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\$1b export rise proves doomsayers wrong

\$8.58b earned in FY05 despite IMF, WB's post-MFA warning

EXPORT EARNING IN LAST FIVE YEARS

Fiscal Year	Income in Million USD	Growth in Million USD
FY05	8,585	Around 1,000
FY04	7,603	1,055
FY03	6,548	562
FY02	5,986	(-481)
FY01	6,467	715

Source: EPB

MONJUR MAHMUD and AZFAR AZIZ

The country's exporters have put the post-MFA doomsayers to shame by fetching approximately \$8.58 billion in fiscal year (FY) 2004-05 or nearly \$1 billion more than \$7.60 billion in FY04.

"Exports saw a tremendous surge last fiscal, fetching around one billion dollars more than the previous fiscal. It proved wrong the fear and predictions at home and abroad that our exports might stumble in the second half of FY05, suffering a

major setback due to elimination of the MFA [Multi-fibre Agreement] quotas," said a top official of the commerce ministry.

According to Export Promotion Bureau (EPB), the total export earning in the first 11 months of FY05 was \$7.785 billion. The EPB is yet to finish calculating June's export figure but estimates it to be more than \$800 million, which puts the annual earning at \$8.585 billion, slightly more than the targeted \$8.565 billion.

"The target was considered

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PHOTO: STAR

Elderly freedom fighter Arafat Ali Khan lies at DMCH with an amputated leg since June 22. After four years of begging, Arafat that day was going to meet the PM to seek help, but instead was severely injured in a road crash.

Ordeals of a deprived war hero

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Arafat Ali Khan, a freedom fighter, has been suffering untold miseries with an amputated leg for more than a month at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH).

Arafat, 76, of Daulatpur village of Netrokona, was left at the DMCH by some unknown persons following an accident after he had arrived in the capital. Only a week ago the hospital authorities came to know that he is a freedom fighter and admitted him in the orthopaedic ward.

Once a valiant soldier of the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), Arafat was shown absconding following the political unrest in 1975. This deprived him of all kinds of

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ARF to accept Bangladesh as member

AFP, Vientiane

Foreign ministers from Asia's main security forum agreed yesterday to accept Bangladesh as the group's 26th member as they wrapped up talks in the Lao capital of Vientiane.

Bangladesh's admission to the Asean Regional Forum (ARF) was recommended by the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

"(The ministers) welcomed and agreed to Asean's consensus on the admission of Bangladesh as the 26th participant in the ARF," the meeting's final statement said.

Bangladesh's membership will

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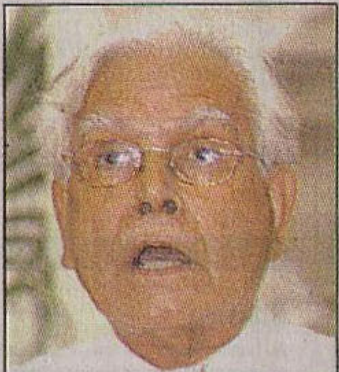
Natwar to discuss irritants in ties

STAR REPORT

Dhaka is putting finishing touches to the itineraries of the three-day official visit of Indian External Affairs Minister K Natwar Singh from August 6, which diplomatic circles expect will consolidate the Indo-Bangladesh relationship.

However, Dhaka does not know whether Singh is bringing a letter from Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for his Bangladeshi counterpart Khaleda Zia, as was reported by Indian press yesterday.

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Natwar Singh

Babar in US explains steps to try Kibria killers, protect Ahmadiyyas

UNB, Dhaka

State Minister for Home Affairs Lutfozzaman Babar, now on an official visit to the USA, called on Senator Edward Kennedy at the Capitol Hill on Thursday.

He apprised the US Senator of various measures taken by the Bangladesh government to ensure trial of all the killings, particularly that of former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Cop arrested on rape charge

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A policeman was arrested yesterday for raping a teenage girl at a hotel in Farmgate area on Thursday night.

The 17-year-old victim, who came from Mymensingh to visit the capital, is undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College and Hospital (DMCH).

Mirpur police said they arrested nayek Nurul Islam, 32, of Riot Police yesterday after the victim filed a case with the police station (case No. 94) under Women and Children Repression Prevention Act.

Police and sources said the girl

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Easing waterlogging at cost of canals' death

MORSHED ALI KHAN

While the city's surviving natural canals urgently need excavation to get back navigability and avoid drying out, a government initiative to address the need has been diverted to cleaning drains and storm sewers to ease waterlogging in the city.

Dhaka Water and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) has already spent more than Tk 50 crore of the Tk 203 crore fund for a waterlogging

removal project in the Dhaka metropolitan area without any 'comprehensive plan' for permanent demarcation and restoration of the canals, sources said.

The project originally envisaged recovery and excavation of the canals in line with the findings of a study conducted by the district administration, which had identified 14 out of 35 natural canals as 'recoverable' and still in use with 'too little draft' for navigation during the lean period.

In May, Dhaka Wasa removed some thatched structures from 12 canals, including the Kalyanpur and Gulshan-Banani canals, at a cost of over Tk 26 lakh but did nothing to restore the characters of these canals and to properly connect them to the rivers outside the embankment of the city.

These canals need immediate manual excavation, as dredgers are too large to enter these narrow, shallow waterways, otherwise "it

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Bapex rejoinder, our reply

Bapex in a rejoinder on The Daily Star news headlined "Niko skirts plan to drill relief well" published on Monday said that some points in the news item were not correct.

The rejoinder said: Niko submitted the relief well drilling programme in the afternoon of July 23, 2005, which is still being reviewed by Bapex.

Thus objecting to the plan in writing by the Joint Management Committee is baseless.

Moreover, the purpose of drilling a relief well is to seal the gas leakage sources.

Quite often a successful relief

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2 NGO workers murdered

STAR REPORT

Unknown assailants hacked two NGO employees to death in Boalmari upazila of Faridpur Thursday midnight.

The dead are Tapan Kumar Roy, 30, of Fakirpara village of Nababganj upazila, and Liplal Marandi, 35, of Mahalpur village of Birganj upazila of Dinajpur. The two, also preachers, worked for an international NGO, the Christian Life Bangladesh, as field workers in Dhupapara village of Boalmari.

Police and locals said the victims were sleeping in their house when the assailants stormed into the house breaking the door at 2:00am and stabbed them indiscriminately.

To restrain the locals from rescuing the two, the killers had chained the doors of houses in the neighbourhood, locals said.

However, hearing the victims' cries, people came and rushed them to Boalmari Health Complex, where the doctors declared them dead. The police sent their bodies to Faridpur

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Banker commits suicide on his wedding day

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mystery shrouds the tragic death of a banker, who allegedly committed suicide yesterday on the day of his marriage ceremony at Mohammadpur in the city.

Shafiqullah Patwari Sohel, 30, accounts officer of NCC Bank at Motijheel, hanged himself from the ceiling at his sister's Banshabari residence.

Sohel's relatives suspect that his would-be in-laws might have cancelled the marriage that prompted

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