

OBC Service to India
with attractive introductory rate

direct On Board Courier (OBC) service by air

delivery within 1-2* business days to all metropolitan cities

attractive introductory rate

* Service availability may vary according to place of collection and destination. Please contact our Sales Office or 24-hour Call Center on 9505114 for exact details.

FedEx Express
Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.
Licenses of Federal Express Corporation

Every Package Matters

PHILIPS
sense your simplicity

Philips DAP ensures you the BEST Gift for loved ones

WEDDING SEASON GIFT

10% Discount on Steam Iron

This offer is valid till stock lasts

Customer Care Centre: 855366-8, 81712-863463, Enquiry: 81711-884591, 81712-882478

TRANSFORM ELECTRONICS

High production cost may hike potato price, fear growers

MD HASAN, back from Munshiganj

Farmers in Munshiganj, a key potato cultivating district, fear late plantation of potato and high production cost could hamper potato yield this season.

Potato farmers in the area are experiencing difficulties which could push the production cost of potato to over Tk 15.50 a kg against last year's Tk 13 a kg, said government officials and experts.

"Farmers had to postpone their plantation until end of December as rainfall, due to cyclone Sidr, damaged prepared lands," said Jatindra Chandra Modak, deputy director of Agriculture Extension

Department of Munshiganj. "Along with high production cost there is also a probability of low production which could put potato prices between Tk 17 and Tk 20 at the grocery shops," he said. Potato represents more than 55 percent of the total vegetable production of the country.

Potato farmers fear incurring loss if the market price is below their production cost during harvest. They claimed since many farmers cannot afford to store their produce in cold storages, middlemen every year take the advantage forcing farmers to sell at lower prices.

Referring to the present food price situation, experts say potato

is sometimes considered as an alternative to rice for people of the low income group. High potato price would put extra burden on the consumers.

"If potato price rises in line with the price of rice, it will create more pressure on consumer price index (CPI)," said Prof Mustafizur Rahman, executive director of Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

Farmers of Kadishal, Taltoal, Kushumpur, Rashunia of Shirajdikhan upazila and Makahati and Mohakhal of Munshiganj told this correspondent that high fertiliser and seed prices, high labour cost, and bad weather is taking a toll on their potato production.

They said this could result in high potato prices.

Munshiganj alone produces almost 34 percent of the potato produced in the country. Last year, 10 lakh tonnes of potato was produced in Munshiganj district, according to Agriculture Extension Department of Munshiganj. The government this year estimated that potato would be cultivated on 35,000 hectares of land.

Cyclone Sidr badly damaged potatoes on 1,624 hectares of land, which were the early crops.

Nabi Hossain of Rashunia at Shirajdikhan upazila, while irrigating his land on Thursday, expressed

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5

Bad preservation of seeds dims prospects of good yield

MD HASAN

Potato growers in Munshiganj have been facing a crisis of quality seeds due to its improper preservation.

Farmers allege that cold stores in the district do not maintain the minimum temperature required to preserve seed potatoes, dimming the prospect of a good yield.

Cold store owners, on the other hand, claim they do not practise anything that can lower the quality of seeds. They, however, acknowledge that because of frequent power cuts it is often hard to keep temperature at the optimum level.

Munshiganj accounts for almost 40 percent of the country's total potato production. The demand for potato seeds in the district is around 64 thousand tonnes a year. And of that, 90 percent come from the local cold stores. According to the Department of Agricultural

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4



A farmer puts fertiliser on a potato field in Rashunia village of Munshiganj. The growers in the district are experiencing various problems including low-quality seeds and high production cost.

