

## Dhaka signs land mine convention

Bangladesh has signed the Land Mine Convention at the UN headquarters in New York, reports UNB.

Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN Ambassador Anwarul Karim signed the convention on prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines and on their destruction on Thursday.

With this, Bangladesh has become the 126th signatory to the international treaty, according to a message received in Dhaka yesterday.

The convention, after some years of negotiations known as "Ottawa Process," was finalised in Oslo on September 18, 1997 and opened for signature on December 3 in Ottawa.

Bangladesh government recently ratified the convention at a cabinet meeting.

## Khaleda's token hunger strike on May 12

By Staff Correspondent

Leader of the Opposition in the Jatiya Sangsad and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia, along with her party lawmakers, will observe a day-long token hunger strike at the Palan Maidan on May 12.

The hunger strike will be observed to press BNP's demand for repealing the "black accord" on Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and to protest what it called the government's failure to check price hike of essentials, unabated corruption, terrorism, deterioration of law and order, anarchy in educational institutions and problems in supply of gas, power and water.

A meeting of the BNP National Executive Committee yesterday urged people from all strata of life to express solidarity.

See Page 12 Col 2

## 3 CHT bodies reject Regional Council Bill passed in JS

A group of hill leaders have rejected the CHT Regional Council Bill 1998 passed in parliament on Wednesday and reiterated their demand for autonomy of the region, reports UNB.

Leaders of three hill organisations in a joint statement on Thursday said the bill and three other bills passed to amend the hill district council acts will bring no peace to the region.

The leaders are: General Secretary of Pahari Gano Parishad Prashit Bikash Khisha, General Secretary of Pahari Chhatra Parishad Dipayan Khisha and Chairperson of Hill Women's Federation Kabita Chakma.

"There is no difference between the councils established in 1989 by the then autocratic ruler Ershad and the councils proposed in the recently passed bills. These will not be able to ensure the rights of the hill people," they said.

The hill leaders also threatened to go for vigorous movement if their demand was not met.

They criticised Janasanghati Samity for what they said its attitude of compromise and surrender to the government.

## Gulshan Lake Legal notice sent to PWD, Rajuk

By Staff Correspondent

Baridhara Residents Association sent a legal notice to the Public Works Department, Rajuk chairman and Directorate of Environment on May 6, demanding suspension of earth filling of Gulshan Lake and construction on its bank within seven days.

The association threatened to take legal action if the authorities failed to fulfil the demands, according to a press release.

## Inside Today

### Article

#### Speech of the Hon'ble President on Ethics in Banking

Page 4

### Business

Govt anticipates 2-phase restructuring of BTTB

Page 8

### Star Literature

Exhibition: As good as Iqbal gets; and Fiction: Dowry

Pages 6 & 7

## Standard of teaching at 3 major medical colleges 'extremely poor'

By Naimul Haq

Standard of teaching at three leading government medical colleges was found to be extremely poor during a quality assessment of teaching and learning in medical colleges in the country, said a reviewer from the UK.

"In terms of teaching, the lecture sessions I attended at Dhaka Medical College, Chittagong Medical College and Rangpur Medical College were found to be very poor," said Prof Charles Bryce of Napier University in Edinburgh, Scotland, while giving his views to The Daily Star.

"During our assessment we focused on four main areas: curriculum and student guidance, teaching and assessment, environment and resources and

April 19 to 30 and met members of the teaching staff and the students. The reviewers observed formal teaching sessions and analysed course documents for the quality assessment.

"Following our assessment we focused on four main areas: curriculum and student guidance, teaching and assessment, environment and resources and

lastly, standards of quality control," Prof Bryce said.

Following a critical analysis, a draft report was produced giving grades to each of the three medical colleges, he said. However to ensure that any deficiencies in the teaching provisions have been remedied, the colleges concerned would undergo a review in the next few months.

