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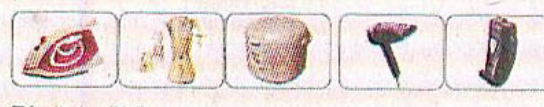
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Poor power coordination led to Sidr blackout

Finds investigation

UNB, Dhaka

The government-formed investigation committee found lack of coordination between the central load-dispatch centre (CLDC) and the power substations as the prime reason behind the nationwide blackout on November 15 when the cyclone Sidr struck the coastal areas.

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ATTACK ON UK ENVOY

Fresh summons on 9 witnesses

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

A Sylhet court issued fresh summons on nine prosecution witnesses, including a deputy secretary, for recording their depositions in a case filed in connection with the grenade attack on the British high commissioner in May, 2004.

Divisional Speedy Trial Tribunal Judge of Sylhet Diproman Sarker passed the order yesterday afternoon as the prosecution witnesses failed to appear before the court in recent days.

The summonses issued are on

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Rangs death toll rises to 11

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Another body has been recovered from under the rubble of Rangs Building, bringing the death toll to 11.

Abdur Rahim, 25, who hailed from Madhukhali in Faridpur, was the last among the 11 trapped labourers.

But the body of a security guard -- Shahidul Islam of Chapainawabganj -- is still missing. Nazrul Islam, who was waiting around the building for the body of Shahidul, said they found his shoes and mobile phone.

Firefighters recovered the body

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Prayer Timing		
December 19		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-20	5-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-22	5-25
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation



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RELIEF OPERATIONS IN SIDR-HIT AREAS

TIB finds irregularities, mismanagement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) in its observation report on the relief operations in the Sidr-affected areas brought allegations of irregularities, corruption, mismanagement and lack of coordination.

The TIB said it found that local body members embezzled relief materials, there were lack of proper assessment before disbursing relief, low if not zero distribution of

relief in remote or inaccessible areas, preference of a number of NGOs in operating among its own members, beneficiaries or coverage areas only.

It observed, "Relief being manipulated as vote banks by the local government representatives."

The TIB gave its observation through the report titled "Integrity in Humanitarian Assistance: Issues and Benchmarks" at a roundtable discussion at the BIAM auditorium in the city yesterday. It urged the

government to bring integrity in humanitarian assistance, saying that without transparency and accountability relief work would not be fully successful.

"Some affected families were over-supplied due to nepotism and lack of coordination and monitoring, while others received none," the TIB said.

It said a number of NGOs were disbursing loan in the name of relief while a few NGOs were

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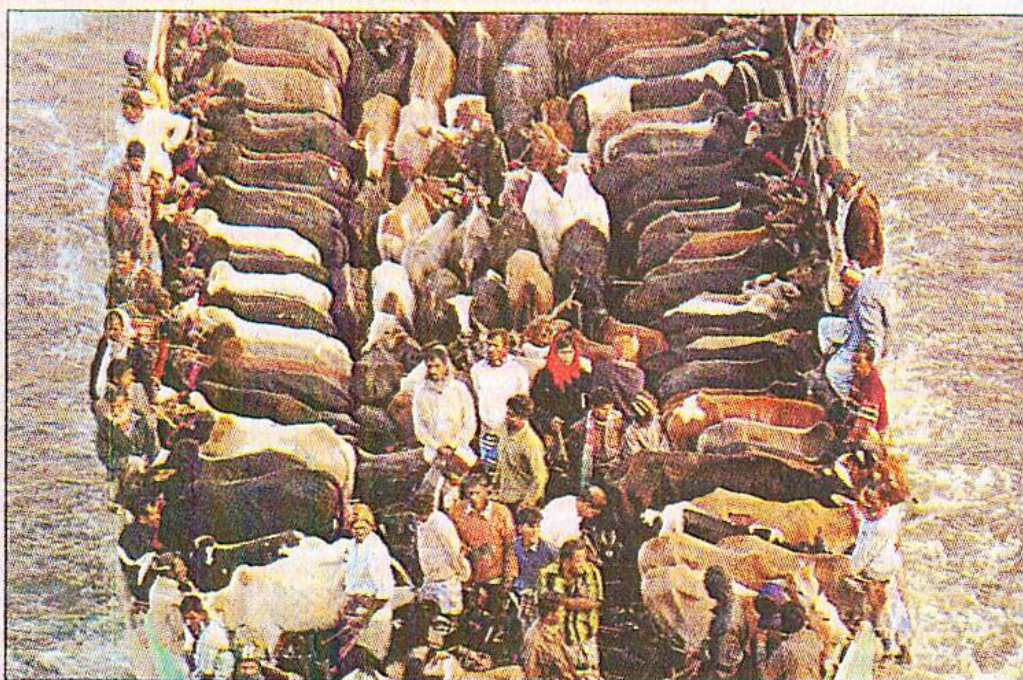


PHOTO: STAR

Cattle traders bringing boatload of sacrificial animals to the capital through the Buriganga yesterday to meet increasing demand as Eid-ul-Azha draws near.

1,500 years old antics found in Bogra

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

Archaeologists have discovered more antics dating back to the Pala dynasty, including a terracotta piece bearing a statue of a meditating Gautam Buddha, at Bhasu Bihar in Shibganj upazila of Bogra.

The terracotta antic was found on Monday in a monastic cell of the existing structure of a Buddhist temple, which is more than 1,500 years old, Custodian Nahid Sultana said.

A large broken earthen jar, a niche, and door frames were also found on December 17 in different cells.

Assistant Custodian Md Mahabub-Ul-Alam said a floor was dug out in the temple beneath a 10-feet layer of ash in

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Terracotta antic with the image of Gautam Buddha in meditation.

