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TRANSCOM ELECTRONICS



## Shazneen's 10th death anniversary today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 10th death anniversary of Shazneen Tasnim Rahman who was murdered inside her Gulshan house in 1998 at the age of 15. She was a student of class nine at Scholastica School.

The five accused -- contractor Syed Sajjad Mainuddin Hasan, house servant Shahidul Islam

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## UN body to help stabilise food prices

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations (UN) will establish a high-powered task force to stabilise world food prices and plan long-term solutions to food security challenges such as land utilisation and agricultural productivity.

The decision was taken following a proposal by Bangladesh, the leader of the group of LDCs, at the ongoing 12th UNCTAD (UN Conference on Trade and Development) in the Ghanaian capital of Accra.

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## UN meet starts with call to protect rights of indigenous people

SANJEEB DRONG from New York

Indigenous peoples are one of the main protectors of environment and the Mother Earth, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in his message on the 7th Session of UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues held in New York on Monday.

He said respecting the rights and culture of the indigenous peoples, human being can respect the Mother Earth.

More than 3,000 indigenous

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## Pak coalition fails to agree on restoring judges: Sharif

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's ruling coalition has failed to agree on a plan to restore judges sacked by President Pervez Musharraf, but will reinstate them "soon," former premier Nawaz Sharif said yesterday.

Sharif, the head of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz party, held two days of talks with Asif Ali Zardari, the widower of slain opposition leader Benazir Bhutto, in a bid to thrash out details of the plan.

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Prayer Timing		
April 23		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-25	5-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-45	5-00
Maghrib	6-27	6-31
Esha	8-00	8-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

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# EC-promised city polls in May not in sight

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission (EC) appears to have failed to go by its promise to hold elections to four city corporations and seven municipalities next month.

Schedules for these polls should have been announced by mid-April at the latest for holding the polls in May since the EC's proposed electoral rules require it to come up with schedules at least 40 days before the polling day, senior officials at the EC Secretariat said.

But the EC could not announce the polls schedules due to lack of fresh laws on such local government bodies, their functions and elections to those, the officials pointed out.

Meanwhile, the council of

advisers to the caretaker government is yet to finalise the laws, and it might take a few more weeks to do so, sources said.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) ATM Shamsul Huda at an April 13 meeting with chairmen of union parishads said he had enquired about the fresh laws, and he was informed that those would be finalised 'this week'.

But finalising the laws was not on the agenda of the council of advisers' latest meeting on Sunday.

"Even if the laws are finalised right at this moment, it will not be possible to hold the elections to four city corporations and seven municipalities in May due to lack of time required for this," said a senior EC official. He mentioned that 40 days' time before the polling day is

needed as per the proposed electoral rules.

Besides, higher secondary certificate examination is scheduled to begin at the end of May and to be continued entire June, the EC official said.

"So, it will not be possible to hold the polls in May, and until HSC examinations are over as educational institutions are used as polling stations and teachers are made poll officials."

In the proposed laws on city corporations and municipalities, the caretaker government seeks to empower the EC to formulate electoral rules and code of conduct. But the draft rules and code of conduct cannot be finalised until the laws are made, sources at the

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## 3 criminals killed in 'shootout' with Rab

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three criminals were killed in a 'shootout' with Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) at Aminbazar of Savar early yesterday.

They are Alam, 32, Anis, 32, and Bashar, 34. Alam was the second-in-command of infamous 'Gangcheel Bahini' and accused of killing two Rab men in Savar last year. The other two are his cohorts, according to a Rab press release.

With yesterday's, the number of those killed in 'shootouts' between Rab and 'criminals' in last one month stands at nine.

Between June last year and March this year, 34 people were

killed in 'crossfire' while the number was 179 in the preceding 10 months. No incident of crossfire was reported throughout February.

A team of Rab-4 raided a brick kiln at Boliarpur at around 4:00am following up leads that members of the 'Gangcheel Bahini', a local crime gang, were preparing to commit robberies.

Lt Commander Ariful Islam who led the Rab team told The Daily Star yesterday that they came under fire as soon as they reached the spot by the Turag river. The elite crime busters returned fire, prompting a gunfight with some 15 members of the gang.

