

Special discount for Picnic party

Just dial 01912256723 & get the products at your step

OFFICE CO CIRCULATION

The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

Plus Rising Stars

LCD HD TV
42TA2800
37TA2800
32TA2800
26TA2800

PHILIPS
sense and simplicity

TRANSKOM ELECTRONICS 8852868, 01712-65483

TO People's Right to Know

REGD. NO. DA 781

VOL. XVIII No. 31

DHAKA THURSDAY FEBRUARY 14, 2008

www.thedailystar.net

FALGUN 2, 1414 BS

SAFAR 6, 1429 HIRI

20 PAGES PLUS RISING STARS PRICE: Tk 10.00

All accused in Khulna journo Balu murder case acquitted

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Khulna speedy trial tribunal yesterday acquitted all seven accused in journalist Humayun Kabir Balu murder case.

The acquitted are founder of Janajuddho faction of outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party Abdur Rashid Malitha alias Dada Tapan, Nazrul Islam alias Khora Nazrul, Iqbal Hossain Shadin, Nazimuddin, Masum, Rimon and Zahid.

Judge Abdus Salam Shikder of Khulna Division Speedy Trial

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

BENAPOLE 6,500 MT rice imported at higher price

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

About 6,500 tonnes of rice were imported from India yesterday through Benapole land port at a hiked price of \$505 to \$10 per tonne.

Traders said the import price of rice higher although an agreement was signed between Indian and Bangladeshi traders earlier, fixing the price at \$420-425.

The same quality of rice was

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

AUG 21 ATTACK Pintu's bail petition rejected

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday rejected bail petition of detained former deputy minister Abdus Salam Pintu in connection with the August 21 grenade attack case.

Meantime, Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) pressed charges against former Public Service Commission (PSC) member Prof Mahfuzur Rahman in a case filed against him for concealing wealth information and amassing assets through illegal means.

Besides, arrest warrants against Basundhara Group Chairman Ahmed Akbar Sobhan Shah Alam and one of his accomplices were

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

68 Titas staff gobbled up Tk 10,000 crore

Taskforce hands over their details to ACC; 15 yet to return illegal wealth

KAILASH SARKAR

A taskforce of the National Coordination Committee (NCC) to Combat Corruption and Serious Crimes, designated to investigate graft in Titas Gas, sent to the Anti-corruption Commission (ACC) a list of alleged illegal properties of 68 former and present staff of the agency.

The total value of the listed illegally earned properties primarily was estimated at somewhere between Tk 9,000 crore and Tk 10,000 crore.

The 68 implicated staff include 15 out of the 136 who had earlier confessed to the taskforce that they had been involved in large scale corruption, and had also promised to handover their illegally amassed wealth to the government.

The list of properties of the 15 was sent to the ACC due to their failure to handover their illegally amassed wealth to the government despite their earlier promise to do so.

The 53 other implicated staff, whose list of properties was also sent to the ACC, however had not confessed to being involved in corruption.

The total value of illegally earned wealth of the allegedly corrupt Titas staff was primarily estimated at somewhere between Tk 9,000 crore and Tk 10,000 by the taskforce, but taskforce officials said the numbers might change based on further findings.

Former sales assistant of the energy agency, Abdul Kadir Mollah, alone owns properties worth Tk 2,100 crore while former meter

reader also a former CBA leader Abul Kshem owns properties worth Tk 300 crore.

Meter reader Mahbubur Rahman owns properties worth Tk 250 crore, technician Habibur Rahman owns properties worth Tk 200 crore, former deputy manager Md Emdadul Huq is worth Tk 100 crore, supervisor Sohrab Hossain Sikder owns properties worth Tk 50 crore, welder Foyez Ahmed has properties worth Tk 40 crore, while former receptionist Olifa Akhter, who had also been promoted illegally to the post of deputy general manager of the IT department, has properties worth Tk 30 crore.

The taskforce also found that each of the remaining implicated Titas staff owns properties worth at least Tk 1 crore.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Hannan Shah held again 24hrs after release

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In around 24 hours after being released from jail, Brig Gen (ret) Hannan Shah, an adviser to the BNP chairperson, was arrested again at 9:00 last night.

He was released on bail from Narayanganj Jail on Tuesday at 8:30pm as the High Court (HC) had granted a three-month interim bail to him.

Police arrived at his DOHS, Mohakhali residence at 8:35pm while leaders of Jatiyatabadi Mohila Dal, women wing of BNP, were visiting him to greet him on his release from jail on Tuesday.

The police asked him to go with them as an extortion case was filed against him yesterday with Gazipur Police Station by an individual named Rashid Mollah for his alleged involvement in extortion that took place in 2006.

Hannan told the police that he did not know anyone by that name

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

EC seeks Tk 570cr for elections

SHAKHAWAT LITON

The Election Commission (EC) has asked the caretaker government to allocate over Tk 570 crore in the budget for fiscal 2008-09 for holding the elections to parliament and local government bodies.

Of the amount, Tk 250 crore was sought for holding the stalled ninth parliamentary election, Tk 100.50 crore for elections to upazila parishes, Tk 200.50 crore for union parishes, Tk 12 crore for city corporations and Tk 2.10 crore for polls to municipalities, sources said giving the main features of polls expenditures.

In addition to this, the EC has sought Tk 159.73 crore to meet its other expenditures from central to field level.

The EC Secretariat recently sent the proposals for budgetary allocations to Finance Division of the finance ministry, which is now working on the next budget.

Senior officials of the EC Secretariat will also meet Finance Division officials in to explain the

need for the funds.

