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Ex-air force chief Jamal stripped of air marshal rank

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has stripped former air force chief Jamal Uddin Ahmed of his rank of air marshal citing 'unlawful elevation to the position' as the reason, said a defence ministry press release.

The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), press wing of the defence ministry, issued the press release yesterday.

Earlier a week ago, former army chief Mustafizur Rahman too was stripped of his four-star general rank.

A gazette notification, approved by the president and published on October 17, 2004, declared the promotion of Jamal Uddin Ahmed to air marshal void.

From October 17 on, his designation would be air vice marshal (retired), said the ISPR.

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40-45 varsities way behind prerequisites

UGC chairman tells on performance of pvt institutions after probe

TAWFIQUE ALI

Most private universities in the country have miserably failed to serve the purposes for which they were set up, Chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC) Prof M Asaduzzaman said yesterday.

The objectives of involving the private sector in the field of university education were to impart quality education, create scope for job-oriented education and facilitate

more access to and bring competitiveness in higher education.

"But the most deplorable fact is that 40 to 45 such institutions out of 52 have not yet met fully the prerequisites laid down by the government under the Private University Act, 1992," Asaduzzaman told The Daily Star.

"We have found the performance of only a couple of institutions satisfactory," said Asaduzzaman, who headed a high-powered

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Open market sale of rice from Oct 21

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to start the open market sale (OMS) of coarse rice at Tk 13 a kg across the country from October 21.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Ministry of Food and Disaster Management with the Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne

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Shop with Altaf to buy cheap

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Want to buy vegetables and essential items cheap? Cheaper by at least Tk 2-10? Then shop with Commerce Minister Altaf Hossain Choudhury.

When the minister went to New Market yesterday to check the prices of essentials, panicky traders immediately quoted prices lower than what they actually are.

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Price mismatch mystery

Consumers in capital are paying as high as four times the growers get for their produce because of extortion, cartel

STAR REPORT

If reports from the fields are something to go by, there persists a wide disparity between the prices that the northern growers are getting for their produce and the prices consumers in Dhaka are now paying for those.

While growers in Rangpur are selling aubergine at Tk 20 a kg, retailers at Dhaka's kitchen markets are charging as high as Tk 80. The farmers in Rajshahi are offering green chilli at Tk 55 a kg but consumers in the capital are forced to buy it at Tk 120 to Tk 160.

An investigation by The Daily Star found a huge difference in

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PICTURE OF PRICE DISPARITY

ITEMS	FARMERS' SELLING PRICE IN RAJSHAHI, RANGPUR AND BOGRA	RETAIL PRICE IN DHAKA
Aubergine	Tk 20	Tk 80
Green Chilli	Tk 55	Tk 120-160
Palwal	Tk 24	Tk 36
Ginger	Tk 45	Tk 68
Okra	Tk 25	Tk 48

STAR GRAPHICS



Armed members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) stand guard yesterday at Rab-3 office at Tikatuli in Dhaka beside some seized ornaments and notes kept on a table. A team of Rab-3 seized the ornaments, heroin and Tk 30 lakh in cash from a slum at Dhalpur in Demra on Sunday. (Story on page 12)

Most AL lawmakers for joining Sangsad

Eager to make their presence felt in JS bodies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Most Awami League (AL) lawmakers are displeased with the party high command's stance on not joining the upcoming session of the Jatiya Sangsad and participating in all the parliamentary standing committees.

The main opposition lawmakers are willing to join the session scheduled for October 28 and participate in the parliamentary bodies to register their protests and speak against what they say are the corruption and failure of different ministries.

As the party high command has not yet made its position clear whether it will continue to boycott the parliamentary proceedings and abstain from joining the parliamen-

tary bodies, many AL deputies have got frustrated, party insiders said.

The AL lawmakers started to boycott the parliamentary proceedings from September 14 in protest against speaker's refusal to their demand to hold discussion on the August 21 grenade attacks on a party rally, adjourning the House's business.

The main opposition lawmakers are yet to join the parliamentary standing committees, except a few, after they were included in the bodies on September 16, one year into the formation of the committees, in line with a list sent by the AL.