See Page 12 Col 7

## One killed, 20 hurt at CU during Shibir attack

From Staff Correspondent

CHITTAGONG, May 8: An admission seeker was killed and 20 people including four police personnel were injured at Chittagong University during a gunfight on Wednesday night, police and campus sources said.

The dead was identified as Ayub Ali, 19. The injured are being treated in private clinics.

The violence erupted Wednesday when armed Shibir cadres in several groups launched a fresh attack to recapture three halls at about 9 pm, police said.

During the attack, the Shibir cadres opened indiscriminate fire at the halls which turned into a gunbattle with police, lasting for about two hours, po-

lice and campus sources said.

In the face of strong police resistance, the Shibir cadres retreated at about 11 pm, the sources added.

Later police recovered the bullet-ridden body of Ayub Ali from behind Shah Amanat Hall.

Police could not confirm whether Ayub was killed in crossfire or by the Shibir cadres.

Campus source, however, said Ayub was dragged out from a room of Shah Amanat Hall and was gunned down allegedly by the attackers.

Ayub, who hailed from Patuakhali, was staying with another student of the university.

See Page 12 Col 6

### Commentary

## BUET crisis: Let Wisdom and Not Vanity be our Guide

By Mahfuz Anam

The nation has been stunned by the resignation of BUET's Vice Chancellor (VC) and of the 71 senior staff members from all administrative positions of our premier engineering university. In an environment where nobody wants to resign in fact the practice it to cling on to one's own chair by any means - the *emmas* resignation has surprised us all. It only points to the gravity of the situation. Whatever may have been the long term and short

term causes of the BUET crisis, our only aim at this point is to solve the problem and get our best academic institution back on track.

The key figure in the solution process in course the VC, Dr. Iqbal Mahmud. He rightly feels that he has lost the confidence of the Chancellor, that is the Prime Minister in this case. Therefore he says, he should not carry on the job. He genuinely, and again rightly, feels outraged at the treatment that

See Page 2

### Sadique dismayed at press reports

Education Minister ASHK Sadique yesterday expressed his hope that the deadlock at BUET would be solved through understanding and compromise keeping in view the logical and humanitarian aspects for the sake of all teachers, students and the institution, reports BSS.

In a statement, the minister expressed his dismay over the interview of Vice Chancellor of BUET Dr Iqbal Mahmud and statement of the BUET Teachers' Association published in the newspapers on May 7.

Sadique said his statement was used totally out of context and asserted that he had never told in his May 5 press conference that "all teachers are involved with the political parties."

At the press conference, the minister had said, "There is no such proof that Vice Chancellor Dr Iqbal Mahmud resigned due to political motive. So it will not be proper to make such remarks. But it is true that he

See Page 2



Sri Lankan cricket star Sanath Jayasuriya with his fiancee Sunudu Kanunayake during their wedding ceremony in Colombo yesterday. (See also page 10)

— AP/UNB photo

## 80 acres of forest damaged beyond regeneration

### Magurjhara explosion

By Shehab Ahmed

At least 80 acres of forest in Srimangal were damaged beyond regeneration when fire gutted the reserved forest following the explosion at Magurjhara gasfield where Occidental oil company had been drilling in June last year.

An unspecified number of mammals, reptiles and birds perished in the fire. Those who could flee the inferno failed to escape from the clutches of poachers, a preliminary survey found.

An estimate by the Forest and Environment Ministry put the loss at Tk 17.6 crore. But the figure may go up when the total damage to environment and wildlife is assessed, officials said.

Shortly after the fire, the ministry formed a committee headed by a joint secretary and comprising forest officials, an official from Petrobangla and two representatives each from

Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies and Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association.

The committee visited the area twice, once immediately after the fire and then earlier this month.

It is likely to submit its report sometime this month, paving the way for seeking compensation from the Occidental for damage to environment.

During the visit, the committee members found that the gas well had been capped and the fire had gone. But bubbles were still visible on the pools of mud and water where gas had escaped and burnt for weeks.

The Occidental had taken a programme to put a green belt around the centre of explosion, where a pool of water formed a pond in about an acre of land.

The crater is about 20 feet deep, a committee member said adding that the gas pressure appeared to have declined.

The scar on nature still remained visible. Rains helped regeneration of grass. The trees burnt on one side may regenerate but the totally burnt ones will never, the member said.

See Page 12 Col 6



Trees around Magurjhara gasfield are now dying.

— Star photo

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Accused Hasan was produced before the CMM's court yesterday where he was placed on two days' remand. Photo shows Hasan trying to avoid journalists and photographers outside the CID office after returning from court.

### Shazneen murder

## Shahid's new disclosure

By Staff Correspondent

Shahid, the prime suspect in the Shazneen murder case, was placed on further CID remand for five days on Thursday while contractor Hasan and two others were again placed on a two-day remand yesterday.

CID officials said the four accused persons were placed on remand for further investigation into the case and determining whether there were one or more abettors(s) with Shahid in killing Shazneen Tasnim Rahaman, 15, in their Gulshan residence on April 23.

Meanwhile CID sources said that in a major change in accused Shahid's statement he told investigators yesterday that contractor Hasan was the man behind the plot to murder Shazneen. He said that on several occasions over the last few months, Hasan had been approaching him to commit the crime with the offer of a large sum of money.

He said Hasan had first approached him before Eid holidays in April saying that if he (Shahid) did as he was told 'You will never have to work again.'

See Page 12 Col 4

## Vajpayee for trade routes between NE states, neighbours

NEW DELHI, May 8: Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee today suggested reopening of traditional trade routes between India's north-eastern states and the neighbouring countries including Bangladesh, reports BSS.

The BUET may face six months' session jam if the current deadlock is not ended during the five-day mid-term break for the students beginning from Sunday, according to official sources in the BUET.

"There has been no progress towards a solution of the deadlock," Prof Razzak Akand, President of the BUET Teachers Association told The Daily Star last night. "We will start our efforts to end the crisis when the university reopens on Sunday," he said.

Crisis in the university began with the Syndicate's acceptance of resignation of 13 teachers of Architecture Department on April 26 last.

Pressure from the higher authorities to reverse the decision led to the resignation of Prof Iqbal Mahmud from the post of Vice-Chancellor of the University on May 4, followed by resignation of 71 teachers from

See Page 12 Col 6

### Teenage boy stabbed to death: 3 held

By Staff Correspondent

A teenage boy was stabbed to death by a gang of local hoodlums at Shambazar thana in the city Thursday afternoon.

Police identified the dead as Zahirul Islam, 17, son of Abdur Rauf Mia, a resident of Baraila under Keraniganj thana.

After preliminary investigation, police said Zahirul was killed due to previous enmity with the gang.

A gang of ten local hoodlums led by one Sagar, started beating Zahirul in front of a grocery shop at Shambazar vegetable market at about 4 pm, police said.

At one stage, Sagar stabbed Zahirul in his back and fled the scene with his gang, police added.

Zahirul was rushed to nearby National Hospital and later shifted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the doctors declared him dead, according to police.

Police arrested Nurul, Babu, and Noor Hossain in connection with the killing on Thursday night. Shatrupur police produced the three before the CMM's court yesterday seeking seven day's remand.

The body of Zahirul was handed over to his family yesterday after autopsy at DMCH.

This session was held in view of press reports and public

See Page 12 Col 4

### Oil & gas block bidding

## Go-slow, review of PSC profitability suggested

Star Report

The government should be cautious with the second round block bidding for oil and gas exploration and it should not award all the block to foreign companies in one go, experts and officials of Petrobangla observe at a 'brain storming session' at Wednesday.

Officials of different divisions said that the most prospective blocks should not be given to foreign companies and BAPEX should be given opportunity to grow by exploring the prospective regions.

The Chairman, however, said, "We do not have enough money for exploration activities of BAPEX." Bangladesh invited foreign companies to explore and develop gasfields