

### Commonwealth seeks Dhaka's support for women empowerment

UNB, New York

Commonwealth Secretary General Baroness Patricia Janet Scotland has sought support and leadership of Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on launching Commonwealth's new programmes related to women empowerment.

"We're going to undertake new programmes related to women empowerment and we seek your support and leadership in this regard," she said when calling on the premier at the UN headquarters in New York on Monday.

After the meeting, Foreign Secretary Shahidul Haque briefed the reporters. Patricia also briefed Hasina about two new priorities of the organisation including the Commonwealth-wide programme on countering violent extremism and terrorism, and protection

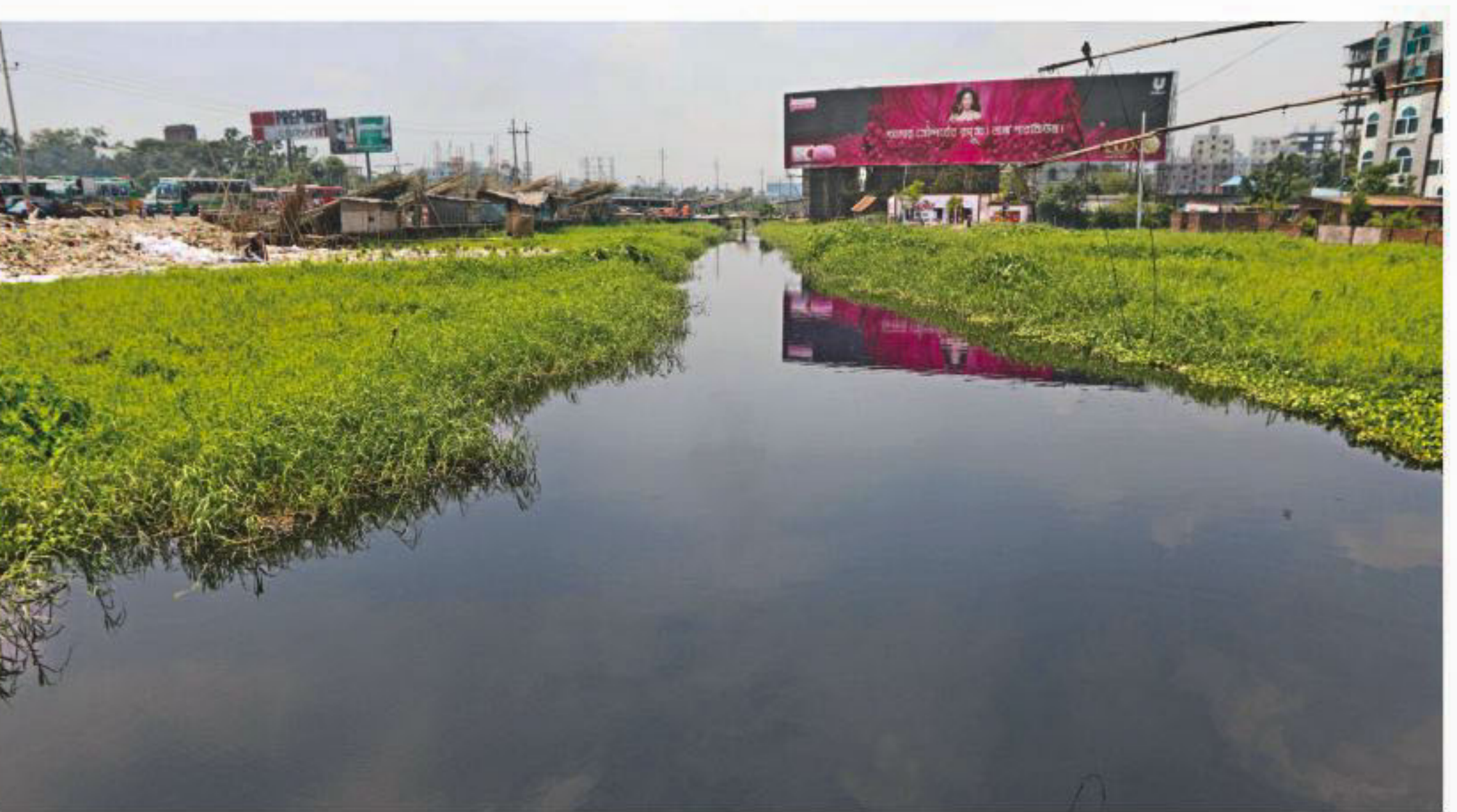
### Joy receives ICT for dev award

UNB, New York

Sajeeb Wazed Joy, information and communications technology adviser to the prime minister, has been conferred upon "ICT for Development Award, 2016" for his contributions to Bangladesh's people through "Digital Bangladesh" initiative.

