

Outlaw killed in 'shootout' with Rab

UNB, Pabna
An alleged leader of an extremist outfit was killed in a shootout between Rab and his accomplices in Ghoshpur area of Kushtia's Kumarkhali upazila yesterday morning.
The deceased was identified as Rafiqul Islam alias Dipjal, 35, of Golapnagar village in Bheramara upazila.
Police said he was a leader of the notorious Panna Bahini and wanted in a number of murder, abduction and extortion cases.
Rab-5 said they arrested Rafiqul in Bheramara's Dhakaiya Para area on Saturday evening. Following his confessional statement, the law enforcers took him to Ghoshpur

Huda, Taimur sued for Tk 1crore CNG scam

Abbas to be quizzed at jail gate over graft

STAR REPORT
Former communications minister Barrister Nazmul Huda and former BRTC Chairman Advocate Taimur Alam Khandaker were sued yesterday for misappropriating Tk 1 crore.
Meanwhile, indicting detained former housing and works minister Mirza Abbas for evading income-tax, the special makeshift court yesterday fixed August 23 for commencing trial with depositions by prosecution witnesses, reports UNB.
HUDA-TAIMUR CASE
Dhaka Auto Rickshaw Shramik Union General Secretary Mohammad Hanif filed the case with Paltan police station against Huda and Taimur along with eight others under sections 406, 420, 409 and 109.
In the first information report, the complainant said Nazmul Huda along with several government employees misappropriated Tk 1 crore which was taken from him on August 2, 2002 for providing 200 CNG-run auto-rickshaws.
Joint forces detained Huda on February 4.
ABBAS, SALAHUDDIN CASE
The special makeshift court yesterday indicted detained Mirza Abbas for evading income tax and fixed August 23 for commencing trial with depositions by prosecution witnesses.
Abbas, standing in the dock, pleaded not guilty when the court set up at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban read out the charge against the BNP leader.
Deputy Tax Commissioner of the National Board of Revenue

People distressed by floods, political repression, says Khaleda

UNB, Dhaka
BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday said people in the country are now in distress due to the floods, political repression and a spike in price of essential goods.
"People are passing through a very difficult time. Political repression, price hike and floods have made public life miserable", she said during a teleconference with expatriate BNP workers who gathered at Quince, New York at 8:00am Bangladesh time.
"International Tarique Mukti Andolan", a platform for pro-BNP Bangladeshi expatriates organised the teleconference.
"Let's pray to Almighty Allah so that we could overcome the bad time and start political activities",

POLITICS BY STUDENTS, TEACHERS, WORKERS
Govt yet to respond to EC proposal for ban

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The caretaker government has yet to respond to the Election Commission's (EC) proposals for amending the existing regulations to prohibit the political parties' having front organisations comprised of students, teachers and workers.
Over two months have gone since the EC sent the draft proposals to the law ministry, seeking also to outlaw the parties' having branches abroad.
Unless the government brings amendments to the Political Parties Ordinance, 1978, the commission cannot make the political parties to be registered with it cut off relations with their offshoots.
Election Commissioner Muhammed Sohul Hussain yesterday told The Daily Star that the EC does not know the current status of its proposals.
Contacted, the law ministry officials said they have not received any direction from the government high-ups whether the ordinance promulgated during the rule of Ziaur Rahman will be adapted in line with the EC proposals.
"We will start working on the issue once the government decides to amend the ordinance," said a senior official of the ministry.
According to the draft proposals, political parties registered with the EC shall not form front organisations with students and teachers of any public or non-government educational institutions that receive financial aid from the government.
They will not be allowed to have branches in government and



Locals of South Keraniganj on the outskirts of the capital join in the 50-year-old traditional boat racing in Painakhal. The photo was taken yesterday near the Rajendrapur Bridge.

Gayoom gets people's nod for new constitution

AP, Male
President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom won an overwhelming victory yesterday in a referendum on the Maldives' future form of government, a poll seen as an informal vote of confidence in his three-decade rule of the tiny Indian Ocean nation.
The vote was expected to clear the way for the Sunni Muslim nation of 300,000 people to adopt a new constitution in November and hold its first multiparty elections next year.
Gayoom, criticised as a dictator by the opposition, sought a US-style political system with a powerful executive presidency. The opposition, wary of keeping power consolidated, backed a British-style parliamentary system.
The referendum was seen as the first true expression of democracy in the Maldives' 43-year history.
Results Sunday afternoon showed the presidential form of government winning more than 60 percent support, 93,042 votes to 57,109 votes for a parliamentary system.
Turnout was not announced, but the votes counted appeared to give Gayoom's side an overwhelming majority, and his spokesman

Thai PM declares victory in referendum

AFP, Bangkok
Thailand's army-installed government declared victory yesterday in a referendum on a new constitution and vowed to hold general elections by year's end to restore democracy following last September's coup.
Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont claimed victory after exit polls showed that nearly 68 percent of Thai voters had approved the charter, with at least two-thirds of the nation's 45 million eligible voters casting ballots.
"We consider that this constitution has been approved by the people, and by the end of August the constitution will be submitted to the king for endorsement," Surayud said on national television.
"Overall, the turnout was more than 50 percent. I thank the Thai people for coming out to exercise their vote," he said.
Sunday's vote was the first test at the ballot box for the ruling junta, which ousted elected premier Thaksin Shinawatra in a bloodless coup last September.
Surayud, who had said the country's first-ever referendum would help put the nation back on track after more than a year of turmoil, reaffirmed that with the approval of the charter, general elections would be held by year's end.
"I reaffirm that the election will be held late this year. The exact date is still under consideration, but I believe the most suitable date is after the king's birthday" on December 5, he said.
"What the public has to do next is to learn about the political parties' platforms, and the public must participate in the next general election late this year," he said.
The prime minister was speaking about 30 minutes after polling stations had closed, and before any early returns had been released by election officials. Preliminary results were due later Sunday.
Although the military has insisted the charter will clear a path

Condition of Wazed Miah 'serious, not critical'
Says his doctor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Health condition of Dr Wazed Miah, husband of detained Awami League President Sheikh Hasina and a renowned nuclear scientist, is "serious though not critical", his doctor said yesterday.
"His heart and kidneys are not functioning properly. He is also suffering from diabetes and blood pressure," Dr MH Millat, who is treating Wazed, said adding the nuclear scientist underwent a vascular operation yesterday.
The reason for the operation was to trace the veins in his hands for dialysis, Dr Millat told reporters at a press briefing at Square Hospitals in the capital.
Earlier, Wazed underwent a bypass surgery.
Briefing to reporters, the doctor said Wazed is not in a position to be sent abroad for better treatment.
Dr Millat, a consultant cardiothoracic surgeon at Square Hospitals, said Wazed would have to be kept alive through treatment and dialysis. "There is no

3 die as bus skids off road

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kishoreganj
A bus skidded off the Kishoreganj-Tarail road at Sheemol Hati in Tarail upazila and plunged into a deep water body yesterday leaving three dead, seven injured and 18 missing.
The dead were identified as Panu Sharma, 73, Shanta, 17 and Ratan, 5, all residents of Sheemol

Benazir links terrorism to Musharraf regime

AFP, Montreal
Pakistan's exiled former leader Benazir Bhutto warned Saturday that the threat of terrorism in north-western Pakistan's lawless tribal zones will not go away while a military government is in power.
"The root cause of the problem lies in the inability of the government of Pakistan to assert governmental authority and state authority in the tribal areas," Benazir Bhutto told Canada's CBC public television channel.
"As long as we have a cabinet ... that needs the threat of terrorism to sustain a military dictatorship in Pakistan we're never going to get rid of terrorism," she said of the leadership of President Pervez Musharraf.
General Musharraf came to power in a bloodless coup in 1999.
Benazir Bhutto, who served as Pakistan's prime minister from 1988-1990 and 1993-1996, now leads her highly influential Pakistan People's Party from exile in London but has declared she intends to return to Pakistan to contest the next legislative election. She met Musharraf in Abu Dhabi last month to discuss a possible power-sharing deal, ahead of the elections planned for around the end of the year.
Benazir Bhutto said she is open to such a deal as long as Musharraf gives up his role as head of the military.
"The military is the problem," she said Saturday. "True democracy will deal with the social and economic needs of the people of Pakistan."

Prayer Timing
August 20

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-25	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-38	6-41
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation