



PHOTO: STAR

FLARE OF ANTI-US TEMPER: (From left) Protesters burn effigies of US President George W Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair at Paltan Crossing during an anti-war demonstration after Juma prayers, vandalise the American Life Insurance Company building, damage the BRAC Bank Limited, and burn US-made cosmetic goods at Motijheel in Dhaka yesterday.

# AL sheds party 'godfathers'

**REAZ AHMAD**  
Long after its debacle in the last general elections, the Awami League (AL) has decided to get rid of leaders having 'godfather' image, party sources said. The so-called 'powerhouses' of the main opposition party, who got protection from the party throughout its five-year rule, are now falling from grace with the AL leadership's decision to keep them at bay. An AL meeting in the city last week discussed in detail how the 'godfather' image of people like Joyanal Hazari of Feni, Shamim Osman of Narayanganj, Abu Taher of Laxmipur

and Abul Hasnat Abdullah of Barisal had contributed to the party's poor show in the October 2001 polls. The AL seems to have realised at long last that it had to pay heavily in the last elections due to the bad name it earned by protecting some party bullies with criminal records. "Better late than never," one source said. Within four days of the AL Secretariat meeting on March 28, the party high command removed the long absconding Joyanal Hazari

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# Bomb attack on police van in Rupsha

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

A police van again came under bomb attack by armed miscreants at Karnapur under Rupsha upazila on Thursday night. The miscreants launched the attack when police team was returning to Rupsha thana after arresting listed criminal Tushar Hasan. None was hurt. Tushar, 30, also a member of Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP), is an accused in several criminal and murder cases. Officer-in-charge (OC) of Rupsha police station said the miscreants hurled four hand bombs that exploded in front of the van.

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# Clash at border village Bangladeshi shot, 2 BSF men injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Rajshahi*

A Bangladeshi was shot and two members of Indian Border Security Force (BSF) were injured when a group of five BSF men illegally entered Bangladesh territory and clashed with villagers at Hossain Bhatta in Bholahat upazila of Chapainawabganj yesterday. Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) caught the five BSF men with two self-loaded rifles (SLRs), one sub-machine gun (SMG) and 43 bullets. The bullet-hit Bangladeshi, Baidul Islam, was admitted to Bholahat health complex. His condition was stated to be critical. The injured BSF men are Havildar GC Gosai and constable Bhupendar Kumar. The three others are Joti Kumar, Krishna Kumar Rao and John Savier. Later, the five BSF members were released with their arms and ammunition during a flag meeting between 37 BDR battalion and 63 BSF battalion. Sources said the BSF men entered Hossain Bhatta village in the morning 'to collect toll' from fishermen.

Protesting this, the villagers attacked them. The BSF members however claimed that they entered Bangladesh, chasing a group of cattle smugglers. BDR Sector Commander Colonel Quazi Anwar told The Daily Star that the BSF members entered about 500 yards inside Bangladesh territory with 'ill motive'. "We have strongly protested the incident in writing and talked with the DIG of BSF in Maldaah over telephone for an end to such incidents taking place frequently," Colonel Anwar said.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
April 5		6-16 pm
April 6	5-46 am	

  

Prayer Timings		
April 5		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-00	5-30
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-15
Maghrib	6-23	6-28
Esha	7-35	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation

# Cashing in on patients' plight

## City diagnostic centres doing booming business in collusion with doctors

**NAIMUL HAQ**  
Most diagnostic centres in the city are doing a booming business in collusion with a section of doctors who get various benefits from them. These doctors refer patients to such diagnostic centres for mostly unnecessary tests in exchange for 'commission', sources said. Many of the more than 200 diagnostic centres have even employed 'representatives' to persuade doctors to refer patients to them in return for personal benefits in cash and kind. The diagnostic centres charge from patients 10 to 200 times the actual cost of many tests and share the huge margin of profit with the

doctors concerned, said a number of employees at different centres. An investigation by The Daily Star shows that doctors get 20 to 80 per cent 'commission' out of the profit from such tests, depending on personal relationship with the centres. In many cases, they also get loans and various benefits in kind such as apartment, car, air-cooler, mobile telephone and computer. Many of the diagnostic centres have set up doctors' chambers for consultation and this practice is growing. Every day, thousands of patients crowd these chambers of doctors, many of them working at reputed public hospitals and institutions like the Dhaka Medical College Hospital

(DMCH), Dhaka Shishu Hospital, Chest Diseases Hospital, Orthopaedic Hospital, Cancer Hospital, Banghabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University Hospital and Institute of Infectious Diseases (IDH). Over the years, diagnostic centres like Popular Diagnostic, Lab Aid, Medinova Diagnostic, Modern Diagnostic, Comfort Diagnostic Centre, Padma Diagnostic and many others have set up air-conditioned

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### US forces take up positions at Baghdad airport

