

SAARC TOURISM MINISTERS' MEET ENDS
Direct air links to be set up
Cox's Bazar Declaration adopted

BSS, Cox's Bazar
Besides, taking necessary measures in increasing government-private cooperation on the development of tourism sector and raising budget allocation for the sector were also highlighted at the declaration.
Under this declaration, experiences of tourism industries and hotel management of Saarc region will be exchanged between the member countries. Some special measures for Saarc tourism sector will be taken to attract international tourists in the region during their visits on

the occasion of the World Cup Cricket 2011 to be held in the four Saarc states.
Pakistan's Tourism Minister Nilufar Bakhtiar, Sri Lanka's State Minister Arjuna Ranatunga, Maldives Deputy Minister Abdul Hamid Zakaria, Bhutan's Deputy Minister on National Environment Commission Dasso Nado Rinhen and Bangladesh State Minister Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir attended the conference.

2 shot dead in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Two youths were gunned down at Mohammadpur and Mirpur in the city last night.
Police identified the man killed at Tikkapara in Mohammadpur as Mohammad Selim, 30, a driver of Rajdhani Paribhan that ply on Mohammadpur-Motijheel route. The other youth killed in the Workers' Colony on Darussalam Road in Mirpur was Monir, 28.
Mirpur police said they have arrested one Sabuj while he was fleeing allegedly after killing Monir. Family members quoting witnesses said three unknown youths

were talking to Selim near a local hotel at around 8:30pm. At one stage they shot Selim in the head and back and fled the scene.
Locals rushed him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital where doctors declared him dead.
Police could not find out the reason behind the killing.
Officer-in-Charge of Mirpur Police Station said some unidentified assailants shot Monir dead at around 10:30pm.
He said Monir hailed from Gazipur.
"We are investigating to find out the reason behind the killing and identity of the killers," OC said.



Teachers and students form a human chain in front of the Aparajeo Bangla on the Dhaka University campus yesterday protesting the killing of a student of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology.

All services under CPA declared essential

BSS, Dhaka
The government yesterday declared all services under Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) "essential".
"All services under Chittagong Port Authority has been declared essential," a Shipping Ministry statement briefly said here today without elaborating.

'Super bumper' Boro output likely this year

BSS, Dhaka
The country is expected to achieve "super bumper" production of Boro crop this year although farmers and agriculture officers had fear earlier of low output due to some problems during the peak season of cultivation.
Farmers are very happy over record production of Boro this year than any occasions in the past as the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) predicts the yield of Boro would surpass all previous records with 1.50 crore tonnes harvests this year.
"At least 90 percent Boro was harvested so far and we hoped that the production would exceed 1.50 crore tonnes against the target of 1.45 crore tonnes," said Director General of DAE Ibrahim Khalil in the city yesterday.
The country produced some 1.38 crore tonnes Boro Crop last year and 1.28 crore tonnes in 2004.
Khalil said use of record quantity of certified seeds, favorable environmental condition, use of balanced

fertiliser as well as constant vigilance of field level DAE officers were behind the success the country is heading for achieving in rice production.
According to statistics, Boro crop was cultivated at least 43.20 lakh hectares of land this year, in which, hybrid seeds were used in two lakh hectares of cultivable lands, the highest one in the country's history so far.
Besides, sources from Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) and DAE said that the BADC and DAE this year have doubled their seed production strength that helped achieve bumper production.
When asked about seed production strength, Khalil said, "We would be able to provide at least 25 percent of the total rice and wheat seeds required annually in the country if we get more financial support to run our seed production project properly.
The BADC and the DAE has provided nearly 50 percent Boro seeds to the farmers this year.

Obituary

Engineer Dr A A Mainul Hussain, son of late Mir Mosharraf Hossain, passed away due to cardio respiratory failure on Saturday, says a press release.
A life-long educationist and former dean, Department of Farm, Power Machinery, Bangladesh Agricultural University, Mymensingh, Dr Hussain left behind his mother, wife, only son and daughters to mourn his death.
His namaz-e-janaza will be held at Buet Central Mosque after Zohr prayers today.
Friends, colleagues and relatives are requested to attend and pray for the eternal peace of his departed soul.

