

JP's short JS boycott drama ends by BNP intervention

Five lawmakers of the Jatiya Party (JP), including Rawshan Ershad, joined the House yesterday upon the government intervention, ignoring a JP Parliamentary Party (JPPP) decision taken a few minutes back to boycott Sangsad for two consecutive workdays. The other ten lawmakers who refused to join the House blasted JPPP chief Rawshan and the four MPs on their return to the office during Magrib prayers break of the sitting. Having heated words exchanged for over an hour, the

ACC without political will failed to curb graft

Transparency International observes

The Transparency International (TI) yesterday said the Bangladesh government has failed to curb corruption in the country as it formed the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) not out of "political will" but as a "concession" to the donor and civil society pressure. A TI report released yesterday also partly blamed a high level of corruption in the National Board of Revenue (NBR) for the "extremely

low level of internal revenue collection". Many tax officials are believed to aid tax evaders upon receipt of a bribe," it noted. In its section on Bangladesh, the "Global Corruption Report 2006" said, "Since the key stimulus to set up the [ACC] came from a combination of civil society demands and pressure from international donors, it could be argued that the government made the concession reluctantly, rather than out of genuine political will." The TI report also noted govern-

ment control of the ACC as the most problematic hindrance to curbing corruption as "the government retains authority over key policy issues, such as budget, staff recruitment and organisational structure." It said the credibility of the ACC has been severely damaged because of its decision to rehire the staff of the erstwhile Bureau of Anti-Corruption, which was dissolved for being ineffective. The report doubted the ACC

Ctg tele link snapped for 11 hours

The tele link between Chittagong and rest of the world remained snapped for nearly 11 hours following slash in the optical fibre in three places near Sitakunda since early yesterday. The 11 hours isolation of the port city from rest of the world not only caused immense sufferings to overseas callers and the subscribers of the TeleTalk but also incurred the BTTB a huge revenue loss. A band of thieves cut the fibre link in three places between Sitakunda and Bhatiani, some 39-km off the port city while they were stealing underground electric cables at 2:10am, said a T&T official

Fuel crisis persists to hurt Boro

Rangpur district administration claimed that there is no fuel crisis in the northern region now after a temporary oil depot at Kazipara in Sirajganj became operational two days back. Deputy Commissioner of Rangpur Nazrul Islam Khan said a magistrate has been tasked with inspecting all petrol stations in the district. A BPC dealer in Rangpur, preferring anonymity, said the Kazipara oil depot cannot do much to improve the situation since 15 oil tankers ran aground in the Jamuna and only half of the fuel they were carrying could be unloaded during the last 48 hours. Meanwhile, the Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) and

Reforms must for fair polls: Hasina

UNB, Sylhet Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday declared that the alliance government would not be allowed to repeatedly play with people's voting right, saying that the opposition's reform proposal must be accepted for ensuring free and fair parliamentary polls. She urged people to be aware of 'ill motives' of the BNP-Jamaat alliance in the next elections. Hasina, also the president of the Awami League (AL), was addressing a grand rally at Rikabi Bazar here. On reforms in the caretaker government system and the Election Commission, she said the

Saifur irked by waste of public fund

Finance Minister Saifur Rahman yesterday expressed utter frustration at the persistent irregularities and wastage of public money he had witnessed in government offices in his 13-year career as a minister, and said morality, not

3 JMB men held with grenades

Police yesterday arrested three Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) cadres from Gazipur and Tangail and seized two hand grenades and bomb making materials. The arrestees are Mahmudur Rahman alias Russell, 19, Jahirul Islam alias Jahir, 22, and Shahadat Hossain alias Emran, 19. On information from earlier arrested Akash, regional commander of Tongi and Uttara JMB, Gazipur police arrested Jahir and Shahadat from their Namasolai home in Kaliakoir upazila at 4:00am yesterday. Following their lead, Detective

Branch (DB) of police raided the home of Russell at Asgana village under Mirzapur upazila in Tangail at about 5:00am and arrested him. Later they unearthed two hand-made grenades and bomb-making materials, including several detonators and 33 lead splinters, in a bush behind his house. Jahir told newsmen that he took part in the August 17 bomb blast at Gazipur crossing. He also said the grenades were produced in a local factory of the JMB. Earlier on Monday, Rapid Action Battalion arrested Akash at Ashulia Bazar and recovered huge bomb making materials from "Tangail Mess" at Gazipura village in Tongi on Tuesday.

Hili land port still close for strike

Hili land port of Dinajpur remained closed for the third consecutive day as exporters, importers, clearing and forwarding agents (C&F) called for an indefinite strike on Monday last protesting a new rule applied by Indian exporters. The port became almost deserted as Bangladeshi exporters and importers stayed inactive yesterday, sources said. They said several meetings between Bangladeshi and Indian traders were held during the previous two days without any solutions. Gonesh Saha, president of Importers and C&F Agents Association, said he had tried to contact Subodh Kundu, president



Poet Shamsur Rahman gives inaugural speech at the national poetry festival organised by Jatiya Kabita Parishad on the Dhaka University library premises yesterday.

Masud Mia, ex-Habiganj SP axed

The government has finally terminated Masud Mia, special superintendent of the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), and AMM Fakhru Islam Khan, former superintendent of police (SP), Habiganj. The Inspector General of Police (IGP) Abdul Qaiyum confirmed the termination of the two. The IGP said Masud Mia was terminated from his job on charges of corruption and other irregularities. Fakhru Islam Khan was sacked for his failure in providing security during the Awami League meeting at Boilder Bazar in Habiganj on January 27 last year that led to help the assailants slip away after hurling

Prayer Timing table for February 2 with columns for Azan and Jamaat times for Fajr, Zohr, Asr, Maghrib, and Esha.