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## 9 Indians engaged to build PM's dais held

PM's tour cancelled  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's today's visit to Laksham in Comilla was postponed yesterday following arrests of nine Indian citizens who had been tasked by a local BNP leader with building dais for the PM's rally.

Special Security Forces (SSF) and intelligence agencies arrested the Indian nationals in the early hours yesterday for entering the country without necessary legal documents.

The nine were remanded yesterday to find out whether they had any plans to perpetrate any act of sabotage.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia was scheduled to address a rally at Laksham Stadium and a local community centre today afternoon.

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## Reining in BNP MPs

### They have to take permission before placing bill in JS

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The government has imposed a restriction on the ruling BNP lawmakers asking them to take permission from the Leader of the House or the party's parliamentary wing before placing a private member's bill in parliament.

The law, justice and parliamentary affairs minister recently issued the instruction and sent a copy of it to the speaker, sparking severe criticism from lawmakers of the BNP as well as other parties.

Many legislators consider the law minister's move as a gross violation of the Rules of Procedure of the Jatiya Sangsad. And it led to a heated debate between Law Minister Moudud Ahmed and a ruling BNP lawmaker at a parliamentary body meeting yesterday, meeting sources said.

BNP lawmaker Abdul Mannan said at the meeting the move is in contradiction with parliamentary democracy and urged the minister to 'redefine' private members.

"The instruction differs with the 12th amendment to the constitution through which parliamentary democracy has been introduced," Mannan said.

The parliamentary standing committee on Rules of Procedure headed by Speaker Jamiruddin Sircar asked the law minister to sit with the legislator to resolve the issue.

But the minister refused to do so saying he has just acted as per a government decision. He asked the member to raise the issue at the BNP parliamentary party meeting, the sources said.

than a minister, is considered as a private member and they are allowed to place any bill on the private members' day in the House. The lawmakers do not need any prior permission from the party or party leader to place such bills.

The new restriction has made it uncertain whether a number of private member's bills that were ready to be placed in parliament will be placed or not.

Talking to The Daily Star last night, Jamiruddin Sircar however said the law ministry initiated the step to avoid any clash between government bills and those of private members. "If lawmakers consult the Leader of the House before placing private member's bills, then there will be no scope for such a clash."

"Due to lack of such consultation, lawmakers often move to place

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## Road accidents kill nine

UNB, Dhaka

At least nine people died and 34 others were injured in road accidents at Tangail, Narayanganj and Keraniganj yesterday and on Friday night.

In Tangail, Sarwar Hossain, 35, his wife and two minor daughters died on the spot and four others were injured when a van rammed a tempo at Rasulpur on the Tangail-Mymensingh highway at about 4:00pm yesterday.

The injured are undergoing treatment at Tangail General Hospital. Police seized the van, but its driver managed to flee.

A report from Narayanganj said three people died on the spot and 20 others were injured when a Monohardi bound bus from Dhaka plunged into roadside ditch at Bantya at about 11:00pm on Friday. The victims could not be identified. The injured were admitted to different hospitals and clinics.

In Keraniganj, two persons died and ten others were injured when a Shariatpur bound bus from Dhaka skidded off the road and fell into a ditch at Rajendrapur on Dhaka-Mawa road at about 11:30pm on Friday. The victims could not be identified.

## ACC IN MORE TROUBLE

# HC asks chief to explain his appointment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday ordered Justice Sultan Hossain Khan to explain under what authority he is functioning as chairman of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

The bench of Justice Shah Abu Nayeem Muminur Rahman and Justice Mainul Islam Chowdhury issued the order that applies also to the government. It is returnable in eight weeks.

The court order came in response to a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by Aminul Haque Helal, a Supreme Court lawyer. The claim challenges the November 21, 2004 appointment of Justice Sultan

Hossain Khan, a former chief election commissioner (CEC), as ACC chairman.

"As per article 118 of the constitution, a person who has once served as CEC is not eligible for appointment to any post in the service of the republic," Aminul Haque said in his petition.

He contended that Justice Sultan's appointment as ACC chairman is contrary to the article as he served the office of the CEC from February 17, 1990 to December 24, 1990.

Besides, Justice Sultan's appointment violates also article 99 of the constitution that prohibits a retired

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## Criminal killed in 'shootout'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged criminal was killed in a 'shootout' with police in Maghbazar in the early hours yesterday.

Police however claimed Abdul Khaleq, 35, an accused in five criminal cases, was killed by bullets shot by his accomplices.

On information, Ramna police rushed to a lane beside Piasi Restaurant on Tongi Diversion Road at 2:30am to nab Khaleq, said a police press release.

"The police team came under fire and retaliated," the press release said, adding, Khaleq's two accomplices fled by a motorcycle and another escaped jumping over a wall.

"Bullets fired by the criminals hit Khaleq all over his body, Sub-inspector (SI) Abu Bakar in the left leg and SI Syed Naser Ali in the right hand," the release added.

SI Bakar and Naser were admitted to Rajarbagh Police Lines Hospital, it said.

The police said they seized a

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PHOTO: STAR

Locals gather and watch the site of the dyeing factory flattened in a boiler explosion that left at least three people dead and 50 others injured yesterday in Uttar Kashipur of Fatullah in Narayanganj.

## 3 killed, 50 hurt in Narayanganj boiler blast

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least three people including a woman and a child were killed and about 50 others were wounded in a dyeing factory boiler explosion at Uttar Kashipur, Fatullah in Narayanganj early yesterday. Locals said at least 13 people who were working at the Rapid Dyeing during the explosion, have gone missing after the incident.

They alleged that the factory owner shifted the critically wounded workers to some other places.

