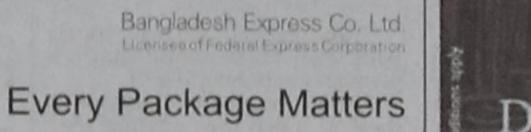
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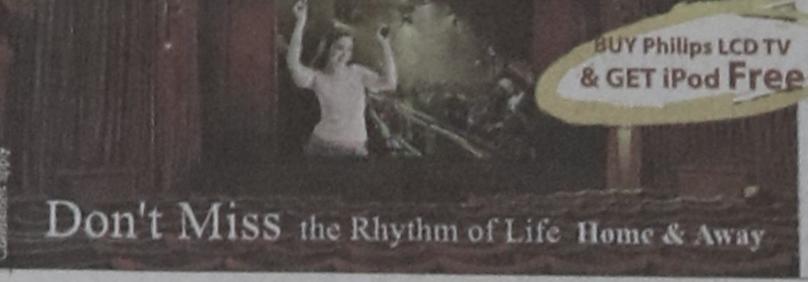
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Delwar slates CEC remarks on BNP issue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Blasting the chief election commissioner (CEC) for his remarks about the BNP constitution and the expulsion of Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, pro-Khaleda faction of the party yesterday said the CEC broke the rules and lost neutrality by making biased comments.

Pro-Saifur leaders, meantime, said the top election official did not give any new information as he merely explained the BNP consti-

Mannan Bhuiyan was not lawful as the party constitution according to which he was ousted was not ratified by the party council.

This is beyond his (CEC's) jurisdiction and an unethical interference in a political party's internal affairs, acting Office Secretary Ruhul Kabir Rizvi quoted SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Four doctors to visit Hasina at jail today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Four personal physicians of detained Awami League (AL) President Sheikh Hasina will examine her health today and place recommendations to the jail authorities.

ENT specialist Prof Pran Gopal Dutta, ophthalmologist Prof Modasser Ali, medicine specialist Dr ABM Abdullah and heart surgeon Dr MH Millat have been asked to visit her at the subjail and give SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Huji operating in Bogra in new name

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

Leaders of banned militant organisation Harkatul Jihad al Islami (Huji) formed a new political party "Islami Gono Andolan" to carry out political activities openly.

They already formed a seven member committee led by Maulana Abdus Salam, founder of Fatematuz Zohra women's madrasa in Sherpur, Bogra, to carry out organisational activities. Former deputy commander of Huji and founder of Ommulara Al Islami madrasa of Shajahanpur in Bogra, Abdul Hannan Sabbir and Huji leader Abdul Aziz are also on the committee.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Mob beats 2 robbers to death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

An angry mob beat two robbers to death and injured another yesterday at Kaliakoir upazila in Gazipur. The dead are Kabir Mia, 30, and

Anwar Hossain, 35, of Shibpur in Brahmanbaria.

Sub-inspector (SI) Mohammad Mithu of Kaliakoir Police Station told The Daily Star that a gang of armed robbers stormed the houses of Alfaz Mia and Ali Hossain at Bringraj village of Kaliakoir upazila at about 3:00am.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

Man found dead in cop custody Torture alleged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A man was found dead in police custody at Batiaghata Police

Station Friday evening. The body of the man, Abul Hossain, 25, was found at around 7:30pm inside a toilet of the lockup at the police station. Police had arrested him the same day at

around 3:00pm. Hossain, arrested from a Khulnabound bus in Satkhira for possession of Phensidyl, has committed suicide by hanging himself from the iron rod of the toilet window with a

plans.

rope made out of torn pieces of blanket, claimed the police. However, Hossain's cousin Ziaul

Huq in a press statement yesterday alleged that Hossain was beaten to death in the police custody.

Ziaul Huq demanded proper investigation into the death.

Groundwater depletion hampers irrigation

PINAKI ROY

Groundwater-based irrigation system is experiencing difficulties in different parts of the country as shallow aquifer level is getting out of reach due to fast depletion of groundwater table.

Shallow tube-wells (STWs) now cannot draw water for about 46 percent irrigated cropland during dry season thanks to current level CEC ATM Shamsul Huda said | of groundwater declination, says Friday that the expulsion of Abdul | data from Survey and Monitoring | lakh hectares of irrigated cropland of Groundwater project and inthelastRabiseason. groundwater zoning map.

STWs can draw groundwater for irrigation within a depth of 2-7

"The problem persists mainly in critical for STW operation. the dry season when farmers irrigate their cropland," said

Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC).

Asked how farmers do the irrigation if STWs don't work, he said they make a pit five to six feet bellow the surface and put the shallow pump there to draw groundwater.

According to 2006-07 irrigation survey report of the government, around 10 million farmers have overwhelming dependence on STWs for almost 70 percent of 47.8

The groundwater zoning map of BADC prepared in 2006 shows that a record high of 78 percent irrigated cropland in Pabna has become

The level is 75 percent in Comilla, 60 percent in Kustia and Khondakar Fazle Hasan, chief Naogaon, 55 percent in

geologist of Bangladesh Mymensingh and Cox's Bazar, 50 percent in Joypurhat, 49 percent in Chittagong, 45 percent in Bogra and Rajbari and 30 percent in Jhenidah, Netrakona, Gazipur and Narayanganj.

In 62 upazilas, the groundwater level goes down more than seven metres. In 14 of these upazilas from the country's central and northern parts, water level goes over 11 metres down in dry season, says the quarterly monitoring report of Survey and Monitoring Project for Development of Minor Irrigation.

Besides, farmers are being unable to draw water by STWs for 28 percent of the land in Sherpur, 20 percent in Jamalpur and Tangail, 18 percent in Natore, 16 percent in Manikganj, 15 percent in Dhaka, Narsingdi and Sirajganj, and 10

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

2 districts STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

Ancient stone

tiles found in

statue, terracotta

Rab members yesterday recovered some artefacts including an over thousand-year-old stone statue of Vishnu in Gaibandha and Dinajpur on Friday night.

Sources said acting on a tipoff, members of Rab-12 led by Captain AM Mahabub and Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Md Osman Shafi recovered a Vishnu statue of 9th century AD at Chappra village of Gobindaganj upazila in Gaibandha.

They also recovered several artefacts including ancient terracotta tiles at Shahargachhi village in Gaibandha and Kamarpara village in Dinajpur.



The artefacts including the over-thousand-year-old Vishnu statue, centre, recovered by Rab members in Gaibandha and Dinajpur.

These people earn their livelihood by pushing rickshaws up the slope of Kamrangirchar Bridge under Kamrangirchar Police Station in the capital in exchange for just Tk 1. The photo was taken yesterday.

Pintu brought Emon to underworld

Claims criminal on return from India in primary questioning

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

introduced him to the underworld Emon as saying. of Dhaka.

along with Emon was deported from India on Friday, told the law enforcers that he was a close associate of dreaded criminal Dakat Shahid.

the two on eight-day remand each for interrogation after the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) produced them before it.

During primary questioning earlier in the morning, Emon told the CID officials that he became involved with Pintu, an infamous said. JCD cadre back then, while he was a student at the sociology department of Dhaka University (DU) in the mid '90s.

BNP lawmaker, used to lead the armed clashes with rival student organisations at the DU. He said that he was attached to

Surya Sen Hall, a stronghold of Pintu faction of the JCD. "I joined Top criminal Sanjidul Islam Emon the faction, started carrying out said that it was former Jatiyatabadi Pintu bhai's orders and at one Chhatra Dal (JCD) leader point, I became involved in crimi-Nasiruddin Ahmed Pintu, who had nal activities," a CID official quoted Later on, he joined hands with | 9.30am.

Meanwhile, Ishaq Ali, who notorious criminal brothers Joseph and Harris Ahmed of Mohammadpur area, but formed a separate group afterwards following a feud with the two over killing of JCD leader Morshed in the A Dhaka court yesterday placed Dhaka court area, Emon said.

Due to the split, Joseph and Harris attempted to kill him thrice and as retribution, he shot dead Titu, another brother of the two criminals in the late '90s in the city, CID interrogators said quoting Emon. It was his first killing, Emon

Emon claimed to the CID offi cials that he does not maintain any group at present.

Some of his accomplices had Pintu, who later on became a been killed in 'encounter' with the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) while many others had joined other crime groups, he said.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

Spin holds key for Tigers

First ODI against SA today SPORTS REPORTER

With the bitter Test series done and dusted, Bangladesh will focus their attention to a relatively comfortable domain of one-day cricket with the first limited-overs international against South Africa being held at the Chittagong Divisional Stadium today.

The match will be telecast live on BTV and NEO Sports from

Mohammad Ashraful will be pinning his hopes on this series to SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

POWER PLANT CASE

Charge-framing hearing resumes today

UNB, Dhaka

The hearing on charge framing against detained former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and six others in the barge-mounted power plant graft case resumes at a special court today.

The court deferred the hearing five times following time petitions from both the defence and the prosecution.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

CA to attend

OIC summit

Leaves for Dakar

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed

leaves for Dakar on Tuesday to

attend the 11th summit of the Organisation of Islamic

Conference (OIC) to be held in the

topics including implementation

of the OIC ten-year programme of

action and adoption of the revised

The summit will focus on four

capital of Senegal March 13-14.

Tuesday

UNB, Dhaka

organisation.

