

# Rupganj flies

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Locals said the army has been trying for the last six months to buy 6,000 bighas of land under 24 moujas in Rupganj to develop a housing project.

They alleged they are not allowed to sell land to anyone other than the army. Besides, the army forces them to sell land for only Tk 15 lakh a bigha when the current market price is Tk 40 lakh, added the villagers.

In a late-night press release, Inter Services Public Relations said local vested interests have been obstructing the Army Housing Scheme (AHS) for the last few months, and they are the ones responsible for yesterday's incident.

It said a group of unruly people attacked the army men and ransacked the AHS project office.

"When they tried to snatch weapons from the troops, a few rounds of bullet went off leaving a civilian injured," read the ISPR release.

The army authorities have decided to withdraw all makeshift offices in Rupganj to facilitate negotiations with the locals, added ISPR.

It also said the AHS project runs solely on private funds of the servicemen.

An army blog claims the government has accepted in principle a proposal for "self-financed housing scheme for the army" in Rupganj.

However, Abdul Mannan Khan, state minister for housing and public works, said he was not aware of any such project.

"I know nothing. Nobody has informed me," he told The Daily Star.

Rajuk Chairman Nurul Huda said he too did not know of any housing project for the army in Rupganj.

As per the rules, he said, developers must obtain an approval from Rajuk to implement a housing project. And to get the go-ahead, they need to submit a layout of the project in keeping with the Detailed Area Plan.

Witnesses said people from 30 villages started gathering on the Ichhapur-Rupganj road from around 9:00am.

Shouting slogans against land purchase by the army personnel, they went to lay siege to Tanmushury camp at around 10:30am.

As police charged baton, the demonstrations got even more violent.

To disperse the marauding crowds, Rab and army personnel shot at least 150 bullets, injuring some 25 people. The shooting forced the demonstrators to go away for some time.

But as the news spread, more villagers joined in. Within an hour, the crowd swelled to around 7,000 and laid siege to three more camps in a five-km radius of Tanmushury.

Mohammad Alam, an eyewitness, said, "The Rab men fired at knee-level when the mob was about to storm the army camp."

Abdus Salam, a local worker, said that shortly after the shooting, someone was announcing through loudspeakers that the army men had shot dead many villagers.

It inflamed the situation, leading the demonstrators to attack the Tanmushury camp.

Alongside the Rab personnel, some army men fired on the crowd, he added.

Momen, one of the injured admitted to DMCH, gave a similar account of the clashes.

He said the army personnel fired at least 50 bullets.

# Pak army airstrikes kill 12 militants

AP, Parachinar

A local government official says Pakistani army airstrikes have killed 12 suspected insurgents near the Afghan border.

The helicopter gunships targeted two suspected militant hide-outs in the Orakzai tribal region yesterday.

The day before, a roadside bomb killed six paramilitary soldiers in Orakzai, where the army has waged an offensive against the Taliban.

Local government administrator Aurangzeb Khan says Saturday's airstrikes also wounded six militants.

The violence is a sign the Taliban are regrouping in Orakzai, where the army had declared victory earlier this year.

Independent confirmation of the strikes and death toll is nearly impossible because access to the conflict zone is severely restricted.

# British Ex-PM Thatcher recovering in hospital

AFP, London

Former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher was said to be feeling "a lot brighter" in hospital yesterday as she recovers from a bout of flu.

The 1980s premier, who has been in frail health for a number of years, was admitted to a west London hospital for tests on Tuesday.

"She is a lot brighter. She is sitting up in a chair in her own room now," a spokesman for Thatchersaid.

"I think we are still going to be here for several days yet just to make sure."

Thatcher was forced to miss a planned 85th birthday party at Downing Street on October 14 due to her illness.

Known as the "Iron Lady", Thatcher was the longest-serving British prime minister of the 20th century and the only woman to serve as premier.

# Cyclone Giri

**FROM PAGE 16**  
Bazara, Chittagong and Mongla have been advised to keep hoisted local cautionary signal No.3.

All fishing boats and trawlers over North Bay have been advised to keep close to the coast and proceed with caution till further notice.