The victims, dead and wounded, suffered shock waves or were struck with remains of the houses as the severe explosion completely damaged 10 to 12 semi-pucca houses, police and locals said.

The dead Tofazzel Hossain, 45, his 12-year-old daughter Ritu and Sheuli Begum, 25, a garment worker, resided in nearby houses.

Eighteen of the wounded were admitted to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH) while the rest were treated at different local clinics and hospitals.

Fourteen of the 24 identified wounded are relatives of dead Tofazzel, our Narayanganj correspondent reports.

They are Tofazzel's son Shyamal, wife Salma Begum, mother-in-law Joygan Bibi, brother Sirajul Islam, Sirajul's wife Rokana, sons Russell, Masud, Shakhawat, Tofazzel's another brother Jahangir, his sons Mohsin and Russell, daughter Shammi and sister-in-law Moni, and Tofazzel's another brother Mobarak.

Other identified wounded are Sony, Mala, Parveen, Sumaia, Lili Begum, Selim, Shirin, Runa, factory workers Baset and Sohel.

Meanwhile, our correspondent failed to contact the owner despite repeated attempts till 6:00pm.

Witness account "I woke up at about 1:45am hearing repeated sounds coming out from the boiler. Suddenly I heard a bang and felt a huge jerk. Soon thick smoke filled the whole area and I lost my consciousness," said Eiti, wife of dead Tofazzel's younger brother, who resides in the house that also

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## Saifur's salvo at diplomats 'violating norms'

### Bashes media again for 'false news to destroy image'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday blasted the news media for publishing what he said were false news and thus destroying the country's image abroad.

Besides, he accused some unnamed foreign diplomats in Dhaka of 'violating diplomatic norms and getting involved in the internal politics of the country'.

He was speaking as the chief guest at the concluding ceremony of the fourth International Poultry Show and Seminar 2005 at city's Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre.

He said that the foreign envoys should confine their activities to diplomatic area in accordance with the code of conduct. But instead they violate the code by going beyond.

He claimed that the 'most damage' to the nation was caused by 100

to 150 newspapers in the country. These papers are out to destroy the 'image of the country' by publishing false news every day.

Saifur claimed that price hike of essentials, especially that of rice, is 'nothing much' if it is set in the context of the people's purchase capacity that grew robustly over the last two decades.

A rickshaw-puller used to earn Tk 70 to Tk 80 a month two decades ago, whereas now he earns around Tk 200 a day, he observed.

The finance minister said that the price of rice was Tk 12 a kg back in 1982 and now it is Tk 15 a kg. Should not the price of rice increase by Tk 3 a kg in two decades? Saifur questioned adding that the media does not want the farmers to get the just price for their products.

Criticising the newsmen for [their] too much alignment with the political parties, Saifur said that

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## 5 years in school, still non-literate

### Campe survey depicts dismal education situation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The standard of primary education is so poor that even after the five-year schooling one in every three children remains 'non-literate' or 'semi-literate', according to the findings of a survey.

The survey, Education Watch 2003-04, conducted by Campaign for Popular Education (Campe) in 10 upazilas also found one out of five children cannot enrol in primary schooling while one in every three of

those enrolled drops out before completing the five-year course.

"The large majority of children, two out of three, mostly poor and disadvantaged in other ways, grow up without basic skills and preparation for life," read the survey report released at a press conference yesterday.

Education Watch Chairperson ANM Eusuf, Campe Director Rasheda K Choudhury and Education Watch Convenor

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## MEDITERRANEAN TRAGEDY

# Govt to track down manpower agents

UNB, Dhaka

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan yesterday said the government will track down the manpower businessmen or travel agents responsible for the tragic deaths of 11 Bangladeshis in the Mediterranean Sea and inhuman sufferings of others.

"They must be found out and punished for this horrific incident," he said, adding that an interministerial meeting of the foreign ministry, home ministry, expatriates welfare and overseas employment ministry, and the civil

aviation ministry would be called soon to evolve an effective mechanism to stop such deceitful business.

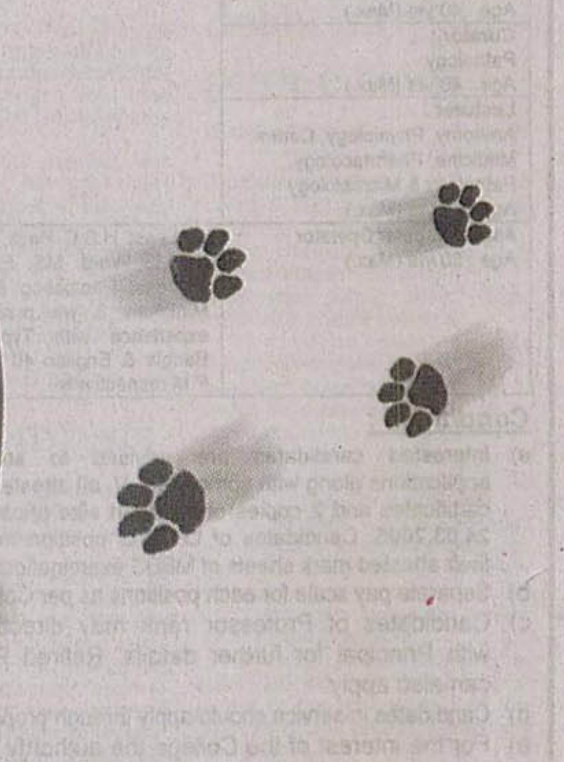
Khan said: "If necessary, existing laws will have to be changed as these illegal movements also cause problem for Bangladeshis in finding jobs in legal way for Bangladeshi workers abroad."

He said the foreign ministry will take necessary measures to bring all the 15 Bangladeshis now under treatment at Oran University Hospital in Morocco and also the

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