



### Kaifi Azmi passes away

Renowned Urdu poet and film lyricist Kaifi Azmi died in Mumbai yesterday after a prolonged illness. He was 82.

A founder of the Progressive Writers Association, Azmi is survived by his actress wife Shaukat Azmi, actress-politician daughter Shabana Azmi and cinematographer son Baba Azmi.

Born Akhtar Husian Rizvi in 1925 in a small town in Uttar Pradesh state, Azmi wrote his first poem at the age of 11.

He arrived in Bombay in 1943 to work with an Urdu paper and five years later began his career as a lyricist and screenwriter which was to produce some of Hindi cinema's most celebrated songs.

A Communist Party member and committed social activist, Azmi wrote many poems about the plight of the exploited, including the famous 'Makaan' which highlights a system where poor, homeless

At least 20 people were injured in a clash between the activists of BNP and Awami League at Keshabpur upazila headquarters yesterday.

Witnesses said the BNP-men ransacked and looted some 20 shops at Keshabpur bazaar and set ablaze upazila Awami League office during the clash.

The looted shops belong to AL supporters, locals said. Eleven of the injured, six of Jubo Dal and five of Jubo League, were admitted to Keshabpur health complex. Others were released after first aid.

Police seized a pick-up van and arrested its driver from the spot. A tense situation was prevailing in the area.

The seven Chinese nationals, who were arrested by Gulshan police for their alleged involvement in assaulting some policemen and ransacking the thana on Thursday, were released on bail from the CMM's Court yesterday.

The Chinese nationals are Chsneeng, Weizhng, Anyojen, Zhonglien Sheng, Yujubin, Panying Giang and Wangbin Chen.

Police also lodged a case against them under section-143/186/225/332 and 333 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC).

## Govt must act now to stop repeat of Meghna tragedy

### Things won't change if lawbreakers not dealt with firmly, believe people

**ABUL KALAM AZAD And MORSHED ALI KHAN, Back From Southern Region**

The May 3 launch disaster in the Meghna that left at least 350 people dead now dominates all discussions in the southern region of the country, where people mostly depend on river vessels for journey.

In tea stalls, grocery shops, educational institutions, offices and houses, people of all ages talk about the accident, the worst ever in the country. They also discuss with great sorrow the events following the disaster.

They painfully talk about virtually non-existent monitoring in the river transport sector and their topics

## NCTB justifies changes in textbooks, to raise prices

The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) plans to take up a series of measures to standardise textbooks through using better paper and attractive cover.

It is considering changing the size of the textbooks and introducing new covers to make textbooks more attractive for students, sources in the NCTB said.

Plans are also there to use standard paper and raise the grammage (weight) of paper to facilitate frequent use of textbooks. This may mean increased prices of textbooks.

They said the paper price has increased by Tk 100 per rim in the retail market, so if the NCTB wants to introduce better paper then there is no other alternative but to increasing the prices.

To check counterfeit, the NCTB

will introduce hologram on every books from the next academic year which may also raise the cost a little.

When asked about the impending increase of price and the planned measures, an NCTB official, on condition of anonymity, said, "We are holding meetings with the ministry in this regard but are yet to reach any decision."

However, the 'doctored facts' in the board books will remain unchanged, and students would continue learning the 'distorted' history.

Textbooks published by the NCTB for the academic year 2001 contained 'twisted facts' about the country's War of Independence mainly because of political influence, sources said.

The BNP-led coalition government has brought about changes in 18 books for primary and secondary levels, incorporating the ruling BNP's ideology into those books

### ASM NURUNNABI

Dhaka City has a number of sore spots which make living in and around these areas a veritable ordeal. Karwan Bazaar is one such spot presenting a spectacle of widespread encroachments on major thoroughfares and parks causing abominable squalor and congestion with makeshift structures covering a major part of the bazaar.

A large number of illegal traders are doing brisk business taking over streets, footpaths and public parks. Setting up makeshift shops spreading over the heart of the bazaar, they conduct a variety of retail businesses selling different kinds of vegetables, onions and spices like garlic, ginger, turmeric etc. Retail sales are carried out in bulk volumes of 5 kg per unit known as "palla".

The bazaar is more like a wholesale market on account of which truckloads of commodities of many

## DOWN TO EARTH

### A sad tale of two city areas

varieties from the outlying areas at some distance in the city come streaming into the bazaar area from early evening each day. These commodities are distributed by wholesalers to retailers who cater largely to the numerous city hawkers of vegetables, fish and other items.

The steady stream of incoming trucks laden with various goods turns the bazaar area into a filthy and an utterly unhealthy place. The overall environment of the bazaar with its damaged roads with numerous potholes can be very depressing, particularly in the rainy season.

The parking spaces for offices in the Karwan Bazaar have allegedly been taken over by encroachers while the authorities concerned turn

a blind eye, silenced by handsome kickbacks from the lawbreakers. On the fringes of the bazaar stands an array of impressive high-rise buildings of offices and business houses, presenting a striking contrast with the dingy surroundings.

