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Go tough on criminals

PM orders stern action

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday directed the top officials of districts to go tough on criminals irrespective of their political affiliations.

She gave the direction in a video conference with divisional commissioners of Rangpur and Barisal and deputy commissioners of Barguna and Lalmonirhat after a weekly cabinet meeting at the secretariat yesterday.

"Country's law and order situation must improve at any cost. Stern actions have to be taken against those involved with militancy and drug smuggling as the Awami League government has zero tolerance to the issues," said Hasina.

Referring to the murder of a local Awami League leader in Rangpur last month, the premier said: "We don't want to know a criminal's political affiliation. A criminal has to be dealt with an iron hand."

Imran Hossain was stabbed to death by a group of criminals in



Only the stumps remain of around 5,000 trees on the embankment at Sekandarkhali of Amtali of Barguna. Workers of a contractor, inset, chopped down the trees with the excuse of mending the dam. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ARIFUR RAHMAN

Over 5,000 trees felled for repairing embankment

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

More than 5,000 trees along the flood control embankment at Dafadar Bridge and Sekandarkhali village in Amtali upazila of Barguna have been chopped down in the name of repairing the embankment.

Amtali forest office sources said about 10,000 trees had been planted under the "green belt" project on the 8 km flood control dam built by the Water Development Board (WDB) in the 1999-2000 fiscal year by forming a village cooperative.

A major part (5 km) of the embankment stretched from Dafadar Bridge to Surandi dam and the rest was built on the adjacent Sekandarkhali village. Different types of trees were planted along the embankment in both the areas.

According to an agreement between the forest department and beneficiary groups which include local people, union parishad, and

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No CSR, if no net profit

Banks, financial institutions with no post-tax profit can now postpone new CSR programmes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Banks and other financial institutions can put off their commitments to undertake new programmes under corporate social responsibility (CSR) if they do not make net profits, said the central bank yesterday.

Banks or financial institutions with no post-tax net profit surplus may

postpone making fresh CSR programme expenditure commitments but should continue honouring previous commitments, said Bangladesh Bank in a circular.

It also said the CSR engagements in priority sectors such as agriculture, SMEs and green financing should also remain on an undiminished scale.

The notice advised banks and finan-

cial institutions to exercise utmost care in ensuring that the CSR support allocations do not end up aiding and abetting the financing of militancy and terrorism.

"Any suspected event of such abuse of CSR assistance must be reported to law enforcement authorities, stopping the CSR assistance forthwith," said the notice, adding that failure to do so will

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ARSON ATTACK IN RANGAMATI
Victims wait for justice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A week has gone by and still no case has been filed and nobody got arrested in connection with the torching of 61 homes of the indigenous people at Burigati union of Naniarchhar in Rangamati.

The same goes for the destruction of thousands of pineapple plants and teak saplings of Bangalee settlers, which allegedly sparked the attack on indigenous people's homes.

People of the area are blaming the police

for inaction.

They said they went to Naniarchhar Police Station to file cases after the incidents but police refused to accept their cases saying the law enforcers did not have the go-ahead from their high-ups.

The Bangalee settlers and the indigenous people told The Daily Star that Officer-in-Charge Muhammad Rashid asked them to register the cases later on.

Rashid, however, denied the allegation, claiming that neither sides had approached

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130 houses gutted in fire

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

At least 130 houses were gutted in a massive fire in the Sataru Para village of Nilphamari Sadar upazila yesterday evening. Five people were injured in the incident.

Food grains and other valuables worth more than Tk one crore were burnt in the fire that had originated from the kitchen of a villager named Ilias Hossain around 7:00pm, said fire service officials on the spot.

The fire soon spread to a huge pile of unthrashed amon rice beside Ilias's kitchen and gradually engulfed adjacent houses, union parishad chairman Abdul Mannan told The Daily Star.

The flames melted the high voltage electric lines and snapped it at different places. For fear of being electrocuted, people in the village did not do anything to douse the fire for a long time.

