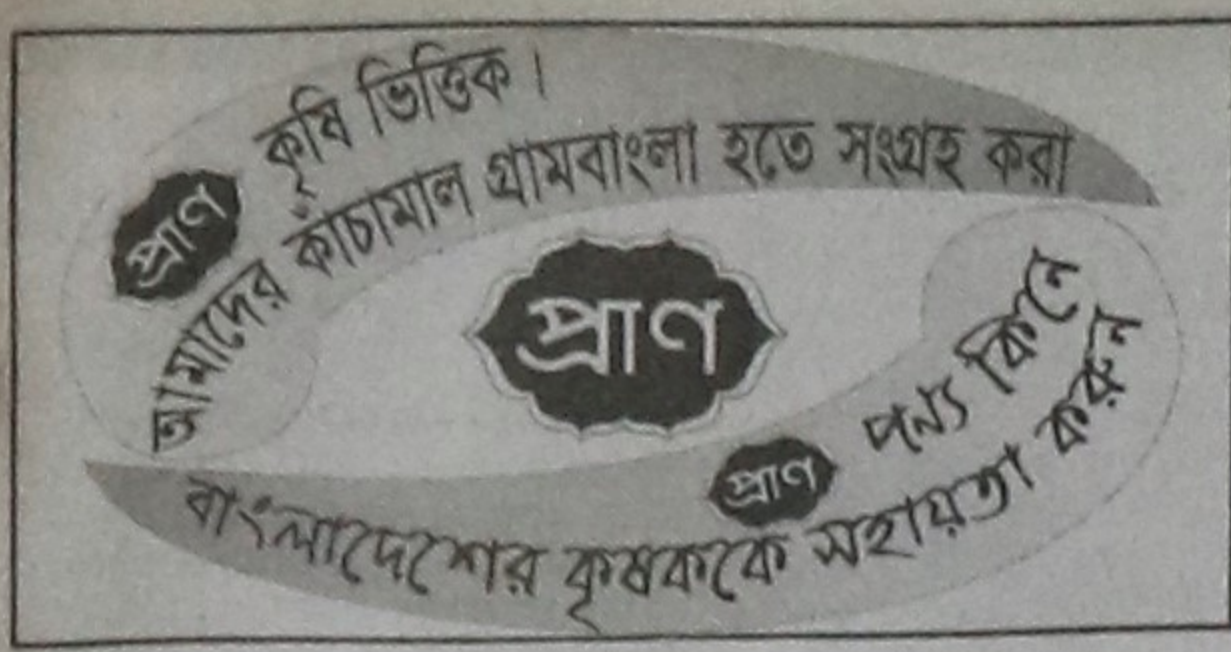


# The Daily Star

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## Activities at Nawabganj brick kiln suspended

By Staff Correspondent  
The authorities yesterday suspended all activities at the brick kiln illegally set up in the middle of three pristine villages in Nawabganj thana under Dhaka district, villagers told The Daily Star over telephone.  
In the face of mounting protests from the people of Agrichar, Balmantachar and Bakshinagar villages, the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF) suspended the Environmental Clearance for Saudia Bricks for the third time on December 4. But the Deputy Commissioner of Dhaka wrote back to the ministry saying that he would need a letter from the ministry to take step to suspend the licence of the brick kiln.  
But taking advantage of the bureaucratic tangle, the kiln owner lit its furnace on Thursday, instantly blanketing the villages with black smoke.  
A report on the authorities' confusing role in this regard was seen page 11 col 6

## MA Hannan Airport handed over to CAAB

From Our Correspondent  
CHITTAGONG, Dec 11: The MA Hannan International Airport has been handed over to the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB).  
The construction company today handed over the airport to CAAB Chief Engineer Asaduzzaman Chowdhury who successfully completed the project before the expiry of the stipulated period of 33 months.  
With its international standard and facility arrangements, the airport is now expected to be inaugurated by the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the middle of next month.  
The Tk 541 crore MA Hannan International Airport project was financed by Japan Bank of International Corporation (JBIC). The project began on March 12 '98 and a Japanese construction firm Shimizu-Marubeni built the airport under the consultancy of Pacific Consortium International (PCI) of Japan in association with Development Design Corporation (DDC) of Bangladesh.