In the midst of an important business district, the ill-organised and haphazard layout of the bazaar with its abominable environment is an eyesore to all who would like to see an important business centre grow with excellence.

There have been indications from authorities that Karwan Bazaar would be shifted elsewhere this year. It is felt that the planned shifting will be an important step in improving the overall look and environment of the place.

The other city area that has lately suffered in respects of appearance and atmosphere is the Uttara Model Township. Once a very pleasant place to live with suburban tranquillity, life in Uttara over the years has suffered greatly from social and environmental degradation.

Rajuk initiated the development of this township in the mid-sixties for middle income city dwellers. Lying by the Dhaka-Mymensingh-Tangail highway, road communication with public transport in the area has developed quite satisfactorily with the addition of the recently introduced Metro and Nirapod AC coaches, and 'Duranta' minibuses.

Rajuk maintained the road network within the township reasonably well until the mid-nineties. The development of shopping

### Communist leader Rabi Niogi dead

UNB, Sherpur

Biplobi Rabi Niogi, a veteran communist leader and one of the pioneers of anti-British and anti-Pakistan movements, died of old-age ailment and various complications at a clinic here yesterday. He was 94.

Rabi Niogi, who was the lifelong president of Sherpur Press Club and Sherpur correspondent of the Daily Sangbad, left behind three sons, one daughter and a host of admirers to mourn his death.

He spent 34 years in jail in different terms during the British period.

Also the founder of Sherpur CPB, Rabi Niogi was the lone Bangladeshi who had returned alive from the Andaman jail.

Rabi Niogi was directly involved in various anti-British movements, including Tanku Andolon, Tebhaga Andolon and Krishak Bidroho, apart from anti-Pakistan movement.

As his death news spread, leaders

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Khulna city Mayor Sheikh Tayebur Rahman (centre) gives away prize to a winner during the second round draw of The Daily Star-Rangs Toshiba World Cup Quiz at Zia Hall in the port city yesterday.

### Fresh attack on Hindu families in Natore

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

At least 50 people were injured when Hindus of Basantapur village came under renewed attack Wednesday night by criminals allegedly belonging to the BNP.

Sources said a gang of about 40 armed criminals riding motorbikes entered the village at about 11:30pm on Wednesday, firing gunshots and exploding crackers.

They then attacked the houses of 13 Hindu families leaving at least 50 injured, three of them critically.

The criminals looted a huge amount of cash and property including gold ornaments. They also ransacked the houses.

During the attack, the gang members harassed the Hindu women and beat up the men. They threatened to rape the women if villagers disclosed their identity to the newsmen.

Sources said the same gang went to the village the following day and warned the villagers of dire c o n s e

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## Water management plan hangs fire

### PMO finds 'many loopholes' in draft

**SHEHAB AHMED**

Despite an expenditure of Tk 65 crore under a World Bank aided project since 1998, the country is yet to have a National Water Management Plan (NWMP) for proper utilisation of its water resources, sources said.

After approval of a draft NWMP by the Executive Committee of the National Water Council on January 28, it is now at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) for review.

Sources at the PMO could not say how long they would take to complete the review and approve or reject the draft plan.

They said the draft plan has not been approved as it contains 'many loopholes' as regards proper use of water resources.

The plan prepared by local and foreign consultants said the country will be able to meet its requirements for the next 20 years with groundwater and will not need any surface water.

Even in emphasising harnessing groundwater, the consultants have given 'contradictory' recommendations, the sources said.

A British consultant, M/s Halcro, estimated 20 years' requirement at 60 billion cubic metre and the groundwater reserve at about 90 billion cubic metre. An American consultant, Harza and Company, estimated the reserve at 31 billion cubic metre. But local experts estimate it at about 21 billion cubic metre.

They suggested harnessing groundwater without

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On a rubbish-strewn stretch of the road adjacent to Ambar Shah Mosque at Karwan Bazar in the city are haphazardly parked rickshaw vans, narrowing down the road to traffic. And a banner calling for cleanliness goes unheeded, of course.

### 5 killed as train derails near London

REUTERS, Potters Bar, England

Five people were killed and 15 seriously injured yesterday when a passenger train derailed north of London in the latest disaster to hit Britain's rail network.

The commuter belt station at Potters Bar was a scene of devastation with "blood pouring everywhere," said one witness.

An ambulance spokeswoman told Reuters: "The latest casualty figures would indicate five fatalities, 15 with life-threatening or serious injuries and 70 walking wounded."

Police said the force of the accident was so great that the rear of the four-carriage train careered into the station.

One eyewitness said she saw a woman trapped under a railway bridge, which appeared to have collapsed.

Emergency crews had to dig her

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### EMS-sent parcel found minus contents

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The contents of a parcel sent through the Express Mail Service (EMS) of the Bangladesh Post Office were found missing.

The package -- No. EE 004593128 -- was sent on February 25 through the EMS at the General Post Office (GPO) by a student of Dhaka University (DU), Russel, to his brother Jakirul Islam living in the UK. The document was 'guaranteed' to reach the

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