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## INDIAN POLITICS TODAY

MJ Akbar looks at the prevailing confusion

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## iPHONE 4S UNVEILED

Apple takes the wraps off a new iPhone at its headquarters in California

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## HUNGRY FOR ANOTHER TITLE

Golfer Siddikur Rahman is confident his second win on the Asian tour will come sometime soon

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# Lawmaker the 'land-gobbler'

His 2 firms filling up water body, forcing locals to sell their lands in 'national interest'; MP Aslamul Haque denies

MORSHED ALI KHAN

Two private power companies are indiscriminately filling up a khas (govt-owned) water body and private land by the Buriganga river forcing the local people to sell their land to the companies-- all in the name of setting up two power plants and an amusement park.

Land owners in Looterchar and Waaspur across the Buriganga are too terrified to complain about the matter. They said Awami League lawmaker from Dhaka-4 constituency Mohammad Aslamul Haque is chairman of the two companies that are implementing the project.

"We were first told that we have to sell our land to facilitate setting up power plants in national interest," said a local land owner asking not to be named. "But we became suspicious as they [companies] started filling up low-lying land one after another not even bothering to ask the owners."

The local people also alleged that part of the Buriganga has also been grabbed by the companies-- Dhaka West Power Ltd and CLC Power Company Ltd. Besides, they have filled up the mouth of what remained of Atir Khal, a canal that used to connect Buriganga with vast areas of Keraniganj.

The huge water body on the northern side of the project site, which retains water round the year and greatly helps irrigation for farming, has been demarcated with bamboo poles for filling up. Part of the water body has already been filled up with dredging spoils from the project.

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Two private companies are filling up this portion of the Buriganga river at Waaspur on the outskirts of the capital to set up two power plants and an amusement park. A digger is in operation at the site. The bamboo poles sticking out of the water are markers up to which the river would be filled.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## GHORASHAL POWER PLANT TENDER

# PDB's forced yes

It votes for Chinese co, but admits the seriously flawed bid calls for rejection

SHARIER KHAN

The Power Development Board (PDB) has recommended awarding the contract for a 300 megawatt power project at Ghorashal to a Chinese consortium for the second time while admitting that the company's bid was flawed enough to consider it rejected.

The PDB also said if the higher authorities want, its recommendation made last month may be rejected and a fresh tender may be floated.

This tender has been taking a rough ride since it was floated last year, leading to three rounds of tender. This delay is taking place mainly because of the influence of a powerful ruling Awami League leader who wants to bag the job for the company that he represents.

Following a second review of the third tender evaluation that was completed in February this year, the PDB board approved recommending the job for a consortium of CNTIC-CMC, PDB sources said early last month.

But the consortium in its bid offer did not give out a net heat rate. The heat rate directly affects project cost. So, it is considered a vital information in judging a bid.

Therefore, the PDB made its own calculations to find out the consortium's net heat rate, which is unprecedented, officials admit.

In this evaluation, the PDB said all the three qualified bidders of the tender had one flaw or another in the papers which demand that they should be rejected. The

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## WAR CRIMES '71

# Formal charges against SQ Chy on Nov 14

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The International Crimes Tribunal yesterday asked the prosecution to submit formal charges against BNP leader Salauddin Quader Chowdhury before it on November 14.

The order came after the prosecution petitioned the tribunal that they have received on Monday the probe report on Salauddin's war crimes in 1971 from the investigation agency.

The prosecution prayed for one-month time to submit formal charges and an extension of his detention till the filing of the charges.

Prosecutor Ziad Al-Malum gave submission before the court regarding the petition. He told the tribunal that its investigation agency has handed over a 119-page investigation report about Salauddin's crimes committed during the 1971 Liberation War.

The probe agency has also provided around 8,000

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## SAFETY NET SCHEMES

# Trend setter -- just needs little fixing

Int'l policy workshop sees land scarcity, huge poverty-struck population as major challenges to ensure food security

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh spent 2.8 billion dollars last year on social safety net programmes (SSNPs) and is a global leader in dimensions of social protection.

But with 27 million of its population still in abject poverty, and no fallow land remaining for further expansion of farm acreage, the country requires viable long-term investment to fight food insecurity.

Experts from home and abroad made the observations at a two-day policy workshop titled "Enhancing Food Security in Bangladesh: Evidence for Action" that

began at a hotel in the capital yesterday.

The workshop is organised by International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) with support from the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

Nearly 250 high-level policymakers including a couple of ministers, ex-caretaker government advisers, leading researchers, and representatives of development organisations gathered at the workshop to discuss investment plans, priorities, and policies to advance agricultural development, and achieve food and

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## HC gets 6 additional judges

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has appointed six additional judges to the High Court, raising the number of HC judges to 94.

The newly appointed judges are Supreme Court lawyers SH Nurul Huda Jaigirdar, KM Kamrul Qader (Ripon) and Muhammad Khurshid Alam Sarker and former deputy attorney generals Mojibur Rahman Mia, Mostofa Jaman Islam and Mohammad Ullah.

"The additional High Court judges have been appointed for two years. Their appointments will take effect from the day of their taking oath," said a press release issued by the ministry of law, justice and parliamentary affairs yesterday.

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Indian vessel Lal Bahadur Shastri is anchored near Ashuganj river port on the Meghna. It has been stuck there since September 28, as the river is too shallow for it to move ahead.

PHOTO: STAR

## ASHUGANJ TO AKHAURA

# Transshipment to try out the route

Foreign minister tells press India pays all applicable charges

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

A trial transshipment of Indian goods is going on between Ashuganj and Akhaura by road through payment of all applicable charges as agreed upon by Bangladesh and India on February 13 this year, Foreign Minister Dipu Moni stated yesterday.

Speaking at a press conference at the foreign ministry, the minister said a total of four cargo ships carrying Indian goods would operate from Kolkata to Ashuganj river port and then the goods would be shipped by road to Akhaura in line with the Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade.

Dr. Dipu Moni informed the press that three cargo ships--two Bangladeshi and one Indian--were anchored at Ashuganj, while a fourth Bangladeshi ship was sailing towards Ashuganj from Kolkata.

The foreign minister said she had no information about any exemption of charges for the transit and transshipment of Indian goods. "The trial run will continue until a specific date agreed by the two countries is reached."

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