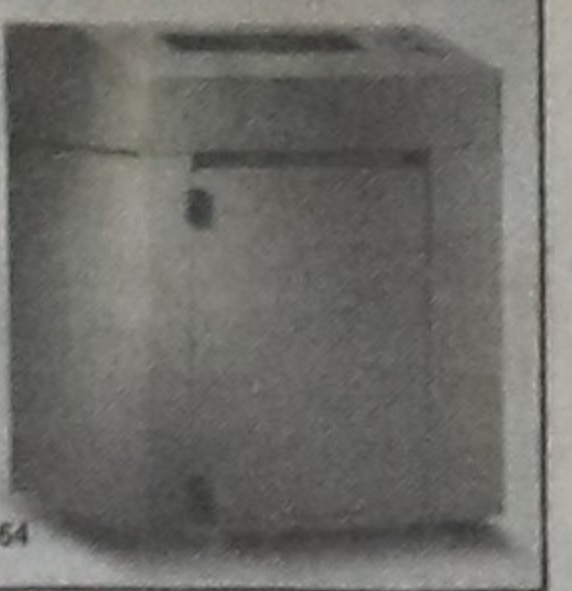


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Hartal without threat legal: Writ dismissed

By SC Correspondent
The High Court has declared that hartal without threat or warning is legal and dismissed a writ petition seeking a decree against calling of hartal.

The judgement on the writ petition was pronounced yesterday by a Division Bench comprising Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury, Justice Syed JR Modassir Hossain and Justice MA Aziz.

The court in its judgement said hartal cannot be against the Constitution as it is one of the devices for ventilating demands of the political parties.

See page 11 col 5
Airbus case
Khaleda indisposed, couldn't attend hearing

By Court Correspondent
The Special Court for Dhaka Division yesterday fixed November 9 for hearing on charge framing in a case against former prime minister Khaleda Zia and nine others for embezzlement of about Tk 175 crore in the purchase of two airbuses.

Judge Mohammad Fazlul Karim adjourned the proceedings of the case on the basis of a petition filed by Barrister Moudud Ahmed on behalf of Khaleda Zia stating that she has been suffering from dyspepsia. So she could not appear in the court.

Fresh bail petitions for former finance minister M Saifur Rahman and former state minister for civil aviation and tourism M A Mannan were submitted by their lawyers, while assistant PP Mohammad Nurul Islam and Faridul Alam Talukder opposed the two petitions.

After hearing both the sides, the court granted the petitions. All the accused except Khaleda were present in the court during the proceedings.

See page 11 col 3
Amber Shamsi murdered, say police

By Staff Correspondent
Amber Shamsi (20), kidnapped from the city's Lalbag area about 10 days ago, was killed by his abductors, police said last night.

Three of the abductors, rounded up by the DB police yesterday, said Amber was killed the day he was kidnapped.

Amber, a student of Naila Memorial School at Dhanmondi and an O' level examine, was abducted on his way to a friend's house on October 15.

When contacted, DC of Detective Branch of police Abdul Hannan said a special DB squad arrested the three abductors -- Alamgir from New Market Tele

See page 11 col 2
Inside Today
Article
The Middle East Peace Process on the Rocks

Column: The Horizon This Week
By Arshad-uz Zaman Page 4

Focus
Egalitarianism: For and against Page 5

Star Magazine



This week's cover story of the Weekend Magazine focuses on whether our reading habit will survive the onslaught of satellite TV and Internet entertainment.

Flood waters stagnant due to illegal cross-dams

By Shehab Ahmed
The ferocity of floods is over in the South-west region of the country but the intensity of suffering of the people due to water logging may not be over for at least two more months.

Unless various 'man-made obstacles' like cross-dams built illegally for farming and raising shrimp and other fishes are removed, all the sluice gates are made operational and silted waterways are cleared immediately, the situation would remain 'complicated', experts said after visiting the region.

There are at least 170 cross-dams along with fisheries, rice fields and homesteads on the Betna river impeding natural drainage of water from Sarsha, Keshabpur, Kalaroa and Jhikargachha upazilas, said a member of the expert team.

The team consisting of experts from the Water Development Board (WDB) extensively visited the areas last week to identify causes of the floods and suggest remedies.

The experts submitted their preliminary report to the authorities on Tuesday, recommending some immediate and long term measures to keep the areas free from floods in future.

The report suggested that regulators on Satkhira Polders should be made operative, passage of water to the Betna and Kobadak rivers is to be ensured to relieve Sarsha of water logging and Jessore-Benapole road should be cut at some points.

Besides, rivers in the flood hit areas have to be excavated and dredged where necessary and a drainage management plan should be immediately formulated and implemented, it said suggesting immediate measures.

See page 11 col 7

Ministers' 'abusive' remarks anger journalists, UNO in Satkhira

From Our Correspondent
SATKHIRA, Oct 25: Journalists of Satkhira today urged Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to withdraw State Minister for Social Welfare Dr Mozammel Hossain from the responsibility of relief operations in the flood affected district.

Satkhira journalists in an emergency meeting on the press club premises with its president Subhash Chowdhury in the chair today gave the call.

Speakers at the meeting criticised the State Minister for his abusive remarks about the local journalists at a meeting with Sadar upazila UP chairman who resigned en masse protesting the remarks about them by State Minister Talukdar Khaleque.

The Prime Minister will visit flood affected areas in Satkhira tomorrow to see for herself the relief activities there.

Meanwhile, 12 UP chairmen in Sadar upazila withdrew their resignation letters after a fruitful discussion with the Minister for Social Welfare this morning.

When contacted Dr Mozammel said he did not make any abusive remarks about journalists.



Mole under the nose... the fruit market on the pavement near the recently inaugurated Gulistan Police Box makes a mockery of the police drive to reclaim the footpaths in the city from the grips of hawkers.

Barak's secret envoy to Arafat

Clinton, Putin renew efforts to revive peace process

JERUSALEM, Oct 25: Efforts to halt clashes in the Palestinian territories gained pace today, amid news that Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak had sent a secret emissary to meet with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat overnight, reports AFP.

At the same time, the Israeli army announced a meeting with Palestinian security officials today in an attempt "to reduce the violence" in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where few incidents were reported early in the morning.

A Palestinian source speaking on condition of anonymity confirmed an Israeli public radio report that Barak had dispatched Yossi Ginosar to establish contacts with Arafat Tuesday night.

Barak has declared a "time out" from the Middle East peace process until fighting subsides. Ginosar, a former senior official of the Shin Beth domestic security service who is now a

Armed Indians raid relief camp: 2 killed

From Staff Correspondent
KHULNA, Oct 25: Two persons including a BDR jawan and Mashiar Rahman, 35, of Raghunathpur village.

The dead were identified as Motaleb, a BDR jawan and Mashiar Rahman, 35, of Raghunathpur village.

The Indians took the body of Mashiar to the Indian side after exchange of fire with BDR jawans, Jessore police super said.

An organised gang of Indians raided a relief centre at about 9-30 pm on Tuesday at the flood affected Raghunathpur village under Sarsha upazila, police said. The relief centre is adjacent to Raghunathpur BOP.

Mashiar was one of the distressed people who took shelter in the relief centre along with his family members. He was shot dead when he tried to resist the Indians.

Jawans of nearby BDR camp rushed to the spot hearing hue and cry of the distressed people. The Indians then fired on BDR jawans killing Motaleb on the spot.

The Indians did not return body of Mashiar till this afternoon while body of BDR jawan was sent to his relatives.

Hazari donates all property to municipality!

From Our Correspondent
FENI, Oct 25: Ruling party MP Joyal Abedin Hazari has donated all his movable and immovable property and money in banks to Feni Pourasava (Municipality).

He formally handed over the deeds to pourasava chairman Mosharrar Hossain Hazari in presence of lawyers, poura commissioners, party leaders, local elite and chairman and members of 45 union parishes of the district at Feni Government College auditorium at noon today.

The most influential leader of the frontier district of Feni, Hazari owns huge property worth several crores of taka.

A confirmed bachelor, Hazari said, "As I have no wife and children, there may be a trouble over the right of the property after my death. So, I have decided to donate it for the welfare of the poor."

The state minister could not be contacted for his comment as he was in the flood affected areas to supervise relief operation.

