

## Prothom Alo, StanChart honour students

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prothom Alo and Standard Chartered Bank yesterday accorded a reception to students who secured the first five positions in the merit list under each of the seven educational boards in this year's Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations.

Accompanied by their proud parents and guardians, students who won the coveted positions under Dhaka, Chittagong, Comilla, Rajshahi, Jessore, Khulna and Barisal boards gathered at the city's Chartered Accountant (CA) Auditorium where the reception was

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PHOTO: STAR

The Prothom Alo and the Standard Chartered Bank accord a reception to achievers of the first five positions in the merit list in the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examinations at a function at the Chartered Accountant (CA) Auditorium in the city yesterday. Prof. Muzaffar Ahmed, Prof. Wahiduddin Mahmud, Prof. Abdullah Abu Sayeed and actress Subarna Mustafa are seen with the achievers.

## AL concern at arrest of Khaleque

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition Awami League has expressed deep concern at the arrest of former state minister and the party's Khulna city unit general secretary Talukdar Abdul Khaleq, MP, and Faridpur Municipality Chairman and AL's district unit joint convener Hasibul Hasan Lavlu.

In a joint statement yesterday, acting president of the party Abdus

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## Hasina returns this morning

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League (AL) President and Leader of the Opposition in Parliament Sheikh Hasina returns home this morning.

She is likely to reach Zia International Airport at 6.10 am by a British Airways flight from Brussels via London.

Leaders and activists of AL and its front organisations will receive her at the airport, party sources said.

Sheikh Hasina left Dhaka on October 22 on a 12-day tour of Europe and USA.

# Trust vital before talks with Pakistan: Vajpayee

AFP, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee ruled out early talks with arch-rival Pakistan over disputed Kashmir, saying yesterday that creating an atmosphere of trust was vital to resuming dialogue.

"Today, nations of the world are putting pressure that we hold talks (with Pakistan)," Vajpayee told reporters here.

"But we want to say that for holding such discussions, an atmosphere of trust should be created first. You should have faith in the other party.

"Intentions should not be doubted... only then can a dialogue succeed and the crisis be resolved," Vajpayee said during the inauguration of a housing complex for relatives of soldiers killed during a bitter border conflict between India and Pakistan between May-July 1999 in Kashmir's Kargil region.

The two South Asian rivals were precariously close to a fourth war over Kashmir at the time, when Pakistan-backed intruders captured key peaks on the icy heights of the Kargil mountains on the Line of Control (LoC), a de facto border dividing the disputed region.

More than 1,000 combatants died on both sides in the six-week skirmish, which left the world jittery because it came about a year after Islamabad and New Delhi had each tested nuclear weapons.

New Delhi accuses Islamabad of arming, training and financing Islamic rebels battling India's rule in Kashmir, which has claimed more than 37,500 lives. Islamabad insists it provides no more than diplomatic and moral support.

The militant incursions are at the heart of the latest tensions, which have seen both sides mobilise

around one million troops along their shared frontier since December, after a deadly attack on India's parliament was blamed on Pakistan-based rebels. The nuclear-armed neighbours announced plans in mid-October to withdraw troops from the internationally-recognised stretch of their common boundary following intense international diplomatic pressure.

On Friday, Vajpayee recalled a trip he made to Lahore in February 1999, for peace talks with his then Pakistani counterpart Nawaz Sharif, months before the Kargil conflict broke out.

"Peace talks in Lahore and war in Kargil. This was betrayal," Vajpayee said. "Our neighbour chose a spot (to attack) that was comparatively not very secure."

Vajpayee's comments came in the wake of accusations by Foreign Minister Yashwant Sinha that Pakistan is using terrorism as a "pre-dialogue negotiating tactic."

"We will be satisfied only when there is a complete stop to cross-border terrorism," Sinha told the BBC's Asia Today programme Thursday.

"Until then, there is no conducive atmosphere for talks."

## Kuwait-Sylhet direct flight

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Biman Bangladesh Airlines will launch a direct flight on Kuwait-Sylhet route via Abu Dhabi today.

The BG 020 aircraft will depart Kuwait today and reach Sylhet Osmani International Airport at 10.05 am tomorrow (Sunday).

According to the schedule, the flight will arrive at Sylhet Airport at 10.05 am every Sunday, sources said.

## Cox's Bazar, Teknaf Foreign investors invited to develop ecotourism

NURUL ALAM, Chittagong

The government has launched a campaign inviting foreign investors to develop ecotourism in Cox's Bazar and Teknaf, said official sources.

