

**GAS SAVING
5 fertiliser
factories
shut from
tonight**

BSS, Dhaka
Five fertiliser factories will be shut down from midnight today to supply 246 millions of cubic feet per day (mmcf) more gas to power plants to generate 500 megawatt power. "As per an earlier decision, the authorities concerned have started the process of closing the factories. Nearly seventy-two hours are needed to shut down a factory," a top official of the energy ministry told BSS yesterday. "However, all the five factories would be closed from tomorrow and the load shedding situation would improve in the country," he added. Earlier on March 29, the
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**Death again for
reckless driving
Mob sets fire to bus**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
Rash driving has claimed yet another life in the city. A bus yesterday hit a pedestrian in front of Eden College and dragged him for around 30 yards before leaving him too injured to survive. Incensed, people set fire to the vehicle, vandalised two others and barricaded Mirpur Road halting traffic for around an hour. The hit-and-run driver, however, managed to flee the mob. Identity of the victim, believed to be in his early thirties, could not yet be known. Jewel, a sugarcane juice vendor who saw the incident, told The Daily Star the man was knocked over while crossing the road at around 12:30pm. "It all happened in a flash. His shirt got tangled up in the bumper, and he was hauled along the road for around 100 feet," he added. Raj, a passenger of the bus, which was going to Sadarghat from Gabtoli, said, "The driver was already speeding. The moment he sensed he had hit someone, he accelerated further." With a mob in hot pursuit, he soon left the vehicle and ran off.
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A bus is set ablaze by angry mob after it hit and killed a pedestrian in front of the city's Eden College yesterday. PHOTO: COURTESY

**WAR CRIME TRIAL
UN to send
observers, if
requested**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The United Nations hopes that Bangladesh will maintain international standard in trying 1971 war criminals. "The UN will consider sending international observers to monitor the trial if Bangladesh requests," United Nations Resident Coordinator Renata Lok Dessallien told reporters after meeting Law Minister Shaifque Ahmed at his secretariat office. In response, the minister said the government will welcome international observers for fair and transparent trial of crimes against humanity during the Liberation War. "There will be no scope for deprecation," he told the
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**47 students
expelled on
first day of
HSC exams**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
A total of 47 students were expelled while a madrasa teacher was arrested for adopting unfair means on the first day of Higher Secondary and its equivalent Alim and Business Management examination yesterday. Sadequ Islam, a teacher of Tanki Alim Madrasa, was arrested on suspicion of dictating answers to examinees at Kasba Madrasa Centre in Brahmanbaria. He had no affiliation with the exam centre. Among the expelled students, 31 were under
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Brutality personified

59-year-old Gofran draws all eyes at BDR court for leading role in massacre

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK
Fifty-nine-year-old BDR Subedar Major Gofran Mallick became the centre of focus when 668 accused of the 24 Rifle Battalion were hauled before the Special Court-5 on the second day's proceedings yesterday. Gofran looked a little restless as he was sitting on the first chair on the front row dock. He along with other rebel leaders allegedly led the massacre during the BDR mutiny in Pilkhana on February 25-26 last year. Officials linked to the trial and investigation told The Daily Star Gofran's cruelty even in this old age astonished them. They said some of his brutality is evident in some video footage.

The three-member BDR specials courts would not try the grievous offences committed by the mutineers, as the civil court would deal with those on completion of investigation by the Criminal Investigation Department. So, many of the grievous offences committed by the alleged mutineers of 24 Rifle Battalion did not come in the case of mutiny before the special court. Prosecutor Lt Col Md Shamsur Rahman told the court Gofran and 449 others spontaneously collected arms and ammunition from armoury and took part in the mutiny, sources say. The majority of the BDR personnel of 24 Rifle Battalion were involved in the mutiny under the leadership of their JCO (Junior Commanding Officer) Gofran, he added. Yesterday's trial started at 1:22pm, over three hours behind schedule as it took more time to bring the accused from Dhaka and Kashimpur jails. Before the court started its proceeding, the alleged mutineers were lined up outside the Darbar Hall, where the courtroom has been set up to
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Gofran Mallick

**Schoolboy stabbed
to death in Sylhet**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet
A schoolboy, who was stabbed by his playmates in the city's Badam Bagicha area Wednesday over playing football at a nearby field, died yesterday morning. The deceased, Saidul Islam, 15, a class IX student of Shahporan Pre-Cadet School, was the son of Nurul Islam, a contractor. Nurul Islam said Saidul was taken to their house at about 12:00 noon Wednesday. Around 2:00pm, some people informed him that his son was beaten up at a place close to the divisional stadium. Saidul was first brought to the house and then taken to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries in the morning, Nurul Islam added. Police said some boys had exchanged hot words over playing football a week ago in the area and this may lead to the killing. The assailants took the student to a nearby playground beside a hillock, beat him up and stabbed at one stage, police said.
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Saidul Islam

