

Don't isolate
VVIPs from
people

President tells PGR

UNB, Dhaka

President Mohammed Shahabuddin yesterday urged members of the President Guard Regiment (PGR) to ensure maximum security to VVIPs without isolating them from the general people.

The president said this while addressing the PGR's 48th founding anniversary programme at its headquarters in Dhaka Cantonment.

"Your main responsibility is to ensure comprehensive, integrated and flawless security for VVIPs. But along with security, the public relations of VVIPs is also very important," he said.

He also said the responsibility entrusted on PGR is glorious on the one hand and on the other hand, it is very crucial and sensitive.

Chief of Army Staff General SM Shafiuddin Ahmed, PGR commander, secretaries concerned to the president and senior civil and military officials, among others, were also present.

Government
to buy more
fighter jets

Law minister tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law Minister Anisul Huq told parliament yesterday that the government has a plan to purchase more advanced technology fighter jets in light of Forces Goal-2030 to modernise the Air Force.

Anisul, who is in charge of the Ministry of Defence in Parliamentary Affairs, was replying to a tabled question of ruling Awami League MP Anwar Hossain Khan from Laxmipur-1.

The minister said there are currently eight squadrons fighter jets in Bangladesh Air Force.

He said navy currently has more than 65 warships, two helicopters and four maritime aircraft -- including two submarines.

Meanwhile, Liberation War Affairs Minister AKM Mozammel Haque told the parliament that there are no brave freedom fighters working in government services at present.

Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Shahab Uddin informed the House that the global biodiversity is facing a serious threat due to human activities.

Two die of
diarrhoea in
Bandarban

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Bandarban

Two diarrhoea patients, a man and a girl, died due to not being able to access medication and treatment in Bandarban's Thanchi.

Rumathi Tripura, 14, of Raymond Para area in the upazila's Tindu union, died on Saturday, while the disease claimed Chandra Tripura's life the next day. Chandra was a 68-year-old farmer. Health officials were informed of the deaths yesterday, informed Wahiduzzaman Murad, the health officer.

"We dispatched medical supplies and staff a week before Eid after the disease broke out. However, they had to come back mid-way as law enforcers barred them from entering the area due to security reasons," he added.

Jomarung Tripua, a member (reserve seat) of Tindu Union Parishad, the disease has resulted from limited access to clean drinking water.



The current state of the oil tanker Sagar Nandini-2 following a second explosion and fire on Monday evening. The fire was doused yesterday morning after 11 hours of effort.

PHOTO: TITU DAS

Under water for five
months a year

Mymensingh's waterlogging woes



PHOTO: STAR

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

For the past two decades, residents of Balashpur Madhyapara area in Mymensingh city have been enduring the challenging ordeal of wading through ankle to knee-length water for approximately five months each year, from May to September.

Despite the persistent waterlogging issue, aggravated during the monsoon season, the local authorities have been accused of making minimal efforts to address and resolve this long-standing problem, according to residents.

The situation has worsened in the past five years, said Md Abul Hossain, a retired railway employee. After heavy or moderate

rainfall, the entire area becomes submerged in ankle or knee deep water for several days, causing immense hardship for low-income residents like Farida Parvin, who revealed that even their bathrooms, toilets, and kitchens get flooded.

The gravity of the situation worsens if the showers persist for more than a day, leading to courtyards of most houses being inundated, she added.

Locals alleged that the construction of Balashpur Madhyapara road in 2013 without proper planning has exacerbated the problem. Initially, the water would flow into the Brahmaputra river through a drain connected to the nearby Kewatkhal area's Railway Power House Colony.

However, due to blockages over the years, the drain remains clogged, and no efforts have been made to clear the passage for rainwater, they said.

As a result, over 2,000 families and over 10,000 local residents are confined to their houses.

Traveling on banana rafts to reach rickshaws on the main road has become a necessity, causing immense inconvenience, said Ashraf Alam Jewel, an expatriate.

In addition to the waterlogging issue, residents in the locality expressed concern over the absence of dustbins, leading to the disposal of garbage in the rainwater during flooding, further worsening the situation.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

'TORTURING INMATE'
Papia shifted
to Cumilla jail

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Gazipur

Shamima Noor Papia, former leader of Jubo Mahila League, has been transferred to Cumilla Central Jail from Kashimpur Jail in Gazipur following allegations of torturing an inmate.

