



Workers give the Central Shaheed Minar a facelift yesterday ahead of observance of the International Mother Language Day on February 21.

### BSF guns down 4 Bangladeshis

AP, Kolkata

Four Bangladeshis were shot dead by the Indian Border Security Force on Thursday.

A group of 15 to 20 Bangladeshi nationals were trying to cross the border into India near the village of Pakshi, about 90 kilometers east of Kolkata at night, deputy inspector-general Rudra Pal Singh said.

The 'infiltrators' began throwing hand grenades when confronted by the Border Security Force. Four Bangladeshis were killed by retaliatory fire, he said.

Meanwhile, BSF at a flag meeting with BDR yesterday refused to hand over the bodies of the four Bangladeshis, says UNB.

BDR local commander N Siddiqui and his BSF counterpart EKM Croop along with their aides held the meeting near Mathurapur village in Meherpur at 11am that ended without any result.

BSF firing at about 8 pm Thursday left four Bangladeshis dead and three others wounded. The bodies were taken away by BSF jawans.

Those killed in BSF firing are Habibur Rahman, 25, Rezaul Haq, 40, Zamirul, 22, and Sadar Ali, 22, of village Khashmohal in Gangni upazila.

BSF alleged that the victims attempted to cross the border by cutting the barbed wire fence constructed by India along the border.

### 3 killed as pirates clash in Sundarbans

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Three-people were killed and 10 others injured in a gunfight between two gangs of pirates in the Sundarbans on Friday.

The pirates belonging to 'Aziz Bahini' of India and 'Shawkat Bahini' of Bangladesh clashed in the river Chankuri over control of a part of the forest.

One of the dead was identified as Nasir Ali, 28, of Harinagar village in Shyampur upazila, while two others could not be identified till 2 pm yesterday.

According to fisherman who witnessed the fierce gunbattle, two dead bodies and eight out of ten injured pirates were taken away by other Indian pirates.

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### Changes in laws finalised to ban polybags permanently

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A draft law incorporating major amendments to two environmental laws and aiming to permanently ban production, marketing and use of polythene shopping bags in the country has been finalised by the Ministry of Environment.

The issue has been included as number one agenda of tomorrow's Cabinet meeting.

Official sources said the Environment Ministry after elaborate discussions with officials concerned and policymakers of the ruling BNP brought some major changes to Bangladesh Environmental Conservation Act 1995 and Environmental Court Act 2000 to stop production, marketing and use of polybags.

The draft proposes up to 10 years' imprisonment and fine of Tk 10 lakh for production and marketing of polybags, a maximum 500-taka token fine for their use, and on-the-spot summary trial by mobile courts which will determine the punishment depending on the gravity of the infraction.

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## Poverty, inequality increased as country got globalised

### CPD seminar told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Bangladeshi economist working in an American university has said that during the period of rapid integration with the global economy, the incidence of poverty appeared to have increased and so have inequalities in the country.

Professor Azizur Rahman Khan of the University of California also said economic reforms in the country produced disappointing results in absence of a system "to induce entrepreneurs to invest in industries."

Lack of institutions to make the economy efficient and reduce transaction costs was also a reason behind the country's poor performance.

Inequalities increased in the country during the period of rapid globalisation, belying the theory. Inequality in income distribution, though relatively low by international standard, increased quite substantially both in rural and urban Bangladesh, he said.

Khan made a presentation on 'Bangladesh Economy in the Age of Globalisation' at the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) conference room in the city yesterday.

Moderated by CPD Chairman Professor Rehman Sobhan, former finance ministers SAMS Kibria, M Syeduzzaman, AMA Muhi, former Bangladesh Bank governor Dr M Farashuddin, economists Dr Wahiduddin Mahmud, Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, Dr Binayak Sen, MM Akash, Anu Muhammad, Dr Mustafizur Rahman, Salahuddin Ahmed and Omkar Shrestha of the Asian Development Bank and Zaidi Sattar of the World Bank also spoke on the occasion.

Khan also mentioned that the average per capita GDP ramped up from 1.46 per cent in the 1970s to 3.34 per cent in the late 1990s.

But the more than doubling of the annual growth rate of average living standard is largely due to demographic transition for which economic

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### Eid cattle markets

## DCC to lose Tk 50 lakh revenue as rival musclemen 'unite'

RAZIUR RAHMAN

Although politics kept them in rival camps, 'musclemen cum seasonal traders' belonging to BNP and Awami League have reached understanding on leasing at least 10 temporary cattle markets in the city from the DCC.

Because of this understanding, Dhaka City Corporation's revenue from cattle markets on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha has fallen by nearly Tk 50 lakh from that of last year.

Last year DCC earned Tk 1.54 crore revenue by leasing out 21 cattle markets. This year the amount would hardly exceed Tk one crore even after adding one more market to the 21, DCC sources said.

The DCC decided to lease through auction 22 spots in the city for four days for their use as cattle markets from Tuesday. So far 18 have been leased out. The rest four are in the process.

But out of these 18, the DCC had to re-tender 10 spots twice or thrice because of unusually low prices offered by bidders. As the deadline drew nearer, DCC had to settle at whatever prices offered for those.

