

BDR set to recruit over 1,000 jawans

Faces manpower shortage for arrest of large number of troops; departmental trial likely to complete before CID charge sheet in Pilkhana carnage case

KAILASH SARKAR

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) will have 1,073 new members in January in its first recruitment since the February 25-26 mutiny at Pilkhana headquarters. The decision has been taken to resolve the manpower shortage the border force faces with a huge number of its troops detained on mutiny charges, BDR Director General Major General Mainul Islam told The Daily Star yesterday. A circular for recruitment of 1,000 troops is coming up, while one seeking applications for 73 non-paramilitary positions has already been published, he added. Criminal Investigation Department sources said 3,500 BDR men have been arrested across the country so far. Of them, 2,163 were held at Pilkhana headquarters in the capital.

Many of the accused would lose jobs as punishment, they added. Of the 1,000 jawans to be enrolled, 482 will come in general quota and the rest 518 in quotas for Ansar and VDP, indigenous people, public orphanages and the children of freedom fighters. The recruitment tests will begin on January 14 and continue till January 28. They would be held at different BDR camps and metropolitan and district headquarters. BDR officials will oversee the selection process. Those to be picked will be issued with appointment letters on the examination day. Meanwhile, the border force authorities plan to begin departmental trial of suspected mutineers at Pilkhana before CID submits a probe report in the carnage case, said sources. CID, they added, might take more time

to complete the mutiny probe, though the home ministry had earlier said the investigation report would be submitted before the year ends. Talking to The Daily Star yesterday, Home Minister Sahara Khatun said the government is striving to ensure a fair trial of the carnage case. Queried when she thinks CID would submit its report, she replied, "It's not possible to have a thorough investigation by working to a time limit." The government wanted to complete the probe within its first year in office. But now it seems the job might take a little longer, as the investigation is leading to new links and suspects, she continued. "The CID officials however are trying their best to complete the probe as soon as possible." Speaking in return for anonymity, a

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



PHOTO: ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

This photo recently taken at Majhirghat area in Chittagong shows huge amount of low-quality fertilisers left to rot since 2003. Inset, fertilisers kept open also add to environment pollution.



Woman knocks down Pope at Xmas mass
He urges tolerance

AFP, Vatican City

An apparently deranged woman knocked Pope Benedict XVI to the ground after vaulting over security barricades in a dramatic start to Christmas Eve mass at St

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Canals left out of recovery drive

Dozens of canals in and around Dhaka dying due to encroachment, pollution

MORSHED ALI KHAN

Canals in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur and Munshiganj will soon become non-existent unless the authorities concerned immediately bring them under the ongoing river-saving drive, said district administration officials and environmentalists of the four districts. Without these canals, rivers of the districts would drastically lose navigability creating more pressure on roadways. For years these canals have been used for transportation of farm and dairy products from peripheral vil-

lages of the city.

According to Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, president of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BAPA), these canals are as important as the rivers since the ecology of Dhaka depends on them. "We have always been vocal about saving these canals along with the rivers in order to ensure a sound ecology and being well of the people living around them, Ahmad said. The authorities declared the rivers Buriganga, Turag, Balu and Shitalakhyia ecologically critical areas (ECA), but did not mention

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1



A day labourer squeezes to sleep in a tukri, generally used for carrying goods, on the roadside of the city's Karwan Bazar apparently in an attempt to avert wintry chill yesterday evening.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Patrons of militants to face trial
Says home minister

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Godfathers and patrons of militancy during the tenure of BNP-Jamaat-led government would be brought to trial soon, Home Minister Sahara Khatun said yesterday. She noted that several incidents of militant attack took place in the country during the then government, and political leaders were also found involved. "We will bring them to trial, so that nobody dares to abet

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Buriganga cleaning drive starts in Jan

Authorities plan massive excavation to free riverbed from dumped polythene, other waste