Twin Kapileswar Temples need protection, renovation

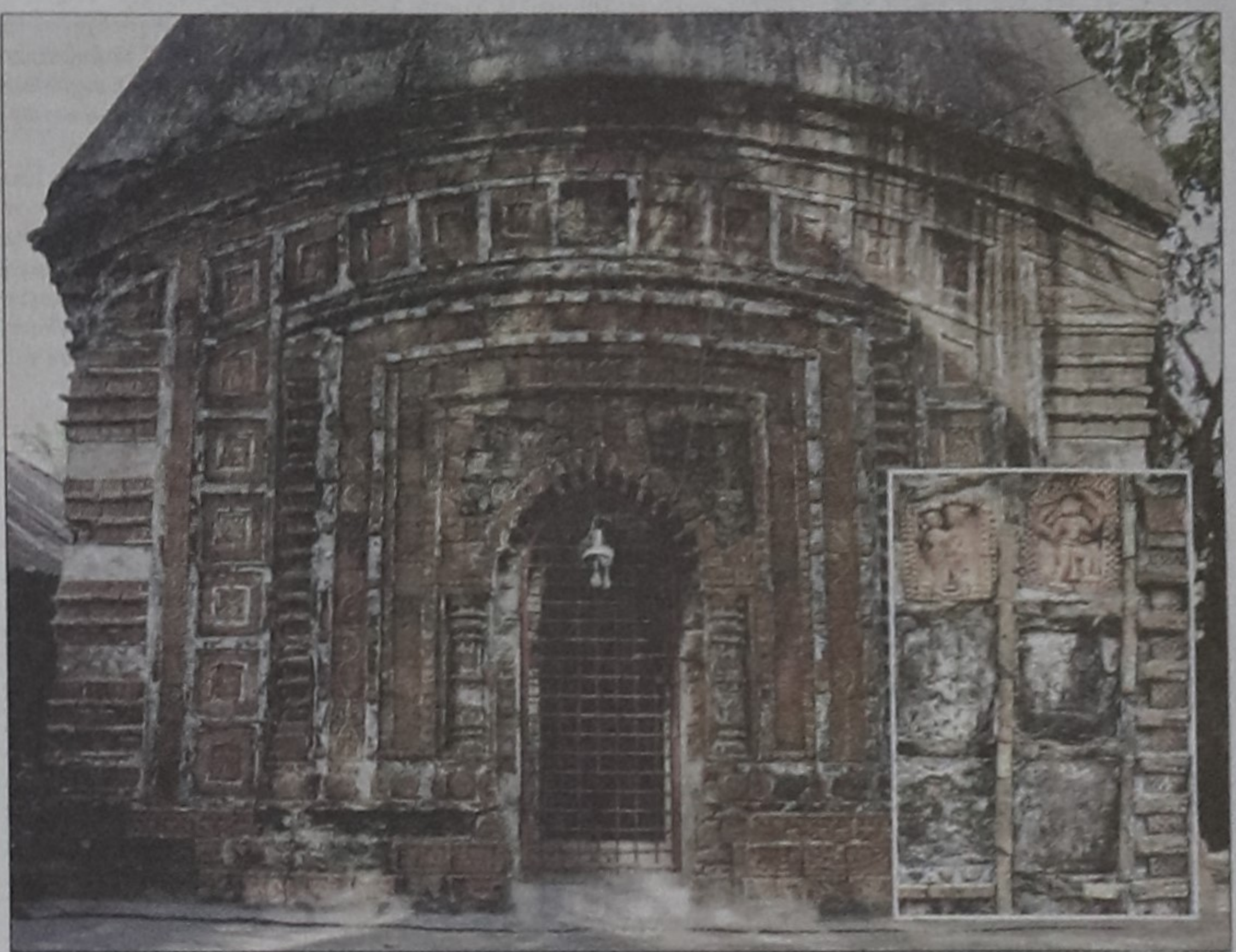
HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, back from Tarash, Sirajganj

The invaluable treasure of ancient terracotta artworks on the walls of the twin Kapileswar Shiva Temples in Tarash upazila of Sirajganj is facing the risk of destruction as the temples have long been in a dilapidated condition.

Although a large number of terracotta decoration pieces have been stolen or misplaced over the years, the brick-built temples built in 1630-35AD still showcase an ample amount of such terracotta plaques. But the authorities have not yet declared them as a protected site.

A few senior officials of the Archaeology Department said several proposals in this regard have been sent to the ministry concerned since the country's independence, but to no avail. Nor have the ancient temples been renovated for the last 300 years.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 3



One of the twin Kapileswar Shiva Temples in Tarash upazila of Sirajganj; (inset) many terracotta plaques have been stolen from the temple walls over the years.

BRAC BANK HEIST DB identifies the mastermind

KAILASH SARKAR

The mastermind of Brac Bank heist at its Dhanmondi branch has been identified by detective police, but he is yet to be arrested, investigators said yesterday.