This happened because of a nexus between the bidders either belonging to ruling BNP or opposition Awami League in making offers for the 10 spots. They offered prices much lower than last year's, the sources said.

"In some cases local political leaders belonging to rival political parties have reached understanding to get lease of cattle markets, offering remarkably lower prices," said a DCC Estate Department official.

From some spots DCC is getting even one fourth of the amount it got last year.

According to him, Golapbagh Math was leased out for Tk 14.6 lakh last year. This year DCC is getting only Tk 4.25 lakh.

DCC earned Tk 60 lakh from Nawab Yusuf Market at Naya Bazar, the

## Bush warns N Korea anew as he leaves for Asia

AP, Washington

President George W Bush said yesterday he planned to remind the world during a visit to the Korean Peninsula's demilitarised zone that North Korea seeks to "threaten freedom with weapons of mass destruction."

In a radio address aired just after he left the White House for a six-day trip to South Korea, Japan and China, Bush did not back down from his recent characterisation of North Korea as part of an "axis of evil," along with Iran and Iraq, that threatens US security.

But he steered clear of that phrase, which alarmed European allies and fueled anti-American sentiment in Iran.

"I will visit South Korea and travel to the Demilitarized Zone, one of the most dangerous places on Earth, where barbed wire marks a line dividing freedom and oppression," Bush said.

"The people of the south are now reaching out to the north in a spirit of friendship and reconciliation," Bush

said. "I support these efforts. Yet I will remind the world that America will not allow North Korea and other dangerous regimes to threaten freedom with weapons of mass destruction."

Bush planned to have lunch with some of the 38,000 American troops who help patrol the hostile border.

In an interview with South Korea's state-run KBS television, Bush said in Washington on Friday he did not believe Kim Jong Il "represents the will of the North Korean people."

"I long for peace on the Korean peninsula," Bush said. "But I am under no illusions. South Korean people are free and prosperous. North Korean people are starving and hopeless."

In his radio address, the president said he was also bearing a thank-you message for help from Asia following the attacks, and a progress report.

"The people of Tokyo, Seoul, and Beijing touched all our hearts in the days after September 11, with moving

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### Shanti murder Court order on bail petition of Haji Selim Feb 18

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka yesterday fixed February 18 for order on the bail petition of former Awami League MP Haji Mohammad Selim, an accused in the Shamsul Haque Santi murder case.

Judge Mollah Mostafa Kamal (in charge) did not pass any order on the issue as the conducting judge was on leave yesterday.

Earlier the defence lawyers had submitted a criminal appeal to the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, seeking bail.

The bail petition was rejected by

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## Sectarian conflict, land dispute led to Patiya gunfight

ABDULLAH-AL MAHMUD, Ctg

Sectarian conflict and a land dispute between madrassah teachers and students belonging to the Wahabi sect and local Sunni Muslims led to the fierce gun battle that left one college student killed and around 100 others injured at Patiya on Wednesday.

The incident was reportedly a fallout of the longstanding rivalry between the Madrassah Al Jameya Al-Islamia Patiya, an affiliate of Al Azha Madrassah of Egypt, and local people.

The row has continued since the establishment of the madrassah in 1938. The rivalry between the local

Sunni Muslims and the madrassah teachers and students belonging to the Wahabi community sparked a series of clashes, including the one in 1966, which left five people killed.

Moreover, the gradual expansion of the madrassah on the adjoining land irked local people. The purchase of the disputed land by the madrassah authorities had also been factored in Wednesday's incident, some local people alleged.

Local people claimed that the madrassah authorities mistakenly occupied a piece of land, which was not theirs. By contrast, the madrassah authorities claimed to have taken possession of the legally

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## Murder of aviation minister Victim of in-fighting for Afghan leadership?

AFP, Riyadh

Saudi Arabia is ready to extradite to Kabul three Afghan security officials it has arrested in connection with the murder of the aviation minister, a Saudi official said yesterday.

"Saudi Arabia will extradite the three men, after receiving a request for such a move from the interim Afghan government," the official told the wire service.

Saudi authorities arrested the three Afghans on their arrival Friday in the western city of Jeddah amongst a group of some 890 Muslim pilgrims who flew in from Kabul aboard two aircraft, he said.

The trio, including the head of National Security's political office, General Abdullah Jan Tawhidi, is wanted

in connection with the beating to death of interim Afghan aviation and tourism minister Abdul Rahman.

In Kabul, Omar Samad, spokesman for the Afghan foreign ministry, told AFP that "a number" of people, including government officials, had been rounded up yesterday.

"Some are merely being interrogated for information they may have about the incident, and they will be released. Others have been formally arrested," Samad said without giving figures.

Among those arrested, he added, were "people in positions of authority who did not carry out their jobs."

"As the investigation continues, we can expect the number of people being interrogated to increase," he

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### ANNOUNCEMENT

This is to inform our valued readers that the February 22 issue of Star Weekend Magazine will be published on Thursday (February 21), as the newspaper offices will remain closed on Friday on the occasion of the International Mother Language Day.

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Feb 17		5-55 pm
Feb 18	6-30 am	

### Prayer Timings

Feb 17		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-40	6-10
Zohr	12-45	1-20
Asr	4-15	4-30
Maghrib	5-59	6-03
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation