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**Hazari back after 8yrs**

Appears at HC, granted 2-month bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former Awami League (AL) lawmaker Joyanal Abedin Hazari who went into hiding since parliamentary poll in 2001 yesterday came out in public for the first time and appeared before the High Court (HC) for bails in the cases filed against him.

Hazari who was awarded a total of 60 years' imprisonment in five cases in absentia, SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

**Fund crunch hits GTCL gas compressor project**

Power plants, upcoming power projects, large industries to suffer from gas crisis

SHARIEF KHAN

As deteriorating gas pressure and supply crisis continues to cause huge power generation shortfall, the Gas Transmission Company Ltd's (GTCL) latest bid to install three gas compressor stations to improve gas supply has been halted due to severe fund crunch.

If this project fails to launch in time, the gas supply scenario will be grimmer within the next two years. Petrobangla sources said that the present gas supply shortfall of 100 to 200 million cubic feet of gas a day would deteriorate further and due to lack of adequate gas transmission pressure, supplies to many areas will be affected.

Earlier this month, the GTCL's second

tender for installing the compressors drew two offers; ABB of Italy sought \$256 million excluding 8.5 percent tax while Hyundai of South Korea sought \$149.7 million including the tax.

While Hyundai's bid is a clear winner, GTCL says it only has \$55 million for the job. This job is part of a \$189-million project financed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to set up three pipelines and install these three compressor stations. The pipeline and compressors together would enhance the gas supply and pressure quality within two years.

The GTCL that held its first failed bid in 2006 says that it always knew that \$55 million was not adequate for the scheme but it had not arranged additional funds

in the last three years.

There is no shortcut to resolving the present gas crisis and all measures to significantly increase gas supply or production will take at least two years. Installing the compressors themselves will take nearly 22 months to complete.

According to Petrobangla sources, demand for gas has spiralled over the years beyond the capacity of the existing gas delivery system.

Petrobangla is now delivering more than 1,800 million cubic feet of gas a day, while it believes that the demand is hovering between 1,900 million cubic feet and 2,000 million cubic feet of gas a day. Official documents show that Petrobangla can supply 2,042 million

SEE PAGE 12 COL 6

**PRIVATE UNIVERSITY Education to suffer as ordinance axed**

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN and SURANJITH DEABNATH

The government decision not to ratify the Private University Ordinance 2008 promulgated by the immediate past caretaker government will allow continuation of imparting substandard education and sales of certificates by a section of private universities, experts believe.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) strongly persuaded the education and law ministry not to drop the ordinance but owners of private universities lobbied against the move of the UGC.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday told The Daily Star that general view about the ordinance was that it would be made law but owners of the private universities are continuing to oppose the move.

"At present the ministry is not thinking about it as the expert committee formed to scrutinise ordinances did not pick the private university ordinance for placing before the parliament," he, however, said that they would work on it later, if needed.

The caretaker government promulgated the ordinance following a proposal of the UGC to bring private universities under strict discipline but the government decided not to place it before the House under the excuse of having no recommendations from the parliamentary special committee.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 8

**Class IV student exhausts prize money to get Shaheed Minar**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Paramita Prantice, a student of class four, has built a Shaheed Minar at her own school in Moulvibazar town with the prize money she won at a national recitation competition.

The Shaheed Minar was inaugurated on February 21 this year and the teachers of Ali Amzad Government Primary School joined its students in celebrating the International Mother Language Day at the Minar.

Paramita, though only in class four, has always wanted a Shaheed Minar at her own school. Recently SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

**No more bills to be placed in JS to ratify ordinances**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

No more bills for making the ordinances promulgated by the last caretaker government into laws might be sent to respective parliamentary bodies for scrutiny.

The House yesterday did not send two bills to the parliamentary body concerned for further examination.

During placement of two SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

**7 JMB men remanded**

Probe report on Gazipur in 3 days

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Gazipur court yesterday placed four JMB operatives detained early Saturday in Gazipur on a 10-day remand each while a Jamalpur court placed three others on a seven-day remand each.

In Gazipur, Detective SEE PAGE 15 COL 7



Both sides of Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue come to a standstill as heavy traffic clogs the street yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

**Ministry to get back power to control Upazila Parishad**

Experts say as 1998 act set to be effective again

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

Strengthening of the upazila parishad system is set to face a setback as the new elected government decided to reincarnate the Upazila Parishad Act 1998, instead of ratifying the Upazila Parishad Ordinance 2008.

Under the 2008 ordinance, upazila chairmen are not bound to consult local lawmakers for leading the parishads, which was compulsory for them under the 1998 act.

Experts said the ministry concerned will turn into the controlling authority over the upazila parishads, instead of the Local Government Commission, if the 1998 act is revived.

According to the Awami League-led coalition government's desire, the Local Government Commission Ordinance will also become ineffective, as it decided not to ratify that either.

LGRD Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam recently said the government decided to revive the 1998 act with some amendments to it. According to the 2008 ordinance upazila parishads' mandate include administrative and establishment matters, social welfare, and planning, designing and implementing local economic and social policies.

The ordinance has a provision for appointing auditors to ensure transparency in parishads' activities, while the 1998 act allows MPs to interfere in the local government's decision

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

**Information secy sued for defaming Bangabandhu**

COURT CORRESPONDENT

An Awami League leader yesterday filed a defamation case against incumbent information secretary on charges of writing a verse criticising Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family members.

Moulana Mohammad Elias Hossain Bin Helali, president of the country's sensitive Information Secretary ATM SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

**Lankan forces kill 65 Tigers in fighting**

LTTE air power has collapsed, say officials

AFP, PTI, Colombo

Sri Lankan security forces killed at least 65 Tamil Tigers in a week of intense fighting that further reduced the territory under rebel control, the military said yesterday.

The Tigers have been driven back into just 73 square kilometres (28 square miles) of jungle, military spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara said, having controlled large swathes of the north and the east of the island less than two years ago.

Officials say the rebels are increasingly desperate and may launch more attacks such as the airstrike on the capital Colombo on Friday, when two light aircraft were used in suicide

missions that killed two people.

The LTTE's air power has almost collapsed after two rebel aircraft, which entered the Colombo sky to carry out a suicide mission, were destroyed by the security forces, officials said on Sunday.

"I do not think the LTTE has any more aircraft left. The two planes took off from a restricted air strip in Pudukudirippu and came to Colombo through Mankulam and Mannar," the officials said. They also added that they were detected on time failing which the damage to Colombo could have been quite high.

When contacted Military Spokesman Udaya Nanayakkara said the defence authorities had SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

**More changes in admin**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday brought more changes in the civil administration by transferring two secretaries and three officers with the rank of additional secretary.

Establishment Secretary ASM Ali Kabir has been transferred to the communications ministry to replace Iqbal Mahmud who has been made secretary of the establishment ministry. It was their second posting in less than a month.

Ali Kabir, who had been sent on force retirement by the past BNP-Jamaat coalition government, got back his job during the last caretaker SEE PAGE 12 COL 1

**Japan to provide \$439m for power, infrastructure**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday signed an Exchange of Notes with Japan for a soft loan assistance worth Tk 2,981 crore (US\$ 439m) for three power and infrastructure projects.

These three projects are Haripur second phase 360 megawatt power plant at Tk 1665 cr under the Electricity Generation Company of Bangladesh (EGCB), Central Zone Power Distribution Project at Tk 728 cr under the Power Development Board (PDB) and Eastern Bangladesh Bridge Improvement Project at Tk 586 cr under the Roads and Highways Department.

The loan for the Haripur project is the second round of Japanese assistance for this project, said a press release.

The 360 MW power project will be executed by the EGCB in collaboration with Rural Electrification Board and the Power SEE PAGE 15 COL 2

**Popular writers' works dominate sale lists**

AMENA KHATUN

The majority of visitors at the Ekushey Boi Mela flock to specific stalls that sell books by the most popular writers of the country.

Though the fair has so far seen an impressive number of new books by promising new writers, names like Humayun Ahmed, Muhammad Jafar Iqbal, Imdadul Haque Milon, Anisul Hoque and Sumanta Aslam still dominate sales at the fair.

Books by these writers are pulling the best crowds at the fair this year, just like the previous few years readers and publishers say.

Lama and Hillol, two friends of Dhaka University were seen yesterday pushing their way through the thick crowd in front of Anya Prokash to buy books by Humayun Ahmed.

Hours later Lama was holding a couple of Ahmed's new books tight to her chest as she explained why she came to the fair each year, "I read all his books as his stories have variation and diversity."

"I can enjoy Humayun Ahmed's writings no matter what mood I am in," she added.

"Around 70 per cent of the total sale from my publishing house are from books written SEE PAGE 15 COL 6



Unscrupulous traders in connivance with fishermen kill a large number of sharks in the Bay. The photo was taken on a beach near Patharghata in Barguna.

PHOTO: BANGLAR CHOKH

**Seismic survey had no impact on wildlife**

Says IUCN report on Lawachhara

UNB, Dhaka

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) conducted a survey at the country's sensitive Lawachhara Reserve Forest SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

**74 miners killed in China mine blast**

AP, Taiyuan

A gas explosion ripped through a coal mine in northern China yesterday, killing at least 74 miners and trapping dozens in the still-burning shaft, state media said.

China's mines are the world's most dangerous with more than 3,000 deaths a year in fires, floods and explosions. The pre-dawn blast occurred while 436 workers were in the Tunlan Coal Mine in Gujiao city near Taiyuan, the capital of Shanxi province, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

At least 73 miners died and 113 were hospitalised, including 21 in critical condition, Xinhua said. It did not say how many workers remained trapped in the shaft but earlier reports said at least 65 were still underground.

State television CCTV showed rescuers in orange suits and red helmets with headlamps entering an elevator to be lowered into the mine shaft, while others emerged from the mine carrying workers on stretchers toward waiting ambulances.

Nearly 100 rescuers were onsite but their work was hampered

SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

**DU denies allegation on Khaleda protocol**

DU CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) authorities yesterday denied the allegation of their being partisan and not giving due protocol to Khaleda Zia during the wreath-laying ceremony in the early hours of 21st February at the Central Shaheed Minar.

DU authorities said BNP chairperson Khaleda Zia came to the Central Shaheed Minar eight minutes later than her scheduled time and by the time the situation went SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

**Prayer Timing**  
February 23

	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-20	5-55
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-03	6-07
Esha	7-30	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation