

## BNP MP for govt action against 2 newspapers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A BNP lawmaker in the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday demanded the government take punitive actions against two national dailies for 'peddling propaganda that a panicky situation is prevailing in the northern region'.

Taking advantage of the freedom of press, the daily Prothom Alo and daily Jugantor are carrying wrong and baseless reports about law and order slide in Rajshahi and adjoining districts, said Harun-ur-Rashid. He is a lawmaker from Chapainawabganj.

Raising the issue on a point of order, the lawmaker said he has recently visited the areas and found the law and order well kept.

Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar however rejected the point, saying there is a provision to file complaints with the Press Council if any newspaper publishes untrue stories.

## Kushtia madrasa closed after Shibir-JCD clash injures 20

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Kushtia Aliya Madrasa was closed yesterday for an indefinite period following a skirmish between the activists of Islami Chatra Shibir (ICS) and Jatiyatibadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) that left about 20 people injured.

The armed violence erupted following a quarrel in a meeting yesterday afternoon between the two sides -- one backed by Jamaat-e-Islami and the other by BNP, both ruling coalition partners -- over the date of the madrasa's annual excursion, witnesses said.

Sources said the ICS chapter wrote to the madrasa authorities to shift the excursion date, slated for today, but the JCD chapter insisted on keeping the schedule unchanged. The authorities then

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

Prayer Timing		
February 28		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-20	5-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-03	6-07
Esha	7-30	8-00
Source: Islamic Foundation		

## TRI-NATION GAS PIPELINE

# Dhaka, Yangon, Delhi to sign deal in March

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

A tripartite accord between Bangladesh, India and Myanmar will be signed next month in Dhaka for the proposed trans-border natural gas pipeline.

Indian Petroleum Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar yesterday said representatives of the three countries agreed on the draft memorandum of understanding (MoU) at a technical meeting in Yangon last week.

The tripartite agreement will be signed in Dhaka by the end of

March, he added.

The 290-km pipeline will run through Arakan province of Myanmar and Indian states of Mizoram and Tripura before passing through Bangladesh to Kolkata to transport gas from a Myanmar offshore field.

Aiyar said a joint project team of officials from oil firms of the three countries will be formed to study the feasibility of the pipeline project in six months.

The team will also detail the financing and operational aspects and maintenance of the project.

It will decide the volumes, quantity and price of gas and size of the pipeline, he said, adding, "We hope the construction of the pipeline will begin next year."

Bangladesh, which will earn about \$70-80 million annually as transit fee for the pipeline, wants it to run through Cox's Bazar.

Aiyar said he will visit Dhaka next month for the signing of the MoU with Myanmar Energy Minister Lun Thi and Bangladesh Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources AKH Mosharraf Hossain.

## BELAL MURDER PBCP cadre confesses to involvement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-Janajuddho) armed cadre Iqbal Hossain Shadhin confessed his involvement in the bomb attack on the Khulna Press Club premises on February 5 night which injured journalist Shaikh Belaluddin, leading to his death on February 11.

Shadhin made confessional statement before Metropolitan Magistrate Atiqul Huq under section 164 of CrPc on February 20. But police suppressed this information for unknown reasons.

Shadhin told in his confession that he and his associate Mirajul

SEE PAGE 11 COL 5

## 3 missing in boat capsize

UNB, Keraniganj

Three passengers, including a woman and a child, went missing after a boat sank in the Buriganga river at Keraniganj in Dhaka yesterday.

Witnesses said the boat, carrying eight people, sailed from Ispahani Ghat near Buriganga Second Bridge at 10:00am and collided with a sand-laden vessel in the mid-river.

Five passengers managed to swim ashore. The identities of the missing three could not be known immediately.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

## 35 hurt as land grabbers evict 250 families in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

At least 35 landless people were hurt, four of them seriously, as land-grabbers in separate attacks evicted 250 families and burnt down over 150 shanties in Kaliganj and Assassuni upazilas yesterday.

Police said over 250 landless families were living on 'disputed' land in Bairagir Chak and Chiugrikhali under Kaliganj and Basukhali under Assassuni for the last two years.

A gang led by former UP chairman Shahid, incumbent UP Chairman Ansar Ali, Mahabbat Mir, Motaleb Khan, Rahmat Mir attacked and evicted the families and set fire to their shanties, locals said.

Ashraf Ali, leader of the landless people, claimed two people were killed, but could not mention their names. Police have rejected his claim.



PHOTO: STAR

Sammito Nagarik Samaj, a forum of citizens from various professions, stages a candlelit demonstration at the Central Shaheed Minar yesterday, demanding trial of the killers of writer Humayun Azad.

# Sharon threatens to freeze peace efforts

## Israel to strike Syria if needed

AP, Jerusalem

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said yesterday that peace efforts with the Palestinians would be frozen if they do not crack down on militant groups in the wake of a suicide bombing that killed four people outside a Tel Aviv nightclub.

Israeli defence officials on Saturday blamed Syria and a Palestinian militant group based there for a suicide bombing that

killed four Israelis outside a Tel Aviv nightclub threatening to shatter an informal truce with the Palestinians and Israel warned it may attack Syria in retaliation.

Syria denied the charges, saying the offices of Islamic Jihad, the militant group that claimed responsibility for the suicide strike, have been closed.

Israel has attacked Syrian targets in the past and will do so again if it deems necessary, a senior

Israeli defence official said Sunday.

"There will be no progress politically, and I repeat no political progress, until the Palestinians carry out a determined campaign to destroy the terrorist groups and their infrastructure in the Palestinian territories," Sharon said before his weekly Cabinet meeting.

Israel has repeatedly demanded the Palestinians dismantle militant groups, but new Palestinian leader

SEE PAGE 11 COL 7

## Global anti-tobacco treaty takes effect

AP, Geneva

A global anti-tobacco treaty came into force yesterday, but a leading expert said it needs strengthening fast if it is to be effective in curbing the killer habit that claims 5 million lives a year.

Dr. Derek Yach, the World Health Organisation's former anti-tobacco chief who oversaw the drafting of the treaty, hailed the accord, known as the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, as a first step.

However, he told The Associated Press in an exchange of e-mails Thursday and Friday, the treaty lacks what are known in United Nations jargon as "protocols" additional agreements that toughen specific areas of a looser accord.

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4

## Pacific to assemble Nissan vehicles at machine tools factory

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pacific Motors Limited (PML), a local car distributor, will assemble Japanese Nissan diesel vehicles at the plant of Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory Limited (BMTF) and

market those at competitive prices.

Managing Director of the BMTF Brigadier General Khan Md Nuruzzaman and PML's Managing Director Faisal Morshed Khan yesterday signed an agreement to

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4