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PM's speech frustrated nation
Says Delwar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The prime minister's address to the nation frustrated people as it didn't go with reality, BNP Secretary General Khandaker Delwar Hossain said yesterday. "She [Sheikh Hasina] is talking about positive politics. But new cases are being filed against opposition leaders while she is seeking cooperation from the opposition," Delwar told reporters in a reaction to the premier's speech. He said torture and repression on the opposition must be stopped for having a healthy political culture. Prime Minister Sheikh

River demarcation starts by Mar 15

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The government will start setting up boundary pillars on the riverbanks to demarcate the original area of rivers to stop encroachers in and around the capital by March 15. The high-powered Taskforce Committee to save the rivers made the decision and instructed the deputy commissioners of Dhaka, Narayanganj, Gazipur and Munshiganj to execute it in time. The taskforce headed by the shipping ministry also decided to plant trees on the riverbanks at its fourth meeting held at the shipping ministry auditorium yesterday. It also decided to restore 13 canals in the capital and asked the Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (Wasa) to provide original maps of the canals. The meeting formed a committee to protect the rivers from further pollution and encroachment by raising mass awareness. It is impossible to save the rivers from encroachment and pollution without raising public awareness, said Shipping Minister Shahjahan Khan while briefing the reporters after the meeting. "So we have formed a committee which will work for awareness building," he added. Asked about the permanent structures still existing inside the rivers, the minister said, "We are also thinking what to do about that. Many have made mosques filling up the rivers. The government is planning to sit with them and work according to the directives of the High Court," Shahjahan added. "We inherited many problems over the decades. We cannot solve them overnight," said State Minister for Environment and Forest Hasan Mahmud who was



The photo taken yesterday near the second Buriganga Bridge in the city shows the BIWTA carrying out clean-up drive that started Wednesday to remove accumulated garbage from the riverbed.

Pilkhana Carnage Day to be observed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The government yesterday decided to observe February 25 as 'Pilkhana Carnage Day' to commemorate those brutally killed inside the BDR headquarters during a mutiny by the lower orders of the border force this day last year. The decision was taken at a meeting chaired by Home Minister Sahara Khatun at the home ministry following a discussion on a proposal sent

All primary students to get books by Jan 15

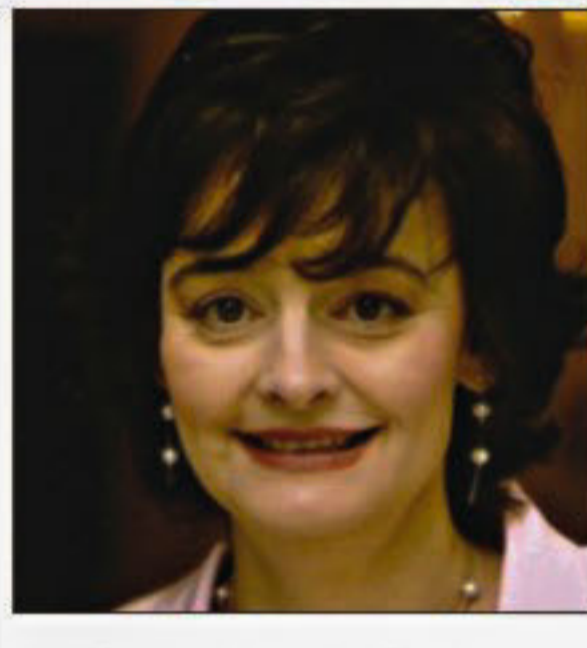
Students of kindergartens, which follow NCTB curriculum, too get free books
STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The government will distribute by January 15 free textbooks to students of all primary educational institutions, including kindergartens, which follow the National Curriculum and Textbook Board curriculum. Abu Alam Mohammad Shahid Khan, acting secretary of primary and mass education ministry, told The Daily Star last night, "No books will be printed for sale. We are committed to giving all students the books as per the prime minister's directive." The government started distributing 18.68 crore free textbooks to 2.76 crore primary and secondary school students from the first school day of this year. However, a state of confusion developed over students of kindergartens and those of institutions that have no state approval. These institutions never received free books and used to buy textbooks from the market. But this year the government did not print any books for sale.

BANGABANDHU MURDER
Process of execution of convicts starts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The prison authorities have started the process of executing death sentence of five detained convicts in Bangabandhu murder case. The process began since the authorities were not yet officially informed of any move to file review petitions against their conviction and death penalty, the inspector general (prisons) said yesterday. But the authorities would suspend the execution process if the convicts can show any court order staying the process, IG (prisons) Brig Gen Ashraf Islam Khan told journalists after meeting the law minister at his office. The five prisoners in death row are Syed Feroq Rahman,

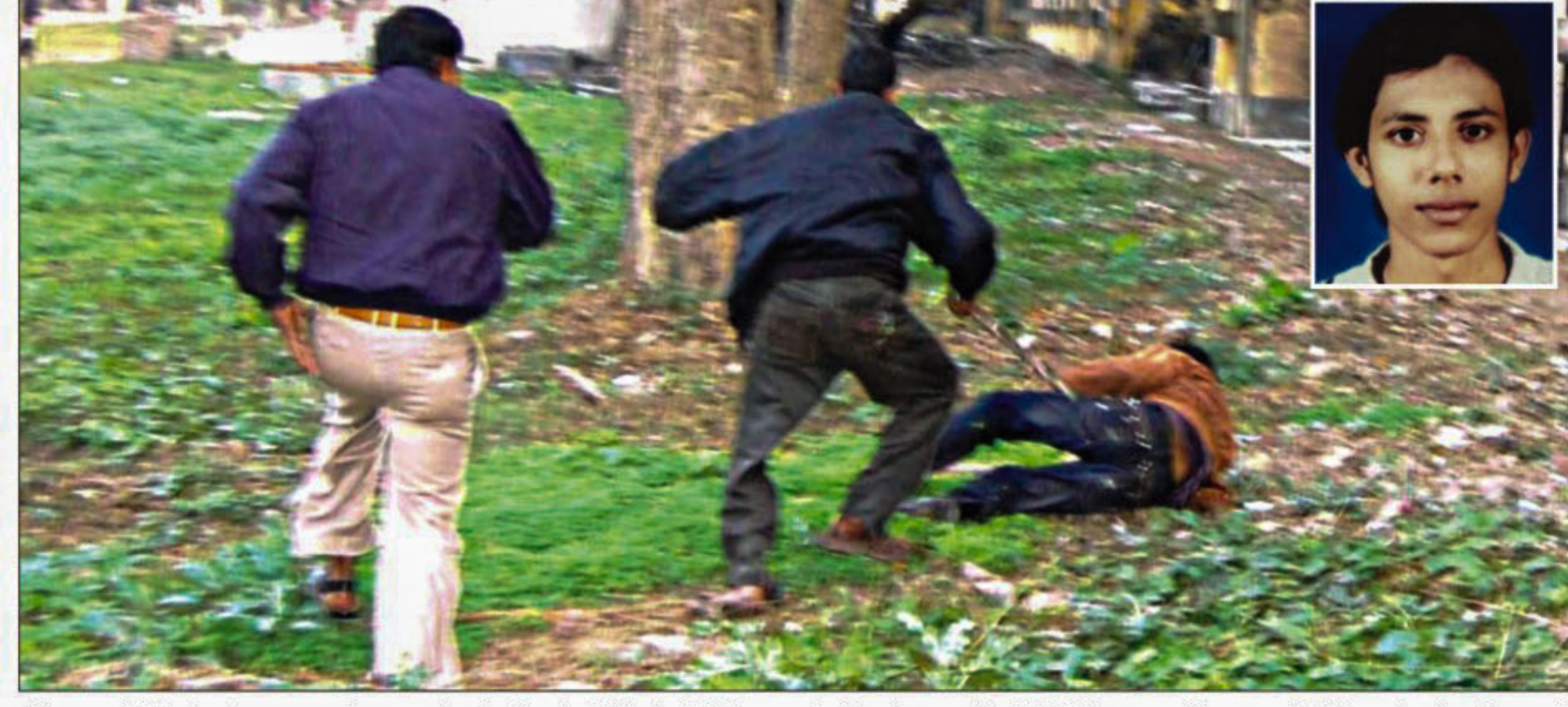
Rice price on rise despite big stock

PORIMOL PALMA
Rice price rose by five to 18 percent in last one month in spite of the 11.5 lakh metric tonnes of the grain in government stocks and projected Aman production of 1.3 crore tonnes. Prices of fine rice now range from Tk 32 a kilogram to Tk 44, while medium quality and coarse rice prices range from Tk 26 to Tk 33 a kg, according to a Trading Corporation of Bangladesh report released on January 6. Meanwhile, rising by 7 to 15 percent, flour now sells at Tk 22 to Tk 34 a kg, which was Tk 19 to Tk 32 a month back. Agronomists say the price hike is basically driven by high international prices, especially as India and Philippines faced production shortfall in droughts and typhoons respectively late last year. India lost 15 million metric tonnes of production while the Philippines imported 2.5 million metric tonnes of rice last year. Rice price in India remains \$330 to \$470 per tonne, while Thailand is not exporting rice at prices below \$500 per tonne. India also maintains bans on rice export since 2007. Agreeing to that Food and Disaster Management Minister Dr Abdur Razzaque said cold wave, which hampered milling of rice, also contributed to the rise. "This price is not very intolerable and once the cold wave goes, market will be stable," he also said at a media briefing at his ministry. He stressed starting open market sales to stable market if necessary saying the ministry already allocated 3,20,750 tonnes



Cherie Blair arrives today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Cherie Blair, wife of the former British prime minister Tony Blair, arrives in Dhaka today on a four-day visit. Blair, a leading international lawyer and human rights advocate, will launch the Cherie Blair Fellowships tomorrow at the Asian University for Women in Chittagong. Blair will call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to discuss matters relating to the Asian University for Women. During her visit, she will also



Jubo and Chhatra league cadres yesterday beat a Chhatra Moitree activist who went to RMCH to see a deceased Moitree leader, Rezanul Islam Chowdhury Sunny, killed in an attack by the BCL men at Rajshahi Polytechnic Institute earlier on the day. Inset, Sunny, vice-president of the institute unit of Moitree.

3 drown in Kaliganga as boat sinks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Three workers of a sand-laden motorboat drowned after it sank in the Kaliganga river at

TOURISM IN HILLS
Consult council for development

CHT Commission advises govt against unilateral decision
STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission (CHTC) has urged Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to take necessary steps to cancel the planning ministry's decision to develop tourism in hill areas without consulting the Hill District Council. The CHTC sent a letter to the prime minister on Wednesday expressing its concern over indiscriminate tourism development plans in the CHT.

OnlinePoll ✓

Do you think gas rationing by keeping industries in seven zones shut once a week in turn will be effective in resolving gas crisis?

Yes (55.5%)
No (42.7%)
No Comments (1.8%)

Total votes: 830

TODAY'S POLL

Do you agree with BNP that Awami League-led grand alliance has failed in every sector in the first year of its rule?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net

Prayer Timing

January 8		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-30	6-05
Juma	12-30	1-15
Asr	4-00	4-15
Maghrib	5-30	5-35
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

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