

Cinema, circus bombed: 3 die

125 hurt in Satkhira, ISA link suspected

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

At least three people were killed and nearly 125 wounded in two bomb explosions at a cinema and a circus in Satkhira town last night.

According to sources, a powerful blast rocked Roxy Cinema at about 7:30pm, leaving one person spot-dead and 90 others injured.

Five minutes later, a second bomb went off at the Satkhira stadium where a circus was on. Two people died instantly while around 35 others were wounded.

Satkhira District Commissioner Abdul Matin Chowdhury and Superintendent of Police Rafiqul Islam told journalists that they suspect involvement of the Islamic Shashantantra Andolon (ISA) in the attack.

The ISA had been holding a series of agitation against the circus and the hall authorities, accusing them of holding 'indecent shows' and screening porno movies.

Witnesses said the first bomb exploded in the dress circle enclosure of the cinema, starting off a fire.

An unidentified man was roasted alive while 90 others received burn and splinter injuries.

Later, fire fighters brought the fire under control. The roof of the cinema collapsed due to the fire.

Five minutes after the cinema blast, unidentified miscreants threw a powerful bomb on the circus, organised as part of a local fair called "Gurpukurer Mela". Witnesses said the bomb was thrown at the women performers.

Two unidentified people died on

SEE PAGE 11 COL 3



A bulldozer gets ready to roll over a pile of phensidyl, used as narcotic, on the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court premises yesterday. Police recovered these from different parts of the capital.

Campus unrest part of a blueprint: PM

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday said campus unrest is being triggered in a planned manner to close down the educational institutions that provide opportunity of higher education for poor and talented students.

"The situation is preventing talents from flourishing," she lamented, apparently hinting at the recent flare-ups at some universities.

Pointing at the huge difference between tuition fees at government and private universities, the prime minister said children of rich and affluent families can afford to go to private institutions or study abroad.

"But the institutions where the poor but talented students pursue higher studies are being closed

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2

14th Asian Games
 BUSAN 2002

Asian Games open today

AFP, Busan

Sluggish ticket sales failed to deter Asian Games officials from giving a bullish prognosis for the sporting extravaganza here Saturday, 24 hours ahead of the opening ceremony.

Despite having hundreds of thousands of unsold seats, with around 60 per cent of the 2.7 million tickets still available, Busan Asian Games Organising Committee (BAGOC) officials were upbeat about the event's prospects.

"Ticket sales are increasing steadily, and for the major events

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

SHADY, SHODDY DEALS

The Daily Star serialises, in three parts, an expose of how a bank has been put in serious financial difficulties because of curious credit policy and mismanagement.

Al-Baraka dares where no one fares

INAM AHMED and SHAHRIAR KARIM

Sheer mismanagement and imprudent credit policy over the years have left Al-Baraka Bank Limited in a serious financial tangle.

Established in 1987, the bank now reels under huge non-performing assets and is tagged with a 'problem status' despite sustained efforts by the central bank.

According to the latest figures available with the Bangladesh Bank, as of June 30 this year, Al-Baraka has Tk 324.60 crore in classified loans, out of a total loan portfolio of nearly Tk 997.21 crore.

Of the classified loans, Tk 312.83 crore is bad debt, Tk 1.98 crore doubtful and Tk 9.79 crore substandard. The bank's accumulated loss stood Tk 86.37 crore on December 31 last year.

With the bulk of its loan unsecured, the bank now faces a provision shortfall of Tk 216.94 crore. As of June 30 this year, its provision requirement was Tk 224.20 crore, of which only Tk 7.26 crore is covered.

As of March 31 last year, the bank made a piffling Tk 1.39 crore profit against an accumulated loss of Tk 92.88 crore and a capital shortfall of Tk 28.41 crore. Its total investment

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

Simi suicide case Cop, four others get one-year jail term

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A police official and four others have been sentenced to one-year imprisonment and another accused has been acquitted in the Simi suicide case.

The convicts are Sub-Inspector (SI) Abul Bashar of Khilgaon police station in the city, Akibur Rahman Khalil, Mohammad Ripon, Mofazzal Hossain and Enayet Kabir Doel. Enayet Chowdhury has been acquitted.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Shahidul Islam of Dhaka delivered the verdict yesterday. Simi Banu, 21, a final year stu-



Simi Banu, 21, a final year student of Narayan Institute of Fine Arts, committed suicide on

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4