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Prof Shahjahan's Ekushey Padak withheld at the last moment

By Staff Correspondent
Dr Mohammad Shahjahan, former Vice Chancellor of the BUET, who was officially invited to the Ekushey Padak giving ceremony yesterday as a recipient was not given the award as his name was dropped at the last moment.
Later, at night, an official announcement said that although Dr. Mohammad Shahjahan was nominated for the Ekushey Padak '96 but due to some specific serious allegations against him, the award was withheld.
The Ministry of Cultural Affairs had earlier invited Dr Mohammad Shahjahan to the Osmani Memorial auditorium to receive the Ekushey Padak 1996, yesterday for his contribution in the field of education.
Dr Shahjahan along with his wife went there to receive award, but he found that his name was not printed in the list

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Tofael, B Chy argue over withholding award

By Staff Correspondent
Commerce and Industries Minister Tofael Ahmed said in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday that Prof Mohammad Shahjahan an water expert and former Vice Chancellor of the BUET was not awarded the Ekushey Padak '96 as this could influence the trial of the corruption case against him.
Tofael made the statement when BNP lawmaker Khondaker Mosharraf Hussain raised the issue rising on a point of order.
Deputy Leader of the Opposition Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury also took part in the debate on the issue.

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Kushtia university college closed

From Our Correspondent
KUSHTIA, Feb 20: Kushtia Government University College has been closed since a die following violent incidents on the campus today.
Centring around the admission into honours first year classes, a group of students ransacked the office of the Principal and created a reign of terror on the campus. Today was the last date for admission.
The college authorities at a meeting decided to close the college for an indefinite period to avoid further untoward incident.
Police have been deployed on the campus.

Holiday

The offices of **The Daily Star** will remain closed today (Friday) on account of Shaheed Day.
Therefore, there will be no issue of the newspaper tomorrow.

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Language Movement

Some Reflections on Recent History

Column: Currents and Crosscurrents

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Experience of a lifetime; and in favour of child labour

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President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed placing wreath at the Central Shaheed Minar at 12:01 last night — Star photo

Ekushey returns to inspire nation

By Staff Correspondent
The nation observes Amar Ekushey today to pay homage to the heroes of the Language Movement and to pledge afresh to translate their ideals into reality.
On this day in 1952, Salam, Rafiq, Barkat, Jabbar and many other unknown brave sons of the soil made supreme sacrifices for giving Bangla the status of state language of the then Pakistan and foil the attempt to make Urdu the only state language.
On that historic day, they were marching in a procession towards the then provincial assembly housed in the present Jagannath Hall premises of Dhaka University.
Their sacrifices led to the movement for self-determination which culminated into independence through the Liberation War.
The day's official programmes began with the placing of wreaths at the Central Shaheed Minar at one minute past zero hour last night by the President, Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed to the strains of the famous song 'Amar bhaier roktey rangano Ekushey February amikhi bhulite pari'. The President was followed by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.
After the Prime Minister, the Speaker, Chief Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad, Ministers, Mayor of the Dhaka City Corporation and Dhaka University Central Students' Union (DUCSU) placed wreaths at the Shahid Minar one by one.
Breaking the tradition, the Speaker, ministers and the mayor placed wreaths before the DUCSU this year.
Earlier, the Vice-Chancellor of the Dhaka University and other members of the Shaheed Dibosh Observance Committee welcomed the President and the Prime Minister at the premises of the Shahid Minar.
President Shahabuddin Ahmed in a message on the occasion said the language movement ultimately inspired us in building an independent and sovereign

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25 hurt in JCD-BCL clash Shahjalal Varsity closed sine die

From Staff Correspondent
SYLHET, Feb 20: The Shahjalal University of Science and Technology has been closed sine die and the residential halls have been vacated following violent clashes between rival student groups.
The university syndicate met in an emergency session after 25 persons were injured in clashes between the activists of the Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal and the Bangladesh Chhatra League (S-P) last night.
Fifteen rooms in the Shah Paran Hall were ransacked and valuables were either thrown out or set on fire.
Of the injured, eight were admitted to the Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital.
The university authorities have set up a five-member probe body with Dr. Md. Jafar Iqbal, dean, Faculty of Computer Science, as its head.
The Masters Examinations which were scheduled to begin on Saturday have been postponed.
UNB adds: Police and witnesses said the clash erupted when armed hoodlums opened fire on Sultan Ahmed Babu, a BCL leader, celebrating his birthday along with friends at the Shah Paran Hall cafeteria at 9:30 pm.
Five JCD activists — Abdul Kader Chishti, Maksud Ali, Goum Azam, Abdullah Al Mamun and Masud Rana — received bullet injuries.
Both JCD and BCL blamed

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Participants in the open discussion on 'Rape and Death in Police Custody' organised by The Daily Star at its office yesterday. — Star photo

'Remove difficulties facing borders of S Asian states'

