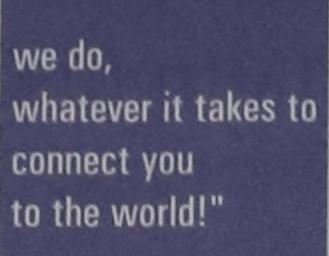
More than

1,40,000 people...





Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd

Every Package Matters



Buy 1 Philips 21" Flat TV and enjoy movies with a PHILIPS **DVD** player

Customer Care Centre: 8855366-8, 01712-665463

Militants rule Dhaka Polytechnic hostels

Some teachers' link alleged

KAILASH SARKAR

The dormitories of Dhaka Polytechnic Institute in the city's Tejgaon area have allegedly turned into a safe haven for fugitive criminals and militants.

Using aliases, the criminals take refuge at the three hostels and stay concealed among the students, alleged a number of students and agencies as well.

Islami Chhatra Shibir, student the militants, they said adding that with Harkat-ul-Jihad Al Islam issue is out of their jurisdiction to

(Huji) are also involved.

Jamaat Assistant Secretary General Muhammad Kamaruzzaman talking to The Daily Star last night denied all allegations against the party men. But he declined to make further

Contacted, Prof Shamshul Alam, principal of the institute, admitted that some teachers of the teachers of the institute, a fact institute are assisting the militants confirmed by the law enforcement to hide in the dormitories. "I have heard about them," he said.

Prof Alam however said that wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, shelters they are unable to take actions against those teachers since they several teachers with Jamaat back- have been discharging their acaground and known to have links demic duties accordingly and the first came to the spotlight as a

deal with. The intelligence agencies and the law enforcers should look into it, he added.

Talking to The Daily Star, Deputy Commissioner of Tejgaon Zone of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) Mahbubor Rahman said, "We have heard that besides the students, some teachers also shelter the militants. We have been investigating to identify them."

They have been keeping an eye on the hostels, he said. "The militants and other fugitives stay among the students of the dormitories using pseudonyms," the DMP deputy commission added.

Dhaka Polytechnic Institute

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Bazlur Rahman laid to rest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bazlur Rahman, one of the country's most prominent journalists and editor of the daily Sangbad, was laid to rest at the Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard yesterday amid state honour and homage from people from all walks

SEE EDITORIAL

Before the burial, a guard of honour was given to Bazlur Rahman for his heroic role in the country's Liberation War in 1971.

Earlier, three namaz-e-janazas were held for the late journalist at Nakla High School ground in Sherpur in the morning, at his Dhaka residence and at the Jatiya Press Club in the afternoon.

The body of Bazlur Rahman was kept at the Press Club, Central Shaheed Minar, office of the daily Sangbad at Purana Paltan, his residence at Ramna Complex at

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

MIG-29 CASE

Hasina not

on security

COURT CORRESPONDENT

MiG-29 corruption case.

on the scheduled date.

AFP, Islamabad

embattled US ally.

February 18.

grounds

taken to court





Motia Chowdhury, top, at a city hospital where her husband Bazlur Rahman passed away Tuesday night. The late Sangbad editor is given a guard of honour at the Jatiya Press Club in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR/FOCUS BANGLA



PHOTO: STAR

A narrow channel is dredged through a char in the Padma near Paturia to keep the Paturia-Doulatdia ferry service alive.

People won't accept polls of blueprint

Says Delwar

'certain quarter'.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Khaleda Zia-backed BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain yesterday said people would neither accept a 'blueprint' election nor a parliament comprising representatives blessed by a

He was speaking to the leaders and activists of Jessore district BNP at his Nam flat in the capital.

Delwar condemned filing of the case against BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia for her alleged involvement in the Barapukuria coal mine corruption.

The BNP secretary general said the party chairperson has been SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Hannan Shah hopeful of party unity

UNB, Dhaka

Softening his earlier stance, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's adviser Brig Gen (retd) ASM Hannan Shah yesterday said reformists will be reinstated in the party for the sake of unity.

"I'm hopeful of unity," Shah told newsmen at his residence. Pointing to the reformists, he said "those who have differed with us will be SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Prayer Timing February 28		
Fajr	5-15	5-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-05	6-10
Esha	7-30	8-00
Source:	Islamic Fou	ndation

4 murdered in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A seven-year-old girl was strangled after rape and three other people were killed in the city yesterday.

