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Encroachment removal starts today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) will carry out an eviction drive against illegal structures in river Turag near Tongi bridge from today, official sources said.

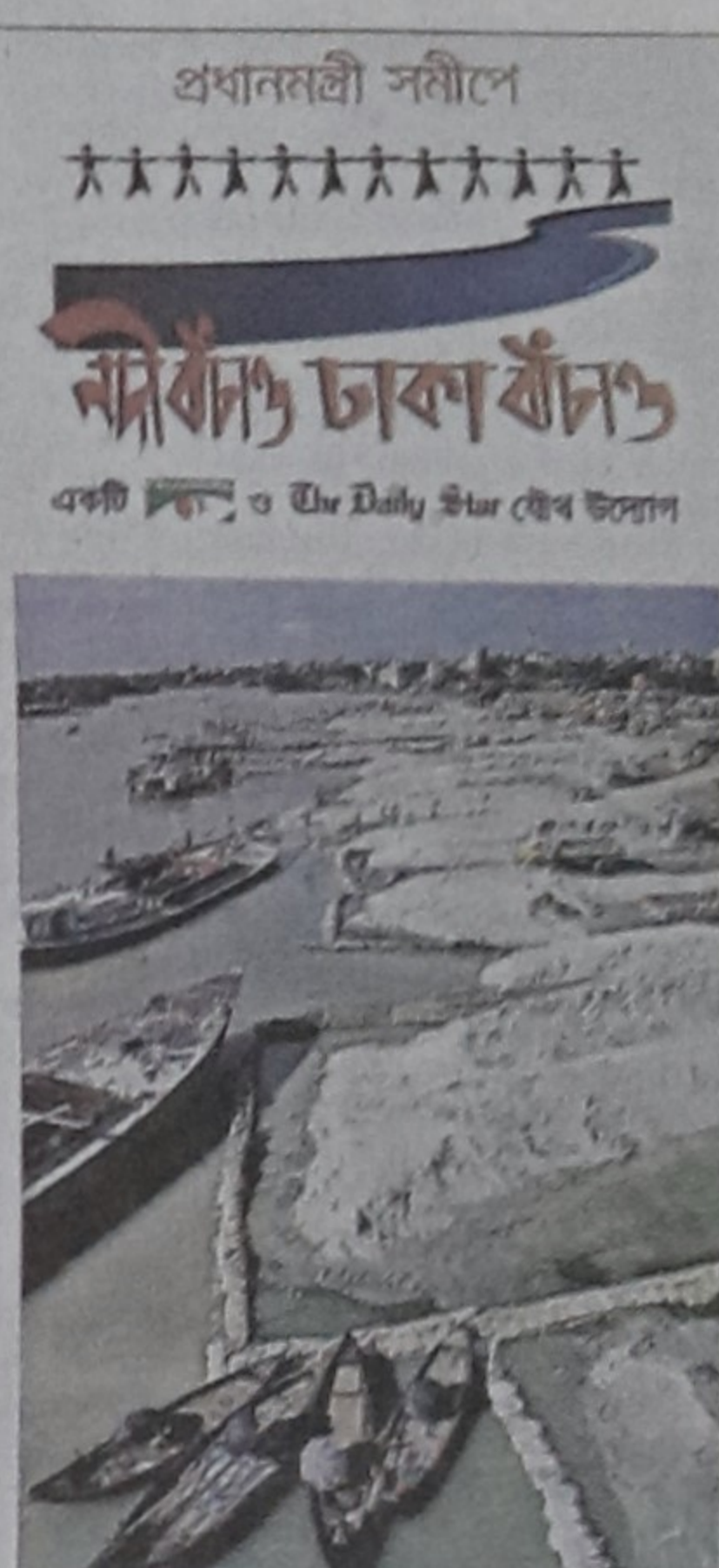
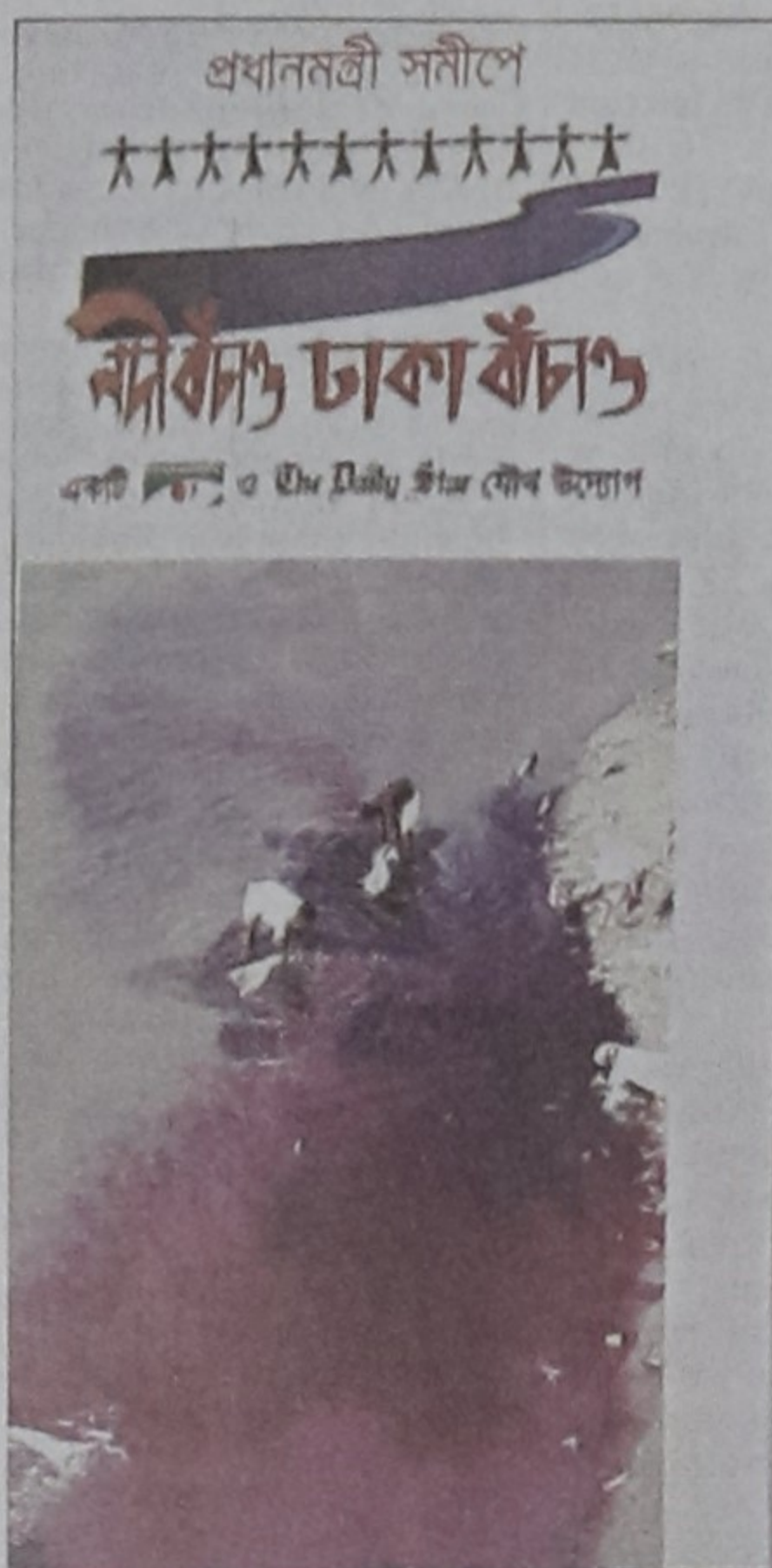
"The day's eviction drive begins to the east of Tongi bridge," said a BIWTA deputy director requesting anonymity. "We will then move towards Biswajitmaground."

A total of 64 illegal structures on Gazipur part and 54 on Dhaka part have been identified for eviction during the three-day drive. The drive begins at 9:00 in the morning.

The drive also includes excavation of earth illegally dumped in the river by encroachers.

Administrators of the two districts have already assigned required number of magistrates for the drives, the official said.

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People look at the photos of river pollution and encroachment that are on display at the South Plaza of Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday. The Daily Star and Channel i jointly organised the exhibition.

PHOTO: STAR

Waiting for the water to roll

MORSHED ALI KHAN, back from Manikganj

On May 22, Jamuna Bangabandhu Bridge Authority recorded water level under the bridge at 7.85 metres. With the start of the flood season and heavy rainfall in the upstream, water in the Jamuna river was rising, slowly inundating hundreds of sandy shoals.

On the bank of the Jamuna at Charkatari under Daulatpur thana of Manikganj district, where the mouth of dried up Ghior canal met the river, Shahid Majhi and many others sat in their large motorboats and waited. Some of the boatmen nearby prepared coarse rice on firewood while others gazed at the sandy bed of Ghior. Scorching sun baked the desert-like bed of the canal, and the southerly air felt hot and humid.

According to Shahid Majhi, during the same period every year hundreds of boatmen, who earn their living mainly by ferrying merchandise to Dhaka from the northern districts across the Jamuna, Padma, and the Brahmaputra rivers, wait for the Jamuna water to enter Ghior canal reviving the easiest way to reach the Buriganga river within only four hours.

"Hopefully the water is going to enter the canal in three days' time during the high tide of the moonless night," said Madhu Mandal, the headman of a nearby boat.

Shahid Majhi, Abdul Gani, and Madhu Mandal, who mainly ferry Indian cattle to Dhaka, said the river Pungli in the upstream and Ghior canal, two leading waterways to Dhaka, start drying up in September.

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Govt allows Tuku to go abroad

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Lawyers for former state minister for power Iqbal Hassan Mahmud Tuku yesterday withdrew a contempt petition Tuku had filed with the High Court (HC) against the home minister and two other officials.

Home Secretary Abdus Sobhan Shikder, Special Superintendent of Police (Immigration) Aurangzeb Mahbub and Officer-in-Charge (immigration) at Zia International Airport Azizur Rahman Chowdhury were due to appear before the court today to face the contempt petition.

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Tax holiday to exist, with checks on tax-dodging

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The government is introducing tax holiday under a new system in the next fiscal year (FY) to stop evasion of taxes, and increase revenue earning.

Finance ministry sources said tax holiday will be allowed for some selected categories of industries but they will be required to pay three to 10 percent tax.

But the industries enjoying tax holiday under the present system would continue to enjoy it till the end of the period for which they have been

allowed this facility.

The sources mentioned that the new system of tax holiday has been almost finalised, but the rate of tax for the industries concerned is still being worked out.

In Dhaka and Chittagong divisions, the new tax holiday facility may be given with the industries concerned having to pay five percent tax for the first two years and 10 percent for the next three years.

In Rajshahi, Khulna, Sylhet and Barisal divisions, and the three hill districts, rate of tax would be 2-3 per-

cent for the first three years and eight percent for the next four to five years.

The government is yet to specify the type of industries which would get the new tax holiday. Sources however said the sectors would include agro-processing, infrastructure, ship building, toy manufacturing, and backward and forward linkage units of garments industry.

At present about 20 sectors enjoy tax holiday. Industries to be set up in these sectors by June 30 of 2011 would also get the facility.

The existing system allows 100 per-

cent tax holiday in Dhaka and Chittagong divisions for the first two years, 50 per cent for the next two years and 25 percent for the next year.

In Rajshahi, Sylhet, Khulna and Barisal divisions, and three hill districts, tax exemption is 100 per cent tax for the first three years, 50 percent for the next three years and 25 percent for the next year.

Meanwhile, the finance minister had earlier said the government would not allow any tax holiday in the next FY. But the business community and the

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WFP BISCUITS Students released from hospital

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

Students of 115 government and non-government primary schools in Khagrachhari who were rushed to different health complexes after having biscuits distributed by the World Food Programme (WFP) Monday returned home yesterday.

Government physicians in both Mohalchhari and Laxmichhari upazilas in the district said the students are out of danger now.

Contacted over phone Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) of Mohalchhari Mohammad Saiful Arif yesterday said some 384 students from 55 primary schools of the upazila were released after first aid and 17 more hospitalised were expected to be discharged in the afternoon.

Laxmichhari UNO Mohammad Solim Ullah confirmed over phone that the 140 students including 40 in critical condition were released yesterday.

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JS body to probe graft at BSMMU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The parliamentary standing committee on health ministry yesterday formed a subcommittee to investigate the allegations of corruption and irregularities at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) during the rule of BNP-Jamaat alliance government.

Headed by lawmaker Matir Rahman, the two-member subcommittee has been asked to submit its

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French plane debris found in Atlantic

AFP, Brasilia, Paris

Search aircraft yesterday found a seat and other debris from a plane in a remote stretch of the Atlantic where an Air France flight carrying 228 people disappeared, Brazil's air force said.

The "small remains" were discovered around 1,100 kilometers (680 miles) off northeastern Brazil, some 650 kilometers northeast of Brazil's Atlantic island of Fernando de Noronha.

The items included a seat from a plane, bits of white material, an orange buoy, a barrel and some oil and kerosene slicks, grouped in two floating patches 60 kilometers apart, according to an air force statement.

It could not immediately be confirmed that the debris was from Air France flight AF 447, the spokesman, Colonel Jorge Amaral, told reporters.

There were no signs of survivors, he said. "The search is continuing because it's very little material in relation to the size" of the Air France Airbus A330, he said.

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2 criminals, cop bullet-hit in shootout

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two criminals and a detective police constable sustained bullet injuries during a shoot-out in the city's Agargaon early yesterday.

Injured criminals Mahbub, 29, second-in-command of Shahadat group and Sabuj, 25 and the DB police constable Anwar were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital. Sabuj was later shifted to Pangu hospital at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, said DB sources.

Detective Branch (DB) of

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Pakistan rescues 80 students from Taliban

Fears of spiralling rebel attacks grow

AFP, Peshawar

Pakistan said yesterday the military rescued 80 students and staff snatched by Taliban gunmen, as fears grew of spiralling rebel attacks to avenge a military offensive in the northwest.

The hold-up, which targeted staff and students from an army-run college, came as a Pakistani court ordered the release of the head of a charity widely viewed as a front for the banned Islamist group blamed for the Mumbai attacks.

Officials said 71 pupils and nine staff were rescued when militants moved them from

North Waziristan to South Waziristan -- tribal zones on the Afghan border where Washington accuses al-Qaeda of plotting attacks on the West.

Sardar Abbas Rind, administrative chief in Bannu town where the students were headed when they were detained, said troops intercepted the rebels before dawn at a military checkpoint 20 kilometres from the college.

"There was an exchange of fire after which the militants fled. All students and teaching staff members were rescued," he told AFP.

The kidnapping took place on the border

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Blast at CNG refill station injures nine in N'Ganj

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Narayanganj

A blast at a CNG refill station in Narayanganj yesterday morning injured nine people, three seriously, and caused material damage worth Tk 10 lakh at the refill station.

The incident occurred at around 11.30 am at Mass, a CNG refill station situated near Narayanganj jail at Chanmari area on the Dhaka-Narayanganj Link Road.

The explosion blew off the

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N-POWER PLANT Govt team to visit Russia next month

UNB, Dhaka

A government delegation is likely to visit Russia next month to have firsthand experience and learn about the Russian nuclear power plant technology, official sources said.

This visit was supposed to take place in the current month. But due to delay in necessary preparation on both sides, the planned trip will now take place sometime in July, a senior official of the science and ICT ministry told UNB.

After an initial negotiation, Bangladesh and Russia on May 13 signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in Dhaka to enhance cooperation between the two countries for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

However, main purpose of the MoU is to take necessary

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OnlinePoll

Do you think political cases filed against political bigwigs should be dropped through executive process instead of court settlement?

☐ Yes (82.6%)
☐ No (15.9%)
☐ No Comments (1.4%)

Total votes: 483

TODAY'S POLL

HC has directed the govt to set up food courts in all dists and appoint inspectors to prevent food adulteration. Do you think the govt should set up special cells to crackdown on food adulteration?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net

Prayer Timing

June 3		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-45	6-50
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Pak court frees Mumbai attack mastermind

India voices disappointment

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE, Lahore/New Delhi

Citing insufficient evidence, a Pakistani court yesterday freed from house arrest Hafiz Saeed, the founder of the terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) that India has blamed for the 26/11 Mumbai carnage, his lawyer said. India immediately expressed disappointment at the development.

"The court has said the detention of Hafiz Saeed was a violation of the constitution and the law of this country," counsel AK Dogar told reporters after the Lahore High Court delivered its verdict.

"Today's verdict shows that sovereignty lies in Almighty Allah," Dogar added.

In New Delhi, India's Home Minister P Chidambaram said: "We are unhappy that Pakistan has not shown the degree of seriousness it should to bring to justice the perpetrators of the crime."

"Saeed is not a terrorist," a JuD spokesperson told reporters in Lahore, adding that the organisation he headed was not a terror group. The detailed court verdict was not immediately available. Government lawyers said they were surprised at the verdict, more so as they had presented evidence linking Saeed's Jamaat-ud Daawa (JuD) charity, into which the LeT had morphed, with al-Qaeda.

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Hilsa catching frenzy in Cox's Bazar

A CORRESPONDENT, Cox's Bazar

Hilsa fish has brought smiles to the face of fish traders in the east sea channel off St Martin's Island.

Large catches over the last couple of days have ensured that every fisherman out with a trawler has been able to return to land with enough to make a huge profit for the season.

Around 7,000 fishing trawlers from the district have now anchored back at the ghats, after braving the rough seas over the past few days.

Around 250 trawlers from St Martin's Island made around at least Tk 5 crore from selling Hilsa, a national favourite, over the last three days.

FB Fatima, a trawler owned by Syed Amin returned to the ghat yesterday with a large catch. He

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Hilsa captured near the St Martin's island yesterday are being packed at Teknaf in Cox's Bazar for shipment to Dhaka.

PHOTO: STAR