# 4 killed

**FROM PAGE 1**  
Bangladesh Shomoy, Golam Kibria Konok, a cloth trader, 30, businessman Shahidul Islam Azad, 38, and Wahid Imran, 25.

Fire brigade divers recovered three bodies, 15 hours after the incident, from the river around 12:15pm yesterday while the fourth body was recovered later in the afternoon.

The trawler sank while going to Tekerhat Lalon festival with 60 passengers on board. It collided with a sand-laden vessel around 9:00pm.

All the passengers except the four managed to swim ashore.

# AL sees

**FROM PAGE 1**  
At least 50 people including policemen, army personnel and locals were injured in yesterday's clash that started around 11:30am.

The clash ensued when law enforcers tried to remove barricades put up by locals in protest against 'forced purchase' of 6,000 bighas for a housing project for army personnel.

# UN to observe

**FROM PAGE 1**  
This year, the message reads.

Due to sincere efforts of Bangladesh's Permanent Mission to the UN, it said, a proposal for observing International Mother Language Day has been included in the resolution.

"It is an important achievement for Bangladesh since February 21 was recognised as International Mother Language Day by the UNESCO in 1999 due to keen interest of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina," the release said.

Since 1999, February 21 is observed as International Mother Language Day in UN member countries.

# Direct trading

**FROM PAGE 1**  
and the delay often caused by crowding of trucks on either side of the border, officials of the two countries said.

Under the MoU, India would allow movement of trucks from Nepal into Bangladesh up to land customs stations in Bangladesh.

It was agreed that Bangladesh would supply 1.7 million pieces of garment to India free of duty from October to December this year, Anand Sharma told a joint press conference with Faruk Khan.

Bangladesh has already exhausted 70 percent of the 8 million pieces of garments to India in the first ten months of this year.

Sharma said steps would be taken for expeditious export of 300,000 tonnes of parboiled rice and 2,00,000 tonnes of wheat to Bangladesh, as per agreement already reached between the two countries.

India's decision to allow resumption of cotton export to Bangladesh following the ban imposed by New Delhi in April is crucial for Bangladesh whose textile industry depends on the item.

Besides, the cotton price has reached its all-time high of \$1.19 a pound in international market this month.

Faruk Khan, who had a 40-minute one-to-one talks with Sharma before half-an-hour of delegation-level parleys, said, "We had very fruitful discussions, particularly the one-on-one discussions."

He said he discussed with Sharma removal of quota and duty for more goods from Bangladesh and the Indian commerce minister "assured us that it is under active consideration of the Indian government".

Bangladesh wants 61 more goods to be removed from India's list of sensitive goods for trading under the South Asian Free Trade Area. An overwhelming number of these goods are in garment sector.

Faruk Khan, after his talks with Sharma, said, "Whatever the little bottlenecks were there in enhancing India-Bangladesh trade have been removed."

"We consider India not only a neighbour but a brother," he said.

According to Faruk, Sharma has accepted his invitation to visit Bangladesh and officials of the two countries will finalise the dates.

Sharma said Bangladesh has responded positively to India's request for allowing use of Chittagong and Mongla ports to help enhance bilateral trade and also use of Ashuganj as a port of call.

Sharma invited the Bangladeshi commerce minister to jointly inaugurate the border haat along the border with Meghalaya with the Meghalaya chief minister.

He said feasibility studies for two separate 1300MW power projects in Khulna and Chittagong to be set up by India would start soon and "we hope bulk power transmission between the two countries will commence by the year 2012".

The Indian commerce minister said seven integrated check posts and eight land customs stations along the border with Bangladesh would be upgraded.

He said his "useful discussions" with Faruk Khan were "important considering the fact that Hasina's visit to India was historic and that it charted the roadmap for cooperation in areas like infrastructure, border infrastructure and power".

Sharma added India and Bangladesh were in talks to build a bridge across Feni river to connect Sabroom in Tripura and Ramgarh in Bangladesh and emphasised integrating North Eastern Indian states with Bangladesh by encouraging investment flows and joint ventures.

Faruk Khan, who was leading a 21-member high-level delegation, wraps up his three-day official visit to India today.

Accompanied by Bangladesh trade and industry leaders, Faruk Khan had an interactive session with Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry. He also addressed the Confederation of Indian Industry.