The World Organization of Governance and Competitiveness, the Plan Trifinio, the Global Fashion for Development and the School of Business of the University of New Haven, Connecticut, the USA jointly organised the function titled "High-Level reception in support of the first anniversary of the adoption of the UN sustainable development goals, the importance of ICT competitiveness as a tool for sustainable development" at the Hotel Millennium in New York on Monday night.

Introduced this year marking the 71st session of the UN General Assembly,



Continual encroachment of canals, mindless dumping of solid waste and indiscriminate fish farming on the lowlands are not only narrowing down the canals and but also keep on contributing to the perennial waterlogging crisis in the DND area, while it remains sealed off from the two rivers -- Buriganga and Shitalakkhya due to the embankment project. The photos were taken recently. PHOTOS: PRABIR DAS

# DND canal encroachment rampant

## Causes perennial waterlogging

### SEVENTH REPORT on DHAKA CANALS

HELEMUL ALAM

Aleya Begum, a widow of Giridhara Residential Area of Fatullah in Narayanganj, is struggling with her eight-member family for the last five months as their home is under ankle- to knee-deep water since the beginning of rainy season.

Aleya purchased the house around 20 years back, but did not face this kind of problem initially as the house was higher than the internal roads and lands of the area.

But since the raising of the internal roads, they have fallen under huge predicaments, which also intensified due to the illegal fish farming at the lowland adjoining their home.

"Since the blocking of the low land for fish cultivating beside our house started around one decade back, we are living with water during the rainy seasons," said Aleya.

They face the problem for failing to raise their house due to a financial crisis, as they run their family by renting out rooms and from the income of her eldest son, she said.

Not only Aleya Begum but also thousands of residents of the

DND (Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra) area face this waterlogging problem during the entire rainy season.

Encroachment of canals, mindless dumping of solid waste into the canals of the area is contributing to the continual waterlogging. Indiscriminate fish farming in the lowlands of the areas also worsen the situation.

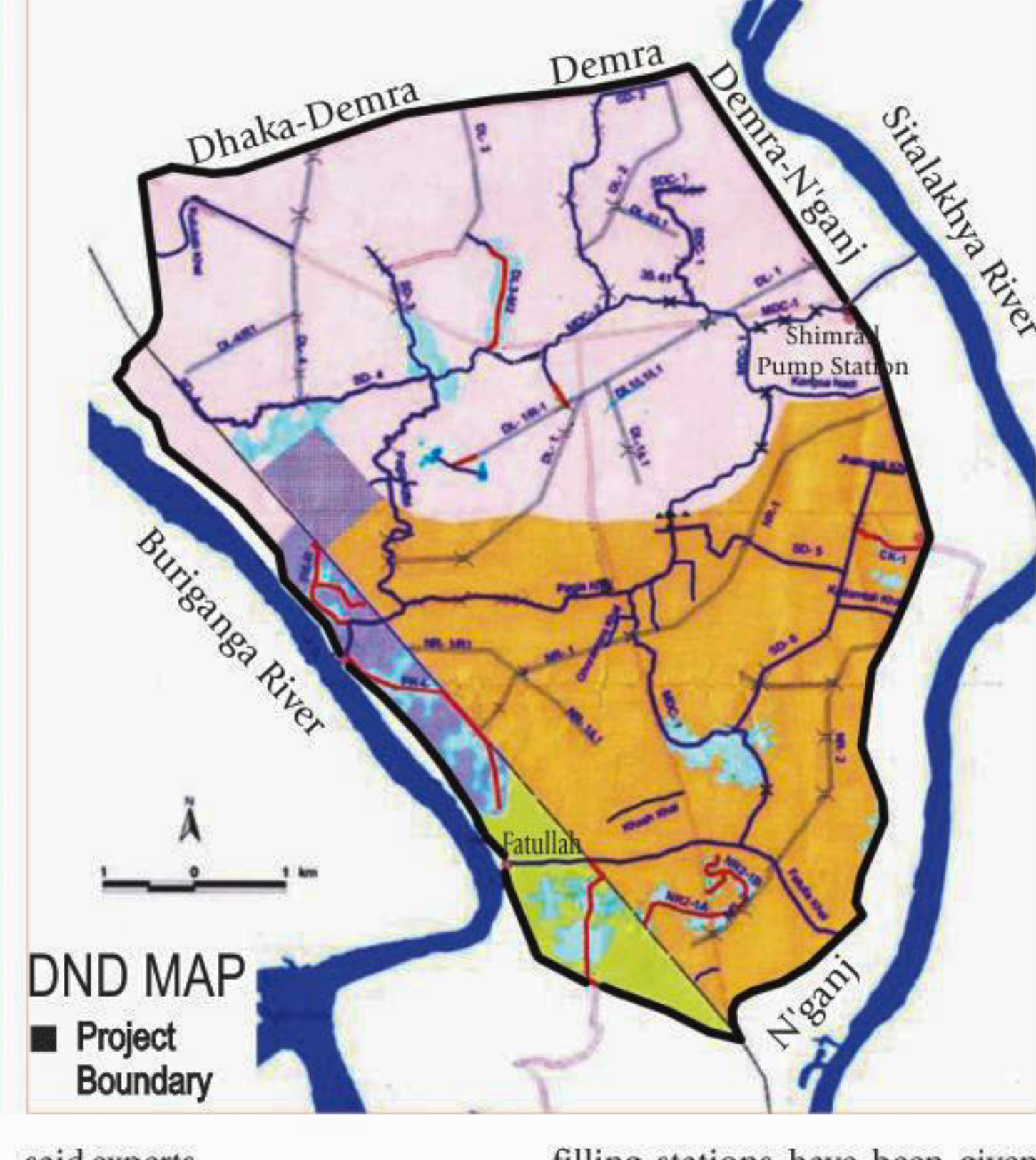
The DND project is another example where the project area has been sealed off from the two rivers -- Buriganga and Shitalakkhya.

