

4 JMB men arrested  
*Grenade shells, explosives seized*  
OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) arrested four Jama'atul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) cadres and recovered 5kg power gel and 15 shells of high power hand grenade Tuesday night from Bajitpur of the district.

The arrestees are Deen Islam, 50, an Imam of Satura Jam-e-Masjid, Harun, 21, Abdul Hannan, 22, and Mohammod Hossain, 25. All are residents of Satura village of Bajitpur upazila.

On information given by JMB cadre Rakib, arrested on Thursday night from Mymensingh, a Rab-9 team led by Lieutenant

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5 of a family killed in gas cylinder blast  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Five members of a family were killed and four others injured in a fire caused by a gas cylinder explosion at a tin-roofed bamboo made house at Jagannathpur upazila headquarters under Sunamganj district on Tuesday night.

The dead are Kripesh Das, 45, owner of a hardware shop, his

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Prayer Timing		
July 19		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-15	4-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-54	6-58
Esha	8-15	8-45
Source: Islamic Foundation		

# Panic leads to mass unconsciousness

Experts assert it is no disease; 77 more students fall sick

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following an on-the-spot investigation in Narsingdi, a team of psychiatrists again termed the mysterious illness of school students "psychogenic illness" in a large scale.

Meanwhile, at least 119 students of different schools in Narayanganj, Gazipur, Jhenidah, Natore and Bagerhat became sick. Expert physicians said since it was not a disease, the students were provided with anxiolytic medicines.

A group of psychiatrists led by

Prof Enayet Karim went to Narsingdi to probe the phenomenon and prepare a report to be submitted to the director general of health.

While talking to The Daily Star experts said "mass hysteria" is a psychological disease that mostly strikes teenagers and females. It does not have any long-term effect and the students and their guardians need not be panicked.

As the psychological defence mechanisms in teenagers are not developed, sometimes they feel

quite vulnerable. They could have headaches, convulsions and fever. Girls may suffer the most for biological and social reasons, the expert said.

"As no pathological evidence was found, people should not be terrified of the symptoms," said Directorate General of Health Shahjahan Biswas.

Motivation and awareness building is more important than

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PHOTO: STAR

Mother of a schoolgirl becomes unconscious yesterday as six schoolgirls (four out of frame) of Adarsha High School in Rupganj upazila of Narayanganj are being taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital in an ambulance.

DEEP-SEA PORT  
Shipping ministry goes for Sonadia  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The shipping ministry today places its recommendations to the advisers' committee on economic affairs for building the country's first deep-sea port at Sonadia island.

The ministry backed Sonadia Island after Japanese consultancy firm Pacific Consultants International (PCI) recommended the island as the most suitable site.

Eight other possible sites PCI surveyed were Potenga, Middle Island, Kutubdia Point, Kutubdia Channel, Moheshkhali Channel, Elephant Point, Saint Martins Island and Akram Point.

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Draft policy on shipbreaking aims to protect environment  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has prepared a draft policy on shipbreaking, aiming to protect the environment and prevent accidents during shipbreaking that claim many workers' lives every year.

A high official in the shipping ministry said the policy would be placed before the advisory council soon for the final go-ahead.

The shipping ministry will hold an inter-ministerial meeting today (Thursday) where representatives of different ministries and stakeholders will place their recommendations before the draft is finalised.

Sources said the policy would suggest the government to form a permanent advisory committee

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# 200 feared killed in Brazilian air crash

AFP, Sao Paolo

A Brazilian passenger jet skidded off the runway after landing and burst into flames at a Sao Paolo airport on Tuesday, leaving as many as 200 people feared dead in what would be Brazil's deadliest air disaster.

Sao Paulo State Governor Jose Serra said none of the 176 people aboard Tam Airlines ill-fated Flight 3054 could have survived the crash, with temperatures in the blaze reaching 1,000 degrees centigrade.

Rescuers spoke of some 25 further fatalities on the ground.

Tam, Brazil's largest airline, said

the Airbus 320 careened off the runway after landing in driving rain, skidded across a crowded avenue, slammed into the company's three-storey offices and exploded in flames.

"The plane accelerated when it reached the end of the runway and tried to take off again to avoid the avenue, but it crashed into the building and exploded," salesman Junior Matos told AFP after witnessing the disaster.

The flight from the southern city of Porto Alegre was landing at Sao Paulo's Congonhas airport.

The airport -- the busiest in Brazil

-- is notorious for its short and often slippery runway, and its proximity to the nearby city center.

Early yesterday, 56 bodies had been retrieved from the burning site, while another two people died after being taken to hospital.

Sixteen of the confirmed fatalities were on the ground when the plane crashed into the office building.

"There's 200 killed over there," Manuel Antonio da Silva Araujo, a colonel in Sao Paulo's fire department said, according to the online

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17 troops among 34 killed in Pak battles  
*Suicide attack kills 15 at judge's rally*

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistani soldiers yesterday fought fierce gun battles with militants after two separate ambushes near the Afghan border, leaving 17 troops dead and at least the same number of rebels, the army said.

On Tuesday, a suicide bomber blew himself up at a rally where hundreds had gathered to hear Pakistan's suspended top judge speak, killing 15 people and plunging the country further into crisis.

The clashes in the North Waziristan tribal region came as President Pervez Musharraf said Pakistan was in "direct confrontation" with extremists who have launched a wave of attacks since a government raid on an Islamabad mosque.

In the first attack, insurgents fired rockets at a military convoy and then opened fire with automatic weapons near the village of Lwara Mundi, chief military spokesman Major General Waheed Arshad said.

"Seventeen soldiers were martyred and more than a dozen miscreants were also killed when troops returned fire," Arshad told AFP.

"Initial reports say that the fighting was heavy," a senior security official based in the area said.

The mountainous area where the ambush took place is near where Pakistani forces earlier this year erected the first 35-kilometre (20-mile) stretch of a controversial anti-Taliban fence along the border with Afghanistan.

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Anti-reformists want to destroy party unity  
*Say BNP reformists*  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Reformist leaders of BNP yesterday said the ones against reforms would not last in politics in the long run.

Hinting at the party chairperson Khaleda Zia, they also said anti-reform elements in the party want to destroy the unity of the party.

"The ones who do not believe in reforms will not last in politics," said ZA Khan, adviser to BNP chairperson.

Khan also said they are working toward implementing the reform proposal as it aims to make the party more democratic.

The pro-reform leaders, wishing to hold a party council by August, claimed that majority of BNP activists as well as the councillors have spontaneously joined

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