## Gias Kamal, Aftab under fire BNP disowns remarks by its 'think-tanks'

By Staff Correspondent  
The remarks made by three persons known as pro-BNP intellectuals has created a strong resentment in the rank and file of BNP and its front organisations.  
Sources said, party BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia reacted to the remarks of Dhaka University teacher Prof Aftab Ahmed, Dr Mahbubullah and journalist Gias Kamal Chowdhury and instructed the party Secretary General to issue a statement against their comments.  
She also instructed party leaders not to invite them in any function of BNP and its front organisations, the sources said.  
These three persons, known as advisors to BNP hardliners, at a discussion meeting held at the Jatiya Press Club in the city on December 9 made adverse comments on the War of Liberation, the National Anthem, late President Ziaur Rahman and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia. The meeting was organised by the 'Shata Nagarik Committee'.  
According to press reports, Gias Kamal had said that Ziaur Rahman established the Shishu Park to 'erase the sign of Pakistani generals' defeat'. He also claimed that he differed with Khaleda Zia on different issues.  
Prof Aftab in his speech stressed the need for changing the National Anthem because the song composed by Rabindranath Tagore does not reflect the hopes and aspirations of the nation. Dr Mahbubullah termed Khaleda Zia "half-educated and lacking maturity".  
Party sources said the hardliners have been trying to turn the BNP into an "extreme right-wing party in line with Jamaat-e-Islami and make it a camp of anti-liberation and pro-Pakistani elements. They are trying to place their men in key posts in BNP and its front organisations, the sources claimed.  
The sources said party activists at different levels have also demanded of the leadership to declare the three persons persona non grata in BNP.  
Many DU teachers complained to the BNP leadership that Dr Mahbubullah and Dr Aftab are responsible for defeat of the White Panel in the Dhaka University Teachers Association.  
The sources said the BNP leadership has informally instructed party leaders and activists at different levels not to allow them into offices of BNP and its front organisations.  
Meanwhile, BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan in a statement yesterday protested the remarks made by Gias Kamal Chowdhury and Prof Aftab Ahmed.  
Bhuiyan said Gias Kamal Chowdhury's remarks against late President Ziaur Rahman are "false, baseless, motivated and nothing but utterances by a mental patient".  
See page 11 col 3

## Failure to provide industrial loan JS body to suggest merger of BKB and BSRS

By M Shamsur Rahman  
The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance Ministry will suggest merger of two specialised banks for failing to provide industrial credit.  
The committee at a meeting yesterday observed that the two banks - Bangladesh Shilpa Bank (BSB) and Bangladesh Shilpa Rin Sangstha (BSRS) - lacked funds for providing industrial credit and were busy trying to realise its defaulted loans.  
The meeting observed that there was no justification in having two such large banks "just to realise loans", said a committee member.  
Quoting committee member ANM Mustafa Kamal, one source the two banks were established to finance industrial sector but they are unable to do, being burdened with default loans.  
"These banks are trying to realise their advances. If they cannot be given fresh funds, they might be merged," the source quoted Mustafa Kamal as telling the meeting.  
He also said that Committee Chairman Ali Ashraf appreciated the idea and decided to recommend merger of the two banks.  
Members of the committee were giving their views on the activities and financial positions of five specialised banks, detailed in a document.  
The committee also decided to discuss overall activities of the central bank and review implementation of its earlier decisions.  
Finance Secretary Dr Akbar Ali Khan said he needed one month to prepare and submit a report in this regard.  
The document on the five specialised banks said there is an overall shortfall of Tk 207.98 crore in provisioning against the loans and advances by the banks. Against Tk 6405.95 crore loans, there is provision of Tk 1655.85 crore while the requirement is Tk 1863.83 crore.  
See page 11 col 1



Eid craze: A shopkeeper demanded Tk one lakh for this gorgeous maroon-colour saree at the city's Rainak shopping mall yesterday. -Star photo

## Samad Azad, Jaswant Singh hold talks today

From Pallab Bhattacharya  
NEW DELHI, Dec 11: Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad and his Indian counterpart Jaswant Singh will hold talks here tomorrow on the whole range of bilateral relations between the two neighbours.  
Azad arrived here this evening from Calcutta where he attended a felicitation function for veteran Marxist leader and former West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu yesterday.  
The talks between Azad and Singh will set the tone for foreign secretary-level parleys due to start here on Wednesday.  
Bangladesh and India are having a longstanding friendship.  
See page 11 col 6