HC bail to Sigma, Mir Helal stayed

UNB, Dhaka

The Supreme Court yesterday stayed bail granted by the High Court to Sigma Huda, wife of jailed former communications minister Nazmul Huda, and Barrister Mir Helal Uddin, son of jailed former state minister for civil aviation and tourism Mir Nasir.

Vacation Chamber Judge M Joydul Abedin, following separate government applications, passed the orders.

Sigma and Helal were tried and punished by special courts under the Emergency Power Rules (EPR). Responding to their petitions, a High Court bench granted them bail on December 13.

The government moved the applications, as it preferred leave to appeal against the High Court orders.

On August 27, the special court, trying the corruption suspects, sentenced Nazmul Huda to seven years rigorous imprisonment in a corruption case, while his wife to three years imprisonment for

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PARIS EXHIBITION

SC clears way for govt to send rest of artefacts

UNB, Dhaka

The Supreme Court yesterday stayed Thursday's High Court order of status quo and thereby cleared all the way for the government to send the rest of Bangladeshi artefacts to Paris exhibition.

Vacation-chamber Judge M Joydul Abedin, following an application moved by the government, passed the order lifting the legal roadblocks to display of the Bangladeshi archaeological masterpieces at the first major international exhibition at Guimet Museum in the French capital.

The artefacts from five Bangladesh museums were scheduled to be on display at the exhibition under an agreement signed between the French ambassador in Bangladesh and the secretary of the cultural affairs ministry.

Some 188 items were selected from Dhaka National Museum and the museums of Paharpur, Mahasthangarh, Mainamati and Barendra for the show.

RAB GUNFIGHT

Youth held in Jamalpur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday arrested the fleeing youth who traded gunshots with the elite force, leaving one dead and two Rab men wounded in the early hours Monday.

The Rab identified the arrestee as Haider Malik alias Rana alias Bappi, 21.

A joint team of Rab-2 and Rab-12 raided a place in Jamalpur Sadar upazila, Bappi's hometown, and arrested him around 10:00am.

Earlier on Monday, Rab and

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Sharif out of elections

Pak EC rejects his appeal against rejection of nomination

AP, Islamabad

Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif lost his appeal against the rejection of his nomination for next month's parliamentary elections, an official said yesterday, eliminating a key opposition leader from the crucial vote.

The Election Commission rejected Sharif's appeal Monday, commission spokesman Kanwar Dilshad said. Dilshad declined to give details, confirming only a report in the Urdu-language Jang daily Tuesday that Sharif was out of the elections.

Sharif, who has been campaigning for his Pakistan Muslim League-N party, has been demanding that President Pervez Musharraf restore Supreme Court judges he sacked during a 42-day state of emergency that he lifted

over the weekend.

Sharif's party initially called for a boycott of the vote but decided against it after failing to muster support from other opposition groups for a united action.

The party described the appeal's rejection as a politically motivated decision.

"This also shows that they are still afraid of his popularity and cannot face him," said party spokesman Ahsan Iqbal. "This is also shows that there is no level playing field in these elections."

Other candidates objected to Sharif's nomination, citing charges against him relating to the 1999 coup by Musharraf that ousted Sharif's government and his alleged involvement in a corruption case.

The chief election commissioner also rejected a separate

appeal by Sharif's brother, Shahbaz Sharif, against rejection of his nomination for the Jan. 8 balloting.

Since his ouster, Nawaz Sharif has lived in exile in Saudi Arabia and Britain. Like Benazir Bhutto, another two-time former prime minister, he has returned home to be involved in the elections.

Addressing thousands of supporters during an election campaign stop in Hyderabad on Monday, Benazir Bhutto sharply criticised Musharraf's rule as a "dark era of dictatorship." She warned that a rigged vote could push the country into "anarchy."

"If the militancy spreads and if, God forbid, the country disintegrates, it would become another Afghanistan," Benazir said.

Musharraf said curbing militancy was the chief reason he

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TAX OFFENCES

Ex-BNP lawmaker Salahuddin's son jailed for 9 yrs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Special Court yesterday handed down nine years' imprisonment to Shahriar Ahmed, son of former BNP lawmaker Salahuddin Ahmed, for committing three types of tax offences.

Judge Shamsunnahar of Fourth Special Court, set up on the Jatiya Sangsad Bhavan premises, also fined him Tk 1.5 crore. In default of

which, Shahriar, who is on the run, has to suffer a year and nine months more in prison.

The court also ordered to confiscate his property including 7.6 acres of land.

National Board of Revenue (NBR) Assistant Commissioner Nashid Rezwana Monir filed the case against Shahriar on November 22 for evading income tax of Tk 8.68

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WAR CRIMINALS' TRIAL

Let state, not individuals, be plaintiff

Urges facts finding body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The War Crimes Facts Finding Committee has said that the state should be the complainant in any case to bring criminals to trial for acts of mass killing and crimes against humanity.

In a press release, Convenor of the War Crimes Facts Finding Committee Dr MA Hasan also called on the people to keep up the continuous movement to bring all war criminals of 1971 to trial.

He also invited all citizens to make lists of the collaborators of

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Star Weddings

The Daily Star Special Publication

The wedding season is here! We've got you covered with the latest trends in wedding fashion, decor, and more. Star Weddings is your go-to guide for everything you need to know to make your wedding day perfect.

This wedding season, brides will follow tradition and lead trends. Saris will absorb heritage and reflect new couture. Classic mehendi will fuse with funky tattoos. Typical instrumentals will blend with groovy tunes. For her, the test will not be one of endurance, but one of enjoyment. And the groom will stand by her, hand in hand, all the way. This wedding season brides will look extraordinary - she will shine like the brightest star. Get your copy of Star Weddings.



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