activities.

Afterwards, Cabinet Secretary Abdul Aziz briefed the newsmen about the three-hour long meeting.

He said the prime minister asked them to step up the pace of work and ensure transparency and accountability.

Referring to the government's priorities that include containing the prices of essentials, establishing good governance and developing the power sector, she directed the officials to work sincerely, rising above fear and temptation.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

AL's Jasim to lose JS membership

SC asks EC to hold by-polls in Bhola-3

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday upheld the High Court verdict that declared illegal the parliament membership of Maj (ret'd) Jasim Uddin, who was elected from Bhola-3 constituency on Awami League nomination.

Jasim Uddin had participated in the December 29 parliamentary election before completion of five years of his compulsory retirement from the defence service.

A five-member bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice MM Ruhul Amin passed the verdict, dismissing Jasim's appeal against the HC verdict.

The court asked the Election Commission to hold a by-election to the constituency.

Officials at the Parliament Secretariat said on receiving the copy of the verdict they would publish a gazette vacating Jasim's membership in parliament. The EC will have to hold the by-election within 90 days of publication of the gazette.



SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Textbook board depot catches fire

Smokes billowing out from burning books, papers, printing materials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A raging fire in the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) warehouse in Tejgaon industrial area of the capital yesterday burnt a large stockpile of textbooks and

printing materials.

Firefighters backed by army engineers and navy divers had to struggle all through the day to make a headway into the burning warehouse.

The fire that broke out around 7:15 in the morning was

still on at the time of filing this report at 8:15pm.

The cause of the fire and the extent of the damage could not be ascertained immediately, said Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid at 3:50 in the afternoon, who had been at the

scene since 8:00 in the morning.

"However, it has undoubtedly caused an extensive damage," he said adding, "The fire has occurred at a time when we are facing the challenge of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4



PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

Firefighters try to douse the raging fire that broke out in the National Curriculum and Textbook Board warehouse in the city's Tejgaon area yesterday.

PAC stays in slumber

Fails to sit in 5 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the ninth parliament has apparently been ineffective till now as it did not meet in the last five months to perform its task of ensuring transparency in government expenditure.

PAC Chief KH Rashiduzzaman is empowered to convene its meeting but he did not do so during this period. Formed on February 18, PAC met only twice on April 27 and May 25.

Members of the 15-strong committee blamed the House body chief for indifference to making it effective, and said in the absence of regular meetings the committee is becoming dysfunctional.

They said the committee should hold several meetings a month considering its massive tasks including settling the huge number of audit objections.

Contacted yesterday, Rashiduzzaman however said it is not true that the committee does not meet regularly.

When told that the last meeting of the House body was held on May 25, the ruling Awami

League lawmaker however said he was abroad for long. So, he could not convene meetings.

He mentioned that the committee formed four sub-committees, and these are meeting regularly.

But other sources said the sub-committees formed on May 25 held no meeting so far.

Asked about this yesterday over telephone, Khandaker Asaduzzaman, chief of a sub-committee, said it could not meet as yet since officials concerned could not complete preparations to this end.

He has convened a meeting of the sub-committee next month, he said.

Asaduzzaman said the main committee should have met regularly to perform its duties.

"The committee chairman did not convene any meeting in the last few months. I think he was busy with his own business," he said.

The PAC, considered the most powerful parliamentary watchdog, examines government accounts of annual income and expenditure, and submits reports to the parliament with recommendations for remedial measures,

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

TAX DODGING CASE Jalil gets HC bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday granted anticipatory bail for three months to former Awami League general secretary Abdul Jalil MP in a tax evasion case.

The HC bench of Justice Syed Muhammad Dastagir Husain and Justice Md Rais Uddin also issued a rule upon the government to explain why Jalil should not be granted regular bail in the case.

The AL leader yesterday appeared before the HC bench and filed a petition with the court for bail in this case. Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud stood for him.

Earlier on October 15, the Senior Special Judge's Court of Dhaka issued an arrest warrant against Jalil hours after the National Board of Revenue (NBR) filed a case against him

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Huda managed 10 coffins, bodies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Barrister Abdullah-al Mamun, counsel for convicts Bazlul Huda and AKM Mohiuddin in Bangabandhu murder case, yesterday claimed before the Supreme Court that Bazlul was innocent and had not been involved in the killings of Bangabandhu and his family members.

Mamun quoted the statement of prosecution witness Abdul Quddus that Bazlul took Bangabandhu's body to the airport after killing him. Besides, he had earlier gone to Mohammadpur to buy ten coffins and also took the rest nine bodies to Banani graveyard, said the counsel.

It is not humanly possible to do so many tasks in cool head after committing murders because a person usually acts quite abnormally after killing someone, Mamun told the apex court while placing arguments during the 10th day's hearing on the appeals of the five convicts.

Mamun said the then Air Force Chief AK Khandaker had sent a helicopter to carry Bangabandhu's body to his village home at Tungipara, on August 16, 1975, the day after the killings took place.

