

## Capt (retd) Huda gets bail in Serniabat murder case

UNB, Dhaka

The Supreme Court yesterday granted an interim bail to Capt (retd) Nurul Huda, an accused in the Abdur Rab Serniabat murder case.

A four-member appellate division bench headed by Chief Justice Mainur Reza Chowdhury passed the order upon an appeal against the High Court order.

Water Resources Minister and close relative of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Abdur Rab Serniabat was killed along with eight members of his family on August 15, 1975 at his Minto Road official residence in the city.

Huda who faces trial after two decades was arrested on October 22, 1996.

Advocate Khondker Mahbub Hossain appeared on behalf of Huda.

## JSD activist shot dead in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

An activist of the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) was gunned down by Biplobi Communist Party (BCP) cadres at village Khordoailchara in sadar upazila yesterday.

The victim was identified as Sabur Mondol, 40, an activist of JSD local unit.

According to sources, a gang of ten BCP cadres stormed into the house of Sabur at about 2 pm and picked him up at gunpoint.

They took Sabur to a paddy field and shot him point blank. He died on the spot.

On receiving information, police rushed to the spot, recovered the body and sent it to Kushtia sadar hospital.

No case was filed in this connection till 8.30 pm yesterday.

## Graft case Charges framed against ex-PSC chief, 4 others

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The Special Court for Dhaka Division yesterday framed charges against former Public Service Commission (PSC) Chairman Prof Mostafa Chowdhury and four others in a graft case.

The four others are former PSC member Mohammad Forhad Hossain Khan, former PSC Controller of Examinations Kabirul Alam Khan, former PSC Director Sharfuddin Ahmed Khan and Assistant Police Super (probationer) Syed Nurul Islam.

The accused pleaded not guilty and demanded justice before the court.

Judge Mohammad Azizul Haq fixed January 18 for trial of the case.

In the case filed with Kafur police station, it has been alleged that Prof Mostafa Chowdhury, Forhad Hossain Khan, Kabirul Alam Khan and Sharfuddin Ahmed Khan were involved in illegally allowing Syed Nurul Islam another accused in the case, to participate in the 20th BCS examination under the "freedom fighters" children's quota, producing fake documents. Nurul Islam allegedly submitted papers showing him as a son of freedom fighter although his father was not a freedom fighter.

The four accused also helped Nurul Islam to get the post of assistant police super, the FIR said.

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### Sehri, Iftar timing

Ramadan	Dec	Sehri	Iftar
26	2		5-14
27	3	5-01	5-14
28	4	5-02	5-14

	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Dec 2		5-10 pm
Dec 3	6-25 am	

### Prayer Timings

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-00	5-10
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-14	5-24
Esha	7-30	7-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

# Non-payment of VAT Legal steps against 59 real estate companies soon

RAFIQ HASAN

The government is going to take stern action against 59 real estate companies for 'not paying' around Tk 26 crore in value added tax (VAT) for long.

Certificate cases will be filed against these companies to realise the overdue amount, according to National Board of Revenue (NBR) sources.

An NBR investigation recently revealed that these companies did not pay VAT, an allegation contested by the firms.

The government excluded the real estate sector from paying VAT in the current budget. But a huge amount remained overdue against their previous transactions, according to sources.

These firms were served with demand notices and reminders for VAT payment without any result, the sources said.

When contacted, President of the Real Estate and Housing Association of Bangladesh (REHAB) Dr Toufiq M Seraj said the VAT remained unpaid because of dispute over assessment.

He told The Daily Star that the housing companies are ready to pay the overdue VAT, but demand notices were served upon many companies with wrong assessment.

"We are consulting with our lawyers for action against the NBR," he said.

The dispute over VAT assessment arose as the NBR calculated the amount taking into account all the flats under a project without excluding those not sold, he said.

Some 30 to 40 per cent of flats under any project are not sold at all and the landowner gets them for free in

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Dhaka City Corporation Ward Commissioner Khwaja Habibullah Habib lines up (third from left) with two others arrested by the army in the city Saturday night.

# Four in race for post of AL general secretary

REAZ AHMAD

With the central council less than a month away, speculation is rife within the Awami League ranks about the possible successor to the party general secretary, Zillur Rahman.

Sheikh Hasina, who has already served as many as five terms as the AL president since her homecoming in 1981 after a six-year self-exile following assassination of her father Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in 1975, is certain to retain the party presidency during the belated council, billed for December 26.

As Hasina faces no challenge for the presidency, competition for the

general secretary is the focal point at the moment.

Zillur has already been the general secretary twice - during the period of Bangabandhu and then from 1997 till date. Party workers are now busy working out who will replace him.

Sources in the party hinted that as many as three members of the party presidium - Abdul Jalil, Abdur Razzak and Amir Hossain Amu - might become candidates for the position.

Besides, much to the surprise of the AL old guards, the party's sports secretary Obaidul Kader might also vie for the post, representing the younger generation of party leader-

ship.

Though they have not officially declared their candidatures yet, sources told The Daily Star that so far Abdul Jalil stood out to be the most formidable candidate among the old guards, with Kader being a challenger representing the young Awami Leaguers.

Earlier, a meeting of the AL Central Working Committee (ALCWC) on November 11 decided that the party councillors coming from across the country would elect a new central committee of the party through voting on December 26.

It also formed a three-member election commission to oversee the

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# Two burned to death inside brick kiln in Rajshahi?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police yesterday recovered "remains of two living beings" from a brick kiln near the city.

With this, the allegation that two persons were burned to death inside the brick kiln may come true.