By Staff Correspondent
Speaker at the dialogue on Interactions with Indian Bordering States on the second day yesterday called for removal of difficulties that 'face the borders' of South Asian states.
Two papers on Ethnicity and Population by Sanjoy Hazarika of the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi and Dr Intiaz Ahmed of Dhaka University were presented at the working session of the Dialogue. Mahfuz Anam, Editor of The Daily Star, was the moderator while the discussants included Afsan Chowdhury a free lance journalist and Subir Bhowmick, BBC Eastern India Correspondent.
It was organised by the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS).
Speaking about illegal immigration, Sanjoy Hazarika in his paper said that "barbed wire fences and walls" have not succeeded in curbing the problem of illegal immigration anywhere in the world.
He said that it was required to recognise the role played by the host nation and communities that migrants are being accepted and absorbed. But, however, he said, when the absorptive capacity of a society has been reached as in the case of the Indian state of Assam. Host Communities look upon migrants with hostility and suspicion, he added.
Observing that illegal immigration is not going to stop, he asked if bordering Indian states could consider issuing work permits to those who would wish to work in a specific company.
Dr Intiaz Ahmed, in his paper, noted that a closed border, "is more a blessing for the smugglers and the bribe-takers than the smuggling agents." Continuing, he said, "There are items which must be regulated or de-smuggled. Cows are one such item."
Speaking about environ-

11 awarded Ekushey Padak '97

The government has awarded Ekushey Padak '97 to eleven persons in recognition of their contribution in their respective fields, reports UNB.
They will be given Tk 20,000 each along with a gold medal and a certificate, said an official handout yesterday.
The awarded personalities are: Abu Ishaque (literature), Begum Movera Ahmed and Nitun Kundu (sculpture), Debu Bhattacharya (music-posthumously), Runu Biswas (dance-posthumously), Dr Razia Khan and Dr Sirajul Haq (education), Begum Shabnam Mushtari (music), Santosh Gupta and Monajat Uddin (journalism) and Momtaj Uddin Ahmed (drama).
They were produced before the court at about 1:20 pm. During the proceedings of the case which continued for

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Two get Bangla Academy Award

Litterateur Moinul Ahsan Saber and Prof. Syed Manzurul Islam of Dhaka University won the Bangla Academy Literary Award '96, reports BSS.
The six chargesheeted accused in the Bangabandhu murder case were produced before the court of Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) yesterday.
They were Lt Col (dismissed) Syed Farook Rahman; Lt Col (relieved) Sultan Shahrir Rashid Khan; Taheruddin Thakur, former minister of state for information; Lt Col. Mohiuddin Ahmed, Acting Director, BNCC, Dhaka; Capt (Hon) Abdul Wahab Joarder and Begum Zobaida Rashid, wife of Lt. Col (dismissed) A. Rashid Khandaker.
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Bangabandhu murder trial Lawyers exchange abusive language: Next date Mar 1

Star Report
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PM distributes Ekushey Padak '96

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday called for united efforts of all to build a 'Sonar Bangla', imbued with the spirit of Ekushey, reports UNB.
The Prime Minister was addressing a function marking the distribution of the Ekushey Padak for 1996 at the Osmani Memorial Hall in the morning.
Hasina said the uncompromising chapter of the Language Movement is the milestone of national awakening as it had intensified the national aspiration for establishing the right to language, democracy and self-rule.
Earlier, the Prime Minister distributed Ekushey Padak among six personalities. They are: Hasnat Abdul Hye (literature), Rahat Khan (literature), AKM Feroz Alam alias Feroz Shain (music posthumously), Prof Muhammad Abdul Hye (education posthumously), Prof Serajul Islam Chowdhury (education) and Mohammad Kamruzzaman (journalism).

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Attack on Iranian cultural centre in Multan: 7 killed

ISLAMABAD, Feb 20: Attackers armed with automatic weapons stormed an Iranian cultural centre in central Punjab province today killing seven people and seriously wounding another, officials said, reports AP.
The attack in Multan, 600 kilometers southeast of the Pakistani capital of Islamabad, was the second on an Iranian cultural centre in Pakistan in the last month.
Twelve gunmen entered the centre in Multan's busy market area at noon (0700 gm) after spraying guards with chili powder to blind them, witnesses said.
The gunmen then turned automatic weapons on workers, killing seven, including the Iranian head of the centre, Mohammed Ali Rahimi.
The attackers set fire to the centre before fleeing by car and motorbike, police and witnesses said.
The Iranian embassy in Islamabad said copies of the Koran, Islam's holy book, were among the books destroyed in the fire.
Iran's ambassador, Mohammad Akhondzadeh, told Iranian radio that he had asked Pakistani officials to "arrest and punish the perpetrators."
No one has claimed the responsibility for the attack, but it appeared to be part of an on-going war between extremist Shi'ite and Sunni Muslim groups that has led to hundreds of deaths in the past year.
On January 19, arsonists set fire to an Iranian cultural centre and library in the Punjab capital of Lahore, destroying them. Some 12,000 books were burned, including rare copies of the Koran, Iran said. No one was injured in the Lahore incident.
The arson attack came a day after the bombing at a Lahore courthouse that killed 25 people, including militant Sunni leader Zia-ur Rehman.

