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BDR Darbar today at Pilkhana

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A special Darbar of the Director General of the Bangladesh Rifles will be held this morning at the Darbar Hall of BDR Pilkhana headquarters.

BDR official sources said DG Maj Gen Mainul Islam would preside over the programme. All top-ranking BDR officers are expected to be present there.

The function starts at 10:30am with the prize giving to BDR officers and personnel who carried out their duties in 2009 exceptionally well.

The BDR mutiny on February 25-26 last year erupted during a Darbar arranged for a similar occasion. The mutineers killed 74

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FIRE PROBE REPORT Factory's poor ventilation main reason

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

A probe committee report said the poor ventilation system was the major cause of the death of 21 workers in the devastating fire at Garib and Garib Company at Bhogra under Gazipur district.

The three-member probe committee headed by magistrate Hasan Sarwar yesterday submitted the investigation report to Gazipur Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kamal Uddin Talukdar.

The terrible fire incident took place at Garib and Garib Company, an export-oriented garment factory, on Thursday which also left 31 workers injured.

Talking to The Daily Star Kamal Uddin said the probe committee in its report mentioned that acrylic yarn in the factory caught fire and created thick smoke that engulfed the

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DU VIOLENCE Probe body identifies 10 'culprits' Syndicate decides to expel them

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Dhaka University committee investigating the death of Abubakar Siddique in a clash between two factions of Bangladesh Chhatra League has identified 10 persons responsible for the incident and the DU Syndicate has decided to temporarily expel them from the university.

The committee submitted its probe report to DU Vice-Chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique who then placed it before the syndicate yesterday.

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This photo shows several tourist vessels anchored near Kotka forest office in the Sundarbans recently. While tourism there is booming, it is not without effect. A few of these vessels had loud overnight concerts onboard for the tourists, despite forest officials' repeated requests not to hold such programmes considering preservation of tranquillity of the wildlife habitat.

PHOTO: SHAFIQU ALAM

Strict rules for pvt universities

Draft bill sent to JS Secretariat

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The private university bill has been drafted to ensure that the private universities will abide by the rules and regulations and maintain quality tertiary education, said Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday.

"We want the private universities to be active and effective but they have to follow some rules and regulations and meet some conditions (set by the government). The approval of the university will be cancelled if they don't meet the conditions," he told the journalists at a press conference at the ministry.

The education ministry has sent the bill to the parliament secretariat yesterday. "I hope this will be passed in the current session," he said.

Nahid said many private universities could not meet the condition even after 10 to 12 years of their approval and the proposed act will help ensure discipline in the higher education.

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He said there is a notion that the private universities have no relation with the government but it is not appropriate. He, however, said if needed, the proposed act will be amended.

Nahid observed that those who want to run the university for commercial purposes as well as ensuring their ownership might face problem if the private university bill is passed.

He urged the admission seekers and guardians not to go to the unauthorised universities.

The proposed act states that each university will prepare a structure for tuition fees consistent with socio-economic conditions and take approval from the University Grants Commission, sources at the ministry said.

It suggests formation of an accreditation council, which will evaluate the overall educational activities of private universities and raise the nation's university education to world standards, said the sources.

CRACKER BLAST Arrestee tells court of Paban's plot

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Pradip Saha who was arrested in connection with the cracker blast in front of BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's Gulshan office, confessed that Abdul Hamid Paban and his friend Golam Sabbir Shovon plotted to explode the crackers there.

Pradip Saha, also secretary of Sonaimuri Upazila BNP, made the confessional statement when he was produced before the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Sahadat Hossain after completion of his five-day remand yesterday. The court sent him to jail.

Pradip in his confessional statement said Faruque over cell phone asked him to come to Motijheel and take him (Faruque) to BNP chairperson's office at Gulshan,

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KILLING AFTER RAPE Death penalty declared illegal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday declared illegal and unconstitutional the provision of awarding death sentence under the Women and Children Repression Prevention (Special) Act 1995.

Section 6(2) of the act carried out the provision of awarding death sentence to any person for killing any woman or child after rape.

The bench comprising Justice Md Iman Ali and Justice Sheikh Abdul Awal delivered the verdict following a writ petition filed by Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) and Sukur Ali of Manikganj district, a condemned convict, challenging legality of the act.

The court also stayed the execution of death sentence of Sukur Ali, son of Hashem Mondal of Manikganj for two months. He was given capital punishment under the section in a rape and murder case filed in 1999.

In its verdict, the court observed that whatever is the nature of crimes, death penalty cannot be the only punishment for the criminals as per the constitutional provision.

The court said the circumstantial condition and credibility of evidences and witnesses should be taken into consideration in awarding punishment. If death is the only option for crimes then the jurisdiction of the judges are restrained.

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Editors worried at threats to Nurul Kabir

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Editors of different national dailies yesterday expressed concern over the death threats issued to the daily New Age Editor Nurul Kabir.