Situation on Friday at 1800 GMT

**Key Locations and Events:**  
 - **TURKEY:** Fighting between Iraqis and Peshmerga fighters backed by US special forces.  
 - **IRAQ:** 3 US soldiers and 2 civilians killed when car explodes at check point.  
 - **IRAQ:** US army claims surrender of 2,500 Iraqis.  
 - **IRAQ:** Iraqi TV shows Saddam Hussein being cheered in the street in the Al-Mansour district.  
 - **IRAQ:** 1,000 Iraqi militia still holding out.  
 - **IRAQ:** No water, electricity partially restored in Baghdad.  
 - **IRAQ:** "Saddam Hussein" international airport (renamed "Baghdad").  
 - **IRAQ:** Airforce HQ, Special Republican Guard, Presidential palace, Republican Guard HQ.  
 - **IRAQ:** Al-Mansour district, Nasiriyah, Basra, Umm Qasr.  
 - **IRAQ:** Artillery fire heard in central Baghdad.  
 - **IRAQ:** Bombing, Fighting, Airports/airfields under coalition control.



A British soldier, left, aims his machine gun at Iraqi positions as they came under fire in the city of Basra yesterday. Coalition forces still battle for the control of the strategic southern Iraqi city. US troops cross the desert northwards near Diwaniya in central Iraq.

PHOTO: AFP

# DOWN TO EARTH

## Real estate stake looks rosy

**ASM NURUNNABI**  
Lately we have been witnessing a spurt in high-pitched publicity mostly in the print media and, in some measure, in the electronic media about the opportunities for investment in real estate in and around Dhaka city. It has been observed that such publicity has two aspects: one relating to private investments in projects like residential apartments, shopping malls, commercial and office complexes within the city areas. The other aspect relates to opportunities for investments in private residential housing plots in the city suburbs. The

on-going high-pitched publicity is sponsored by a good number of private real estate companies covering both the aspects of the offers for investment. It seems that the new spurt in publicity which has been occupying substantial space in city's newspapers and periodicals, may lead to the creation of significant impact on the total real estate development prospects. To encourage investments in real estates in and around the city, the sponsoring companies are offering a number of incentives, such as concessional terms in initial payments for booking, payment of price of the

booked property in suitable installments, assistance in arranging bank loans etc. In the city, the current trend is for construction covering the residential and non-residential components in the important areas of the city. This mainly attracts the affluent and the high-income groups. In this context, concerns have been expressed by knowledgeable quarters about the resultant impact of such high-rise building projects on the already acute city's

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# Bangladeshi students set to rewrite record

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Over four lakh Bangladeshi students will participate in a lesson along with students of 100 other countries on April 9 to set a new Guinness World Record. They also will drum up support for equal education for girls and women, organisers of the programme said yesterday. They said that the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), a worldwide coalition of NGOs and teachers unions, will organise the world's biggest ever lesson. In 2002, a total of 28,801 students took part in a language lesson in the United Kingdom to set a Guinness World Record. Anyone, anywhere, regardless of age

and sex, can take part in the lesson to spread the word on girls' right to education, they said. In more than 100 countries, in thousands of different classrooms, adult education centres, university campuses, churches and village halls, they will be teaching the same lesson. The lesson is simple: girls and women need an equal chance to learn. In Dhaka, over 10,000 students, teachers and guardians will gather at the central Shaheed Minar at 10:00am to take the lesson. Teachers will give lesson on five questions in 30 minutes. The attempt to create a new world record will be made at 3:30 GMT in South and Southeast Asia

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# Husband killed, wife injured in city fire

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A man was burnt to death and his wife seriously injured in a fire at their Shantinagar residence yesterday. Firefighters went to the scene at 5:00am and rushed Alhaj Manunur Rahman, 45, and his wife Selina Akther, 35, to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH). Rahman was pronounced dead on arrival. Selina was later shifted to the Holy Family Red Crescent Hospital. A guard of the house, Noor Bhaban, saw smoke billowing from the house and alerted people in the neighbourhood. Firefighters said a short circuit might have caused the fire. Deen Mohammad, nephew of Mamun, filed a case with the Motijheel Police Station.

# Dr Aftab murder in Sylhet Killers at large even after six months

**IQBAL SIDDIQUEE, Sylhet**

Police have failed to arrest the killers of Dr Aftab Hossain, assistant director of Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College, even after six and a half months. Though several persons were rounded up a few weeks after the killing, the main suspects are still absconding, official sources said. The Detective Branch of police (DB) said the killing took place as a sequel to a quarrel between a local gang of extortionists and the doctor over toll collection. The DB sources said yesterday that

the investigation is almost complete, but the charge sheet could not be framed as the main accused was still at large. "We are expecting to arrest him soon and then the charge sheet would be given," the sources added. So far, nine persons have been arrested. The DB is also trying to recover the mobile phone, motorbike and wristwatch of the late doctor. Already it has become clear to the DB that the killing took place as a sequel to the quarrel between a

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