According to the EC's electoral roadmap announced on July 15 last year, parliamentary election will be held by December and long overdue polls to upazila parishes in November-December this year.

Elections to five of the six city corporations and many of the municipalities will be held starting from April and ending before the parliamentary polls.

As per the electoral roadmap, polls to over 4,000 union parishes were supposed to be held this year but the EC later decided not to hold the polls as it might retard preparation for parliamentary polls.

But the EC will have to hold polls to the union parishes immediately after the parliamentary election as their tenure will expire by next month.

The estimated expenditure for holding the stalled parliamentary election exceeds that for any previous election.

EC officials attributed this

SEE PAGE 5 COL 4

Move to honour Birsreshthas, language martyrs Villages will be named after them

UNB, Dhaka

The caretaker government has decided to rename the nine villages and one union of seven Birsreshthas and three language martyrs for their heroic deeds and struggles in 1971 and 1952.

Under the same plan, a library and a memorial museum will be established in each of the villages of the Birsreshthas and language martyrs through local district councils.

The government has allocated Tk 6.29 crore for implementing the scheme.

Ramnagar, the village of Birsreshtha Flight Lieutenant Motiur Rahman, will be renamed Matur Nagar in Narsingdi district. Air Vice-Marshal (Retd) AK Khondokar, one of the sector commanders of the Liberation War, will inaugurate the library and the museum at the village on March 20.

Khordh Khalishpur, the village

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



Shopkeepers try to save goods during a drive conducted by Rajdhani Unnayan Kartipakkha to demolish illegal settlements at Fakirapal market in the capital yesterday.

BoP goes into a rare \$63m deficit

Rise in import of food, fertiliser, fuel blamed

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Bangladesh's balance of payments (BoP) went into a deficit for the first time in six years due to an astronomical rise in food, fertiliser and petroleum imports, and experts fear it may blow out to \$200 million by June this year.

Between October and November in the second quarter of the current fiscal year, the overall BoP was \$63 million in deficit compared to the \$203 million surplus in the previous quarter, says Bangladesh Bank quarterly report.

One of the causes for the deficit is the astonishing 983 percent rise in rice imports in the first seven months of the current fiscal year. Moreover, letters of credit to import rice also increased by 1,221

percent in the same period, according to BB figures.

In FY 01, the BoP was in deficit of \$281 million, with the overall balance enjoying a steady string of surplus years until last quarter.

According to BB data in the five months, imports have gone up by 17.52 percent, while exports have grown by only 2.4 percent, widening the trade imbalance to \$2.09 billion. In the corresponding period last year, the trade imbalance was \$1.16 billion.

The central bank sources say the trade imbalance could worsen as imports continue to rise against exports in the context of a sharp fall in domestic agricultural production and soaring international food prices.

The quarterly report states that

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Hasina not produced before court

Graft case hearing deferred to Feb 19

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The special court dealing with the Tk 3 crore graft case against Sheikh Hasina and other accused yesterday deferred again the hearing on framing charge until February 19 as Hasina was not produced before the court because of illness.

Hasina's counsel filed a petition yesterday, seeking bail. The prosecution and the defence completed their arguments on the petition and the court decided to deliver its order on the next day of hearing.

Firoz Alam, judge of the special court-1 set up in the MP Hostel on the National Parliament Complex, adjourned the proceedings until 2:30pm of February 19.

The court sat at 10:30am after the jail authority informed the court that the physical condition of the former premier minister and Awami League president was not good and her blood pressure was

fluctuating, so she cannot attend the court.

Former power and energy secretary Dr Toufiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, another detained accused of the case, was produced before the court yesterday.

Toufiq had obtained bail from the High Court (HC) and the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court also upheld the order on Tuesday.

The prosecution alleged that Hasina awarded the contract of setting up a barge-mounted power plant to Khulna Power Company Ltd (KPCL), a conglomerate comprising Wartsila, Sunnit Group and United Group, in exchange for a bribe of Tk 3 crore paid in eight pay orders.

They said the New England Power Company was the lowest bidder with a quotation of a rate of \$4.59 for one kilowatt per hour

SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Another innovation by The Daily Star

Logon to epaper.thedailystar.net and read your favourite newspaper

The Daily Star online exactly as it appears in the print edition!

epaper The Daily Star
epaper.thedailystar.net

For the first time in Bangladesh, The Daily Star has launched epaper.thedailystar.net, the electronic copy of the print edition combined with the power of web

Exact replica of the print edition Read The Daily Star online as it is in the print edition	Copy / Print / Email your favourite news, articles, advertisements or images	Supplements, advertisements, tender notice, classifieds are also available in epaper.thedailystar.net
--	--	--

The epaper.thedailystar.net is powered by MNHS in partnership with The Daily Star

Visit our Kiosk (EX-05) at BASIS SOFTEXPO 2008

No matter where you are, visit epaper.thedailystar.net and you'll never miss your favourite newspaper with the exact look & feel

Experience the new horizon of trust

Grand Opening of **Feni Branch** February 14, 2008

Feni Branch: 106 Kazi Center, SSK Road, Feni

www.trustbank.com.bd

Trust Bank

This Valentine's 3 special ways to say you care

Welcome your callers with love tunes

Send love songs and messages to any part of the world

Free registration February 10-24, 2008
Simply SMS the song and artiste's name to 4356 (HELO)

Music and voice message service
Dial *438 (*GFT)

Find your special valentine

Voice chat service
Dial 3678 (DOST)

It's Simple.

Helpline: 121 (from Citycell), 011 99 121 121 (from any phone) | e-mail: customerservice@citycell.com | website: www.citycell.com