# Qaeda's US spokesman urges attacks in the West

AFP, Dubai

Qaeda's American spokesman, Adam Gadahn, has urged fellow Muslims in the West to carry out attacks in the "Zio-Crusader coalition" states, SITE Intelligence Group said yesterday.

"To my Muslim brothers residing in the states of the Zio-Crusader coalition ... know that Jihad (holy war) is your duty as well," Gadahn said in a video, excerpts of which were provided by the US monitoring group.

He addressed Muslims in "emigrant communities like those which live on the margins of society in the miserable suburbs of Paris, London and Detroit, or are from those arriving in America or Europe to study in its universities or seek their daily bread in the streets of its cities," SITE said.

"You have an opportunity to strike the leaders of unbelief and retaliate against them on their own soil, as long as there is no covenant between you and them," he added in the 48 minute, 20 second video, produced by al-Qaeda media arm As-Sahab.

He urged Arabs to launch "heroic operations similar to the invasion of the American consulate in Peshawar and the bombing of the Danish embassy in Islamabad," in their cities and capitals.

However, "it is obligatory to avoid harming Muslims and destroying their properties" when carrying out such attacks, he said in Arabic, with the video providing English subtitles.

Six Pakistanis were killed in an April attack on the US consulate in the northwestern Pakistani city of Peshawar.

In June 2008, a car bomb exploded outside the Danish embassy in Islamabad killing at least eight people, including a Dane, and wounding about 27 others.

Gadahn also called on Muslims to attack "American military bases spread across the (Arabian) Peninsula, the Gulf, the Levant countries and elsewhere... like the one carried out by Major Nidal Hasan," the US Army psychiatrist accused of opening fire on colleagues at Fort Hood, Texas, killing 13.

**FROM PAGE 1**  
BSMMU Hospital told The Daily Star.

On October 12, two local youths attacked Mizanur, a chemistry teacher of Lokmanpur College in Bagatipura upazila, for protesting staking of college girls.

They ran a motorcycle into him, leaving him critically injured.

He was declared clinically dead on October 21. Since then, he had been on a life-support machine.

The deputy inspector general (DIG) of police for Rajshahi yesterday assured locals that the attackers will be hunted down soon, reports our correspondent from Natore.

One of the accused in the case has already been arrested. DIG Siddiqui Rahman along with senior police officials visited the spot, and gave the assurance at an exchange of views with local elite, teachers of the college, and leaders of different political parties.

All classes of Lokmanpur College in Bagatipura upazila of the district have been suspended till October 28 to avert fresh violence after Wednesday's protest by the students and blocking a train at Lokmanpur Bazar.

Meanwhile, black flags remain hoisted all over Lokmanpur area demanding stern action against the offenders.

Police patrol has been intensified in the area.

# Mizanur dies

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# Logging stopped

**FROM PAGE 16**  
executed through tender bidding.

But after felling 20 giant trees then, the loggers had to stop their work in the face of public protest. Most recently they have returned with a High Court (HC) order dated November 2, 2009, which permitted execution of the official work orders, specifically, "to cut down dead and risky roadside trees."

People from all walks of life have now raised their voices against felling of centenarian trees. Jhenidah Poribesh O Jibbochitra Shanrakhan committee, Hunger Free World, and people under the banner of Kaligongbashi formed human chains and held rallies in protest of the tree felling in Kaligong and Jhenidah on September 17 and 18.

Shajon Shanga, Patriot Jessoro, Ulashi Shrijoni Shanga and Bangladesh Environmental Lawyer Association (Bela) formed human chain and held rallies in protest of the tree felling in Jessoro on September 29.

Dr Khalukuzzaman, a naturalist and also the professor of Environmental Science at Khulna University, said that it is everybody's duty to preserve the centenarian trees.

"If the trees become risky to human life, authorities should trim the burdensome branches and let them live. But cutting the whole tree is unacceptable," Khalukuzzaman said.

The trees are dotted along the Jessoro-Jhenidah, Jessoro-Benapole and Meherpur-Chaudanga highways. According to archive, one Kali Babu planted the rain trees between 1830 and 1840 along the Jessoro-Kolkata road.