WEATHER TODAY
Sun, clouds, rain

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka
Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Khulna, Dhaka, Barisal, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.
Day temperature may rise slightly over the country, Met Office said in a forecast.
Highest temperature 37.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chuadanga and lowest 22.5 degree Celsius at Chittagong.
The sun sets in the capital at 6:37pm today and rises at 5:13am tomorrow.
Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Table with 4 columns: City/Town, Temperature in Celsius (Max/Min), Humidity in percentage (Morning/Evening). Rows include Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Barisal, Sylhet, Cox's Bazar.

Capt Abdul Mannan

BSS, Dhaka
Valiant freedom fighter captain (honorary-ret'd) Abdul Mannan, passed away due to prostate cancer in Comilla Combined Military Hospital yesterday at the age of 82.
Mannan is survived by his five sons, three daughters and a host of relatives and admirers.
Mannan joined the Army in 1943. He was one of the founding members of the Bangladesh Hospital during the War of Liberation.
He was buried on the premises of Comilla Combined Military Hospital with a state honour.

Two to die for killing N'ganj BNP leader

BSS, Narayanganj
A court here yesterday sentenced two persons to death and two others life in prison for murdering a BNP leader two years ago.
The persons, who got death penalty, are Humayun, 40, and Jasim, 50, the convicts, who were handed life, in prison, are Mohan, 40, and Monir, 38. Both the convicts with death were trial in absentia and two others in the custody.
The prosecution story, in brief, is that former vice president of Siddhirganj thana BNP Abul Kashem, alias Golakata Kashem, was shot dead at Jalkuri by the convicts.
Abul Kashem was going to Narayanganj district judge's court in connection with a case when he was shot dead on March 28, 2004.
Victim's wife Rezia Begum filed a case with Siddhirganj police station accusing ten people.
The court acquitted six others as the charges brought against them were not proved. Number one Special Additional Session Judge Abdul Mannan handed down the verdict.

US envoy calls on Tariqul

UNB, Dhaka
US Ambassador Patricia A Butenis made a courtesy call on Environment and Forest Minister Tariqul Islam at the latter's office in the city yesterday.
During the meeting, they discussed on the issues of afforestation, particularly social afforestation, eco-tourism and environment.
The minister mentioned various programmes undertaken by the government to improve afforestation and environment and eco-tourism. The US envoy praised the government steps in this regard.
Tariqul expressed his hope that the existing friendly relations between Bangladesh and USA would be strengthened in the days to come.

Muhaddes made PIO

BSS, Dhaka
The government has appointed M Muhaddes as Principal Information Officer (PIO) on a contact basis for a period of one year with effect from his date of joining.
Earlier, Muhaddes served on contact basis as Minister (Press) in the Bangladesh Permanent Mission in the United Nations in New York.

Rakta Joba to be screened at Cannes Festival

BSS, Dhaka
A short film titled 'Rakta Joba' the red flower directed by Bangladeshi Director Makbul Chowdhury will be screened at 'Shot film corner' at the 59th Cannes Film Festival.
Cannes Film Festival is one of the most prestigious film festivals in the world attracting filmmakers, producers, TV companies and distributors of all genres of film and media across the world, said a press release yesterday.
This year's festival will be opened by the film 'Da Vinci Code' by Ron Howard. The festival takes place from May 17 to 28 at the French Riviera, the historic town of Cannes.

WILLS LITTLE SCHOOL Students demand removal of acting principal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Students of Wills Little Flower School and College damaged windowpanes of classrooms yesterday to press their demands, including removal of acting principal.
The students said, "Acting principal is conspiring to close down the college section and not forwarding letter for the monthly pay order (MPO) to the authorities concerned for the last five months."
They said the authorities have failed to serve quality foods in the canteen and supply water despite they are paying high fees.
A teacher of the college seeking anonymity said the students turned violent and damaged three rooms on the 5th floor as the acting principal rebuked a senior teacher in front of the students for playing a leading role for establishing the college.
"Students of class X also damaged some rooms in the ground floor after they heard that the acting principal rebuked their teacher," she said.
Meantime, the college authorities filed a General Diary (GD) with Ramna Police Station yesterday.



