

# 16 abducted in Rangamati

## Three released later

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati**  
Armed miscreants on Saturday abducted 16 people from Ram Krishnamachari under Ghilachhari union of Naniarchar Upazila of the district.  
Witnesses said an armed group of about 35 men raided the village early Saturday morning and picked

up the 16 men at gunpoint. The miscreants also set fire to seven houses, including one belonging to a Union Parishad member, before leaving the spot.  
Ten of the kidnap victims were identified as Taposh Chakma, Protipod Chakma, Biro Kumar Chakma, Maraching Chakma, Reboty Ronjon Chakma, Naton

Chandra Chakma, Loleet Chakma, Ananda Biharee Chakma, Deep Chakma and Narayan Khisha.  
Mohammed Kadir Bux, officer-in-charge (watch) at the office of District Intelligence of Police, acknowledged the incident but could not confirm the number of kidnap victims or the identities of

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# 'JCD activists' beat up female students at Khulna college

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna**

Eleven students of Boyra Govt Girls' College were injured, two of them severely, when a group of activists reportedly belonging to the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) beat them up with iron rods in the presence of on-duty police at 12.30pm on the college campus yesterday.

Associate Professor Akhtaruzzaman of the Economics Department, the head of a three-member committee probing a recent incident of the damaging of portraits of Bangabandhu and

Sheikh Hasina, also sustained severe injuries.  
The injured students, all Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) activists, underwent treatment at a local clinic.

Shammi and Rini, the two severely injured BCL leaders, alleged that police helped JCD activists to enter the campus violating a principal's order in this regard. Police simply looked on as the BCL girls were being beaten with iron rods and did not respond to their cries for help, Rini alleged.

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A relative comforts Nasima Begum, mother of kidnapped student Simon, in Chittagong yesterday.

# WB team due soon to assess reforms with SOEs, NCBs

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

A three-member team of the World Bank (WB) will arrive in Dhaka on September 3 to make a pre-appraisal of the proposed reforms with the state-owned-enterprises (SOEs) and the nationalised commercial banks (NCBs), officials said yesterday.

During its two-week stay here, the mission will meet Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman, governor of the Bangladesh Bank and high-officials of the Privatisation Commission, Board of Investment (BOI) and Bangladesh Export Processing Zone Authority (BEPZA).

Simon C. Bell, WB sector manager, will head the mission which also includes Kiatchai Sophastienphonng, advisor, and Sunita Kikeri, senior financial sector specialist of the WB. The WB team is scheduled to leave Dhaka on September 16.

As per prescriptions from the WB and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the government recently decided to bring reforms to the SOE and NCB sectors under a project titled 'proposed SOEs and NCBs reform'. The project is expected to be ready by December for WB approval, sources said.

The WB, the IMF and the Department For International Development (DFID) will finance the project under which 96 SOEs will be privatised or liquidated within the next two to three years. Some 75,000 to 1,00,000 staff of these u n i t s

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# Move to list cops linked with toll collectors

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The home ministry at a meeting yesterday decided to make a list of the policemen, who help toll collectors in the transport sector and take shares from them.

The meeting of the special committee, with Communications Minister Nazmul Huda in the chair, was held at the communications ministry. The committee members and other officials were also present at the meet. The ministry observed that police are the prime collaborators of the toll collectors. Home Minister Ataf Hossain Chowdhury, who was present at the meeting, admitted the allegations. He said government officials from any department involved in toll collec

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Sammilita Nari Samaj, a women's group, holds a protest rally in front of the National Museum yesterday marking the Day for Resistance to Repression on Women.

# PMO staff, DC of Sylhet face contempt charges

**BSS, Dhaka**

The High Court Division yesterday rejected a petition by the deputy commissioner and nezarat deputy collector (NDC) of Sylhet, and a joint secretary posted as director general in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in Dhaka seeking pardon in a contempt of court charge.

The deputy commissioner and NDC of Sylhet Mohammad Mujibur Rahman and joint secretary Latifur Rahman of the PMO yesterday appeared before the High Court and submitted written apologies.

But the court rejected their prayers and sent the matter to the

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# Another kidnap feared in Ctg

## Ransom for untraced schoolboys reduced to Tk 7 lakh

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg**

Another young man went missing in Chittagong last Tuesday in an incident feared to be abduction for ransom.

The youth is Zaker Hossain, 17, a second year student of Al-Jamia Al-Islamia Madrasah in Patiya upazila, Chittagong, and son of Haji Umed Ali of Mogdale village in Matarbari union in Maheshkhali, Cox's Bazar.

Sources said Zaker was eating with two of his classmates - Ataur Rahman and Mansur Alam -- at around 1.00pm on August 19 at a nearby restaurant when an unidentified man called him out to 'have talks on important matters'.

"Since then Zaker has not

returned and we guess he has been kidnapped," said Mohammad Reza, the estate officer of the madrasah, last night.

Quoting family sources, Reza said an identified criminal of Matarbari area had demanded Tk 10 lakh for his release.

However, two Cox's Bazar-based newspapers yesterday reported the incident where the ransom demanded was stated to be Tk 5 lakh, sources said.

Reza said that Patiya police were informed of the incident and that madrasah authorities urged to go for further inquiry into the incident.

Duty officer of Patiya Police Station Abul Kalam said last night

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# Santu accuses govt of stalling execution of CHT treaty

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangamati**

Santu Larma yesterday accused the government of dallying with the implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) treaty and continuing a 'de facto military rule' in the region.

"Realisation of the treaty would bring in peace," said Larma, chairman of the Regional Hill Districts Council (RHDC).

Larma was speaking at the inauguration of a health initiative organised by Greenhill, a NGO, at Rangamati's Hajachhari Monpara Village.

"Non-implementation of the treaty has rendered the RHDC ineffective, thereby undermining o n e o f

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# AL ponders boycott of CPA meet

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The main opposition Awami League (AL) is likely to boycott the upcoming Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) conference Dhaka is hosting next month, accusing the government of politicising it.

Senior leaders of the AL will hold a meeting at the Sangsad Bhavan today to review the situation and lodge their objections with Speaker Jamir Uddin Sircar, sources said.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the conference on

August 4 which will be attended by 48 member countries of the grouping.

Over 400 delegates from 156 national and state parliaments of member countries have already confirmed their participation, parliament secretariat sources said.

Leaders of the AL told The Daily Star yesterday that the government did not consult with the opposition for holding the October 4 to 12 conference in violation of the CPA charter.

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# 'Dhalywood' hit by strike over obscenity

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

Bangladesh Film Federation (BFF) yesterday observed the second day of indefinite work abstention, demanding action against vulgar films.

Artists and directors of the forum also staged a sit-in in front of the Film Development Corporation

(FDC) to press their demands, creating traffic jam on the Tongi Diversion Road.

Director Kazi Hayat, actor-producer Sohel Rana, actors ATM Shamsuzzaman, Manna and Shakib Khan and actress Sadeka P e r v i n

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# Verdict on Badda triple murder case today

**COURT CORRESPONDENT**

The Speedy Trial Tribunal-3 of Dhaka Division delivers the judgement in the sensational Badda triple murder case today.

Judge Md Abu Hanif had earlier fixed the date on completing all trial procedure.

According to the prosecution, Hafez Hafizur Rahman killed his wife Rokeya Begum,

son Fahim Hasan, 11, and seven months-old daughter Fahima Hossain, on May 9, 2002 at his Badda residence. Hafiz left the place after the incident.

When Badda thana police later arrested Hafiz on May 12, he confessed to the crime before a metropolitan magistrate.

The court framed charges against him on March 24 this year and the court examined 17 out of 25 prosecution witnesses during the trial.

# JS body snubs ministry for failing to stop launch mishaps

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

The parliamentary standing committee on the shipping ministry yesterday criticised the ministry for their failure to take necessary action to prevent launch accidents.

The committee at a meeting, held at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhavan, asked the ministry to submit a report at its next meet, specifying the causes of random launch accidents and their steps to prevent further accidents.