Police recovered the bodies of three victims while another was beaten to death by a mob.

student of Mirpur Cantonment Government Primary School, from set. inside a cowshed adjacent to her house at around 9 in the morning. Sources at Dhaka Medical College (DMC) morgue said the neck. autopsy revealed that the little girl

was strangled after rape. Police suspect someone close to the family may have raped the girl and later killed her as she recognised the rapist.

Priti had been missing since

SYLHET VOTERS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The Election Commission yester-

day began taking fingerprints of

24,933 people in Sylhet City

Corporation area again after scru-

tiny of the draft voter list there

found that their fingerprints were

to ensure that people whose finger-

taken at all come to the respective

registration centres between

February 27 and February 29 to

give their fingerprints, Khondaker

Mizanur Rahman, deputy election

concerned over the loudspeaker to

have themselves fingerprinted

commissioner of Sylhet Division,

tion officials in the city were asked glitches.

not properly taken.

returning home from school on Tuesday. Family members filed a general diary with Pallabi Police Station when she remained miss-

ing that day. Meanwhile, Badda police recovered the body of an unidentified girl in her twenties from a field in Pallabi police recovered the Aftabnagar Project at around 10 in the morning. The young girl was body of Priti Rani Sarker, a class-II dressed in a black salwar and kamiz

Fingerprints of 25,000

Ward commissioners and elec- attributed to computer or scanner

prints were incorrectly taken or not displeasure in that they will have to

Officials called on the voters need to give their fingerprints

voter list.

will be taken again

Police and DMC morgue sources said the girl was strangled. Black marks were found on her

In the other incident, two separate parts - suspected to be of the same body - of an unknown man, or men, were recovered from Kadamtala in Sabujbagh and Motijheel areas yesterday.

again within the specified time.

Work on voter registration in

Sylhet City Corporation area was

completed in early January. The EC

published the draft voter list on

February 5, showing 2,54,450

people as registered voters. But

election officials later found the

fingerprint problem which they

People, however, expressed

go to the registration centres again.

They blamed the inefficiency of

proper supervision for the errors in

162 people out of 510 people, who

again, came to the registration

A ward commissioner said only

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

computer operators and the lack of

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Dhaka-Kolkata train service date not yet fixed

UNB, Dhaka

A spokesman for the Indian High Commission in Dhaka yesterday said the work on introducing passenger-train service between Dhaka and Kolkata is going on but the date for its commencement has not yet been finalised.

Ajit Gupte, counsellor (PIC), made the remark following media reports in Bangladesh which quoted communications secretary as having stated that the train service will begin on the first day of Bangla New Year on April 14. "We would like to point out that

no dates for the commencement of the service have yet been finalised by the Governments of India and Bangladesh," he said. SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Hillary, Obama clash in crucial debate

AFP, Cleveland, Ohio

Democratic rivals Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama Tuesday traded attacks over the Iraq war, healthcare and foreign policy at a feisty debate heading into crunch White House nominating contests.

appeared to have landed a knockclashes in Texas and Ohio.

They ended the 90-minute debate in Cleveland praising each other over presumed Republican

encounter, the two Democrats exchanged potshots over negative SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

GENERAL ELECTIONS

3 parties ask EC to bar war criminals

The Election Commission (EC) Detained former premier Sheikh Hasina was not produced before the court on security grounds during yesterday's hearing of the

Meanwhile, the Dhaka metropolitan police (DMP) commissioner has submitted an application to the home secretary for setting up a sessions court adjacent to the sub-jail where Hasina has been kept and holding the trial of the case there due to security reaan electoral reform dialogue.

(JP-Manju) and Jatiya Samajtantrik Judge of the special court for Dhaka Division Golam Mortuza with EC for the dialogue. Majumder adjourned the hearing until March 13 and directed the jail authorities to produce Hasina, now detained in a sub-jail at Sangsad Liberation War elements from taking part in the elections. Bhaban complex, before the court

The court also asked six other accused in the case to appear before it on the same date.

Hasina's lawyers submitted a petition seeking time for the next hearing. The said they had already SEE PAGE 5 COL 6

The winners of Pakistan's elections

yesterday demanded that

President Pervez Musharraf con-

vene parliament immediately in a

joint show of strength against the

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

yesterday observed that it cannot ban religion-based political parties and bar them from taking part in polls as the constitution does not allow any such act.

"We can't go beyond the existing laws and the constitution of the country," Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda said while talking with Gonotantri Party, who EC invited yesterday to Two other parties -- Jatiya Party

Dal (JSD-Rob) also separately sat All the three parties urged EC to bar war criminals and anti-

Showing its shortcomings, EC advised the political parties to seek this regard.

