

## POWER PRICE HIKE Police charge baton on protesters

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police yesterday dispersed a procession of Ganatantrik Bam Morcha in the capital when the left leaning political alliance was on its way to lay siege to Power Development Board (PDB) office in protest of recent power price hikes.

Bringing out a procession from Jatiya Press Club, the alliance was advancing towards PDB office at Hare Road but police charged baton on them leaving about 15 injured, said a press release.

Being obstructed, about a hundred leaders and activists of the alliance held an instant rally on the spot and protested frequent hikes in electricity price.

The government is continuously increasing the price of power to compensate the loss by quick rental power plant projects, they said.

Zunayed Saki, coordinator of the alliance, addressed the programme among others.

## DoE fines textile factory Tk 29 lakh in Dhamrai

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Department of Environment (DoE) yesterday fined a textile mill Tk 29 lakhs in Dhamrai on the outskirts of the capital for polluting river Bangshai with untreated chemical effluent.

An enforcement team of the DoE found that the effluent treatment plant of "The Immaculate Textile Ltd" was grossly defective and unable to treat the waste matter of the factory, said a DoE press release.

The factory has been releasing untreated effluents into the river through a concealed bypass drain, said DoE Director Mohammad Munir Chowdhury who handed down the penalty and ordered to seal the factory off.

An instant examination revealed that the untreated liquid effluent contained no dissolved oxygen though required level is 4.5 to 8 milligrams per litre, he said.

Such effluent is deadly for aquatic life and overall environment, he said adding that the factory has released nine crore litres of liquid effluent into the river in past one year.

The factory's managing director Kazi Iftekhah Ahmed made a formal pledge to the DoE to rectify the factory's fault within a month, said Munir.

Contacted, Iftekhah Ahmed said there was no bypass drain of the factory for releasing liquid effluent. But it had drain to discharge other waste water.

He, however, admitted that required oxygen level was not present in the effluent and that he gave an undertaking to resolve the problem.

## CARETAKER GOVERNMENT SC verdict reflects govt's will *Says JAF president*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiyatabadi Ainjibi Forum (JAF) President Rafiqul Islam Mia yesterday said the Supreme Court verdict "given by former chief justice ABM Khairul Haque declaring the caretaker government system illegal is a reflection of the present government's will".

Khairul Haque has given the verdict in order to satisfy the ruling Awami League and bring this party to the state power again, he said, while addressing a press conference organised by JAF, a body of pro-BNP lawyers, on the Supreme Court Bar Association premises.

Rafiqul said Khairul Haque in his verdict had suggested formation of a caretaker government comprising elected representatives, which he had not said in the short order.

The inconsistency between the short order and the full verdict is unprecedented, he said, adding that the recent verdict given by Khairul was the most controversial one in the world.

Replying to a question, Rafiqul said three other judges, who agreed with Khairul Haque's opinion in the judgement, were also responsible for the disputes created over the verdict.



Law Minister Shafique Ahmed speaks at a seminar on "Land problems and legal rights of the ethnic group/ indigenous community in greater Mymensingh", organised by Caritas Perlam-MJF project, a joint initiative of Caritas and Manusher Jonno Foundation, at Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

## New plant in Munshiganj to treat Padma water

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) is going to set up a water treatment plant at Jasholdia point of Munshiganj, with a capacity of supplying 45 crore litres of water per day.

An agreement was signed yesterday between Dhaka Wasa and China CAMC Engineer Com Ltd in this regard. CAMC will construct the plant in 42 months.

The plant would reduce to a large extent city people's dependency on ground water, said Abu Alam Mohammad Shahid Khan, local government secretary, while delivering a speech as the chief guest at the signing ceremony at Sonargaon Hotel in the capital.

Water from the Padma river would get treated at the plant and then pass through 33-km long pipe lines to the distribution lines near Mitford Hospital

before it is supplied in Dhaka city.

The Chinese government will provide around Tk 2,500 crore out of the estimated cost of Tk 3,500 crore in soft loans and the remaining expense of the Padma Water Treatment Plant will be borne by Bangladesh.