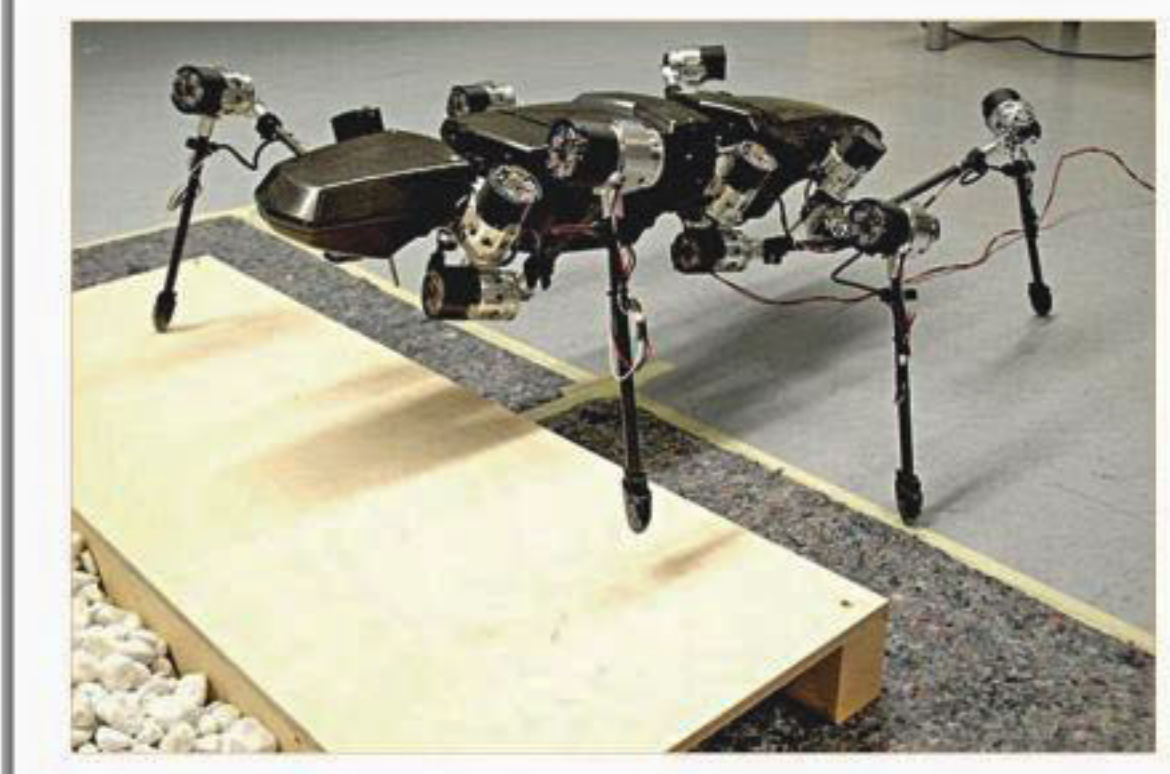
Fire brigade brought the fire under control after struggling for about two hours.

Asad Mia, project implementation officer (PIO) of the Sadar upazila, said he had visited the spot and assured this correspondent that the district administration would distribute warm clothes, dry food and necessary materials to build houses in the affected neighbourhoods today.



Sewage from an overflowing manhole and water from a cracked main created puddles on the Tejgaon-Gulshan Link Road damaging the surface of the road. Locals tried to fix the problem by dumping rubble. The authorities seem to have not noticed this.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON



Robotic bug
It can help space scientists explore alien planets

MAIL ONLINE

A robotic stick insect that can walk up stairs and negotiate stony ground has been created by scientists.

Researchers at Bielefeld University, in Germany, built the robot after studying how the legs of stick insects move.

To copy nature's design, the robotics experts gave their six robot legs a total of 18 joints that are highly elastic, allowing it to cope with uneven surfaces.

Each leg was packed with sensors to help the robot get feedback about the ground and enable it to climb over objects.

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PRAYER TIMING December 23

Fajr	5-25	6-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-24	5-27
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

The Daily Star

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ONLINE POLL

Do you think there is a tendency of political parties to exert overwhelming influence on state and non-state institutions in Bangladesh?

Yes (94%)

No (06%)

TOTAL VOTES: 222

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think government would be able to control the price hike of the daily essentials after declaring salary hike of the government service holders?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT www.thedailystar.net

China probes senior party official for graft

AFP, Beijing

A senior Chinese Communist Party official who was a close aide to former President Hu Jintao is being investigated for "suspected serious disciplinary violations" -- normally a euphemism for corruption -- state media said yesterday.

The probe into Ling Jihua, who is also a national political adviser, was announced by the ruling party's Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

Ling is vice chairman of the national committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), a top advisory body.

He also heads the United Front Work Department of the party's Central Committee.

Ling found himself in the media spotlight after his son Ling Gu died in a Ferrari crash in Beijing in March 2012.

Also in the car were two young women who were seriously injured, one nude and the other partly clothed.

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