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## Mutiny charges against nine

BDR trial begins in Rangamati

SHANTIMOY CHAKMA, Rangamati



The much-talked-about trial of BDR mutiny began yesterday through pressing charges before the three-member court against nine soldiers of 12 Rifle Battalion of the Rangamati sector.

This is the first time in the history of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) that the border guards set up own courts to try soldiers on charges of mutiny on February 25-26.

The three-member court headed by BDR Director General Maj Gen M Mainul Islam sat at 3:00pm at a makeshift courtroom at the Mechanical Transport Shed of the sector headquarters.

During the fifty-minute proceedings, Deputy Assistant Director (DAD) of Rajanagar 12 Rifle Battalion Reaz Uddin Ahmed read allegations before the court against the nine alleged mutineers.

Of them, five are now in Rangamati jail and the rest are in Unit Quarter Guard, the BDR chief Maj Gen Mainul told journalists after adjourning the proceedings.

DAD Reaz in his submission told the court the nine mutineers supported the incidents at Pikhana Headquarters and were ready to revolt. They also misbehaved with the officers and their families, cut telephone wire and kept arms and ammunition in open without permission, he added.

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PHOTO ON PAGE 13



A swamp in Kalinga forest in Srimongol shows how trees were felled by illegal loggers.

PHOTO: FAHIM BASHAR

## Rainforests ravaged

Greed of loggers, forest men left Kalinga resources almost bare

INAM AHMED

It seemed that we were standing on the premises of a huge saw-mill. Actually we were right in the middle of Kalinga forest in Srimongol, supposed to be one of the largest and pristine rainforests of the country.

What we saw around is unbelievable -- felled trees, sawed off branches, splintered wood, barks shaved off trees, huge trees, small saplings. And this is Kalinga today, a devastated forest, plundered and pilfered, reduced to a pale shade of what it was only a year ago.

Unthinkable, how a forest could vanish so quickly just in a year.

"This forest is almost gone," said the man who took us around on a tour and who did not want to be named in fear of reprisal from the foresters who were supposed to take care of the jungle. "What you see here is just the tip of the iceberg. Deeper in the forest and by the chharas (streams), you will find nothing left."

And we did find it -- found how greedy forest officials and illegal loggers joined hands together and finished off the forest.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

KARAMJAL BREEDING CENTRE

## 18 baby crocodiles go missing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Eighteen baby crocodiles went missing on Sunday from Karamjal Crocodile Breeding Centre, which had been launched in 2000 in efforts to save the Sunderbans' declining crocodile population, in Dakop upazila of Khulna district.

The crocodiles, under the age of one year, were stolen from the centre with the

advantage of the negligence of persons concerned, Divisional Forest Officer of east wing of Sundarban Forest Division Mihir Kumar suspected.

Deputy Ranger Abdur Rob of the east wing of Sundarban Forest Division, who is in charge of the breeding centre, said, after being aware of the crocodiles missing, the staff of the centre carried out a hectic search

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5



PHOTO: JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

Eighteen of the 130 nestling baby crocodiles at Karamjal Crocodile Breeding Centre, the first of its kind in the country, in Khulna's Dakop upazila went missing last Sunday.

## Striking power memo penned

Dhaka, Delhi agree on open-ended import, export; joint venture power projects; PDB can access Indian private power; 2 years needed for first exchange of power

SHARIER KHAN

Dhaka has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Delhi seeking open-ended import and export of power with the option to purchase power from both public and private sectors of India, said a top official of the Power Development Board (PDB).

This means, if materialised, the MoU would allow Bangladesh to import not just 100 megawatt power as was proposed earlier, but 400-500 MW in the near future. Similarly, it allows the PDB to sell power to India when it has surplus. This option was created keeping in mind future development of the power sector.

Power deals can be framed both on

short-term or long-term basis as is found convenient for the two countries.

If the MoU is approved by the cabinets of both the countries, it will take at least two years to install equipment for interconnectivity between them, said the official.

Officials of the two countries have identified Ishwardi as the best point in Bangladesh, and Bahrapur in India's West Bengal state where interconnectivity can be set up at the earliest possible time.

A four-member Indian team headed by a joint secretary of the power ministry, now visiting Dhaka, has held meetings with the Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB) and the PDB in this

connection. Their visit is a follow-up of the visit of a Bangladeshi team headed by the power secretary between November 18 and 22 during which the MoU was signed.

Following lengthy meetings, Indian and Bangladeshi officials decided to form a technical team for further discussion and review of how the interconnection would be built and how transmission between the power grids of the two nations would be synchronised.

The MoU also allows joint venture power projects between the PDB and the government-owned National Thermal Power Company (NTPC) of India. Such joint venture would allow the two

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

C'WEALTH MEET PM flies today to Trinidad

BSS, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina leaves here today for Port of Spain, the capital of Trinidad and Tobago in South America, on a six-day official visit to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

Britain's Queen Elizabeth II will open the CHOGM on November 27 at the Cultural Centre in Port of Spain.

Hasina will be among 52 leaders attending the summit, including Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

She will lead a high profile Bangladesh delegation to the CHOGM.

The PM will leave Dhaka by

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## Patronise talents, creativity

Urges president at 'Celebrating Life' award-giving ceremony

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President Zillur Rahman yesterday called for nurturing the rich culture of the country and artists of all medium, saying that creative works inspire people to be patriotic and to connect the past with the present, while helping nations to move forward as well.

"Songs, photographs, and movies are strong forms of arts. Songs and movies of old days still encourage and help us to be more patriotic," he said while addressing the award giving ceremony of Celebrating Life, an annual contest of films, photography, and lyrics organised by The Daily Star and the Standard Chartered Bank.

The theme of the second annual contest this year was 'Celebrating Womanhood'. President Zillur Rahman distributed the awards to the 22 winners in a gorgeous ceremony in Bangabandhu International Conference Centre yesterday evening.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

MORE PHOTOS AND STORY ON PAGE 2, 5 & 16



আপনার স্বপ্ন নীড়কে করুন সত্যি, আমাদের হোম লোন নিয়ে।

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US drops Bangladesh from its HR watch list

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh has been de-listed from the US watch list as the American government is now happy with the situation of human rights, minority communities, and women's safety and empowerment in the country.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Separated twins now out of ICU

AFP, Sydney

Bangladeshi twins Trishna and Krishna have left intensive care as they continue their remarkable recovery from surgery to separate their conjoined heads, the hospital said.

The two-year-old girls, SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Eid Mubarak

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