Jail Superintendent Obaidur Rahman said Papia was transferred around 5:00pm on Monday based on a complaint filed by a relative of the inmate and the orders of higher authorities.

Runa Laila, the victim of the alleged torture and beating, is still receiving treatment at Shaheed Tajuddin Ahmad Medical College Hospital.

Her brother Abdul Karim had filed a complaint with Gazipur deputy commissioner on June 25.

The DC later assigned an additional district magistrate to investigate the incident.

Karim told The Daily Star that he heard the news that Papia was sent to Cumilla jail around 9:00pm on Monday. "This is not good news for our family. This is a good news for the inmates of Kashimpur jail."

Karim said, "I have asked the DC [Gazipur] to take actions against Papia. I didn't get justice. Papia has ruined my sister's life."

Three people have been served show-cause

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

Tanker lacked
safety equipment,
trained staff

Says fire service director; blaze
doused after 11 hours, probe
committees formed

SUSHANTA GHOSH and MD ABBAS

The massive fire that broke out in the Sagar Nandini-2 oil tanker in Jhalakathi's Sugandha river on Monday evening was doused yesterday morning after an 11-hour-long frantic effort.

At least 13 people, including nine law enforcers, were injured after the fire erupted following an explosion in the tanker, which was carrying four lakh litres of petrol.

Twelve units of fire service from Barishal, Jhalakathi, and Khulna extinguished the fire at 5:25am yesterday, said Lt Col Tajul Islam Chowdhury, director (operations and maintenance) of fire service.

Besides, the oil tanker did not have a proper fire safety plan and lacked adequate safety equipment. In addition, the staff of the oil tanker was not properly trained, he said.

He also said the fire may have occurred due to accumulated gas from petrol or short circuit.

Senior officials, including energy secretary Khairuzzaman Majumdar and Barishal divisional commissioner Amin Ul Ahasan, visited the site at 1:30pm.

Two critically injured individuals, policeman Shawkat Jamil and oil tanker driver Sharif, were transferred to Sheikh Hasina National Institute of Burn and Plastic

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

Trapped for 2
days without
food, water

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

An elephant calf, separated from its herd, has been trapped in Shah Parir Dwip of Cox's Bazar's Teknaf for the last two days without food or fresh water.

Meanwhile, forest department officials are conducting drives rescue the animal.

According to Abul Kalam Sarkar, ranger officer of Teknaf Coastal Forest Division, they were informed of a lost calf loitering around the area on Monday. The animal got lost while crossing the Naf river from Myanmar to Bangladesh and took shelter in the coastal forests.

"The calf, aged around six to seven months, is weak and exhausted. To add to its anxiety, people are continuously chasing it, making the rescue operations more difficult," he said.

Once rescued, the calf will be taken to protected forest lands or a safari park upon orders from authorities. Meanwhile, precautions are being taken to ensure that the animal is not harmed in any way, he added.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

Locals unite to save
century-old pond

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

The century-old Rayenda Bazar pond, one of the few existing fresh water bodies in Bagerhat's Sharankhola upazila, is in danger as the Zilla Parishad has decided to put it up for lease for the construction of a market.

According to locals, there is an acute shortage of freshwater sources in the area, and the construction of a market will further lead to the pond's extinction, making it more difficult for them to access water for their daily chores.

To protest this decision, various students and residents of the upazila formed a human chain on June 22.

According to the protesters, the Zilla Parishad had significantly narrowed the eastern side of the pond to construct a market with 8-10 shops, distorting the pond's shape. They are now looking to lease out the southern portion, which will lead to inevitable damages.

"Most people in this area are dependent on this pond for fresh water. Instead of excavating it, the Zilla Parishad is building shops on its sides. We have to walk for miles to access freshwater. I don't know why the authorities are ignoring our struggles," said Jahid Shaikh, a local.

Students from various institutions also use this pond to suffice their daily needs, informed Amrendu Halder, headteacher of Rayenda Government Pilot High School.

A pond sand filter (PSF) was constructed on the north side of the pond in the last financial year, spending Tk 7 lakh. The construction of new shops will deplete the pond's water and also destroy the PSF, leading to more

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6



School students protest the building of a market on the southern wing of the century-old Rayenda Bazar pond in Bagerhat's Sharankhola upazila amid drizzles. While the authorities are planning to lease the pond, locals worry that this initiative will destroy their only source of fresh-water supply in the area. Inset, the eastern side of the pond was narrowed earlier under a similar project.

PHOTO: STAR