

14 to get Ekushey Padak

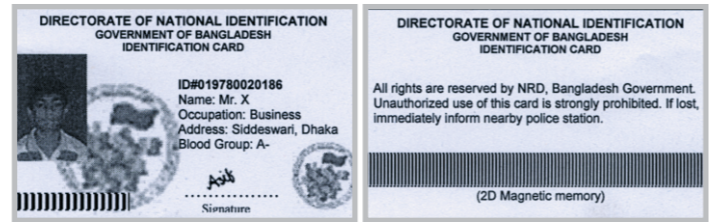
UNB, Dhaka
The government has decided to award 'Ekushey Padak-2005' to 14 personalities in recognition of their contributions to respective fields.

National ID card for citizens on cards

Project to start next year, Babar tells JS

MUSTAK HOSSAIN

The government is planning to introduce for every citizen a multi-purpose national identity card with photograph and fingerprint.



Samples of national ID cards

At present it is very difficult for the police to identify persons involved in crime. Once the ID card is introduced, it will be easier for them, sources said.

Open rice sale starts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

To counteract the spiralling rice prices, the government yesterday launched a two-month Open Market Sale (OMS) programme of the staple food across the country at a subsidised rate.

Under the OMS, each buyer can buy up to five kilograms of rice at Tk 14.50 per kg, compared to Tk 19-20 a kilo for coarse rice charged by the private traders.

Inaugurating the OMS in the city yesterday the food minister said two lakh metric tons of rice would be released under the programme in the two-month period.

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Premier Bank in loan controversy

Bank gave loans to relatives of chairman flouting rules

STAR REPORT

Premier Bank faces another financial scandal as it has been found that a huge amount of loans has been sanctioned to the relatives of its chairman HBM Iqbal, using fictitious names and addresses of non-existent companies.

The Mothjheel branch of Premier Bank sanctioned Tk 25 crore as overdraft (OD) against Tk 1 crore fixed deposit and fixed and floating assets of a company named Nirvana Construction that does not exist at all.

She is the wife of late Shah Alam, brother of Iqbal.

Dewan Anwarul Latif, executive vice-president and in-charge of the Mothjheel branch, signed the sanction letter to the borrower mentioning the address - house-36, road-18, block-C, Banani, Dhaka.

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11 to die for killing a couple

UNB, Comilla

A court here yesterday sentenced 11 people to death for killing a couple at Sonarchar village in Meghna upazila of the district three years ago.

The convicts are Ujjal Miah, Enamul Haq Munna, Yunus Miah, Moharaj Miah, Mohan Miah, Siraj Miah, Rob Miah, Ali Hossain, Nurul Islam, Abdul Halim and Senu Miah.

According to the prosecution, the

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Grenade found at Savar

Model said to be more destructive

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rab (Rapid Action Battalion) men recovered an anti-personnel hand-grenade and 250 grams of cannabis from the house of a drug-peddler in Savar yesterday, 38 days after the recovery of another grenade from Aminbazar.

The grenade, identified as a HE-36 model, is said to be more lethal than other grenades recovered earlier in the country.

Rab sources said they had information that the drug-peddler, Nazrul Islam of Borodeshi village in Savar, along with his associates Anju and Pagla Faruk, was staying at his newly-built house with illegal firearms in his possession.

A 12-member team of Rab-4

started at midnight from their Paikpara office to conduct a raid on Islam's home, but did not find anyone there when they arrived at 1:10am.

Searching the house, the elite force found a HE-36 grenade and 250 grams of cannabis hidden under sand in the courtyard.

The Rab men then searched neighbouring houses for Nazrul, Anju and Faruk, but were unable to find any of them.

Rab explosive experts later took the grenade to Rab headquarters in Uttara for disposal.

News agency BDNEWS24 quoted a Rab expert as saying the grenade recovered yesterday is a defensive type of grenade used earlier by Bangladesh Army for

training purposes.

"There are two types of grenades - defensive and offensive. A defensive grenade is more destructive than an offensive one," the expert said, adding that this type of grenade is more lethal than other types of grenades recovered earlier in the country.

"Its body, which is made of iron, splinters when it explodes. The splinters can hit a target even 20 metres away from the point of explosion," the news agency quoted the Rab expert as saying.

It contains high explosives called BARATOL 80/20. It is 610 grams in weight while its height is 1.4 inches and its length 3 inches.

On January 9, the same battalion

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HABIGANJ CARNAGE Probe team gets 2 more weeks

UNB, Dhaka

The government has extended by two weeks the tenure of the probe body on the January 27 grenade attack on an Awami League (AL) rally at Boilder Bazar in Habiganj.

Former finance minister and AL leader SAMS Kibria and four others were killed in the attack.