**Banks asked
to suspend
accounts of
Mir Kasem**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The National Board of Revenue yesterday asked banks and financial institutions to suspend transactions in the accounts of Jamaat-e-Islami executive committee member and Diganta Media Corporation Chairman Mir Kasem Ali and his family members. The Central Intelligence Cell of the NBR sent letters in this regard to all banks and financial institutions concerned, also directing them to send information about the latest balance in those accounts to the cell.
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**Toxic waste
chokes
Louhajang
river**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail
The Louhajang river, a tributary of Dhaleswari in Tangail, has turned extremely poisonous due to rampant dumping of toxic industrial waste. The water is unusable and pollution is now threatening aquatic life, crops and the greenery, locals said. The local administration can do nothing in this regard as the industries, responsible for the pollution, have obtained permission from Directorate of Environment (DoE) for dumping waste into the river, they alleged. During a recent visit to Taratia, Bhatkura, Khudirampur villages under Tangail sadar upazila The Daily Star correspondent saw for himself the smelly and pitch-black water. People of those villages said they cannot use the water even for washing clothes. Sahera Begum, a housewife of Taratia, said her three children and she have skin diseases as they have no alternative but to use the river water. Ripon Miah and Shamim Ahmed of Bhatkura and Khudirampur said boro paddy fields around the river are dying due to lack of water, as the water cannot be used for irrigation. Even cattle suffer from diarrhoea if they drink this water, he added. The industry authorities, however, denied the allegations and said they had already installed effluent treatment plants by spending crores of taka. They also claimed that the water released from their industries is not at all hazardous. Sirajul Islam, chairman of the Environmental Science and Resources Management
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The colour of the river Louhajang behind BSCIC industrial area in Tangail testifies how recklessly toxic liquids and waste from industries have been dumped into the water body day after day. The photo was taken recently. PHOTO: STAR

**Bashundhara chief to
be quizzed by cops**

'Dakat' Shahid allegedly given Tk 50 lakh for killing of DCC ward councillor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The Detective Branch of Police is going to summon Bashundhara Group Chairman Ahmed Akbar Sobhan alias Shah Alam for quizzing in connection with the DCC ward councillor Ahmed Hossain killing case. Nazimuddin, Keraniganj Shuvaddah union parishad chairman, who was arrested and placed on remand Monday, told investigators that he hired Dakat Shahid for Tk 50 lakh to have Ahmed Hossain eliminated as the councillor obstructed Shah Alam from buying an LPG cylinder factory in Hasnabad of Keraniganj. Ahmed Hossain and Nazimuddin are both major shareholders of the factory.
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Shah Alam

Bashundhara Group yesterday refuted the allegation of the group's or Shah Alam's involvement in the killing. "Nazimuddin acts as Shah Alam's muscleman and helps in Bashundhara's real-estate business," said Assistant Commissioner of DB Sanwar Hossain quoting Nazimuddin. Dakat Shahid, now absconding in India, had instructed his cohorts, including Kawsar and Biddyut, to kill Ahmed Hossain. Biddyut and 50 others gunned down Ahmed Hossain on February 9 when he was about to leave a mosque at Alubazar in Old Dhaka after
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**60 lakh Ansar, VDP
men to combat
militancy**

Sahara tells Sangsad
STAFF CORRESPONDENT
The government plans to deploy around 60 lakh Ansar and Village Defence Party (VDP) members countrywide to combat militancy and improve law and order. "On the prime minister's directive, a process is now underway to make rules specifying the duties and jurisdictions of Ansar and VDP," Home Minister Sahara Khatun told the House yesterday in reply to lawmakers' queries. There are 59.42 lakh Ansar and VDP members across the country, she said. Responding to a query, the home minister said the government has also moved to purchase modern equipment including tele-monitoring system with data identification and analysis facilities, and set up a modern DNA laboratory for strengthening investigation and detection of criminals to improve law and order. Purchase of arms and equipment for police is also in process to gear up activities of police.
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**Solar panel
opened at
PM's office**

UNB, Dhaka
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the Solar Panel System at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday morning. Pressing the switch of the solar panel, the PM opened the system installed with capacity of 20.16 kilowatt. A special prayer was also offered on the occasion seeking success of the government
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Notice
The Saturday issue of The Daily Star will contain a 16-page tabloid special supplement titled: "Schools - The Foundation Builders". Make sure your hawkers deliver the supplement along with the main issue.