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## HC takes action on 8-yr-old girl's arrest, asks govt to explain

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday issued a Suo Moto rule asking the government to explain within two weeks as to why the arrest of an eight-year-old girl on charges of carrying twenty bottles of Phensidyl and the order to send her to jail should not be declared illegal.

The bench comprising Justice M Iman Ali and Justice Md Emdadul Haque passed the rule after advocate Fahima Nasrin, vice-president of Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA),

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PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL

Farmers drying Boro paddy in the sun at a yard in Shreepur village of Dhamrai in Dhaka yesterday. The Boro harvest is expected to bring down the prices of rice across the country.

## Khulna mayor acquitted in arms case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A court here yesterday acquitted Khulna Mayor Sheikh Tayebur Rahman in an arms case.

The court said the investigation officer (IO) could not prove that the arms seized from the mayor's city residence was illegal.

The IO, police sub-inspector Shibu Prasad Dutta, did not

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## Blair's wife in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cherie Blair, wife of former British prime minister Tony Blair, arrived in Dhaka yesterday on a private visit.

She has been invited by a British-Bangladeshi lawyer, Ajmalul Hossain QC. The reasons for her visit could not be known immediately.

Sources however said a number

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## Pennsylvania a must win primary for Hillary

AFP, Philadelphia

Democrats in Pennsylvania were choosing between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama in a bitterly-fought primary yesterday that Clinton must not only win, but win convincingly to rescue her trailing White House bid.

The New York senator is tipped for victory in late opinion polls, but many observers think it will take a double-digit triumph to stave off more calls for her to quit the epic Democratic nomination race.

She also needs a fresh burst of momentum ahead of the next round of contests in Indiana and North Carolina on May 6, which are followed quickly by the last six voting showdowns of the epic nominating battle into early June.

"I don't think the margin matters. I think a win is a win," Hillary

Clinton told NBC television, asked if she might drop out if unable to win by a wide margin.

"We'll see what happens," she added. "The bottom line is we have a lot of contests yet to go. This is a really close race."

A shock win by Obama would narrow Hillary Clinton's already unlikely route to the nomination, and likely snuff out her historic quest to be the first woman president.

Polls opened in the economically pummelled northeastern state at 7:00 am (1100 GMT) and close at 8:00 pm (0000 GMT).

The former first lady's position is already perilous.

She trails Obama in total nominating contests won, pledged delegates apportioned in those showdowns, the popular vote, and

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## Heat leads to widespread diarrhoea

SHAHEEN MOLLAH and  
NAJMUL ALAM NOBIN

The number of diarrhoea patients being admitted to hospitals in the capital has been steadily increasing over the last few days.

Hospital sources blame this increase on the sweltering weather which is making people drink a lot of water which is sometimes

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## BNP standing committee member 'picked up, freed later'

UNB, Dhaka

BNP standing committee member Chowdhury Tanvir Ahmed Siddiqui was learnt to have been picked up by men of an intelligence agency and set free later yesterday, party sources said.

## মিলাদ নাহফিল



বাংলাদেশ জাতীয় পার্টির চেয়ারম্যান, সাবেক মন্ত্রী এবং ঢাকা মিউনিসিপ্যাল কর্পোরেশনের মেয়র জনাব নাজিউর রহমান মল্লিক গত ০৬-০৪-২০০৮ইং রবিবার ইন্তেকাল করেন। মৃত্যুকালে তাঁর বয়স ছিল ৬০ বছর।

মরহুমের মিলাদ নাহফিল আগামী ২৫-০৪-২০০৮ইং শুক্রবার বাদ আছর বাসা নং-২৫, রোড নং-৭, বারিধারা-২ অনুষ্ঠিত হবে।

সকল আত্মীয়-বন্ধন, বন্ধু-বান্দব ও শুভাকাঙ্ক্ষীদের উপস্থিতিতে তাঁর আত্মার মাগফেরাত ও দোয়া কামনার জন্য অনুরোধ জানাচ্ছি।

অনুরোধকরে

মরহুমের স্ত্রী ও সন্তানাদি



PHOTO: STAR

A kitchen market operates on the Shah Ali Mazar Road in Mirpur in the city almost closing down the street and creating congestion all day long. The photo was taken yesterday.