## Talks begin in Delhi tomorrow Foreign secys to meet on open-ended agenda

By M Anwarul Haq  
A two-day Foreign Secretary level talks between Bangladesh and India are due to begin in the Indian capital tomorrow.  
The talks are likely to concentrate on a wide range of bilateral issues including land boundary demarcation, trade imbalance and establishment of multi-modal communication links between the two countries, sources concerned said.  
Dhaka and Delhi are also expected to touch upon political, economic and security issues during the Foreign Secretary level talks being held after two and a half years.  
Observers consider the talks very crucial in shaping the course of bilateral relations in the immediate future.  
Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Shafi Sami will lead a 10-team member team at the meeting with his Indian counterpart Lalit Man Singh leading the other side. The Bangladesh team will include Syed Maudud Ali, Director General of South Asia Desk in the Foreign Ministry, and High Commissioner to India Mustafa Faruk Muhammad.  
Although the foreign secretaries will meet on an open-ended agenda, Dhaka will underscore the need for early completion of demarcation of some six and a half km of land boundary as per the Mujib-Indira accord in 1974, the sources said.  
Dhaka will also insist on taking effective measures to remove its serious trade imbalance with Delhi. It will reiterate that 25 categories of Bangladeshi items be given duty free access to Indian market, as agreed much earlier.  
Commerce Minister Tofail Ahmed while attending a seminar on 'Indo-Bangladesh Relations: The New Millennium' in Calcutta last week articulated the  
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**Inside Today**  
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**Dolly Democracy and Growing Despondency**  
Column: Heart of the Matter  
By Mansoor Mamoon  
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Spain: The death of a dictator and rebirth of a nation  
Page 5



BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia and JP senior presidium member Begum Rawshan Ershad at an iftar party hosted by Jatiya Party in the city yesterday. -Star photo

## Resignation of two HC judges yet to be accepted

By Special Correspondent  
The resignation letters of two Judges of the High Court are yet to be accepted by the President, court sources said yesterday.  
Justice Kazi Shafuluddin tendered resignation on November 10, citing personal reasons after what he said being superseded three times by his juniors as regards promotion.  
Justice Mohammad Latifur Rahman resigned on November 23, citing personal grounds. His name cropped up in the much discussed cassette case.  
With the resignation of two judges, death of one, retirement of one and promotion of one judge, the number of HC judges has come down to 40, the sources said.  
Meanwhile, Justice Mahmudur Rahman of the Supreme Court is due to retire today and Justice Kazi Ebadul Huq in the near future. Chief Justice Latifur Rahman is due to retire on February 28, the sources said.  
He is likely to be replaced by Justice Mahmudur Amin Choudhury, the senior most SC judge next to him, the sources added.  
The Law Ministry is processing the files for appointment of at least nine judges in the HC.  
Those will now be sent to the office of the President who appoints the judges.

## 'No last word in politics'

Rawshan Ershad yesterday said there is no last word in politics as BNP agreed to join planned movement for release of her jailed husband and party chief Ershad, reports UNB.  
Rawshan, Jatiya Party's senior presidium member, made the remarks when a newsman wanted to know from her how BNP would join hand with them in Ershad-release campaign as they had sued the former President in the Janata Tower corruption case.  
Chiefs and representatives of the four-party opposition alliance had a post-iftar parley at Asiatic Printers office in the evening.  
JP hosted the iftar in honour of the leaders of political parties, when the party chief remained in Dhaka Central Jail.  
Opposition leader Khaleda Zia, former first lady Rawshan Ershad, JP Secretary General Najjur Rahman Manjur, Jamaat former Ameer Prof Golam Azam, new Ameer Mattur Rahman Nizami and IOJ Secretary General Mufit Fazul Huq Aminec, among others, joined the consultation after taking iftar.  
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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Dec 12		5.13 pm
Dec 13	6-32 am	

**Prayer Timings**  
December 12

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-06	5-15
Zuhr	12-45	1-20
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-14	5-22
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

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**Sehri, Iftar timings**

Ramadan	Dec	Sehri	Iftar
15	12	5-07	5-16
16	13	5-08	5-17
17	14	5-08	5-17