



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

TODAY'S ISSUE 20 PAGES



REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XV NO. 66

DHAKA THURSDAY MARCH 24, 2005

People's Right to Know

www.thedailystar.net

CHAITRA 10, 1411 BS

SAFAR 13, 1426 HIJRI

20 PAGES PLUS RISING STARS PRICE: Tk 10.00

KIBRIA KILLING US still in talks on FBI help to seek out grenade origin

UNB, Dhaka

After completion of investigation into the Kibria murder case, the government has sought FBI's assistance in digging out the origin of the grenade used in the January 27 attack in Habiganj.

"The Bangladesh government states that the murder phase of the investigation is now completed, and that the one area where they still seek assistance is identifying the origin of the grenade used in the attack. We are discussing with the home ministry officials how we can be responsive to this request," a

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Saifur's breakfast meeting with US, UK envoys

UNB, Dhaka

Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday had a breakfast meeting with the British and US envoys and exchanged views on matters of bilateral interest, informed sources said.

The sources said US Ambassador Harry K Thomas and British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury attended the meeting at the minister's Gulshan residence.

The development is seen significant in the wake of recent strong remarks made by Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and the finance minister about the role of foreigners and

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Helicopter crash-lands in Noakhali

BDB leader
Mannan hurt

UNB, Dhaka

A private helicopter, caught in a storm, crash landed in Noakhali injuring three on board --Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh leader MA Mannan, his personal staff and the pilot.

The helicopter was forced to land at Bibirhat at about 6:00pm and it caught fire.

Mannan and the pilot suffered

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Nor'wester kills 16, injures 300

BDNEWS, Dhaka

At least 16 people, including women and children, were killed and over 300 injured by nor'wester in Chandpur, Habiganj, Faridpur, Kishoreganj, Manikganj and Munshiganj yesterday and Tuesday night.

At least 31 others were also reported missing since the nor'wester accompanied by hailstorm razed vast areas felling many trees and houses and damaging crops.

Continued rain in many areas,

including capital Dhaka, paralysed normal life. The nor'wester snapped telecommunications and affected electricity supply in a number of places.

Police and local sources said hundreds of thatched houses and trees in Chandpur were damaged in a 15-minute nor'wester starting at 8pm Tuesday.

Police Super Mokhesur Rahman informed that Rony, 3, of Ramdhanimura in Hajiganj, Rina Akter, 12, of Ragol of Shaharati, and Sabura Khatun, 60, of Chalia in

Faridganj, died as their houses collapsed during the storm. The SP also said freedom fighter Mafizur Rahman, 80, of Chandail of Shaharati, and madrasa teacher Habibur Rahman, 73, of Govindapur in Faridganj, died in lightning.

Over 100 people were injured in the storm. Many of them were admitted to Chandpur Sadar hospital.

One Yunus Sardar, 60, hailing from Shariatpur, remained missing as a boat capsized during the nor'wester.

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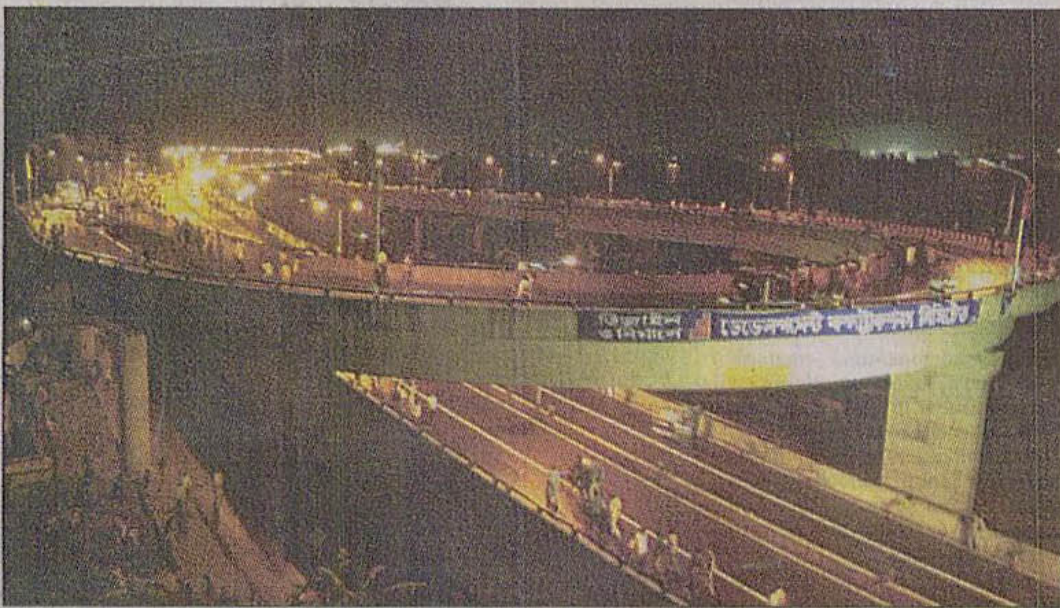