The canal mouths under the DND were blocked and a pumping station at Shimrail with four pumps, each having a capacity of 3.63 cubic metres per second (cumec), was set up in the 1960s.

About 20 lakh residents of the area have to live with the risk of waterlogging as the canals of the DND areas are facing encroachments.

There are 93.98km canals in the DND areas but most of the time it remains blocked at different points due to incessant garbage dumping and encroachments.

As the canals are also being blocked due to an embankment, it has to depend on pumps to get the water out, but the capacity of the pumping station is not sufficient, which is another major reason for waterlogging there,



said experts.

Every year, thousands of residents of the DND areas face severe waterlogging problem due to the cordoned off project and lack of proper pumping stations and active canals, and most importantly failure of authorities concerned to take long-term measures to improve the situation, experts said.

Around 15 petrol pumps and

- | REASONS  |
|--|
| Cordoned off project   |
| Canal encroachment   |
| Fish farming at low lands  |
| Unplanned urbanisation   |
| Fewer pumping stations   |
| Lack of long-term measures   |
| SUGGESTIONS  |
| Canal excavation   |
| Keeping canal mouths open  |
| Protecting water bodies  |
| Demolishing illegal structures   |
| Setting up pumping stations  |
| Retention ponds  |
| STEPS TO MITIGATE WATERLOGGING   |
| Govt project budget Tk 558.2cr   |
| Excavating 93.98km canals  |
| Constructing 13.5km walkways   |
| Pumping stations at Shimrail, Adamji Nagar & plants at Pagla, Shyampur, Fatullah |

less due to encroachments," said Monirul Islam, a resident of Paradaga.

Chunnu Sardar, a resident of Shanir Akhra, said, "The canal was dug in 1988 during construction of the highway and was linked to the Shitalakkhya through Simrail pump station." The canal is under serious threats of encroachment as most of the places were filled up or the con-

structed structures were setting up small pipes for water to pass, he added.

The canal met at Signboard with the Pagla canal, starting from Shyampur, which falls to Shimrail pumping station, he said.

Bachchu Miah, a 70-year-old man, said the Pagla canal, which is around 20 to 30 feet now, was three to four times wider even 15 years back in the Signboard area, which is being reduced due to mindless encroachment.

The canal also became wider during the rainy season as a vast area was wetland, he said.

Since making the roads of the area higher without keeping a proper provision for water to flow to the canal, the waterlogging problem intensified, said Mohammad Saddam Hossain, a resident of Giridhara Residential Area.

He said the internal canals of the areas and wetlands which used to carry rain water to the pump station are blocked due to the unplanned internal roads.

Ainun Nishat, professor emeritus of Brac University, and a water resources and climate change specialist, said the city corporations itself constructed many roads on the canals and the DND areas were the best example.