"We are embarrassed for the launch accidents. We want to know the details the ministry is going to do," Golam Mohammad Siraj, the chairman of the committee, told The Daily Star yesterday.

The committee also took an obituary reference on over 400 people, who were killed in a launch capsizing on July 8 at Chandpur.

The members of the committee at its first meet yesterday observed the activities of different organisations under the shipping ministry. They also observed the poor situation of the Mongla port because of corruption, irregularities and low business.

Siraj presided over the meeting, also attended by Shipping Minister Akbar Hossain, among others.

# Cries go unheard

## Families of launch tragedy victims cry for help

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**

So far there has been none to hear the soul stirring pleas for help by the families of the victims of the country's biggest launch capsizing in the Meghna at Chandpur.

"Help me rear my children. I have no one to turn to," pleaded Maksud, at a press conference at the Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) office, one and half month after losing her husband in the MV Nasrin capsizing.

"I am not worried about myself. But please help me with a little fund so that I may save my two sons and daughter," said Maksud.

Eight-year-old Farid who had lost his mother, brother and sister have no one to look after him. He now stays with some distant relations too poor to rear him up.

Jharna, 12, who lost her sister and mother and Fatema her husband

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# Army team in Joypurhat, sees seized explosives

**BSS, Khetlal, Joypurhat**

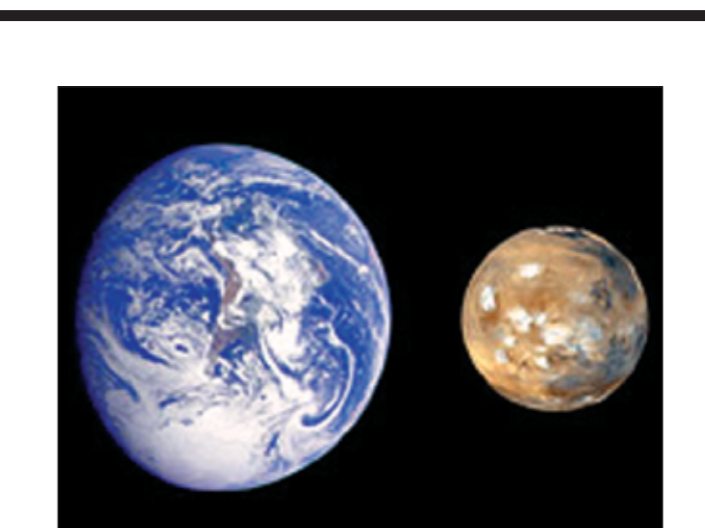
A team of army explosives experts yesterday visited Uttar Moheshpur village, the spot of militant-police gunfight last week, and inspected the explosives seized from the activists of Jama'atul Mujahidin, an Islamist outfit.

Three army experts from the Bogra cantonment visited the area and checked the explosives, sources said.

Police failed to nab other members of the outlawed group or recover looted firearms and wireless set.

In another incident, police charged two Mujahidin leaders, arrested in Thakurgaon, in Dinajpur blast case.

Abu Yusuf Mohammad Khalilur Rahman MP, deputy commissioner and police super of Joypurhat also visited the village yesterday and talked to locals.



AS CLOSE AS IT GETS: An undated NASA file photo shows earth and mars looking eyeball-to-eyeball.

# Earth set for mars close encounter

**BBC ONLINE**

Mars will make its closest approach to earth for almost 60,000 years on Wednesday. Dr Robin Catchpole, senior astronomer at the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, London, explains how to witness the event.

Every 26 months, the earth overtakes mars on the inside

track as they both orbit the sun. Every 15 to 17 years, this happens when mars is closest to the sun.

This year they will pass at a distance of 55,760,000 km or 0.3727 AU (1 AU is the distance of the earth from the sun), closer than any time during the

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Aug 25		6-24 pm
Aug 26	5-37 am	

Prayer Timings		
August 25		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-30	5-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-35	6-40
Esha	8-00	8-15

Source: Islamic Foundation