PHOTO: STAR

Khilgaon flyover was opened to traffic yesterday.

PM opens Khilgaon flyover Says plan on to construct elevated expressway, underground railway

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A long cherished dream of the city dwellers came true as Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday opened the country's second and biggest flyover at the busy Khilgaon road-rail intersection in a major step towards easing the nagging traffic congestion in the capital.

"Not only the flyovers, we have a

plan to construct elevated expressway and underground railway to improve the communication system in Dhaka. Flyover is part of that plan," she said while opening the Khilgaon flyover in the afternoon.

People of all walks of life braving torrential rains converged at the site and its adjoining areas to witness the opening of the flyover, which also created immense sufferings to

local people during its construction period.

The 1.9-kilometre-long and 14-metre wide flyover was constructed at a cost of Tk 81.75 crore, including expenses for land acquisition and compensation to the affected people. The Local Government Engineering Department (LGED) built it.

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ACC blasts Cabinet Division for turmoil

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday went on the record blasting the Cabinet Division for its 'negative role' that is holding back the commission's progress and hurting its image as an independent body.

The commission also noted that there are some flaws in the Anti-Corruption Commission Act and if the flaws create any hurdle to smooth functioning of the commission, the law should be amended.

The observation came from the three-member commission yesterday at a meeting that decided to

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Robber Rab sergeant caught red-handed

6 flee with Tk 7.8 lakh booty, 2 more members picked later

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A sergeant of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) was caught robbing yesterday while six of his alleged colleagues managed to flee with Tk 7.8 lakh robbed from a cattle trader at Gabtoli in the city.

Commanding Officer (CO) of Rab-4 Lt Col Saber Sharif confirmed that Sergeant Atiqur Rahman, 30, held during the robbery, belongs to his battalion. Atiq was drawn from Bangladesh Air Force.

The CO last night said an investigation committee of Rab-4 has

already recovered Tk 2.58 lakh from a cellphone shop at Eskaton.

Rab-4 later picked up two fellow men from an specified place for their alleged link to the robbery.

Witnesses said the team of seven alleged Rab members in plain clothes came to the house of cattle trader Ratan Ali at 32, Coatbari in Gabtoli under Mirpur Police Station by two CNG-run three-wheelers at around noon.

They kept the three-wheelers waiting, identified themselves as Rab members and started searching

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Rab Sergeant Atiqur Rahman

Dhaka, S'pore to combat terrorism together

FM says talks on
FTA soon

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh and Singapore have agreed to cooperate in combating international terrorism and work in close collaboration in the Asia Middle East Dialogue (Amed) to remove misgivings in the West linking religion with terrorism.

Briefing newsmen yesterday on the outcome of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's visit to Singapore, Foreign Minister Morshed Khan said although there has not been any terrorist act like 9/11 in America or

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Cops foil opposition hunger marches

170 hurt in countrywide clashes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police foiled an opposition attempt to take out 'hunger processions' in Dhaka and elsewhere yesterday as they clubbed and fired rubber bullets and teargas shells on the demonstrators opposition gatherings, leaving at least 170 wounded.

In Khulna, at least 100 people were injured as opposition demonstrators fought pitched battles with police, who lobbed tear gas canisters to disperse an AL procession. Khulna City AL President Talukdar Abdul Khaleque, MP, General Secretary Mustafa Rashidi Suja and photojournalists Abdul Malek and

Kamrul Ahsan were among the injured.

In Rangpur, over 50 opposition adherents, policemen and photojournalists were wounded when workers of main opposition Awami League (AL) fought pitched battles with police after the law-enforcers prevented them from bringing out the planned processions to protest the price spiral of essentials under the BNP-Jamaat-led coalition government.

There were also reports of attacks on the opposition activists in Manikganj and Rajshahi. In Dhaka, police did not allow the opposition

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Hartal hours curtailed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Awami League (AL) and its allies have curtailed the March 31 hartal for four hours in Dhaka to facilitate a programme of the family of slain AL lawmaker Shah AMS Kibria.

The hartal will be enforced from 6:00am to 2:00pm in Dhaka and from 6:00am to 6:00pm elsewhere, said separate press releases of the AL and its left allies.

On the same day in Dhaka, the family of Kibria, also former finance minister, will put on display a

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Notice

Today's issue of The Daily Star contains a 4-page special colour supplement on Bangladesh Business Awards 2004.

Partha tells tale of grisly torture

Released finally seven months
into his arrest

STAR REPORT

Shaibal Saha Partha, released from the jail yesterday seven months into his arrest allegedly for emailing a threat to kill Awami League President Sheikh Hasina, narrated a harrowing tale of torture.

His family and lawyers from Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) and Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) received a frail-looking Partha at 5:15pm at the Dhaka Central Jail gate.

Talking to The Daily Star at the ASK office at Purana Paltan, he said he still

could not believe that the ordeal was over for him. "It was one of the worst nightmares I would ever had," Partha said, trying to strangle a sob.

"I feel like I've just come out of hell..." Partha muttered as he struggled to stand on his feet. Days of relentless physical and psychological torture during questioning and after arrest left a telltale sign all over him.

Partha's mother Bela Rani Saha and father Shanti Bhushan Saha and other relatives were with him at the ASK office.

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Drug barons operate from Dhaka jail

SHARIFUL ISLAM

Notorious drug peddlers now in Dhaka Central Jail allegedly continue their illegal trade of banned drugs like heroin and phensidyl inside the jail in collusion with a section of dishonest jail staff, convicts and on-trial prisoners.

These criminals take up to half a kilogram of heroin each inside the jail when they go out for appearing in court in cases. Their accomplices outside provide them heroin packets in toilets of courts often deceiving the law enforcers and sometimes bribing them.

The elements put heroin packets in ankle socks, tie them with their thighs and safely take them inside the jail. Then they prepare 'puria'

(small packs) of heroin, supply that to their regular customers and collect money through their paid people, mostly convicts and other prisoners tasked to sweep the jail and distribute foods.

Sources linked to the jail gave these startling information, seeking anonymity.

A group of inmates of the jail led by 'Kangali' Zakir, a convict in Police sergeant Ahad murder case, on Monday morning assaulted a rival group headed by Emran, an accomplice of dreaded criminal 'Sweden' Aslam, in an alleged bid to establish control over drug trading in the jail.

The jail authorities later stand-released six jail guards including the chief jail warden for beating up

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Elegy for a Bir Sreshtha



Bir Sreshtha Matiur Rahman's daughter Mahim Matiur Khandaker and her husband and son offer prayers at Matiur's grave in Mashrur Air Base graveyard in Karachi in 1994.

ASHIQUIR RAHMAN

Thirty-four years have gone by since the Liberation War, but successive governments have not taken any initiative to bring back martyred Flight Lieutenant Matiur Rahman's (Bir Sreshtha) remains from Pakistan.

Recently Milly Rahman, wife of Matiur Rahman, has appealed to the prime minister for steps to shift her husband's grave to Bangladesh so that the nation can pay homage to Matiur, a martyr to the cause of the country's independence.

Matiur died in a crash on

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