

# The Daily Star

THIRD EDITION

TODAY'S ISSUE 28 PAGES

People's Right to Know

www.thedailystar.net

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XVI NO. 151

DHAKA SATURDAY JUNE 17, 2006

ASHAR 3, 1413 BS

JAMADIUL AWAL 19 1427 HJRI

28 PAGES PRICE: Tk 7.00

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## 2 top outlaws killed in 'crossfire' with Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Two top leaders of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP M-L) were killed in an encounter between the members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and their cohorts at Singhhara village in Atrai upazila of Naogaon district early yesterday.

The late Abul Fazal alias Tusher, 38, military commander for 'Ka' region comprising four greater Rajshahi districts, and Muktar Hossain alias Agun, 37, Atrai upazila commander.

Rab members arrested the two on Thursday at Nilkadam village in Singra upazila of Natore and took them to Rajshahi Rab office for quizzing.

On their statements, a Rab team along with the two outlaws set out

## Number of landless triples in 5 decades

### No effective step to recover, distribute khas land

PINAKI ROY

The number of landless people in the country has tripled in the last five decades but the government is not taking any effective measure to distribute khas lands among them. The government is not even recovering khas lands from illegal grabbers.

Experts think if the government would distribute khas lands among the landless, it could reduce poverty. The total area of khas land in the country is 50 lakh acres, according to a report of the parliamentary standing committee on land.

According to government statistics, 58 percent of the total popula-

tion is landless now. Many factors including land erosion, price hike, and unemployment have been contributing to the acceleration of the number of landless people.

"So far, lands the government has marked as khas could be distributed among landless families. Each landless family would get up to 0.55 acre of cultivable land," said Prof Abul Barakat, an eminent economist who has been doing research on khas land in Bangladesh.

The ratio of land ownership is uneven in the country. Government statistics show that more than half of the families in the country own only 4.2 percent of the country's total land area while only

6.2 percent of the families own 40 percent of the land.

In 1960 only 19 percent of the families were landless, according to government statistics. But by 1996, the figure rose up to 56 percent which is now estimated to be no less than 58 percent. The percentage of landless people has increased three-fold in the last five decades.

Elite politicians and influential people have been grabbing khas lands, experts said. "If we can recover them, hundreds of thousands of landless families will be rescued from poverty," Dr Abul Barakat said.

But government data reflect its

## UNDP team to study pre-poll environment

UNB, Dhaka

A two-member team from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) New York headquarters will be studying the pre-election environment in Bangladesh in the next couple of days and finalise its report before the end of this month.

The UNDP team will talk to all concerned, including the election officials, political parties, academics, civil society and journalists, during their 10-day appraisal mission, a UNDP official told UNB yesterday.

The UN, based on the study, would take the decision on sending the election observers to monitor the upcoming general elections, the official said.

A UNDP consultant already made his first visit to Dhaka to assess the requirement for a UNDP secretariat to be set up here before the election. The planned secretariat will provide logistic support to



Forward Robin van Persie (R) scores Holland's first goal from a freekick against Ivory Coast in their Group C match at Stuttgart's Gottlieb-Daimler Stadium yesterday.

## Holland, Argentina thru'

AFF, Stuttgart

Holland booked a place in the last 16 of the World Cup with a thrilling 2-1 win over a spirited Ivory Coast in a Group C match here Friday.

The result spelled heartbreak for the African Nations Cup runners-up, however, with Argentina's 6-0 trouncing of Serbia and Montenegro earlier Friday assuring the South Americans got the other qualifying spot from the group of death.

The Dutch took the lead with two goals midway through the first half but Ivory Coast hit back with a

goal before the interval and gave the Oranje a real run for their money throughout a pulsating match.

Robin van Persie, who cut a solitary figure in Holland's opening 1-0 win over Serbia and Montenegro on Sunday, was a constant thorn in the Africans' side and it was no surprise when one of many jinking runs ended with a free-kick on the edge of the area in the 23rd minute.

The Arsenal winger stepped up and blasted in a curling left-footed freekick just over the head of the

diminutive Arthur Boka, the last man in the Ivory Coast wall, and beyond the reach of diving goalkeeper Jean-Jacques Tizie.

The Dutch lead was doubled four minutes later, a deft through ball by Arjen Robben falling into the path of the advancing Ruud van Nisterooy.

The out-of-favour Manchester United striker, whom Dutch coach Marco van Basten kept faith with despite the admission he was out of form, calmly stroked home past the stranded Tizie for his first World Cup goal.

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Three lion cubs feasting on a beef liver as the Chittagong Zoo authority arranged their first birthday celebration yesterday. The zoo decorated with balloons and flowers assumed a festive look on the rare occasion that offered the viewers, especially children, a nice weekend to enjoy.

PHOTO: ZOBAR HOSSAIN SIKDER

## Pry teachers go on strike today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Teachers of government primary schools go for an indefinite strike across the country today to realise their 21-point demand, including elimination of salary discrimination and introduction of school-based examination system, at the primary school level.

Under the banner of Bangladesh Primary Teachers Association, around 1,80,000 teachers will keep 37,000 government primary schools under lock and key until their demands are met.

They will also start a fast-unto-death programme from June 24 in the capital to force the government to meet their demands.

