

Businessmen to grab sports

Mayor, environmentalists decry bid to take over Dhanmondi public playground

TAWFIQUE ALI

A limited company of powerful businessmen will soon take over Dhanmondi playground, earmarked in the city's master plan as a common field, to build there a mini stadium with exclusive sports facilities much to the chagrin of local residents.

Dhanmondi Club, now a limited company, has been named after Sheikh Jamal, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's slain brother, said sources.

Noted environmentalists denounced the move and said the playground is a public property, which will now serve the business interest of a group of affluent people.

During the military rule of Ershad, Public Works Department (PWD), the official custodian of the playground, designated Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) to maintain it.

The playground, however, has been under the control of Dhanmondi Club since 1962

without any legal authorisation of the authorities concerned.

PWD division-2 (Dhanmondi) executive engineer Abdul Kader Chowdhury said there is no scope for a public playground to be used for any commercial purposes.

"Dhanmondi is a residential area and I think no authorities will give approval to a plan for a stadium in a residential area," he said.

Such a stadium will just destroy the residential character of the area with the onrush of people and vehicles, he said, adding: "A stadium in our country invariably means hundreds of shops and other commercial establishments."

DCC Mayor Sadeque Hossain Khoka said, "A limited company does not have any mandate or scope to convert a playground the way it was planned."

The company will have an eleven-member executive body and a governing body, which

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PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

The Dhanmondi Playground, which was under the control of Dhanmondi Club for a long time, could be under the hands of powerful businessmen soon.

2 committees to probe scam

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two committees—one led by the FBCCI and the other by the commerce ministry—were formed yesterday to investigate the recent sugar scam that led to an abnormal rise in the commodity's price during Ramadan.

The committees were formed at a time when eight sugar traders have been hiding following a government declaration that they would be arrested.

Commerce Minister Faruk Khan briefed the media about the committees after his meeting with a delegation of traders led by Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

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Sugar prices soar on permit sale frenzy

Purchase paper of a dealer gets sold several times, at increasing rates, till delivery of sugar

PORIMOL PALMA

Permits given to big dealers to buy sugar changed hands several times at higher rates during Ramadan, leading to the abnormal rise in the commodity's price at that time, traders and intelligence agency sources said.

Dealers obtain delivery orders (DOs) for sugar from mills by paying in advance. There are around 300 dealers at the Moulavibazar wholesale market in Dhaka and Khatunganj in Chittagong, but only a

few big dealers buy sugar from millers in bulk amounts.

The rest make business by selling the DOs. Each time a DO changes hands, new costs are most likely taxed on sugar, sources observed.

A DO was sold even 50-100 times during Ramadan, each time adding to the sugar price by Tk .20 a kg on an average, said a trader at a city market.

The issue came to the forefront as sugar price went up to Tk 65-70 a kg in Ramadan although the government had

fixed the price at mill gates at Tk 39 a kg and Tk 42 at retail level.

Even after Eid-ul-Fitr, sugar was selling at Tk 56-60 at city markets.

Following the government declaration on arresting a few big dealers on charge of hoarding sugar, many dealers are now not opening their businesses.

Although Trading Corporation of Bangladesh is blamed for its failure to make adequate market intervention, businesses said it is the "DO business" by

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Aman lands in jail

Case filed by party colleagues; Delwar demands release

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Detective Branch of police yesterday arrested former BNP state minister Amanullah Aman at Zia International Airport in an attempt to murder case filed by one of his party colleagues.

The former student leader was held as soon as he got off a Thai Airways flight from Singapore at around 1:30pm. Police took him straight to a Dhaka court which sent him to jail.

The arrest sparked fierce demonstrations by a group of BNP activists disrupting traffic on Airport Road for about an hour.

Police charged baton to disperse the stone-throwing protesters, said witnesses.

Vehicle movement on the busy thoroughfare returned to normalcy at around 2:30pm.

Police sought a 10-day remand for quizzing Aman. But as



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Hindu devotees clash

1 killed, 10 hurt

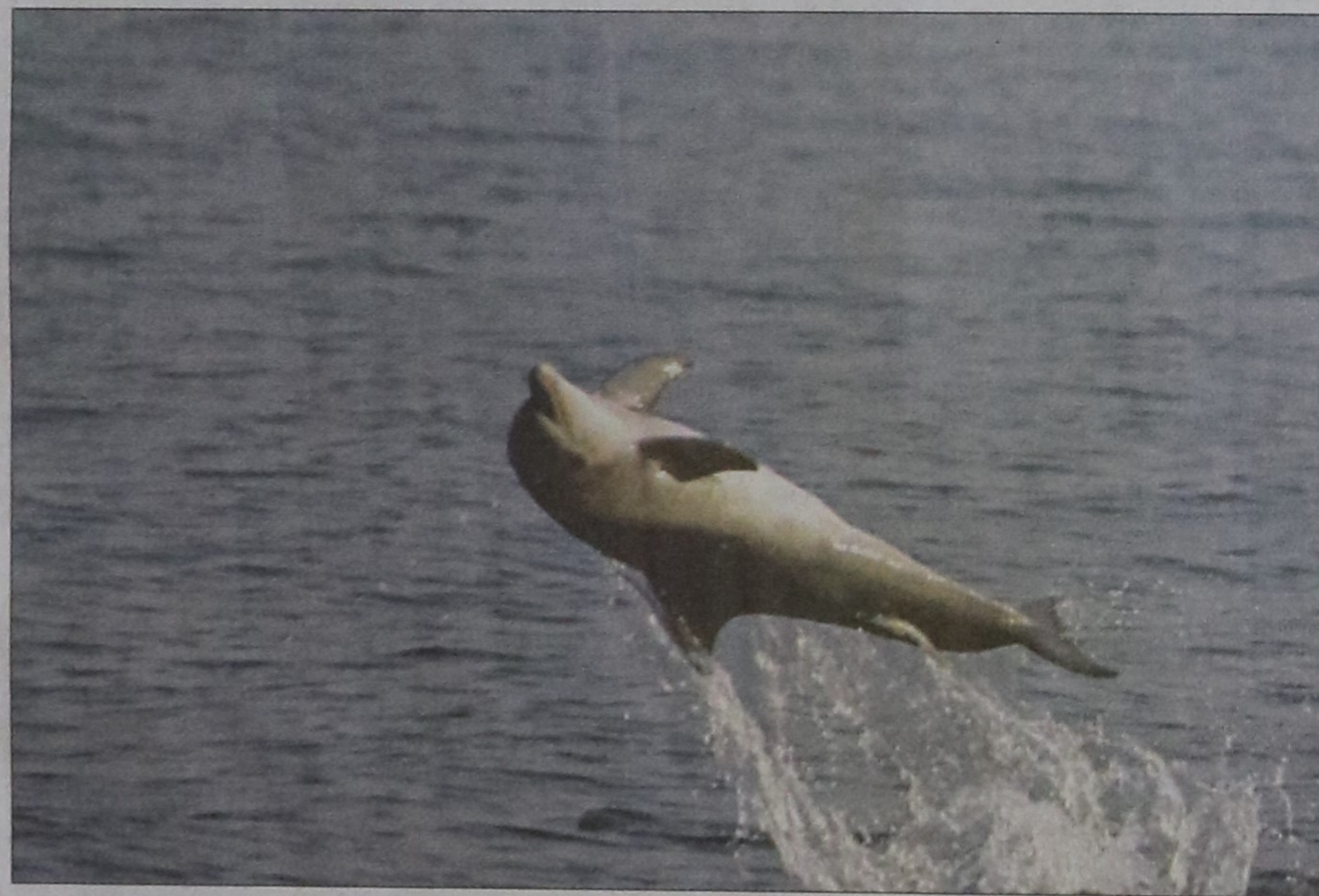
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Swechchhasebok League leader was killed and 10 others were injured in a clash between two groups of Hindu devotees at Shyambazar in Sutrapur area in the capital yesterday.

Both the groups alleged the clash erupted over taking control of 32 kathas of land on RM Das Lane at Bhushipatti in Sutrapur.

Goutam Sarker, 34, Swechchhasebok League president of Ward No 79, succumbed to bullet injuries at a private clinic two hours

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A playful bottlenose dolphin is caught in the photo frame at a river around the capital that received a bit of fresh water from upstream during this rainy season. These mammals are likely to either die or forced to move downstream when the rain stops and the pollution makes the water murky.

PHOTO: COURTESY BANGLADESH CETACEAN DIVERSITY PROJECT

Gangetic dolphins return

MORSHED ALI KHAN

A school of gangetic dolphins have returned to the rivers Turag and Buriganga with the flow of fresh floodwater from the upstream.

Several dolphins were sighted recently near Shoalmachi in the river Turag and at Jhaochar, a kilometre downstream in the river Buriganga, much to the delight of environmentalists and local boatmen.

But the delight is short-lived as the fresh water flow in all the rivers around the capital city will soon start to recede and dumping of millions of tonnes of toxic waste into the river water will make it impossible for any aquatic life to survive.

If the escape route towards

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BANGABANDHU MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

11 doctors dismissed

They term politically motivated

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ten professors and an associate professor of different departments of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU), the lone medical university in the country, were dismissed yesterday for their alleged political affiliation.

University Registrar Abdul Gafur who served the termination letter to those teachers told The Daily Star the eleven were relieved of their jobs because their appointments flouted the Public Servants (retirements) Act, 1974 that prohibited the recruitment of retired government officials as permanent employees.

He also said the act states that the retired persons could join any autonomous institute on a contract basis but they cannot be made permanent. The dismissal orders come into effect from today.

Those who were terminated are Sayeba Akhter and Nasim Akhter Chowdhury of Gynaecology Department, Jahangir Kabir of Nephrology, SA Khan of Transplant Urology, Matiur Rahman Mollah of Dental, Abul Kashem Chowdhury of Microbiology,

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CEC bins Jalil's doubting polls

Terms it nothing but outpouring of frustrations

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chief Election Commissioner ATM Shamsul Huda yesterday said Awami League lawmaker Abdul Jalil's recent remarks on the ninth parliamentary election are "nothing but outpouring of frustrations".

Maintaining that the December 29 election was free, fair and neutral, he said people, not any frustrated person, will judge the fairness of the polls.

The CEC made the observations while talking to reporters at the Election Commission.

"The way we conducted the polls was lauded both at home and abroad," he added.

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AL came to power thru' vote rigging

Khaleda cites Jalil's admission

UNB, Sirajganj

Opposition Leader Khaleda Zia deplored that the present government is not paying attention to public welfare nor fulfilling its pre-election pledges, as Awami League "didn't come to power with people's vote but through rigging."

To underpin her observations, she said a former general secretary of the ruling party divulged that AL came to power 'through entente and rigging,' which her party has complained repeatedly after the December 29 polls.

The BNP chairperson cautioned the government that her party doesn't want to launch movement now.

But, if the government wants to implement agreements against the country's interest, her party would launch movement and build up resistance to halt the government's move.

She further said BNP would remain prepared for throwing

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10 BCL men rape girl

Farcical arbitration let 16 culprits get away with fine of Tk 10,000 each; victim's poor father dares not to file case

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Ten activists of Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) allegedly gang-raped a teenage girl Friday night and were later handed down mere punishment at village arbitration arranged to ensure their escape by local Awami League leaders.

Family sources say the AL leaders compelled the victim's father not to go for legal action and also took their signatures on three blank sheets to stop any future move to that end.

Police also released two of the accused held on the spot while handing the victim over to her father early Saturday morning.

A band of 16 youths kidnapped the girl, a

class VII student of Pakhimara in Kalapara upazila, Friday night when she was returning home on a rickshaw from a Puja mandap with her cousin Nasir Uddin.

The BCL men beat up Nasir, drove him away and took the girl to a nearby garden. Ten of them raped the girl until her relatives with police rushed to the scene to rescue her around 2:00am.

Sub-inspector Kabir Hossain of Kalapara police station held two of the culprits -- Rajib and Sohag -- from the spot but freed them later after handing over the girl to her family.

Later on Sunday, local AL leaders including Kalapara upazila unit Secretary Rakibul Ahsan

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Tax return deadline stretched to Oct 31

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The last date for submitting tax returns of individual taxpayers has been extended by a month to October 31.

As October 31 is a government holiday, November 1 would be considered the last date for submission.

The National Board of Revenue extended the date considering the long holidays due to Eid-ul-Fitr and Durga Puja, NBR Chairman Nasir Uddin Ahmed told reporters at his office yesterday.

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