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# Revenue shortfall at Ctg customs house prompts secret probe

NURUL ALAM, Chittagong

The government has launched a secret probe into the Tk 525-crore shortfall in revenue collection by the Chittagong Customs House (CCH) in the last fiscal year (FY), despite an increase in import traffic.

In FY04 the house realised a Tk 9,645-crore revenue against a target of Tk 10,170 crore.

Sources said the National Board of Revenue (NBR) was amazed at the

failure, as CCH had even exceeded its revenue target in the previous fiscal year. In FY03 CCH collected Tk 8,888 crore in revenue, Tk 288 crore more than the targeted amount of Tk 8,600 crore.

The NBR has asked the customs house in the port city to explain the shortfall, a high-ranking customs official said.

According to official documents, the Chittagong Port handled 18.98 million metric tons of imported

goods in FY04, up from 18.31 million metric tons in FY03.

The number of cargo ships calling at the port also marked an increase from 1,683 in FY03 to 1,748 cargo vessels in FY04.

Intelligence agencies are now at work to uncover the suspected nexus between unscrupulous importers, clearing and forwarding agents and corrupt customs officials in evading duties through false

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## Rab nabs five Ctg criminals, recovers arms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Members of the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested five notorious criminals with firearms and ammunition in the city's Muradpur area early yesterday.

Acting on a tip-off, a Rab team raided Ambia Colony under Panchlaish Police Station at about 4:00am and arrested the criminals belonging to Satkania based infamous 'Ahmadya Bahini'.

They recovered one revolver loaded with five bullets, one bullet of .303 rifle and eight bullets of M-16 rifle from their possession.

The arrestees are Mohammad Nasiruddin alias Hasan Mahmud Nasir, 22, of Chakrai Rajakhali, Mohammad Ansar Ahmad, 22, of Reazuddin Bazar, Mohammad Golam Rahman alias Bashar, 24, of Hathazari, Didar, 24, of Fatikchhari and Mohammad Fazlul Karim, 23, of Rangunia.

## Bangladesh among top finishers in US visa lottery

AFP, Washington

Bangladesh, Nigeria, Poland and Ethiopia were the top finishers in the US visa lottery, which granted 50,000 permanent residence visas, or "green cards," allowing recipients to live and work in the United States, the US State Department said Thursday.

The "diversity lottery," held each year under the US Immigration and Nationality Act, distributes the visas to residents of countries which have low immigration rates to the United States.

Applicants were selected at random from a total of some 9.5 million applications submitted from November 1 to December 30, 2003, said the State Department.

Bangladesh got 7,404 visas, Nigeria 6,725, Poland 6,211 and Ethiopia 6,060.

Countries with heavy immigration to the United States, including Canada, China (minus Hong Kong and Taiwan), Colombia, Pakistan, The Philippines, Russia, South Korea, Britain (minus Northern Ireland) and Vietnam, were excluded from the lottery.



Black stinking sewage water mixed with floodwater swamps the road near Fakirapool Bazaar in the capital yesterday as the rivers surrounding Dhaka continue to swell.



Rescuers work by the train which ran off track near the village of Makeke, west of Istanbul, early yesterday. Thirty-six people were killed and 60 injured when the train crashed on its way from Istanbul to the capital Ankara on Thursday.

# Law soon to pave way for electronic business

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

The government will soon introduce a law -- Information Technology Act -- to pave the way for electronic transaction and digital signature and to combat cyber crimes.

Electronic transaction will allow businesses and banks to settle transaction electronically and digital signature will enable users to transfer cash online via Internet without physical movement, sources said.

"A draft of the Act has been finalised and it will be placed before the cabinet soon for approval," a top official of the Ministry of the Science

and Information Communications Technology told The Daily Star yesterday.

The Law Commission initially prepared the draft Act and the ministry finalised it incorporating stakeholders' views and taking into account the latest development in the sector.

The central bank helped prepare the draft Act.

The country has an ICT policy, introduced in October 2002. The government now seeks to transform the policy into an Act to cater for the present-day need, a senior official said.

"We need to have a law to create an opportunity for electronic trans-

action and digital signature to facilitate e-commerce," he added.

The business circle, mainly the ICT industry, was pressing the government for such a law.

Ahmed Hasan Jewel, vice-president of Bangladesh Computer Society, hoped the enactment would give a boost to e-commerce.

"Law-enforcement agencies would not be able to curb cyber crimes without a law like the one going to be introduced," an official said. He however pointed out the rate of such crimes in the country is still insignificant but it shows an upward trend in developed countries.

# 2 Bangladeshis shot dead by BSF in Kushtia

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Indian border security force (BSF) gunned down two Bangladeshis at Udaynagar frontier in Daulatpur upazila in the early hours of yesterday.

The dead are cattle traders Rafiqul Islam alias Rafiq, 35, and Mantu Bapari, 32, of village Udaynagar in Daulatpur upazila of Kushtia district.

According to Bangladesh rifles (BDR) of Mirpur Sector, BSF men of Damkula camp in Murshidabad opened fire on an engine boat carrying cattle from Udaynagar border through the river Padma at about 3:30am.

Rafiq and Mantu died instantly, while boatman Ratan escaped unhurt jumping into the river.

The BSF men took away the Mantu's body.

Police recovered Rafiq's body in

the morning and sent it to Kushtia General Hospital for autopsy.

When contacted, BDR Mirpur Sector commander said he has sent a letter to the BSF protesting the incident and asked for holding a flag meeting.

A tense situation was prevailing in Kushtia, Meherpur and Rajshahi border areas.

AFP from Kolkata adds: Indian border guards in the last six months have pushed back around 21,000 Bangladeshis after they crossed into Indian territory, the chief of the country's border guard said here Thursday.

Border Security Force (BSF) chief Ajai Raj Sharma also said an ambitious project to fence off Bangladesh's borders has also helped decrease illegal migration from the neighboring country by 25 percent.

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# BADC to go growing seeds as it gets fund

REAZ AHMAD

Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) has at last received a government allocation of Tk 100 crore to clear dues of several hundred 'contract farmers and farm workers' and start its seed-growing activities soon.

The BADC has to pay 5 percent interest on the funds it received after months of persuasion with the higher authorities.

Sources in the Ministry of Agriculture said the BADC owes about Tk 24 crore to seed growers and it has to pay that before going for fresh deals with them to produce and supply 15,500 tonnes of rice seeds for the next boro season.

BADC sources however say the corporation has Tk 248 crore due with the government on the count of subsidy to farmers on seeds, fertilisers and irrigation.

For years, the state-owned semi-autonomous corporation operated as a state monopoly on irrigation and fertiliser and seed marketing, but privatisation has recently shrunk its activities.

Officials of the BADC said the government allocation is a 'bailout fund' for the BADC although it carries interest.

Meanwhile, the budget for the current fiscal year has doubled farm subsidy to Tk 600 crore from Tk 300 crore last year and the agriculture ministry has also planned to raise BADC's seed-supply capacity to 10 percent from five percent now.

Although the corporation now supplies only 5 percent of cereal seeds, it is credited with supplying the best quality seeds.

Contacted, BADC Chairman Mohammad Ismail said they would now go for seed production as they received funds.

# DU move to recruit two lecturers violating rules

HASAN JAHD TUSHER

The Dhaka University (DU) authorities have allegedly taken a move to recruit two lecturers in population science department -- one lacking requisite qualifications and the other getting preference over a candidate with better academic records.

The authorities had earlier advertised for recruitment of three lecturers and two assistant professors in the department and now selected for appointment two of the candidates for the posts of lecturer in violation of rules, department sources said.

Of the two, one is Mahabubul Anwar, an administrative/finance assistant of a departmental project, who got second class both in BSS and MSS in sociology and GPA 3.61 in MSS in population science (equivalent to second class). His position was second class 75th in BSS and 143rd in MSS in sociology.

There were properly qualified candidates for the post.

DU rules say at least one first

class in BSS or MSS is the minimum requirement for applying for the post of lecturers.

Asked about the alleged violation of rules, Chairman of the department Prof. Shahed Hasan said he could not talk about any candidate now.

Sources also alleged the university authorities reformed the Coordination and Development Committee (C&D) of population science department and took an initiative to make GPA 3.50 equivalent to first class to pave the way for recruitment of Mahabubul. But the initiative on GPA failed due to

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# New group to transmit Star TV channels

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

MGH Infocomm Limited (MIL), a sister concern of MGH Group, will distribute and transmit 11 STAR Television channels in Bangladesh.

Anis Ahmed, managing director of MIL, told a press conference at the Hotel Sonargaon yesterday that MIL was appointed as the sole distributor of the channels.

"We signed an agreement with the Asian Broadcasting FZ-LLC (ABF), a subsidiary of STAR Group, on July 1 on three-year channel distributorship," Anis said.

ABF terminated STAR Group's

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**Ahsania Mission Cancer & General Hospital**

**Request for Donation**

Dhaka Ahsania Mission being a non-profit voluntary organization cannot provide necessary financing for the hospital from its own sources. It therefore, requests all benevolent persons and organisations both at home and abroad to donate generously for the hospital. Any amount of donation will be received with importance. With one time donation of Tk 10.00 lakh one can be a Sponsor of the hospital. One can also dedicate bed, ward, cabin etc. in memory of his/her near and dear ones by making donations at the following rates:

**Cost of Sponsorship, Bed, Ward and Cabin for AMCH**

Sponsorship	Tk. 10,00,000.00	10-Bed Ward	Tk. 40,00,000.00
Bed	Tk. 5,00,000.00	Twin-Bed Cabin	Tk. 10,00,000.00
5-Bed Ward	Tk. 20,00,000.00	One OT	Tk. 60,00,000.00

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3rd Floor	27,222	272.22	the ground floor of the
4th to 10th Floor each	27,201	272.01	hospital with Tk. 4 crore.

Cost are only for Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing and all built in casework, furniture and requisite medical devices costs have not been included.

Contact : Dhaka Ahsania Mission  
 House # 19, Road # 12 (new), Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1209  
 Phone : 8115909, 8119521, 9123402, 9123420  
 Fax : 8113010, 8118522  
 e-mail : dambgd@bdonline.com

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