The programme was announced at a rally held at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city on Thursday, where thousands of government primary teachers gathered carrying banners, festoons and placards.

## Eminent citizens dismayed at move to defame Prof Muzaffer

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nine eminent citizens in a joint statement yesterday expressed their dismay and distress at the recent character assassination of Professor Muzaffer Ahmed by a television channel and several newspapers regarding his appointment as the Tayub Hossain Chair in the Department of Economics of Dhaka University.

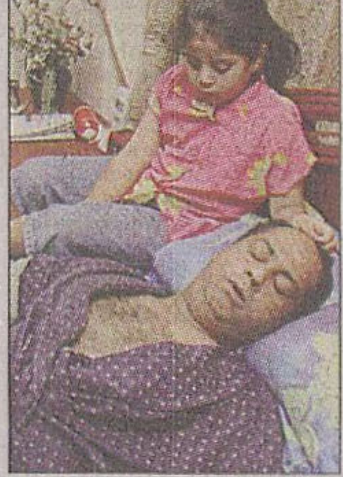
"We have known Professor Muzaffer Ahmed for a long time. He is an internationally renowned scholar, a committed teacher and researcher, an honest and selfless individual and true patriot," signatories to the statement said.

Driven by his own sense of social responsibility as a citizen, Prof Muzaffer has displayed great courage over the past 40 years -- from the time of Ayub Khan to Ershad -- resisting autocracy, and fighting for democracy and the

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## Bulu finally freed on bail

### Court disputes arrest warrant from Barisal



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Boishakhi television channel's 'director', MNH Bulu, was finally released from jail yesterday after an arrest warrant issued against him had been disputed by an additional district magistrate of Barisal.

Earlier on Thursday he could not come out of jail despite securing bail in three cases previously filed against him, as an interim arrest warrant issued against him on the same day had been sent to Dhaka Central Jail.

The warrant was issued in connection with a murder case against him filed with Gournadi police station in Barisal on March 4 this year.

Following a petition, the addi-

tional district magistrate investigated the interim arrest warrant and in a letter to the chief metropolitan magistrate of Dhaka he said the signature on the arrest warrant is not of any magistrate currently discharging duties in Barisal.

Bulu was released from jail yesterday after the jail authorities had received the letter.

Bulu was arrested on May 31 in an attempted murder case, a day after he had filed a criminal case against Housing and Public Works Minister Mirza Abbas, and Managing Director of the private satellite TV channel Boishakhi Kazi Mohammad Shahidullah, accusing them of threatening him with death unless he hands over his

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## Fifth regional dialogue in Sylhet today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), Prothom Alo, The Daily Star and Channel 1 are jointly organising their fifth regional dialogue on National Election 2007: Civil Society Initiative for Accountable Development at 9:00am today in Sylhet.

Eminent academics and professionals, development and cultural activists, public representatives, political leaders, and other civil

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## Senior-junior feuds to take toll on BNP

Partymen fear impact on polls

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

Lingering internal feuds among the senior and junior leaders of the ruling BNP will harm the party in the next general elections, said party insiders. They are also worried about corruption allegations against Hawa Bhaban.

In recent interviews with the media, a number of top BNP leaders have questioned the "domination" of BNP Senior Joint Secretary General and Prime Minister's son Tarique Rahman in the party. They also criticised the corruption by some ministers.

The conflicts between senior and junior BNP leaders surfaced in recent times with Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman's virtual defeat in

a dispute with junior lawmaker Ilyas Ali from Sylhet. Saifur hinted at Tarique's backing of junior leaders, including Ilyas, in the recent conflict.

Some BNP standing committee members expressed views against Tarique's dominance, alleged corruption and unusual favour to ruling coalition partner Jamaat-e-Islami. They believe a negative image of Tarique and the Hawa Bhaban may cause bad impact on BNP's next election results.

Other senior leaders either sidetracked in party politics or disturbed by Jamaat-e-Islami activities in their constituencies include standing committee members Col (retd) Oli Ahmed,

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বিসমিল্লাহির রাহমানির রাহিম

**প্রকল্পের বিশেষ বৈশিষ্ট্য :-**

- প্রকল্পটি ফাইং জোন ও ক্লাড শে জোনের বাহিরে অবস্থিত।
- প্রকল্পে রয়েছে সর্বমিল্ম ৩০', ৫৫' ও ১০০' প্রশস্ত সড়ক।
- প্রকল্পটি কোজ সার্কিট ক্যামেরা দিয়ে নিয়ন্ত্রিত এবং সুপ্রশিক্ষিত নিরাপত্তা বাহিনী দ্বারা সর্বাধুনিক নিরাপত্তা ব্যবস্থা।
- প্রকল্পে রয়েছে দেশ-বিদেশের আন্তর্জাতিকমানের স্কুল, কলেজ, বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, হাসপাতাল, মসজিদ, খেলার মাঠ, লেক, পার্ক, বিনোদন কেন্দ্র সহ আরো পর্যাপ্ত নাগরিক সুবিধা।
- ভূগর্ভস্থ বৈদ্যুতিক ক্যাবলের মাধ্যমে পুরো প্রকল্পের বিদ্যুৎ সরবরাহ ব্যবস্থা।

**আশিয়ান সিটি**

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