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The Daily Star open discussion 'Separate homes' for safety of women in custody suggested

By Staff Correspondent
Leading lawyers and academicians at a Daily Star open discussion on 'Rape and Death in Police Custody' Wednesday expressed their resentment on women being put in jail in the name of judicial custody and suggested that 'separate homes' be set up throughout the country for accommodating such persons.
Judicial custody is imposed on rescued victims of trafficking and rape, witnesses to be produced in court or else when they have no safe place to go to. For lack of homes, these women are sent to jail, sometimes in the same jail as the perpetrators of the criminal offence, they pointed out.
The discussants recommended that the existing laws should be amended and properly implemented, rather than introducing new special laws. 'Black laws' such as Section 54 of the Penal Code under which police can arrest anyone on suspicion on nine separate grounds have been specially repressive to women, they said.
Referring to Shima's case, Advocate Sarah Hossain said that Shima was arrested on grounds of suspicious character only because she was with a male friend, having a walk system, there was a lot of state intervention.
Afsan Chowdhury said those who migrate do not do so out of choice, but due to lack of economic opportunities. He said most Bangladeshis and Indians who have migrated to developed nations like US and Canada were actually economic refugees.
Subir Bhowmick said that the creation of Bangladesh helped India re-establish con-

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Khulna Newsprint Mills closed

From Staff Correspondent
KHULNA, Feb 20: The Khulna Newsprint Mills has been closed from Wednesday evening because of frequent load shedding, low quality of products and financial problems.
According to sources of the mills, over five thousand tonnes of newsprint are lying unsold in the godown creating serious space problem. Dealers are also reluctant to buy the newsprint as most of the newspapers are using imported white print due to low quality of Khulna newsprint.
Meanwhile, the employees and workers have criticised the authorities for closing the mills without giving prior notice. They said they were planning to start an agitation if the mills is not reopened within 24 hours.

Landslide kills 4 in Cox's Bazar

COX'S BAZAR, Feb 20: Four construction workers were killed in a landslide at Ghoonerpara in the town today, reports UNB.
The dead were identified as Mohammad Arif, 40, son of Momin Uddin of Charfession, Bholu, Moslem Khan, 34, son of Hason Ali, and Abul Hossain, 35, son of Mostafa Ali of Mohipur, Patuakhali, and Dev Chandra Dhar, 45, son of Kalchash Dhar of Ramu, Cox's Bazar.
Local people said a big chunk of earth of a 300-foot hill fell down on the labourers when they were constructing the wall of 'Krishna Dham' temple at Ghoonerpara here at 5 pm.
Seven workers were engaged in wall construction. Three of them with minor injuries were rescued by the local people.

Yasmin murder 7 witnesses cross-examined

From Our Correspondent
RANGPUR, Feb 20: Seven prosecution witnesses of the Yasmin Rape and Murder Case were cross-examined by the defence counsels in the District and Sessions Judge's Court here today.
The witnesses are Reazul Hossain, a former MP of Dinajpur; Azizul Islam, an advocate and district secretary of the Human Rights Implementation Sangstha, Zahedul Islam, Dinajpur Paurashava ward commissioner and four members of the *adivasi* community.
Sukumani, an *adivasi*, in her deposition told the court that when she woke up in the early hours of August 24 in 1995, she saw 9 police van leaving the police station in a hurry. Later, in the morning she, along with thousand other people, found a young girl lying dead.
The court will sit again on Saturday.

Afsar resigned at PM's request, Zillur tells JS

By Staff Correspondent
Deputy Leader of the House and LGRD Minister Zillur Rahman told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday that the State Minister for Housing and Public Works Afsaruddin Ahmad Khan was dropped from the cabinet in accordance with the relevant rules.
He was giving a statement on the issue after BNP lawmaker Mashur Rahman, quoting press reports, had alleged that the Constitution was violated in handling the case of the state minister.
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BNP's gayebana janaza for Shima

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, Feb 20: The BNP, Chittagong city unit, held a gayebana janaza for Shima Chowdhury here this afternoon.
BNP leaders said, Shima Chowdhury had embraced Islam after marrying her fiancé Abdul Hafiz.
They also expressed resentment for cremating the body of Shima.
Meanwhile, the viscera report on Shima has not yet reached here from Dhaka. Police sources said the viscera report will be sent to the court directly.
In the meantime, one magistrate, Md Mostafa has taken over as acting superintendent of Chittagong Jail. A new doctor has also joined the jail.

Fire at Baridhara: Two injured

By Staff Correspondent
Two labourers sustained burn injuries when a fire broke out in a building at Baridhara in the city yesterday afternoon.
The labourers were engaged in making partex ceiling on the ground floor of the six-storey building on Road No 10 of Block-A at about 1:30 pm, fire service sources said.
The victims were taken to a clinic.
The cause of the fire could not be known immediately.