In a statement, the editors said, "With deep concern we are observing that the New Age editor is being threatened with life repeatedly. Nurul Kabir has already lodged a general diary with the police. The threats are being made from the same mobile phone over and over again."

Editor of The Independent Mahbul Alam, Editor of the Ittefaq Rahat Khan, Editor of the Shamokal Golam Sarwar, Editor of the Prothom Alo Matiu Rahman, Editor of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam, Editor of the News Today Reazuddin Ahmed, Editor of the Janakantha Atikullah Khan Masud, Editor of the Kaler Kantho Abed Khan, Editor of

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MPO listing to start soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will soon start the process of bringing more non-government educational institutions under the monthly pay order (MPO) with an allocation of Tk 112 crore for this, Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid said yesterday.

"We have taken preparations to include the highest possible number of educational institutions under monthly pay order with the budgetary allocation of Tk 112 crore, and the process is expected to start soon," he said.

Briefing journalists about his ministry's development activities, Nahid said a large number of educational institutions are waiting to be placed under the MPO as the process of doing this stopped in 2004.

The MPO policy formulation committee has suggested reforming the 1995 organogram of non-government educational institutions which cannot be fully implemented with the limited fund right now, he said. "That is why the education ministry has sent a proposal in this regard to the finance ministry

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Border rules not followed by BSF

Says BDR chief

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Trans-border issues including "adverse possessed lands" would be tabled in the director general-level conference beginning from March 7 in New Delhi, said Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) Chief Maj Gen Md Mainul Islam yesterday.

"The Indian Border Security Force (BSF) are off to occupy our lands on the plea of having adverse possessed lands," Mainul Islam said.

The BDR director general (DG) is expected to lead a 19-member delegation in the five-day DG-level conference.

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BSF kills 2

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

Indian Border Security Force shot dead two cattle traders, one Bangladeshi and one Indian citizen, at the Dharmagarh border in Ranishankoil upazila of Thakurgaon early yesterday.

The victims were identified as Abdul Quaium, 30, son of Abdul Kader of Kathaldangi under Haripur upazila of Thakurgaon and Mohammad Bodhu Miah, 32, son of Mongolu of Dakkhin Dinajpur district in India.

Bangladesh Rifles, police and local sources said, BSF members opened fire on a group of cattle traders around 4.30am near Darmagarh border when they were trading cattle.

The Indian national Bodhu Miah died on the spot while Bangladeshi national Abdul Quaium received injuries in

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Govt to import sugar after 8yrs

Moves to keep price stable during Ramadan

KAWSAR KHAN

After eight years the state-owned Bangladesh Sugar and Food Industries Corporation has decided to import sugar to rein in the volatile sugar market.

Initially Bangladesh Sugar and Food Industries Corporation (BSFIC), which controls all the 15 state-owned sugar mills of the country, wants to import 50,000 tonnes of sugar before next July, ahead of the holy month of Ramadan.

BSFIC, in this regard, has sent a proposal to industries ministry expressing its interest in importing sugar from the international market.

"We have formally made the proposal to import sugar on Thursday but we began necessary ground works in this regard much earlier," said Ranajit Kumar Biswas, chairman of BSFIC.

He said the move was taken to keep sugar price under control during the Ramadan. In the past the corporation had also imported sugar in the time of need, he added. It imported sugar last time in 2002.

According to industries ministry sources, Industries Minister Dilip Barua has consented to the proposal.

"Though the ministry agreed to the proposal there are still

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Adivasis stage a sit-in in front of the Jatiya Press Club yesterday morning demanding immediate arrest and punishment of the persons responsible for the arsons and killings in Ranganmati and withdrawal of the army from Baghaichhari. Story on page 2.

PHOTO: STAR

Refugee for life

28 years on, Nirupa Chakma still hopes for a home

EMRAN HOSSAIN, back from Baghaichhari

Every time Nirupa Chakma lost her home she hoped it was the last, and she always prayed that her next home would be cosy and warm.

She has spent the last 28 years vainly trying to find a safe haven.

Nirupa said, "Ever since I was born, I have had to experience life as a refugee."

Time and time again I have been made a refugee, and once again I have no home."

The latest incident that caused Nirupa to become a

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2 UPDF men shot dead

Arson attack on 4 houses of settlers

STAR REPORT

Two young men, identified as UPDF activists, were shot dead allegedly by rivals of Jana Sanghati Samity (JSS) at remote Boraitali of Jurachhari upazila in Ranganmati yesterday afternoon, reports UNB.

Police quoting the locals said Raju Chakma (22) and Jampeda Chakma (28) were going in an auto-rickshaw to upazila town around 5:30pm. Activists of JSS waylaid them at Boraitali opened indiscriminate fire leaving Raju and Jampeda dead on the spot.

Auto-rickshaw driver Lasmiraj Chakma wounded by bullet was admitted to local hospital.

Rivalry between JSS and UPDF indigenous organisations is intensifying in the hill

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