Prime Minister's ICT Affairs Adviser Sajeeb Wazed Joy receives "ICT for Development Award, 2016" at the Hotel Millennium in New York on Monday night. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is also present among others. PHOTO: BSS

### Don't domesticate new EC: BNP

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP senior leaders yesterday warned that people would not accept any "domesticated" Election Commission (EC) formed by the government following the expiry of the present Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmad-led one's tenure in February.

They suggested the government, following consultations with political parties, form a search committee comprising politicians to propose names for the new EC's five members.

They were addressing a discussion organised in the capital's Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh marking BNP Chairperson Khaleida Zia's "9th jail release day".

"We certainly want an election under a fully neutral election-time administration and an independent Election Commission. We will not accept any election in the Awami League-style under a domesticated Election Commission," said Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir.

### 3 die from electrocution while bathing in canal

5 N'ganj power officials suspended

A CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Three people, including a woman and her child, died from electrocution while they were bathing in a canal connecting the river Dhaleshwari in Shuvokardi area of Bandar upazila in Narayanganj yesterday.

Police said the trio were electrocuted as a live electric wire snapped into the water while electricity wires were being installed in the area, according to UNB.

Meanwhile, five officers of Palli Bidyut Samity (Bandar Zonal office) were suspended over the incident, said officials.

The deceased were Krishna Rani Ghosh, 30, wife of Sentu Ghosh of the area; Shanti Rani Ghosh, 4, their daughter; and Md Masud, 33, son of Kitabuddin.

Santosh Kumar Saha, acting general manager of Palli Bidut Samity (Narayanganj-1), said the suspended are DGM Zakir Hossain, AGM (operation and management) Abdus Salam, Co-Junior Engineer Mominur Rahman, lineman Nurul Islam, and apprentice lineman Hossain Ali.

A committee comprising DGM Golam Mostafa and AGM Ahsan Kabir of the Samity was formed to investigate the incident and it was asked to submit a probe report within 24 hours, he added.

### SC eases convicts' fine payment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Supreme Court yesterday issued some directives for easing the fine payment process of convicts prior to their release from jail.

Now, a representative or relative can deposit the fine with a Bangladesh Bank or Sonali Bank branch in the district where the court issued the verdict or where the jail term is being served.

A treasury challan has to be used along with the respective codes: Session's/equivalent court 1-2141-0000-1901; chief metropolitan magistracy 1-2107-0000-1901 and chief judicial magistracy 1-2108-0000-1901.

Permission will no longer be needed from the court for the deposit, payable before or after the jail term has been served.

Earlier, the payment used to be made after the jail term was served and the procedure was complicated and time consuming.

The SC issued a circular containing the directives, recently approved by Chief Justice SK Sinha at a full court meeting with High Court judges. It said a copy of the treasury challan must be directly forwarded to the prison authorities to verify its authenticity online or through phone before informing the court and releasing the inmate.

### Six killed in road accidents

CITY DESK

Six people, including a couple, were killed and 25 others injured in road accidents yesterday.

In Munshiganj, three people, including a couple, were killed and five others injured in a head-on collision between a bus and human-hauler on Dhaka-Mawa highway at Shologhar in Shrinagar upazila yesterday.

The deceased were Sukumar Mondol, 55, of Deolbhog village, his wife Parul Mondol, 48, and Farhad Hosen, 28, of Ketoykhali village.

In Rangpur, a man was killed and 20 others were injured as a bus fell into a ditch beside Lalmonirhat-Rangpur road as the driver lost his control over the vehicle in Daudpara

### Teachers to be sacked for failing to recognise students: Nahid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday warned that school and college teachers would lose jobs if they fail to recognise their students.

A teacher who does not recognise his students has no right to be in the profession, Nahid said at a meeting with heads of different educational institutes in Rajshahi Medical College auditorium.

"We are collecting information about such teachers. We will cut the teacher's name from the monthly pay order (MPO) list or sack him if he is a government service holder", Nahid said.

If it becomes difficult for teachers to remember their huge number of students, they should admit an adequate number of students so that they can attend them and maintain contacts with their guardians, he added. Nahid further said students are being misguided and dragged into militancy due to a lack of close relation with their teachers who could provide them proper guideline. Rajshahi Education Board organised the meeting.



A kid pushes a van full of people and luggage at the entrance of the Second Buriganga Bridge yesterday. This is what he does for a living. The boy makes Tk 50 to Tk 60 per day by helping vehicles and people bigger than him climb the ramp of the bridge. There are many kids like him in the area who push these heavily loaded non-motorised vehicles to support their families or themselves. PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN