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### 3 killed in 'crossfire'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two criminals and an underground operative were killed during "shootouts" between their accomplices and the law enforcers in Chittagong and Kushtia early yesterday.

They are Mohammad Mosharraf Hossain alias Tarif, 28, son of late Delwar Hossain of Gachbaria under Mirersarai upazila, Mohammad Nurul Islam, 37, son of Kala Mia of West Barumchhara under Anowara upazila of Chittagong, and Marzul Islam alias Guddu Dakat, 30, a

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

### Delhi wants Dhaka to back its UN bid.

UNB, Dhaka

India has sought Bangladesh's support to her candidate for the post of secretary general of the United Nations (UN).

Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Veena Sikri sought the support when she met Foreign Minister M. Morshed Khan at his office yesterday.

India has nominated UN Under-Secretary General Shashi Tharoor as her candidate for the

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### SC bar decides to meet Iajuddin

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) yesterday decided to meet President Iajuddin Ahmed to know his physical condition and take necessary legal steps to protect the constitutional dignity and rights of the president.

The decision was taken at an emergency meeting of the SCBA

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| Prayer Timing |       |        |
|---------------|-------|--------|
| June 29       |       |        |
|               | Azan  | Jamaat |
| Fajr          | 4-05  | 4-40   |
| Zohr          | 12-45 | 1-15   |
| Asr           | 5-00  | 5-15   |
| Maghrib       | 6-54  | 6-57   |
| Esha          | 8-17  | 8-45   |

Source: Islamic Foundation

### PROF TAHER MURDER

## Home sits on approval for pressing charges

### 3 accused move to withdraw judicial confession

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

With home ministry delaying its approval for pressing charges in Prof Dr S. Taher Ahmed murder case, three of the arrested accused have submitted prayers to court to withdraw their confessional judicial statements given earlier.

Detective Branch (DB) of police said they completed the investigations and reported to the home ministry on May 10 for pressing charges against five people includ-

ing Taher's colleague Prof Mia Md Mohiuddin and RU Shibir President Mahbub Alam Salehi.

"Home ministry's approval is essential as the case is listed as one of the sensational cases under the ministry's monitoring cell," explained a police source adding that charges would be pressed soon after getting the clearance.

On Monday, a metropolitan magistrate (MM) court in Rajshahi recorded the withdrawal prayers of the three accused -- Taher's house

caretaker Jahangir Alam, his brother Abdus Salam and their relative Nazmul Hossain.

The three in separate judicial statements had earlier told that Mohiuddin and Salehi masterminded the murder for academic gains.

Salehi is absconding while the rest are in custody.

Meanwhile, another MM court also asked the Rajshahi Central Jail authorities to arrange for Jahangir

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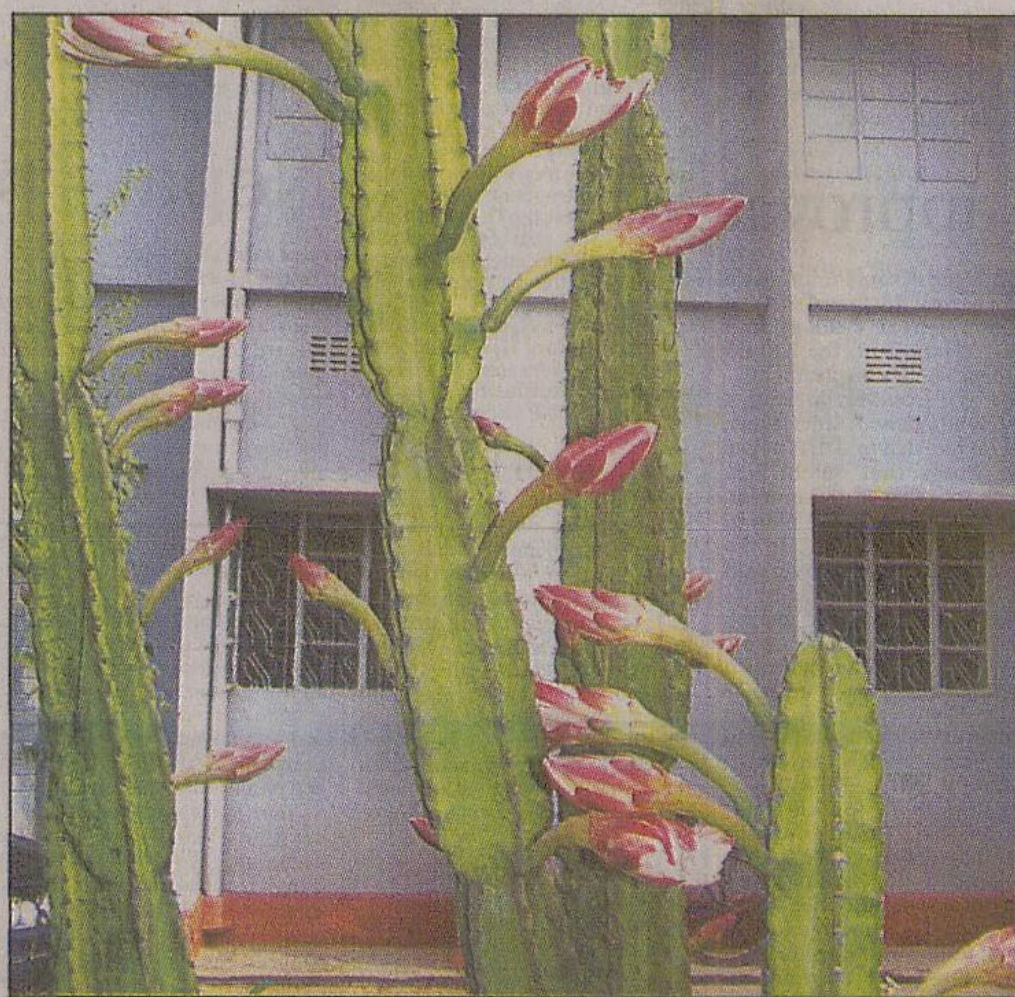


PHOTO: STAR

A rare species of cactus blooms in eye-catching colours at the Skylab Pharmaceuticals Ltd garden in BSCIC area in Comilla Tuesday night.

### Finance bill approved

#### Duty on raw sugar import halved

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The parliament yesterday approved the Finance Bill 2006 bringing an amendment to the import duty structure of raw sugar.

The government reduced the specific import duty on raw sugar to Tk 2,250 per metric ton in order to stabilize market volatility.

Earlier, Tk 5,000 per metric ton was proposed as specific duty on both raw sugar and finished sugar.

Finance Minister M. Saifur Rahman said the amendment was brought to protect the five sugar refineries in the country.

The finance minister during his concluding speech in the parliament on the proposed budget yesterday replied to all criticisms

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

### Nepal's parliament sworn in as king sidelined

AFP, Kathmandu

Nepal's parliament and ministers were sworn in yesterday at a ceremony which for the first time did not include the king but ill-health forced the prime minister to skip the event.

Parliament slashed King Gyanendra's powers after he ended 14 months of direct rule in April following weeks of pro-democracy protests by political parties and rebel Maoists.

"The prime minister could not come for the oath ceremony due to health reasons and he will take the oath later in parliament," Surya Kiran Gurung, parliament general secretary, told journalists. He did not elaborate.

The 84-year-old premier

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

## Crises in edn institutions continue to brew

### Teachers, staff of non-govt school, colleges threaten indefinite strike from July 9

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Teachers and employees of non-government high schools and colleges yesterday announced going for indefinite strike from July 9 demanding immediate realisation of their six-point demand including 100 per cent salary from the government exchequer.

"We have decided to go for stern action like indefinite strike at the schools and colleges from July 9 if the government does not realise our six-point demand by July 4," said Prof M. Shariful Islam, presi-

dent of Shikhhak Karmachari Oikya Jote, a platform of non-government teachers and employees.

Jatiya Shikhhak Karmachari Front, another platform of non-government school and college teachers and employees led by Prof Kazi Faruque Ahmed also announced strike on July 1 and indefinite strike from July 18, if the budget for the next fiscal year is passed without meeting their demand for 100 per cent government salary.

Addressing a press conference

at Ramna restaurant in the city, leaders of Shikhhak Karmachari Oikya Jote also demanded resignation of Education Minister Osman Faruque for the 'anomalies' in the education sector.

Terming the education minister as the 'main responsible' for this crisis, he said some eight lakh teachers have come down to the street for the alliance government's failure in the education sector.

"Around 98 per cent education at the secondary and higher secondary levels depends on

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## BDR, BSF trade shots on Jakiganj border

### One injured; hundreds of villagers flee home

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The Indian Border Security Force (BSF) and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) traded gunshots for over five hours early yesterday, forcing the locals to flee their houses at bordering Amolshid village of Jakiganj.

Sources said over 1,800 bullets were fired during the gunfight, which left a villager injured.

The two sides continued firing till 8:30am after the BSF men had opened fire at about 3:20am.

Lt Col Abu Tasnim, commander of 38 Battalion of BDR Sylhet,

visited the area yesterday. He said BDR has reinforced its position along the border.

The Bangladesh paramilitary force fired around 600 gunshots while their Indian counterpart over 1,200 rounds, he added.

A tense situation has been prevailing across the villages between the Uttarkul and Amolshid border outposts since Friday when BDR men foiled the Indian border guards' attempt to occupy a farmland near border pillar 1354.

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### Outlaws kill 2 BNP men

OUR CORRESPONDENT, KUSHTIA

Outlaws belonging to Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP-Janajuddho) gunned down two BNP men and injured another in separate incidents in Mirpur upazila of the district on Tuesday night.

The dead are Sadarpur Union BNP President Hazrat Ali, 33, and BNP activist Akhter Hossain, 32, while the injured is Shahjahan Ali, 30, son of Yasin Ali of Goabaria village in the upazila.

The first incident took place near GK (Ganges-Kobadak) canal at Mosainagar at about 11:00pm while Akhter and Shahjahan were returning home at Goabaria village from adjacent Kakiladah village after watching world cup football tournament.

The PBCP men fired on the two,

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

## CONDOLENCE

We are deeply shocked at the untimely death of

Lt Col (retd) Akbar Hossain BP, MP, A valiant Freedom Fighter, a dynamic politician and a close associate of Shaheed President Ziaur Rahman, a trusted associate of Desh Netri Begum Khaleda Zia, Five-time elected member of the Parliament from Comilla sadar, President Comilla District BNP, and

honourable Minister of Shipping, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

We pray to the Almighty for the salvation of the departed soul and for Him to grant strength to the bereaved family to bear the loss.

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## Israelis bomb camp, cut power, water in Gaza Strip

AP, REUTERS, Gaza Strip

Israel turned up the pressure on Palestinian militants to release a captive soldier yesterday, sending its warplanes to bomb a Hamas training camp after knocking out electricity and water supplies for most of the 1.3 million residents of the Gaza Strip.

The Hamas-led Palestinian government called for a prisoner swap with Israel, saying the Gaza offensive would not secure the soldier's release. Militants holding the hostage have made that demand, but this was the first time the government made such a proposal.

In a statement, the Information

Ministry said it was "natural logic" to carry out an exchange.

"This has been exercised by previous Israeli governments with Hezbollah and the PLO, and this is what other countries do in conflict situations," the statement said.

This was Israel's first ground offensive in the Gaza Strip since leaving the territory last year.

Tanks and infantry, backed by assault helicopters and artillery, set up a strategic observation post at a disused airport outside the southern town of Rafah as masked gunmen waited behind barricades and in alleyways for battle to begin.

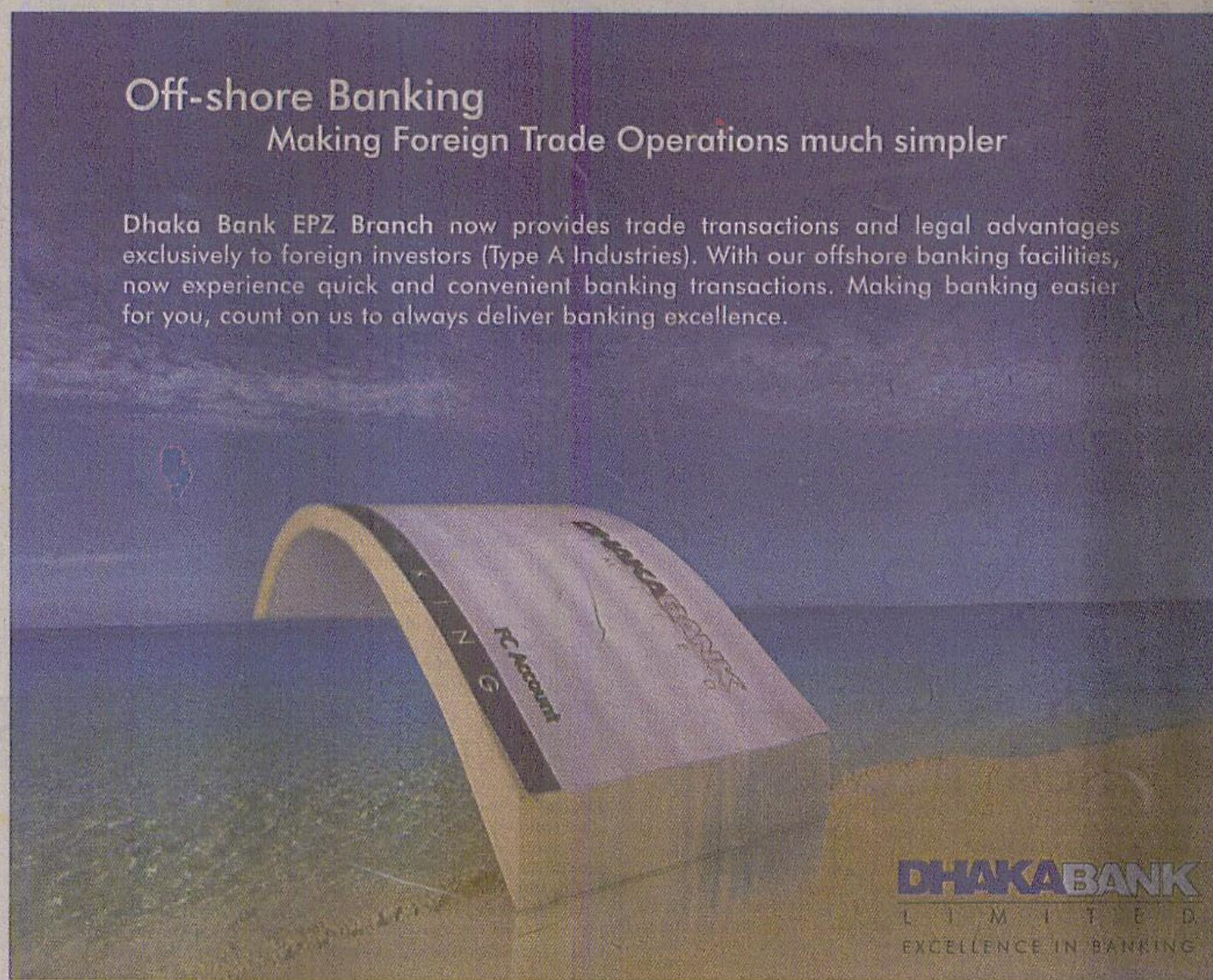
Threatening "extreme steps" if Corporal Gilad Shalit was not freed,

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