This is the first time China is financing a treatment plant, Shahid said.

The process of land acquisition for the plant is underway and the construction work will start this year. The plant will be constructed on 94 acres of land, a Wasa official said.

Currently, Wasa can supply around 210 crore litres of water per day, 87 percent of which comes from ground water and the rest from surface water treated by four treatment plants.

Excessive extraction of water legally and illegally by deep tube wells is lowering the ground water level in the capital, posing a risk to the city's future.

## Two JMB men arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested two militants of banned Jama'atul Mujahedeen Bangladesh (JMB) in Bagmara upazila of Rajshahi yesterday.

The arrestees were Abdul Mannan, 51, of Konopara and Abdul Mannan Khondoker, 50, of Mirjapur.

They were close associates of the executed JMB leader Siddikul Islam Bangla Bhai.

On information that some fugitive JMB activists returned to villages and trying to reorganise the outfit, the Rab arrested them raiding Taherpur area.

Arrest warrants were issued against them and they are charge sheeted in extortion and torture cases, said ASP Mirza Golam Sarwar of Rab-5.

## TV talk shows platforms for raising people's voice *Seminar told*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Discussants at a seminar yesterday said accountability of the country's politicians can be enhanced and democracy can be strengthened through the discussions of representatives from all walks of life in TV talk shows.

The talk shows in television channels have become a medium to raise the voice of mass people in the country, they said.

They made the remarks at the seminar titled "How much political talk shows are affecting us" organised by private television Channel I at its office in the capital on the celebration of its 14th founding anniversary on October 1.

Dhaka University teacher Prof Nazmul Ahsan Kalimullah presented a keynote paper in the seminar.

He observed that the TV talk shows are creating awareness among the country's common people on different political, social, and economic issues.

Noted Jurist Barrister Rafiqul Haque said the talk shows can play an import role in draw-

ing the attention of the government and policy makers on their activities in absence of oppositions in the parliament.

Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan said the people are becoming aware on the one hand, and on the other hand they are becoming confused through the discussions in the talk shows.

Naimul Islam Khan, editor of Bangla daily Amader Orhaneeti, said the talk shows are working as mini-parliaments to raise the people's voice.

But politician Haider Akbar Khan Rono and Bangladesh Jatiya Party President Barrister Andalib Rahman Partha said the talk shows can be a route to establishing democracy not an alternative to the parliament.

Industries Minister Dilip Barua, lawmaker Golam Moulana Roni, Jatiya Party president member Kazi Firoz Rashid, Awami League president member Yusuf Hossain Humayun, former FBCCI president Abdul Awal Mintoo, Bhorer Kagoj Editor Shamol Dutta, and eminent banker Mamun Rashid, among others, also spoke.



PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

Pedestrians sometimes fall into this manhole as some of the rods covering it have been missing for quite a while at Bahaddarhat in Chittagong city. The open manhole also leads to frequent traffic jam. The photo was taken yesterday.

## Two killed in road crashes

METRO DESK

Two people were killed and two others injured in separate road accidents in Sirajganj and Natore on Monday and yesterday.

Our Sirajganj correspondent reports, a youth was killed instantly and two others were injured as a lorry hit their motorbike on Bogra-Nagarbari highway at Jugnidah village in Shahzadpur upazila on Monday night.

The deceased was identified as Rocky Ahmed, 18, son of Mozammel Haq of Dwariapur Maholla in Shahzadpur municipal area.

Injured Mizanur Rahman, 20, and Farid Uddin, 19, were admitted to a local clinic.

Police recovered the body on Monday night and sent it to a hospital morgue for autopsy on Tuesday morning.

Shahzadpur Police Station Officer-in-Charge Motiar Rahman said the tank lorry rammed the motorbike while the trio were going to Talgachhi village from Shahzadpur.

Our Natore correspondent reports, a child was killed instantly when an earth-laden truck ran her over in Dakkhin Lalpur area of Lalpur upazila around 10:00am yesterday.

