



Symbol of Absolute Reliability

SOLAR PANEL

SOLAR BATTERY

ELECTRO SOLAR POWER LTD.
Hotline: 01755541047
Address: House-50/9, 204, Road-5,
Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212

The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

www.thedailystar.net

Your Right to Know

24 PAGES PRICE : Tk 10.00



GEN ZIA IN HISTORY

Syed Badrul Ahsan discusses many faces of the assassinated president

PAGE 6

FUELLING SYRIA CONFLICT

Russia says EU failure of renewing arms embargo would undermine peace talks

PAGE 8

A CHAT WITH SHAKIB

Tigers all-rounder speaks on his injury, the BPL and much more

PAGE 14

GRABBED FORESTLAND Price double the budget *Says CAG report*

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The value of illegally occupied forestland across the country is around Tk 2,74,902 crore, double the budget for fiscal year 2010-11, says a government audit report.

However, the current market price of the grabbed forestland is much higher than the amount estimated according to government-fixed rates, says the report on forest management in Bangladesh by the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG).

The country's forests continue to be depleted due to illegal logging, smuggling of timber, land grabbing in the name of setting up industries, and lack of proper management of industrial waste, it says.

The report notes that forest management in the country is seriously hampered by lack of coordination between the DoE and the ministries and divisions concerned. The report has been placed in parliament.

Talking to The Daily Star, Mohammed Yunus Ali, chief conservator of forests (CCF) at the Department of Forest, said it was true that some forestland were still being occupied by land grabbers.

But the figures mentioned in the audit report were not "absolutely accurate" as they were based on seven-year-old findings. And the situation had changed a lot in the last four years, he said.

Younus said the Department of Land Survey and the district administration had been informed about the illegal occupation of forestland, but no action was taken against the land grabbers.

According to him, land survey is done by temporary staff, and there are many instances where one's land has been recorded against someone else's name. And the chances of such discrepancies are much higher in case of government land.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 7



People load up a truck with logs of illegally-felled trees at a forest in Tankaboti union of Bandarban to take those to different parts of the country.

PHOTO: SANJOY KUMAR BARUA

Rare show in politics

Khulna city polls candidates speak from same dais

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Sitting on a same dais, all three mayoral candidates in the upcoming Khulna City Corporation polls yesterday assured voters of turning Khulna into a modern, clean and green city.

The assurance came during a 'meet the voters' programme organised by Greater Khulna Development Action Coordination Committee at the Shaheed Hadis Park in the city.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6
PHOTO ON PAGE 5

Rajuk role in question *Inaction, delay in manpower allocation paved the way for illegal buildings*

TAWFIQUE ALI

Noted architects and civil engineers blame catastrophic building disasters like Rana Plaza collapse on lack of effective control of Rajuk over building construction and government's foot-dragging over approving required manpower.

Since 2007, the Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) has had five designated officials in a committee responsible for approving building construction in Savar.

The committee, comprised of a board member, an assistant director and an executive engineer of Rajuk, assistant chief architect of department of architecture and a government-appointed authorised officer, has a revised jurisdiction over Turag, part of Ashulia and Tongi and Gazipur Sadar in April this year.

But they never appeared to enforce build-

ing law there, said Mubasshar Hussein, president of Institute of Architects Bangladesh.

It is apprehended that the building law, safety precautions and mandatory Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC) have not been followed in constructing thousands of buildings in Savar and other fringe areas of the capital, he said.

Authorised Officer Md Helal Ahmed said they inspected approval of only around 50 buildings in Savar over the past several months and could not check all the buildings due to lack of adequate number of inspectors. He said it was not possible to ascertain the number of illegal buildings in Savar without a survey.

Rajuk chairman Md Nurul Huda said they could not control construction of

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1
MORE ON PAGE 4

Confusion over next ADP size

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Confusion shrouds the size of the next fiscal year's Annual Development Programme, after the National Economic Council has included expenditures of various autonomous bodies in the ADP.

Such a move is unprecedented, and a planning ministry official said it was done on government's instructions so that the ADP size looks bigger ahead of the next general election.

According to a planning ministry statement, the size of the approved ADP is Tk 73,984 crore, which

SEE PAGE 10 COL 8
MORE ON B1

PADMA BRIDGE PROJECT Tk 1,600cr shown from foreign funds

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Although the government has decided to construct the Padma bridge with own funds, the planning ministry estimates that Tk 1,600 crore of the project cost will be available from foreign sources in the next fiscal year.

The National Economic Council yesterday approved for the fiscal year an annual development programme of Tk 65,870 crore, of which Tk 6,852 crore was allocated for the Padma bridge project.

Of the total cost of the project, Tk 5,252 crore will be covered by the government and the rest by foreign funds, according to a proposal of the planning ministry.

Asked about the foreign sources, Planning Minister AK Khandker yesterday told reporters that the government has not decided against taking foreign aid for the project.

Planning Secretary Bhuiyan Shafiqul Islam said the government might take foreign assistance from various sources, including Indian credit.

After the World Bank withdrew its \$1.2 billion funding

SEE PAGE 10 COL 6

FIGHTING GRAFT Lavalin offers amnesty to whistleblowers

AFP, Ottawa

Canadian engineering giant SNC-Lavalin, facing mounting bribery allegations, on Monday offered amnesty to employees who come forward with knowledge of wrongdoing.

In a statement, the company guaranteed whistleblowers that it would not make "claims for damages or unilaterally terminate employees who voluntarily, truthfully and fully report violations of its Code of Ethics and Business Conduct."

The offer, however, does not extend to staff who profited from "ethical

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4



These structures are built on a partly encroached-upon canal beside Dhaka- Chittagong highway at Siddhirganj in Narayanganj. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

CITY POLLS NOMINATION Jamaat making it up for BNP

RASHIDUL HASAN

Opposition ally Jamaat-e-Islami has withdrawn its mayoral candidates for Rajshahi and Sylhet city corporations to please Khaleda Zia and favour BNP-backed aspirants there.

Khaleda, chief of the BNP-led 18-party opposition alliance, has been annoyed at Jamaat's recent role in handling the May 5 rally of Hefajat-e Islam, a radical Islamist organisation.

Jamaat leaders had convinced Khaleda that they had been effectively using Hefajat's agitation to beef up their anti-government movement.

As part of its strategy, Jamaat had made efforts to have the Hefajat rally linger at Shapla Chattar in the capital on May 5. But law enforcers early next day had driven the Hefajat men out of the city, which frustrated the opposition, said insiders in the 18-party alliance.

Against such backdrop, two Jamaat-backed mayoral aspirants on Sunday withdrew their candidacies from the June 15 polls to Rajshahi and Sylhet city corporations, despite having strong support there, said the insiders.

On Monday night, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at a meeting with top alliance leaders in her Gulshan office expressed

SEE PAGE 10 COL 8

HARTAL today



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The BNP-led 18-party alliance enforces another daylong hartal across the country today, demanding withdrawal of the cases against BNP Senior Vice-chairman Tarique Rahman.

The fresh spell of strikes comes amid an unofficial ban on political meetings and rallies, and will cause fresh disruptions in economic and educational activities.

Unlike previous hartals, pre-hartal violence took place outside the capital yesterday.

Pickets vandalised at least 40 vehicles and torched five more and blasted around 30 crude bombs in Narayanganj, Kishoreganj, Feni, Faridpur and Bogra, report our

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4