The AL lawmakers are participating in the meetings of House Committee, Private Members Bills and Resolution Committee only.

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Durga Puja begins today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Hindus across the country begin celebrating the Durga Puja today amid fears of insufficient security at the Puja Mandaps.

Leaders of Bangladesh Hindu Bouddha Christian Oikya Parishad, Bangladesh Puja Udjapan Parishad and Mahanagar Sarbajaneen Puja

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Target to stabilise population at 21.60cr by 2060

Cabinet okays draft policy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The cabinet yesterday approved the draft of the National Population Policy 2004 (NPP 2004) that focuses on bringing down population growth rate to 1 percent by 2010 from 1.54 percent now.

The new policy aims to stabilise Bangladesh's population at 21.60 crore by 2060, and to that end the net reproductive rate (NRR) has to come down to one percent by 2010.

First outlined in 1976 and revised by a nine-member committee since 2002, the draft NPP 2004 comprises 16 specific objectives that include bringing down maternal and infant

mortality rates, and seven implementation strategies like empowerment of women, human development and decentralisation of programme implementation.

Maternal mortality rate (MMR) in Bangladesh now is one of the highest in the world with 320 women dying during childbirth, out of every 1,000 live births (3.2/1,000). Infant mortality rate (IMR) is also quite high compared to that in any other developing country. About 70 infants die out of every 1,000.

In view of the high MMR, the new policy particularly emphasises women's reproductive health

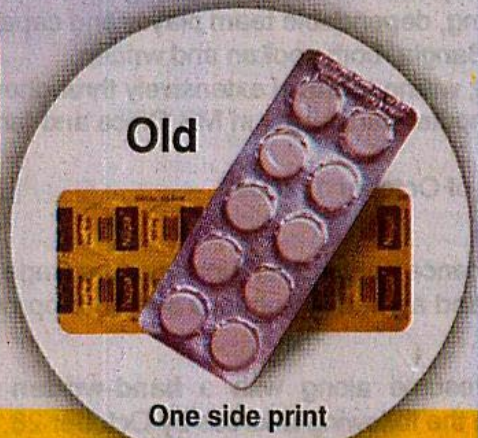
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BEXIMCO PHARMA

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Same model grenades used in Sylhet, AL rally

Scotland Yards submits finds to police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The grenade hurled on British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury at Hazrat Shahjalal Shrine in Sylhet on May 21 was of the same model as those found on Bangabandhu Avenue on August 21 and at Dhaka Central Jail the following day.

The Scotland Yards that assisted local investigators in the probe into the grenade attack said in its report that the grenade hurled on the Bangladesh-born British high commissioner was one of ARGES model.

Three grenades retrieved from Bangabandhu Avenue area after the August 21 grisly attack on an Awami League rally that killed 20 people

and injured about 200 and another one recovered from Dhaka Central Jail the following day were of the same model, the report said.

The Criminal Investigation Department (CID), which is currently probing the May 21 incident, received the Scotland Yards report yesterday.

The CID, however, is yet to dig out clues to the grenade attack.

The British detective agency gathered evidence from the spot two days after the attack that killed three including a policeman.

Assistant Superintendent of Police (CID) Munshi Atiqur Rahman, also investigation officer

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BD-NZ first Test starts today

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh will be up against a double-edged sword when the first Test against New Zealand begins at the Bangabandhu National Stadium today.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Today's issue of The Daily Star carries a 4-PAGE 4-COLOUR STAR SPORT SPECIAL ON THE NEW ZEALAND CRICKET TEAM'S VISIT TO BANGLADESH. It contains interesting write-ups, profiles and stats of both teams. The Culture Page has inadvertently been dropped today.



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42 Rabindra Sarani, Sector-7, Uttara, Dhaka-1230, Bangladesh
Phone : 8959142, 8952575, 8955208, Cell : 0189-269373
E-mail : tiu@connectbd.com, info@tiubd.org
Website : www.internationaluniversity.edu

Dr. Stephen Barnhart
Chancellor, TIU, USA



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Best wishes to Bangladesh National Cricket Team.



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