The deceased was Riya Khatun, 2, daughter of Rabbel Ali of Dakkhin Lalpur village.

Lalpur Police Station Sub-Inspector Anisur Rahman said the truck crushed Riya while she was playing on the road beside their home.

Police seized the truck while its driver manage to flee the since.

## HC throws out charge against Orion Group chairman

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday quashed the proceedings against Orion Group Chairman Obaidul Karim in a bribery case.

On June 5, 2007, Dhanmondi police filed the case against Obaidul Karim on charge of giving a car worth Tk 50 lakh as bribe to Harris Chowdhury, political secretary to former prime minister Khaleda Zia, to get the construction work order of the Gulistan-Jatrabari flyover.

ACC lawyer Khurshid Alam Khan said his client will move an appeal to the Supreme Court against the HC verdict.

Although police filed the First Information Report (FIR), later the ACC took over the case for its dealing, he said.

The HC bench of Justice MR Hasan and Justice Mahmudul Hoque delivered the verdict.

## Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 28th death anniversary of Shaheed Maizuddin, an organizer of the

War of Liberation and close associate of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Maizuddin, a former lawmaker and Awami League leader, was killed at Kaliganj in Gazipur in 1984 for his proactive role in anti-autocratic movement, says a press release.

Ruling AL has chalked out elaborate programmes to mark the day. Senior AL leaders including its acting chief Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury will place wreaths at his Banani graveyard.

## SCHOOL, COLLEGE GOVERNING BODIES Minimum educational qualification sought

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday called for fixing a minimum education qualification for the members and chairmen of the governing bodies of non-government schools and colleges.

The people who have at least obtained the Secondary School Certificate should be selected as members, while the chairmen should have a bachelor degree, they said.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid slightly differed with the recommendation, saying the qualification would have to be fixed considering all educational institutions of the country.

Many people want to be in the governing bodies for personal interests but one should have a mindset for serving the institutions, he told the roundtable, "Governing bodies of non-government educational institutions: Experience and responsibilities", at a hotel in the capital.

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Ministry of Education organised the programme.

Urging the members and chairmen of the governing bodies to work impartially, Nahid said, "Schools or colleges do not belong to a particular party. Everyone's children study there."

Prof Fahima Khatun, chairman, Dhaka Education Board, pointed out the issue of lawmakers' interference in the formation of governing bodies and school managing committees.

## HC stays effectuation of NU recruitment circular

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday stayed for one month the effectuation of a National University (NU) circular for recruiting officials and staff to the university.

In response to a writ petition, the court also issued a rule asking the NU authorities to explain in four weeks why their circular published in the NU website on September 4 should not be declared illegal.

On September 24, three NU officials who were terminated from their jobs filed the writ petition with the HC challenging the legality of the circular.

## INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S LANDS Law minister for ban on sale to outsiders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday said there should be a law that prevents the indigenous community from selling their lands to people outside their community.

The minister was addressing a seminar styled "Land problems and legal rights of the ethnic group/ indigenous community in greater Mymensingh", organised by Caritas Perlam-MJF project, a joint initiative of Caritas and Manusher Jonno Foundation, at Jatiya Press Club in the capital.

He suggested the plain land indigenous people draft district wise lists of indigenous community lands, which have been occupied illegally or declared as vested property.

If lands of indigenous community are declared as vested property, the land ownership claimants should file their claims with tribunals that have been set up to deal with this issue, Shafiquesaid.

"We will extend maximum legal support to protect your (indigenous) lands," he said.

State Minister for Social Welfare Promode Mankin said the parliamentary caucus on indigenous people is working on formulating indigenous people's rights act to protect their rights.

Presenting a paper, Bangladesh Adivasi Forum General Secretary Sanjeeb Drong placed a 10-point recommendation to protect land rights of indigenous people.

The recommendations include -- formulation of separate land commission for plain land indigenous people, formation of national indigenous commission, constitutional recognition of indigenous people, and punishment to illegal land occupiers.

Rina Roy, director (rights) of Manusher Jonno Foundation, also spoke on the occasion.