Campaigns through foreign missions of Bangladesh and other channels have already started as part of the effort.

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Mohammad Nasiruddin told The Daily Star that the Malaysian tourism minister assured the Bangladesh government of persuading investors of his country into developing the tourist resort along the Naaf River.

"He assured me at a meeting in Dhaka two months ago ... and I gave

him a reminder later," said Nasiruddin.

"Also, we have received responses from entrepreneurs of Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain."

"We are also approaching many other foreign entrepreneurs and local investors ... we want to develop ecotourism in Cox's Bazar to attract more foreign tourists and earn more revenues," he said.

The state minister issued an order on an investment of Tk 100 crore to develop the runway of the Cox's Bazar airport.

"We will take steps to make the flight service to and from Cox's Bazar easier and more comfortable. We will link the Cox's Bazar skyline with international airways," he assured.

## 3 criminals held after gunfight with police at Gulistan

BSS, Dhaka

Police arrested three listed criminals with arms and ammunition from Gulistan Hawkers Market in the early hours of yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, Sutrapur Police, led by Sub-Inspector (SI)

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## BNP factions in Magura clash: 15 hurt

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Magura

At least 15 people including a woman were injured, three seriously, in a clash between two factions of the local unit of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) in Sreerampur village under Magura Sadar Upazila yesterday morning.

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## Derailment Dhaka-Ctg train service disrupted for 4 hours

UNB, Gazipur

Train service on Dhaka-Chittagong route remained suspended for about four hours yesterday as luggage van of a passenger train derailed near Naichata Railway station.

Railway sources said none was injured in the mishap. However, UNB Narsingdi correspondent said 25 passengers were injured in the accident.

Three of the injured were admitted to Kaliganj upazila health complex.

Railway officials said the luggage van of the Dhaka-bound 11 down train coming from Noakhali derailed at about 5:30am.

A relief train from Dhaka reached the spot and put the derailed van back on track, restoring train communication at 9:30am.

Causes of the mishap could not be ascertained immediately.

## UP member abducted in Rangamati

BSS, Rangamati

A Union Parishad member in Naniarchar upazila of the district was abducted early yesterday.

Manikyadhan Chakma, 40, a member of Naniarchar Sadar Union Parishad, was picked up by a gang of miscreants from his house at Kalyanpara. The kidnappers later demanded Tk one lakh for his release.

The UP member was abducted allegedly by the armed youths belonging to the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), the sources said.

## DOWN TO EARTH

# Look before you eat

ASM NURUNNABI

In today's fast-paced life in the capital Dhaka City, different makeshift restaurants by the road as well as standard eating houses preparing fast food and snacks cater to the needs of various kinds of customers who are hard-pressed to find enough time to cook for themselves. Due to the ongoing rapid urbanisation and industrialisation, people have become ever more busy with their jobs which leave them very little time to indulge in culinary delights in the privacy of their homes and thus resort to restaurant food to satisfy their hunger. This aspect has become an inseparable part of our city life.

But a large number of ordinary citizens who scrape by on a meager earning cannot afford to spend money on food in expensive restaurants and thus can be seen flocking to the numerous makeshift shops by the road selling different kinds of food items. Many such customers are migrants from rural areas who have settled down under extremely poor conditions in urban slums where basic services are non-existent or very inadequate at best. The lack of water and electricity as well as other facilities to prepare food at home, the distance between home and workplace, the time constraint and above all the economy factor contribute to the growing dependence on cheap food outside.

There is hardly any place in the city where one won't run into roadside eateries and makeshift food outlets. These cheap food joints have mushroomed all over the city, specially by the streets of Motijheel, Dilkusha, Sadarghat, Tejgaon and many other busy places like bus stops, railway stations, launch terminals, etc.

However, there is a good reason for concern inasmuch as the poor culinary standards in many of these food joints where food preparation and handling fall far below the proper hygiene and sanitary standards. There is also no agency to monitor the sanitary practices at these food outlets. The raw materials used for food preparation are mostly not up to the standard so as to make them cheaper.

Dhaka is experiencing one of the highest urban growth rates in the region. Commensurate with this trend, the city-dwellers' dependence on prepared food has grown by leaps and bounds. But sadly, in most cases, the suppliers of such food do not maintain a minimum standard of hygiene. And the lack of quality control by the relevant authorities poses a very serious health risk for consumers.

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