The detectives are now verifying suspected involvement of staff of the bank and Hotel Nidmahal

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Wild elephant kills 2, damages 60 houses

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Two people were killed and at least 60 houses were damaged by a wild elephant at Uparmara village under Patgram upazila of Lalmonirhat district yesterday.

The dead were identified as Aminur Rahman, 30, and Azhar Ali, 48.

The officer-in-charge of Patgram Police Station said Aminur and Azhar were trampled to death by the elephant that entered the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

BSC wants to buy 13-year-old vessel despite opposition

JASIM UDDIN KHAN

Bangladesh Shipping Corporation (BSC) is seeking to buy a 13-year old container ship at a cost of Tk 84 crore despite opposition from the Planning Commission that has warned BSC that it is unlikely to recoup its investment.

Moreover, the ship will still not be allowed to enter any ports in European Union countries, where all BSC ships are already banned due to the aging nature of the country's merchant fleet.

The BSC says the ship is needed to improve the organisations capacity to transport goods on the Chittagong-Mongla-Singapore route.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Any unilateral US intervention to be treated as invasion

Warns Musharraf

AFP, Singapore

President Pervez Musharraf has warned the US-led coalition in Afghanistan that any unauthorised incursion into Pakistan will be treated as an invasion, according to an interview published yesterday.

Musharraf told the Straits Times that US or coalition troops would not be welcome unless invited for a particular reason, such as hunting al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden.

"Nobody will come here until we ask them to come. And we haven't asked them," he said in the interview datelined Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

PCJSS welcomes govt move, wants to hold talks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parbatya Chattagram Ja a Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) yesterday urged the caretaker government to have dialogues with it under the government's initiative of dialogues with political parties.

They also congratulated the five newly appointed advisers and three special assistants to the caretaker government.

Rupayan Dewan, councillor of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Regional Council and central committee member of PCJSS, in a press release yesterday said the PCJSS is confident that this new set of advisers and the special assistants would try to give the nation a credible election at the earliest. The PCJSS said it believes they would work hard to help establish good governance and a democratic culture in politics.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Wellington Test starts today

SPORTS REPORTER

One down Bangladesh go to the second and final Test match against New Zealand today to make sure they return home with some consolation from a tour they have yet to make any impression.

The match starts at 4am Bangladesh Standard Time with SAB channel beaming the live coverage from the 12,000-capacity Basin Reserve in Wellington.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5



A huge fire engulfing structures at Neemtola slum of Rayerbazar in the city last night. It gutted over 2,000 shanties and other structures in four slums.

Prayer Timing		
January 12		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-36	5-40
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

job in your pocket

The Daily Star Classifieds
On Mobile or Computer

cellbazaar.com

Help: 01713238381-5

7th INTERNATIONAL APPAREL MACHINERY & ACCESSORIES TRADE SHOW OF BANGLADESH

INAUGURATION TODAY

at 11.AM

Mr. Anwar-ul-Alam Chowdhury (Pervez)
President - Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BGMEA)

Focus on :

- ◆ Sewing ◆ Knitting ◆ Embroidery
- ◆ Laundry ◆ Finishing ◆ CAD/CAM
- ◆ Accessories ◆ IT Solutions
- ◆ Consultancy

World class products of Garment Machinery from Japan, Korea, Taiwan, China, Germany, Turkey, Taiwan, Italy, India etc.,

Entry Free for Trade Visitors Only
Timings : 11am- 7pm

ZAK GARMENTECH

12 13 14 15 JAN

Bangladesh - China Friendship Conference Centre

ADKOPP AOLAN ARTERA BANGLA CAT brother DINO DOTEC E-Cool ELGI FABCARE

FDM FEIYUE GEMIS GLORY TRADE CENTRE HASHIMA HUBBA IMP WA JACK JOIN HAR

JUKI JL Kaikuan KANSAI K-CHANCE KHW KPI LA macpi

MEL GROUP MITSUBISHI MITSUYIN M t M NAOMOTO Ngai Shing Ni SHO ONHIMA PEBASUS PMM

Ramov Salf SHANGHAI LING SICAMA SIRUBA Soabar Sarsine SunSir SMF TAKING TIK

CXMC treepoint TSM TYPICAL Uzu VEDA YAMATA ZENITA ZHANYI

Organised by : Zak Trade Fairs & Exhibitions Pvt. Ltd, India / Zakaria Trade & Fair International, Dhaka