14-party opposition combine stages a demonstration at Shanir Akhra in the city yesterday demanding adequate supply of water.

'Enact law to ban import of handloom goods'

BSS, Dhaka
Bangladesh Handloom Board (BHB) urged the government to enact a law banning import of handloom goods.
BHB Chairman Mohammad Akram Hossain told BSS yesterday that if the government enact the law it would support around 8 lakh weavers across the country for better marketing of their products.
Better marketing facilities include facilities for direct access to textile mills for buying yarn, dice and dyes and ban on foreign handloom goods in local market.
Besides, he said, the weavers expect support to the export of handloom products.
The BHB chairman said the weavers want to ensure marketing of their handloom products other

than mere support. Handloom is the ancient industrial sector where females are being employed with males in a balanced manner.
Anwar said the BHB sent a copy of "Indian Handloom Act" with a proposal to the Ministry of Textiles and Jute. The Indian law was imposed in 1985 and it is being used as a useful protection tool for the weavers since then.
The Indian handloom act prohibits entrance of handloom made saree, dhoti, towel, gamcha, bed sheet, bedcover, durreet, dress material, barrak blanket, shawl, loo, muffler, pankhi, wollen tweed, chadder, mekhala, phaneek and others in that country.
The marketing of country's handloom products is being affected mostly by the handloom goods coming from the neighbour-

ing countries, said the weavers.
Officials said the volume would have been amounted to hundreds crores taka as different kinds of silk saree, dhoti, punjabi and shawl produced by handlooms are regularly entering the country through legal and illegal means.
Handloom, the largest cottage industry in the country, has a market amount to the tune of Taka 12 hundred crore annually.
But there are no reliable data about the volume of imported handloom goods, said the officials.
Handloom sector which meets about 40 percent of the total domestic demand of cloths also suffers from working capital. The annual demand of working capital of the weavers now stands at around Tk 275 crore.

Darul Ihsan Trust wants to grab Tk 7cr university building Claims owner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
A Bangladeshi expatriate in US yesterday alleged that both factions of Darul Ihsan Trust are now in the race to grab his six-storey building in the city in the name of Darul Ihsan University.
"The trust had signed a contract of Tk 7 crore with me to buy the building for establishing the university, but without paying the money, the trust is now threatening to kill me," said Shawkat Hossain, owner of the house, at a press briefing at Dhaka Reporters Unity auditorium.
He said the trustees paid him Tk 1.75 crore as first instalment to purchase the building and promised to pay the rest by April as per the contract.
"Of the initial instalment, the trust took back Tk 1.25 crore from me tactfully in the name of involving me as a donor to the university," he said.
Shawkat said the trustees pledged to pay the money by February 28 and later extended the date to April 30 this year.
"Thus the two factions of the trust attempted to grab my house without paying the rest money," he alleged.
Shawkat said after paying initial

instalment, the trust started activities of the English department on the fourth and fifth floors of his building at Mohammadpur.
"After a few days they occupied more rooms without my permission," he added.
"Of the part of their ill attempt, they also issued threats to kill me if I do not leave the country forever," said Shawkat who claimed that he is a cancer patient.
He also alleged that a group of hooligans stormed his house on different occasions identifying them as the men of state minister for home and asked him to leave the country or face death.
"Of the them also identified him as a nephew of local lawmaker, but I don't know which is true," said Shawkat, owner of the house at 22/10 Babar Road.
He alleged that Darul Ihsan trustees use religion to cover their ill deeds and the recent race in the university to grab the post of the vice-chancellor is also linked to grabbing his building.
In reply to a question Shawkat told the reporters that university Registrar Abdul Malek himself told him to leave the country.
"Abdul Malek also threatened me to hand over the building to the trust," he further alleged.

Replying to another question he said if the trustees pay full money as per contract, he would register the house in the name of the trust.
"But if they are unable to pay the money, they will have to leave my house immediately," he added.
Shaon Reza and Sekandar Ali Moni, brothers of Shawkat Hossain, were present at the press briefing.
When asked about the allegations, Syed Ali Naki, vice-chancellor of Darul Ihsan University and leader of a faction of the trust, accused the owner of cheating the trust.
The owner manipulated original design of the building by adding another three floors on a three-storey base, he told The Daily Star last night.
"We paid Tk 3 crore and stopped paying the rest when we were informed of the faults of the building," he added.
Zahirul Alam, personal officer of MA Rafiq Khan (who leads another faction of the trust and claims himself as vice-chancellor of the university) told The Daily Star that they would make full payment to the owner. He also blamed the administration of Syed Ali Naki for the crisis.



Sramik Oikya Forum stages a demonstration at Mauna in Gazipur yesterday protesting the killing of a garment worker in Gazipur on Friday.

Child parliament leaders meet Daily Star editor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
As part of the preparation for National Child Parliament Session 2006 to be held on May 28-29, the executive committee of child parliament met with Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, at his office in the city yesterday to have an exchange of views.
The committee sought his opinion on various information that the members of child parliament collected from 64 districts of the country to ensure quality education and healthcare services.
The child leaders requested him to give in The Daily Star an extensive coverage of the issues to be raised in child parliament.
"If you want to do some thing to achieve the rights of children, I am ready to help you," Mahfuz Anam assured them.
About the development of children with disabilities and their admission to general schools he said newspapers have many things to do in this regard.
Led by the Speaker of National Child Parliament Shaiful Islam Talukder, the 15-member delegation told Mahfuz Anam that an action paper will be prepared after consultations with 20 eminent personalities including economists, researchers, educationists, journalists, ministers and top bureaucrats.
Save the Children Australia, Plan Bangladesh and AED are providing technical and financial assistance for holding the National Child Parliament Session 2006.

\$3.86m deal signed to fight TB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Brac has signed a 3.86 million dollar agreement with nine reputed development agencies yesterday to fight Tuberculosis (TB), says a press release.
The agreement was signed between Aminul Alam, deputy executive director of Brac and the heads of ICCDRB, NATAB, Bangladesh Foundation Bangladesh, Lepra Bangladesh, HEED Bangladesh, RDRS-Bangladesh, The Leprosy Mission, Lamb Hospital and PIME Sister.
Initially the contract has been signed with the partner organisations for two years with a budget of 3.86 million dollar (Tk 26 crore).
The agreement will be renewed for another three years with a budget of 15.65 million dollar after the successful completion of the first phase.
Under the agreement, the activities will be implemented by the National TB Control Programme, Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in partnership with a number of NGOs.
This is an example of public and private partnership approved by the Country Coordination Mechanism (CCM) of Bangladesh for securing a large amount of grant for controlling tuberculosis with the support of the Ministry of Health Family Welfare.

CARETAKER MURDER 7 robbers get life

COURT CORRESPONDENT
A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced seven robbers to life in jail for killing Delwar Hossain Dilli, a brickfield caretaker at Fatullah in Narayanganj in May 2004.
Judge Golam Mortuza Mazumder of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-2, handed down the sentence in presence of the convicts at a packed courtroom.
The convicts are Aslam, Jashim, Kamal, Kashem, Mati, Gouranga and Mahbub. Of them, Kamal, Gouranga and Mati were tried in absentia.
The punishment of the fugitives will be effective from the day of their arrest or surrender, the judge said.
According to the prosecution, a gang of robbers picked up the victim from a brick kiln situated on the bank of the Buriganga river at about 8:00pm on May 16, 2004, killed him and dumped the body in the river. The gang killed him as he saw their offences of robbery in the Buriganga river.

Seminar on holding fair polls tomorrow

BDNEWS, Dhaka
The Peshajibi Samannay Parishad (PSP) will hold a national seminar on "Free, Fair and Impartial Election: Preconditions of Peoples' Empowerment" at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre tomorrow.
Leader of the Opposition and Awami League President Sheikh Hasina will address the seminar as chief guest with PSP convener and Bangladesh Bar Council vice chairman Barrister Rokonuddin Mahmud in the chair.
PSP member secretary Dr Kamrul Hasan Khan at a press conference at the Bar Council auditorium said constitution expert and Jatiya Oikya Mancha President Dr Kamal Hossain will present the keynote paper on the occasion.