Zohr

Maghrib

Esha

JOURNALIST HAMID MIR From Pakistan

Nawaz-Zardari love will not last long Musharraf believes

President Pervez Musharraf is confident that the new friendship between Nawaz Sharif and Asif Ali Zardari will not last long and that they will part soon. The president has met almost all the newly elected PML-Q members of the National Assembly and urged them to remain united on one platform.

Background interviews with many PML-Q legislators who recently met Pervez Musharraf revealed that the president is sure that the issue of restoring the deposed judges will remain a great

Gambari for about one hour and 20

minutes at a military facility near

She was taken to and from the

meeting in a convoy that picked her

up at her house in Yangon, where

the 62-year-old Nobel peace prize

years under arrest.

her home, Myanmar officials said.

source of difference between the PPP and the PML-N.

The president even predicted to one group of the lawmakers that the PPP will have no other option than to make a coalition with the PML-Q and the MQM after a few weeks. On the other side, the PPP leadership has decided that they will not form the federal government in case the PML-N is not ready to share the "responsibility" by joining the cabinet in the centre. "We can even sit in the opposition

by the regime known as the Union

Solidarity and Development

after their talks with Gambari,

which came one day after the

junta's blunt refusal to give the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

NLD leaders dodged reporters

Association (USDA).

winner has spent 12 of the last 18 NLD a role in a constitutional

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Miladunnabi on

UNB, Dhaka

March 21

The holy Eid-e-Miladunnabi marking the birth and demise of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (SM) will be observed across the country on March 21.

The National Moon-sighting Committee took the decision in a meeting at the Islamic Foundation as the moon of Rabiul Awal was not sighted yesterday. The month will begin from tomorrow.

Chaired by Religious Affairs Secretary Muhammad Ataur Rahman, the meeting was attended, among others, by Islamic Foundation Director General M Fazlur Rahman and Principal Information Officer Iftekhar Hossain.

On this day, the 12th of Rabiul Awal of the Hijri calendar, Muhammad (SM) was born with divine blessings and messages of peace for humankind. He also passed away the same day.

immediate withdrawal of a deci-

sion under which the hospital

authorities "forcibly sacked" 150

members of the staff, including

docs and nurses, without giving

During the daylong demonstra-

tions, the medicare systems of the

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

any prior notice.

Probe finds anomalies in NGO registration

Now Sylhet NGO vanishes with money from 500 depositors

STAR REPORT

The Social Welfare Directorate (SWD) yesterday stand-released two officials of Natore office as primary investigation revealed irregularities in registering fraud NGOs that disappeared with members' about Tk 500 crore.

Meanwhile, the tendency of disappearing with public money spreads elsewhere, as another NGO vanished, this time in Sylhet, with Tk 50 lakh from over 500 depositors, report UNB.

protesting the decision of retrenching employees.

Sources said, Social Welfare Deputy Director Mir Bux has been transferred to Bhola and registration officer Ismail Hossain to Bandarban, reports our Roving Correspondent from Natore.

The steps were taken after the three-member SWD team from Dhaka probed discrepancies in Natore office in the last three days.

Headed by SWD Additional Director Sailendranath Paik, the team also comprises Deputy Director (HQ) Badiuzzaman and Assistant Director Nasir Uddin.

"Now they [two officials] are transferred, but punitive action might be taken against them and some others who are now working in other districts once the probe completes," said one of the team.

Meanwhile, an impending threat on law and order is being widely apprehended in Naldanga and neighbouring upazilas as victims attacked and torched two more houses yesterday.

A mob swooped on the house of Wabaidul Haque at Sonapatil SEE PAGE 15 COL 3 OIC charter. It will have two brainstorming sessions on economic cooperation and knowledge sharing among the member states. The OIC headquarters says 42 heads of state or government have so far confirmed their attendance at the summit of the 57-member

> Pakistan will have ministerial SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Prayer Timing

March 9

Azan

5-45

1-15

4-45

6-11

5-10

12-45

4-30

6-07

7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

APOLLO HOSPITAL Doc, nurse demo disrupts medical UN envoy services UNB, Dhaka Most employees of the Apollo Officials declined to provide any AFP, Yangon Hospital, including doctors and information about their talks. nurses, yesterday staged demon-Normally Gambari only discusses Myanmar's detained democracy strations to press for immediate his meetings after leaving the leader Aung San Suu Kyi yesterday resignation of its chief executive met with visiting UN envoy officer Dr EDL Hansen, seriously The UN envoy earlier held talks Ibrahim Gambari, officials said, as disrupting its medical services. with top officials from her National the nation's junta rebuffed global Around 1,000 employees of the League for Democracy (NLD) and pressure to reform its election hospital went on a sit-in strike at later met with officials from a proabout 8:00am, also demanding junta party and a civil group set up Aung San Suu Kyi spoke with

Staffs of Apollo Hospitals in the city's Bashundhara residential area stage a demonstration in front of the hospital

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