HELEMUL ALAM

Rampant and mindless dumping of polythene bags, plastics, coconut shells and other waste materials especially from the kitchen markets has produced millions of tonnes of sludge on the bed of the river Buriganga, said a BIWTA official. The highest concentration of such waste has settled on the bed of the river near Sadarghat launch terminal in the capital, prompting Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority

to take up a cleaning drive from the first week of January 2010. "Initially we will remove the garbage from one kilometre area of the Buriganga bed stretching from Badamtoli Bridge to Simpson Ghat near Sadarghat," said another official of BIWTA, adding that the drive will go on for three months. The target of the drive is to clear up around three lakh cubic metre of sludge from the Buriganga.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Bangladeshi to lead UN peacekeepers in Ivory Coast

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations is going to appoint a major general from Bangladesh Army as the commander of its peacekeeping mission in Ivory Coast. Chairman of parliamentary standing committee on defence ministry M Idris Ali said this to reporters at the Zia International Airport on his arrival after a 14-day official visit to the peacekeeping missions in the African states of Ivory Coast and Congo. A number of members of Bangladesh armed forces and police are engaged in the UN missions there. Talking to the press, Idris Ali also pointed out that there are some problems Bangladesh peacekeepers are facing abroad. The standing committee will submit recommendations to the government in this regard like taking initiatives to provide Bangladesh soldiers with cheap phone call rates for talking to their relatives back in the country and chartering aircraft to fly them home on annual holidays, he said.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

1.5 lakh bags of fertiliser lying on streets for 6yrs

Importer didn't take delivery as test found those mixed with ground stones, brick chips

ABDULLAH AL MAHMUD, Ctg

A huge amount of imported fertiliser stockpiled at different places in the port city's Sadarghat and Bangla Bazar areas over the last six years is causing serious environmental pollution. Sources said around 1.5 lakh bags of fused magnesium phosphate (FMP) fertiliser worth about Tk 20 crore have been kept on the government and private land occupying huge space along Sadarghat Strand Road in the city since 2003. The importer avoided taking delivery as chemical tests showed that the fertiliser was mixed with ground stones and brick chips. A portion of the imported FMP, kept under the open sky, is getting damaged and harming the environment as it regularly gets rainwater. Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) and Department of Environment (DoE) are issuing warnings to the people concerned but nothing happens, local sources said. Non-delivery of fertiliser bags has left huge amount of dues unpaid for years and deepened the crisis of storage space, sources said. Ripon Group of Industries at Bijoynagar, Dhaka imported 1,48,397 bags of fertiliser, each weighing 50 kg, from China in 2001. The importer with bank liabilities abstained from responding to the repeated calls of contractor and commission agents for taking delivery of the fertiliser and paying the space charge worth over Tk 1.5 crore. The group entrusted two contractor and commission agents - Babul Enterprise and MY Enterprise -- with the task of storing

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

CLIMATE SUMMIT Hasan trashes BNP's claim of PM's 'failure'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

BNP's statement about the prime minister "failing" to uphold Bangladesh's interest in Copenhagen was a futile effort to confuse the nation, said State Minister for Environment and Forest Hasan Mahmud yesterday. He urged BNP not to try to get political leverage out of a national issue like climate change. The state minister said, "BNP leaders are now trying to

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Two cops held for snatching

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Zia International Airport police last night detained two constables of Armed Police Battalion after an angry mob beat them up for snatching foreign currency from a money exchanger at the airport. The detainees were identified as constables Yakub and Solaiman, said Abu Saleh Mohammad Shamsuddin, officer-in-charge of Airport Police Station.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Change is progress

SOCIAL ISLAMI BANK LIMITED

Sylhet Branch shifts to its NEW PREMISES tomorrow

Microsoft Windows

OLD ADDRESS

Central Plaza, Ambarkhana
Airport Road, Sylhet-3100

Close program

Restart Required

NEW ADDRESS

781 Karima Mansion
Dargah Gate, Sylhet-3100

OK

www.sibibd.com

সোশ্যাল ইসলামী ব্যাংক লিমিটেড
SOCIAL ISLAMI BANK LIMITED