Azizul Haque Moni, executive director of Ulashi Shrijoni Shanga, termed the trees "heritage" and said "We shall not let them cut the trees,

which we have admired for generations."

Protesting villagers alleged that the contractor has earmarked healthy trees for logging, instead of dead ones.

Zakir Hossain, assistant arborist of R&HD in Khulna, said that they had to abide by the HC directive. "We have handed over the work order of trees along Jessoro-Jhenidah road which have been sold to the contractors following the court directive," Hossain said.

Enamul Kabir O Kholadanga village under sadar upazila, Moniruzzaman of Jessoro, Abu Bakkar Siddiq of Chaudanga obtained the HC order to execute the work orders of felling down 49 roadside trees, sources said.

Enamul Kabir told The Daily Star that they followed all official procedures to obtain the work orders. "We are not doing anything illegal. We have waited for so long after investing our money in the tender," he said.

Locals alleged that during the tenure of BNP-led government, contractors had cut down 87 roadside trees in Meherpur showing the papers for 37 trees.

Although the executive arborist's office under the Ministry of Communication sold the trees, the district council under the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development claims that the trees belong to them. Several ministerial level meetings were held to resolve the dispute but no headway was made, sources said.

Javed Ahmed, chief executive officer of Jessoro district council, said the entire tender process of the executive arborist's office in 2002 was dodgy.

"The trees belong to the district council and had we been made a party in the High Court, the contractor could never win the case," Ahmed said.

# 4 lakh secret

**FROM PAGE 16**  
killed in Iraq, Mr Assange said.

The new documents and new deaths contained within them showed the range and frequency of the "small, relentless tragedies of this war" added John Sloboda of Iraq Body Count, which worked with Wikileaks.

Speaking to reporters in Washington on Friday, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said she condemned the disclosure and suggested the leaks put lives at risk.

However, Wikileaks said it was confident that the documents - published in a heavily censored form - contain "no information that could be harmful to any individual".

Wikileaks says it expects to launch legal proceedings as a result of information contained in the documents.

It shows the US military was given a video apparently showing Iraqi Army (IA) officers executing a prisoner in the northern town of Talafar.

"The footage shows the IA soldiers moving the detainee into the street, pushing him to the ground, punching him and shooting him," states the log, which also names at least one of the perpetrators.

In another case, US soldiers suspected army officers of cutting off a detainee's fingers and burning him with acid.

Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell told the BBC that if abuse by the Iraqi security forces was witnessed, or reports of it were received, US military personnel were instructed to inform their commanders.

Mr Morrell, of the Pentagon, told the BBC that the leak was a "travesty" which provided enemies of the West with an "extraordinary database to figure out how we operate".

He said the cache of documents contained "nothing new" with regards to fundamental policy issues.

And he once again asked Wikileaks to remove the documents from the web and return them to the Department of Defense.

According to an initial review of the documents and reports by other media that have had access to them for at least 10 weeks, the broad themes from the "Iraq war log" attracting the most attention are:

**DENIAL**  
The files show the US kept records of civilian deaths, despite previously denying it. The death toll was put at 109,000, of whom 66,081 were civilians.

The US military knew of the abuses, the documents suggest, but reports were sent up the chain of command marked "no further investigation".

**IRANIAN INFLUENCE**  
Military intelligence reports released by Wikileaks detail previously well-known US concerns that Iranian agents had trained, armed and directed militants in Iraq.

In one document posted by The New York Times, the US military warned that a militia commander believed to be behind the deaths of US troops and the kidnapping of Iraqi government officials was trained by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

**BLACKWATER**  
Britain's Bureau of Investigative Journalism says it found documents detailing new cases of alleged wrongful killings of civilians involving a firm previously known as Blackwater. Blackwater, which has now changed its name to Xe Services, saw its reputation badly damaged by a 2007 incident in which its security guards were involved in a shooting that killed 14 civilians.

**IRAN DETENTION OF US HIKERS**  
Documents in the Wikileaks file also show that US officials privately believed the three American hikers detained in Iraq last year were on the Iraqi side of the border, not in Iran as Tehran contends. Iran is still holding two of them and the document says Iranian leadership hoped to benefit from the incident by focusing the nation "on a perceived external threat rather than internal dissension."

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