The three parties asked EC to declare specific date of election to dispel people's confusion about it. They also stressed the need for

Pressure on Musharraf to

convene parliament soon

MPs of coalition partners hold jt meeting in Islamabad

single day more for the assembly to

be convened," Sharif said, ques-

tioning why Pakistan's election

lifting the ban on indoor politics

and withdrawal of the state of

emergency. On the question of party registration, JP delegation said it will create dual system in politics which will cause anarchy in the aftermath.

The CEC agreed with this view saying there should not be dual system in politics. He said the Commission would review the Political Party Act, 1978 and see if any provision could be inserted in it for guiding non-registered par-

The invited parties expressed their support to ban front organisations of political parties saying those might work as associate organisations.

GONOTANTRI PARTY

A 10-member delegation led by Muhammad Nurul Islam, president of Gonotantri Party urged not observation of the High Court in to register religion-based political parties with EC. They said these parties create instability in the society and are source of religious fundamentalism and militancy.

owed husband, said it was time for

the new parliament to assemble

and restore democracy in "hom-

age" to her assassination in a sui-

cide attack at an election rally in

empower the parliament and finish

the establishment once and for

Security was heavy for the meet-

ing, with sniffer dogs and dozens of

police guarding the hotel where the

89 lawmakers from the PPP, 67 from

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Sharif's PML-N, 10 from the ANP

and several independents met.

"We are united together to

December.

all," Zardari said.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Purchase body okays import of 390,000 tonnes of fuel

UNB, Dhaka

Purchase yesterday approved import of 390,000 tonnes of refined fuel oil from UAE at international market price plus premium to meet the carrying cost. A meeting of the committee at

The Advisory Committee on Public

the planning ministry with Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam in the chair approved import of 330,000 tonnes of diesel and 20,000 tonnes each of kerosene, jet fuel and The revised premium at \$ 5.20

per ton for diesel, \$ 5.60 per ton for kerosene and jet fuel, and \$ 7.50 per ton for octane will save Tk 30 million (3 crore) from the national exchequer, the finance adviser told reporters after the meeting.

The meeting also gave postfacto approval for importing 25,000 tonnes of urea fertiliser at \$507 per tonne from Saudi Arabia to meet the demand for fiscal Advisers and officials con-

cerned were present at the meet-

Five killed in bus crash in B'baria

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Five people were killed and 25 others injured in a road accident when a bus fell into a wayside ditch near the Poirtala Puniaut rail crossing point in Brahmanbaria yesterday morning.

The Ashuganj bound bus was carrying around 55 passengers from Kasba Kuti in Brahmanbaria when the accident occurred at around 10.30 in the morning.

According to eyewitness the speeding bus travelling faced a rickshaw coming from the opposite side at a turning point, some 300 metres off the Poirtala Puniaut rail crossing. The bus tried to give way to the rickshaw and in the process overturned and fell into a SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Thaksin returns home today

AFP, Bangkok

Former Thai prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra plans to return to Thailand today for the first time since the military toppled his government in a bloodless coup 17 months ago, officials said.

the coup, staying mainly in Britain where he owns Manchester City football club. Two government officials said

Thaksin has lived in exile since

Thaksin would arrive in Bangkok at 9:40 am (0240 GMT) Thursday on a Thai Airways flight from Hong Kong. "As far as I know, he will be on

the Thai Airways flight arriving in Bangkok mid-morning tomorrow," said Supamas Isarabhakdi, a close aide to Thaksin who now works in the office of Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej. Foreign Minister Noppadon

Pattama confirmed that Thaksin would arrive Thursday in Bangkok SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Giving no quarter, both presidential runners probed each other's defenses but neither out punch a week before the pivotal

nominee John McCain, with Obama stating that Hillary would be "worthy as a nominee" but that he would be better at uniting the However, for much of the

commission had not yet released official results. Benazir's Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-N and the nationalist Awami National Party (ANP) are

Slain opposition leader Benazir now close to the two-thirds major-Bhutto's widower and former ity they need to impeach premier Nawaz Sharif made the demand at the first meeting of MPs Musharraf. "We must fight together, we must from a coalition that trounced the defeat dictatorship," added Sharif, president's backers in the polls on

"We inform Mr Musharraf that military coup in 1999. we are not prepared to wait for a

the man toppled by Musharraf in a Asif Ali Zardari, Benazir wid-

Acting Awami League President Zillur Rahman, right, greets BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday before the namaz-e-janaza of journalist Bazlur Rahman.