Sutrapur police play innocent! Sumon leads procession as masked men fire shots

By Staff Correspondent
While the main accused in the sensational Sutrapur double murder case, Sumon and Sujon, openly demonstrated in the area on Friday, local police and Detective Branch (DB) officials claimed that they did not know anything about the procession and just heard about it later.

According to a wide section of people in the area, a group of men and women, including relatives and friends of Sumon, brought out a procession in support of Sumon and others accused in the murder case at around 3-30 in the afternoon. Masked young men in motor bikes escorted the procession. On their arrival at Sutrapur bazaar, they fired several shots in the air and exploded cocktails before dispersing.

Shopkeepers at the bazaar and several other witnesses claimed that they had seen Sumon, his brother Sujon and several other 'notorious criminals' in the procession, brandishing firearms. Sumon sported dark sunglasses, they said.

Second Officer of the Sutrapur police station, Shahidul Islam Shahin, told The Daily Star yesterday that the police went to the spot after the processionists had dispersed.

See page 11 col 1



Gruesome reminder... curious passersby flock to see a gruesome poster with a picture of the decapitated and decomposed bodies of Mohsin and Sayem, the hapless two who were brutally murdered in the city's Sutrapur on September 15 this year. The poster demands trial and punishment of Sumon and his men, accused in the sensational double murder case.

Star photo

Save the Buriganga Protection plan caught in bureaucratic tangle

By Staff Correspondent
The Tk 68.22 crore project to protect the river Buriganga and develop its banks is caught in bureaucratic tangle, sources said. After the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) under the shipping ministry and the district administration under the land ministry had done the groundwork, the government intervened and handed over the project to the ministry of water resources. The superintending engineer of the Water Development Board (WDB) has been made the project director.

The BIWTA, official custodian of the shore, fore-shore and the channel of the river, conducted an elaborate survey and identified more than 200 encroachers.

According to sources, the WDB has been given the responsibility because it has already built several kilometres of embankment and roads along the riverbank.

The project envisages construction of roads and some other structures along the bank to protect the Buriganga.

Although the ECNEC approved the project concept paper nearly two months back, the project proforma is yet to be finalised, said sources at the WDB. Once the proforma is worked out, the project would go to the Departmental Project Evaluation Committee for approval, which is mandatory for disbursement of fund.

Meanwhile, following an inter-ministerial meeting recently, the Planning Commission has been approached for immediate release of 20 crore taka for the project.

"We have conducted the land and morphological surveys on the river and as soon as we get the money we would be able to start the work," the WDB engineer said.

See page 11 col 6

4 top forest officials face corruption charges

Star Report
The Bureau of Anti-Corruption is investigating charges of corruption including venality and nepotism against four top officials of the Department of Forest, sources concerned said.

The probe began early this month following a complaint lodged with the Bureau by the then Secretary of the Ministry of Forest and Environment in July this year.

The four officials are Chief Conservator of Forest (CCF) M Nuruzzaman, former CCF Golam Habib, now on LPR; Mosharrar Hossain, Conservator of Forest in Chittagong range and Tapan Kumar Dey, Divisional Forest Officer of the Sundarbans.

The complaint said the then CCF used to collect money from officials and employees of the Department in the name of the minister. He was also accused of threatening his subordinates with transfer unless they bribed him, smuggling forest resources particularly timber and misappropriating public money showing fake expenditure.

The forest ministry received four specific complaints of corruption, nepotism, smuggling of forest resources and financial irregularities against Golam Habib from Bangabhaban sources. Besides, four such complaints were made from the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Establishment during his one-year tenure as CCF from January 14 last year.

Sources in the forest ministry said as the complaints were not handled properly, the then Secretary Syeed Margub Morshed filed those with the Bureau of Anti-Corruption for legal action.

Referring to the Mazid Committee Report on irregularities in the forest department, the complaint said, "Allegations of corruption and nepotism are very common against M Nuruzzaman, the acting CCF. In 1998, in the light of the Committee recommendations, the authorities were asked to take punitive measures against him."

Nuruzzaman was made CCF on August 2 this year. See page 11 col 8

INT'L TURKISH HOPE SCHOOL PROUD TO CELEBRATE THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS FOUNDATION EVERLASTING STORY : ADMISSION GOING ON