"We recovered remains of two living beings from inside the kiln and sent those to experts for confirmation," Rajshahi Metropolitan Police Commissioner Abdul Mannan told newsmen yesterday.

Those were recovered at around 3pm yesterday following a thorough search inside the kiln after putting out the huge fire.

The remains are suspected to be those of Ramesh Sarkar Vedlu, 24, son of Debendranath Sarkar and Siddique Hossain, 30, son of Nur Muhammad of Lalitapur area of the city.

They were missing since they went to the brick kiln at around 9:00pm on November 26.

Anwar Hossain Anar, a contractor and local BNP leader, owns the Auto Brick Kiln.

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## Duration of army drive to be decided after PM's return, says Moudud

BSS, Dhaka

Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Barrister Moudud Ahmed yesterday said the decision on whether the joint drive should continue till the Union Parishad elections will be taken after the prime minister returns home.

"The UP election will be held according to the new schedule and the government will extend all necessary support for it," he said in a press briefing in his ministry here.

Replying to a question, the law minister said the existing laws of the land are enough and no new law will be needed to try on charge of treason.

He also termed a report published in a newspaper on treason as baseless.

"It will really be good, if the opposition leader sues the government, although the matter is absolutely her own affair," he said while replying to another question.

Moudud said "the propaganda" she has been making abroad against the country and the people in last one year could be proved in the court.

The law minister also urged the people to elect honest and dedicated persons in the next Union Parishad election.

## President assents to Speedy Trial Tribunal Bill

BSS, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed has assented to nine bills which were passed in the fifth session of the eighth Jatiya Sangsad (JS), a JS press release said here yesterday.

The bills are Non-Government Educational Institute Teachers and Employees Welfare Trust (Amendment) Bill, 2002, Non-Government Educational Institute Teachers and Employees Retirement Benefit Bill, 2002, Speedy Trial Tribunal Bill, 2002, Cooperative Association (Amendment) Bill, 2002, The Arms (Amendment) Bill, 2002, The Explosive Substances (Amendment) Bill, 2002, Narcotics Control (Amendment) Bill, 2002, Vested Property Return (Amendment) Bill, 2002 and The Bangabandhu Award Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2002.

## Govt should quit if army needed to rule country: Hasina

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gopalganj

The Awami League (AL) President and Leader of the Opposition in parliament Sheikh Hasina yesterday said if the army was required to rule the country, then the BNP-Jamaat alliance government need not remain in power.

Labelling the ruling alliance as anti-democratic, the opposition leader advised them to step down immediately.

Hasina, on a visit to her ancestral home at Gopalganj, was addressing a brief rally in front of the district AL office.

She alleged the present government consists of those who at different times had vowed to turn Bangladesh into a 'Taliban' nation.

Hasina said on resuming office, the government started acts of repression on the AL leaders and

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## Written test results for appointment of pry teachers published

Results of the written examination for appointment to the post of assistant teacher in government primary schools have been published, said a PID handout yesterday.

A total of 1,05,732 candidates have been selected to appear at the oral examination.

The final selection will be made as per the quota allocation in the recruitment rules and the merit list determined from the aggregate of marks obtained in both written and oral exams.

Successful candidates will be informed about the venue, date and time of the oral exam.



PHOTO: STAR

Cine celebrities lead a World AIDS Day rally in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday. The rally was organised to raise awareness of the killer disease.

# Viqarunnisa University hits a dead end

## Govt detects irregularities, revokes licence

STAR REPORT

The government has cancelled the permission of Viqarunnisa University (VU) home to 133 students upon detection of malpractices.

The Ministry of Education in a notification on Saturday showed a series of malpractices and cancelled the permission under the Private University (amendment) Act, 1992.

The university was established mostly with infrastructure and funds

of the Viqarunnisa Noon School and College (VNSC) for a five-year run with some conditions.

But upon a VNSC complaint about transfer of its funds and land to the university, the ministry formed a committee to probe the irregularities.

"The committee has recommended cancellation of the permission as it detected numerous malpractices, which breach the condition of the temporary permission," said a key official of the ministry.

He, however, said the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the authorities concerned have been asked to cooperate so that the university students could enrol at other private universities.

The notification also abrogated the university's authority to encash Tk 5 crore deposited with a bank. The official said, "Government approval will be required to encash the funds."

The investigation committee

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# Agrani Bank lags way behind

## Defaulted loans, operating loss bloat

STAR REPORT

It was Agrani Bank's turn yesterday and Bangladesh Bank Governor Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed once again had a shock.

At a meeting yesterday to assess the financial position of the bank, the governor found that the bank's defaulted loans have increased significantly thanks to two large defaulter groups.

During June-September period of this year, Agrani's classified loan portfolio ballooned by Tk 48 crore

and its classified portfolio as percentage of total loans has become an unsustainable 43.25 per cent.

Agrani had a target to make Tk 52 crore in operating profit in the first nine months of the year. Instead, it is bogged down with Tk 29 crore in loss.

The governor was shocked at the dismal performance of the public sector bank. He inquired if Agrani had taken any step to adjust Tk 270 crore loans of two big groups as promised before.

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# 2 foreigners, not journalists held, says PIO

UNB, Dhaka

No foreign journalists were arrested but two foreigners were held as NGO activists for their suspected involvement in "subversive acts", Principal Information Officer Khondker Manirul Alam said yesterday.

"No foreigners were arrested, but police arrested two foreign NGO activists on charges of anti-state activities," he said at a press briefing at its office.

Khondker Alam, who was talking about the ongoing army-led joint-drive across the country, said some 1324 arms and 27,630 rounds of ammunition were seized and 7,768 people arrested so far during the

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