

More than
1,40,000 people...

we do,
whatever it takes to
connect you
to the world!"



FedEx
Express
Bangladesh Express Co. Ltd.
Licensee of Federal Express Corporation
Every Package Matters



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

This offer is valid only at Transcom Premium showrooms and selected dealer outlets till stock lasts.
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 teachers of the institute, a fact confirmed by the law enforcement agencies as well.

Islami Chhatra Shibir, student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami, shelters the militants, they said adding that several teachers with Jamaat background and known to have links with Harkat-ul-Jihad Al Islam

(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 comments.

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

Prof Alam however said that they are unable to take actions against those teachers since they have been discharging their academic duties accordingly and the issue is out of their jurisdiction to

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) Mahbubur 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 commissioner added.

Dhaka Polytechnic Institute first came to the spotlight as a

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 of life.

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



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



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

PHOTO: STAR

People won't accept polls of blueprint

Says Delwar

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 'certain quarter'.

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 (ret) 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		
	Azan	Jamaat
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 Foundation

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.

Pallabi police recovered the body of Priti Rani Sarker, a class-II student of Mirpur Cantonment Government Primary School, from inside a cowshed adjacent to her house at around 9 in the morning.

Sources at Dhaka Medical College (DMC) morgue said the 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

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

Meanwhile, Badda police recovered the body of an unidentified girl in her twenties from a field in Aftabnagar Project at around 10 in the morning. The young girl was dressed in a black salwar and kamiz set.

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

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.

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.

Giving no quarter, both presidential runners probed each other's defenses but neither appeared to have landed a knock-out punch a week before the pivotal clashes in Texas and Ohio.

They ended the 90-minute debate in Cleveland praising each other over presumed Republican nominee John McCain, with Obama stating that Hillary would be "worthy as a nominee" but that he would be better at uniting the nation.

However, for much of the encounter, the two Democrats exchanged potshots over negative

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Pressure on Musharraf to convene parliament soon

MPs of coalition partners hold jt meeting in Islamabad

AFP, Islamabad

The winners of Pakistan's elections yesterday demanded that President Pervez Musharraf convene parliament immediately in a joint show of strength against the embattled US ally.

Slain opposition leader Benazir Bhutto's widow and former premier Nawaz Sharif made the demand at the first meeting of MPs from a coalition that trounced the president's backers in the polls on February 18.

"We inform Mr Musharraf that we are not prepared to wait for a

single day more for the assembly to be convened," Sharif said, questioning why Pakistan's election 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 now close to the two-thirds majority they need to impeach Musharraf.

"We must fight together, we must defeat dictatorship," added Sharif, the man toppled by Musharraf in a military coup in 1999.

Asif Ali Zardari, Benazir wid-

owed husband, said it was time for the new parliament to assemble and restore democracy in "homage" to her assassination in a suicide attack at an election rally in December.

"We are united together to empower the parliament and finish the establishment once and for all," Zardari said.

Security was heavy for the meeting, with sniffer dogs and dozens of police guarding the hotel where the 89 lawmakers from the PPP, 67 from Sharif's PML-N, 10 from the ANP and several independents met.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8



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.

PHOTO: STAR

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 Poiralta Puniat 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 eyewitnesses the speeding bus travelling faced a rickshaw coming from the opposite side at a turning point, some 300 metres off the Poiralta Puniat rail crossing. The bus tried to give way to the rickshaw and fell into 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.

Thaksin has lived in exile since the coup, staying mainly in Britain where he owns Manchester City football club.

Two government officials said 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