The five-member committee was formed on January 28 with AKM Mahfuzul Haq, DIG of Sylhet Range; Abdur Rahim, CID special police superintendent; Major Mainul Hossain, deputy commander of Rab-3; Major Mamun of DGFI and Major Afzal Tareq of NSI.

ASP's bail prayer rejected

Outlaw links him to attack on journo

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected the bail petition of former additional superintendent of police in Khulna Mofazzel Hossain, who was arrested on Wednesday at city's Moham-madpur area.

Earlier on Tuesday he was disciplined for allegedly harbouring an outlawed party operative and assaulting Rapid Action Battalion

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CRR reduced to stabilise taka

REZAUL KARIM BYRON

The central bank yesterday raised the statutory Cash Reserve Requirement (CRR) by 0.5 per cent to 4.5 per cent in a bid to stabilise taka against dollar and to ease import pressure.

Commercial banks had to maintain 4 per cent of their total deposit as CRR with the central bank.

The CRR has been raised with a view to efficient management of the

monetary policy, a central bank circular said. Economists, however, term the measure as 'contractionary policy.'

Yesterday's step was taken to squeeze loanable funds of the commercial banks in the face of higher import bill payments and to halt thaka's slide against the greenback, according to a source in the central bank.

The country's imports rose by 23 per cent in the last five months while

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Kibria family reiterates demand for FBI probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

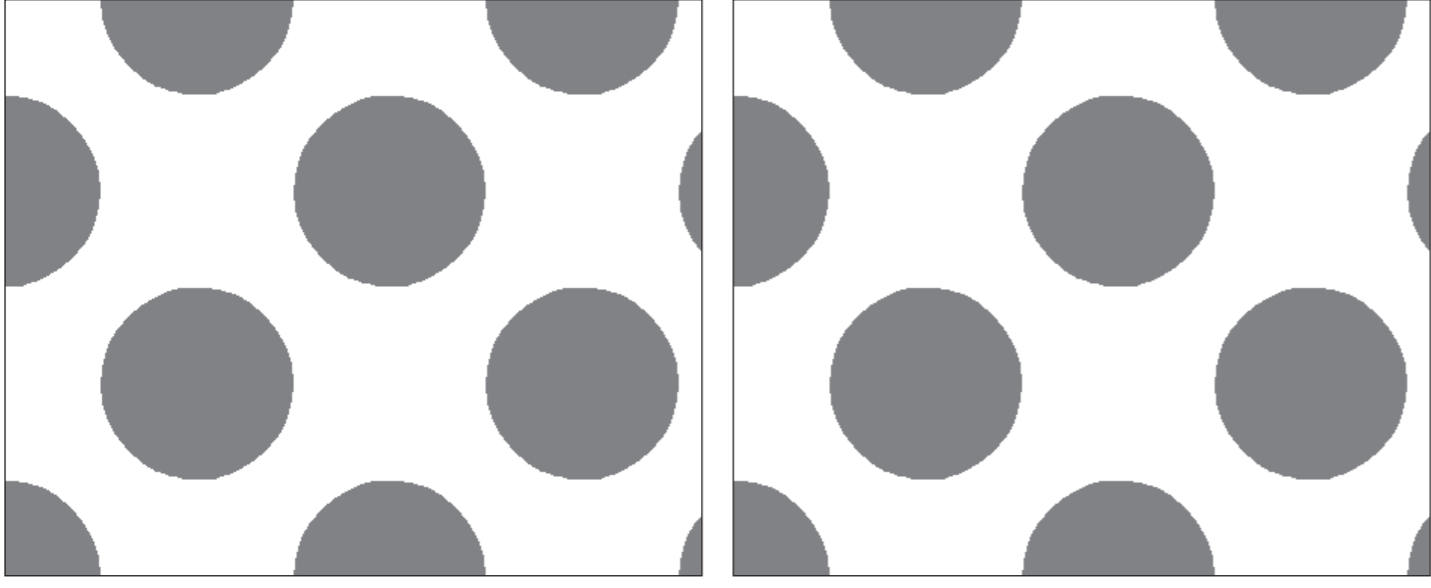
The family of late SAMS Kibria yesterday reiterated its demand that the government invite immediately the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to ensure a transparent investigation into the Habiganj carnage.

"We won't accept any investigation under supervision of the current government," Reza Kibria, son of the slain Awami League lawmaker,

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Asma Kibria, wife of slain former finance minister SAMS Kibria, yesterday demands involvement of the FBI in the investigation into the Habiganj grenade attack that killed her husband.



Prayer Timing February 18 table with columns for Azan and Jamaat times for Fair, Juma, Asr, Maghrib, and Esha.