He questioned why AK Khandaker had not taken any initiative to resist the killers and rescue Bangabandhu and his family members on August 15, 1975.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Suicide attack on Iran's elite guards

30 killed; Tehran points finger at US; Sunni group claims responsibility

AFP, Tehran

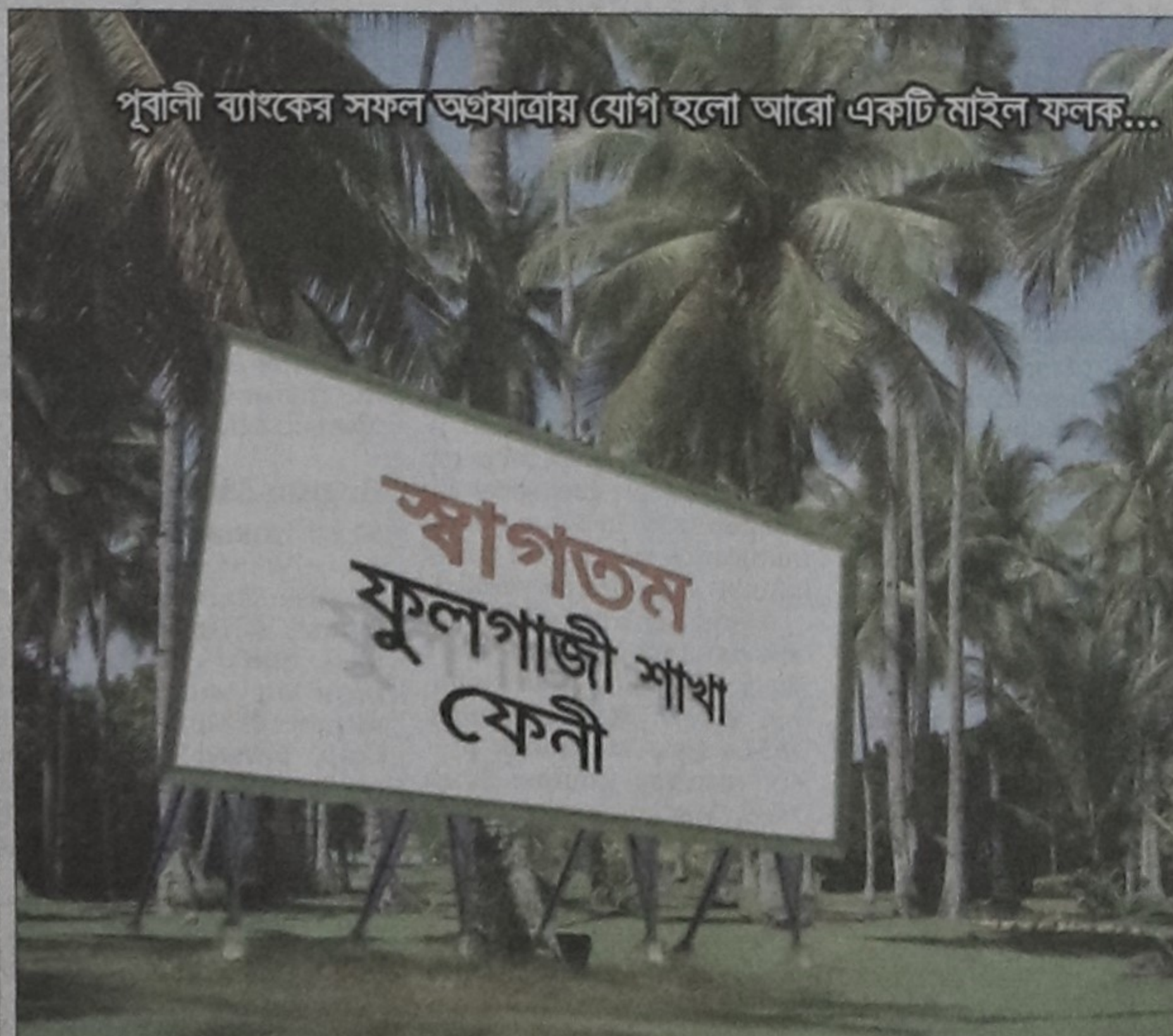
A suicide bomber blew himself up at a meeting of the elite Revolutionary Guards in southeastern Iran yesterday, killing at least 30 people including top commanders and tribal leaders, a senior official said.

The attack took place in the city of Pishkeen near the border with Pakistan in restive Sistan-Baluchestan province, which hosts a substantial Sunni population, local news agencies said.

Iran's parliament speaker said the United States was behind the attack while the Guards accused Western powers of carrying out the assault, the deadliest against them since a bombing in February 2007 in the same province killed 13 people.

"Based on the latest information... between 30 to 35 people, including military officers, tribal leaders and local citizens, have been martyred in the attack," Mohammad Marziah, chief

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