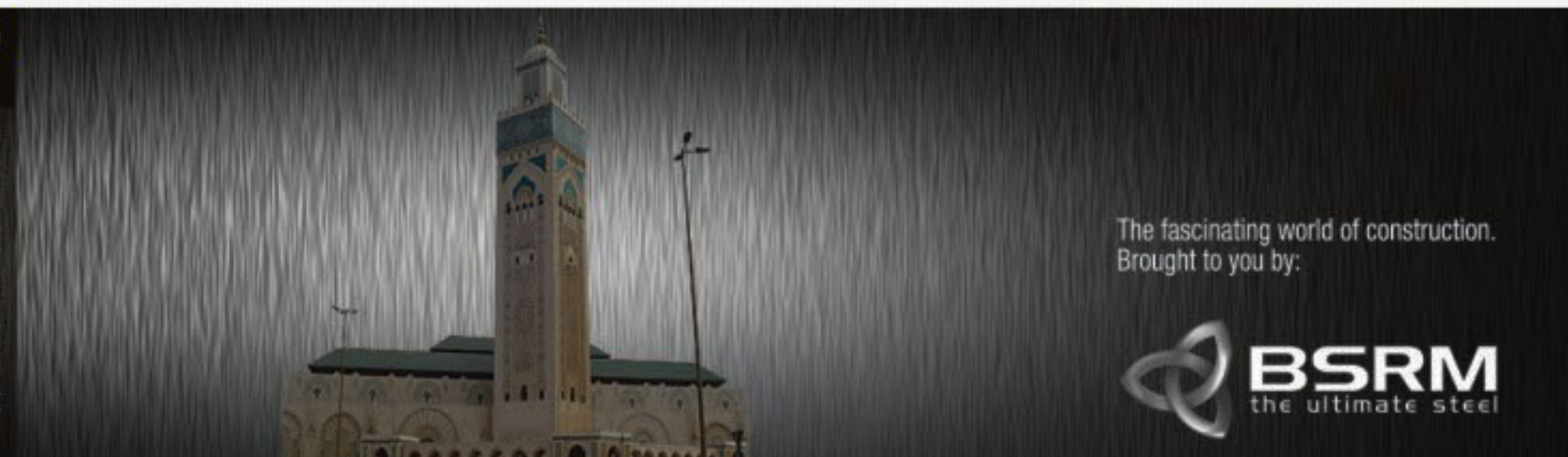


Did you know?

The Hassan II Mosque, located in Casablanca is the largest mosque in Morocco and the third largest mosque in the world. It stands on a promontory looking out to the Atlantic, which can be seen through a gigantic glass floor with room for 25,000 worshippers. A further 80,000 can be accommodated in the mosque's adjoining grounds. Its minaret is the world's tallest at 210 m (689 ft).



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AL plans big to counter BNP programmes

To hold grand rallies at all divisional HQs

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

The ruling Awami League will hold grand rallies at all divisional headquarters to counter BNP's opposition and draw people's attention to the government's success.

Prime Minister and AL President Sheikh Hasina will also exchange views with the grassroots after April 14 to learn about people's hope and aspirations, party men said.

AL presidium member Obaidul Quader said, "Like other years, we will hold the rallies to let people know about the government's short-, mid- and long-term plans to fulfil our electoral pledges and the challenges the government will face in implementing the plans".

The ruling party has come up with the decision after the main opposition BNP started holding grand rallies in divisional headquarters aiming to mobilise people against the government for its failure to tackle crises including power, water and gas across the country.

At the rally in Chittagong, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia asked her party men to get ready

for a movement to oust the government as it failed to rule the country properly.

She will also address another six rallies in other divisional headquarters, sources said.

AL leader Quader said they will organise the grand rallies after the premier's meeting with the grassroots.

The AL chief at the meeting will explain as to how the government is implementing its plans to fulfil the electoral pledges.

Asked about the opposition's similar programmes, the ruling party lawmakers alleged that the opposition has been giving provocative speeches through the programmes, and they will have to handle it politically with patience.

Talking to The Daily Star, AL Organising Secretary Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury said they have a plan to hold the grand rallies soon after their current organisational tour programmes.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina may address those grand rallies and counter Khaleda's speeches, sources said.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3



Firefighters douse smouldering remains after an arson attack on at least 20 business establishments at Loharpool Dhal of Kamrangirchar yesterday. Several other business establishments were looted by the attackers.

PHOTO: STAR

2001 POST-POLL VIOLENCE Probe body starts field visits today

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

The commission formed to probe 2001 post-election violence starts visiting different parts of the country today to gather information and evidence of attacks on minority communities and leaders and workers of the then opposition Awami League across the country.

The three-member investigation commission headed by former district judge Muhammad Sahabuddin will visit during April 10-17 six southern districts--Barisal, Patuakhali, Jhalakathi, Pirojpur, Bagerhat and Gopalganj--where massive violence took place.

Just after winning the October 1, 2001 general elections, party men of the ruling BNP-Jamaat coalition allegedly launched attacks on Hindus and AL leaders and activists at many places.

The commission was formed on December 27 following a High Court directive and it started working formally on February 7.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Woman, son hurt in bomb attack

Attackers earlier realised ransom kidnapping the boy

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of criminals, who realised ransom from a contractor abducting his son, made a bomb attack on his house yesterday injuring the boy and his mother in the capital's Jurain.

The criminals attacked the house of contractor Jahangir Alam at about 1:00pm after locals came to know about the abduction of his 14-year-old son Faisal Ahmed on Thursday.

They looted valuables and escaped the scene exploding two bombs.

Injured Reena Begum and Faisal were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital with severe burn wounds.

Reena said, "Local criminals Sajal, Dipu, Masum, Abu and another unknown person kidnapped my son on Thursday evening while he was returning home. They took him to an abandoned house and made a phone call demanding a ransom of Tk50,000."

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

BSF releases Bangladeshi farmer after torture

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Indian Border Security Force released a Bangladeshi farmer on Thursday evening after torturing him severely at Munshipur border point of Damurhuda upazila in Chuadanga.

According to sources in 35 Rifle Battalion of BDR, Safiqul Islam, 32, son of Yakub Ali of the upazila, was picked up by a BSF team around 12:30pm on Thursday.

Safiqul was working at his paddy field near the main

SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

River erosion to displace thousands

Padma, Jamuna to erode at 38 points this year, forecasts WDB

PINAKI ROY

At least 16,650 people might be displaced in 14 districts by this year due to erosion by the Jamuna and Padma rivers at 38 points stretching over 145 kilometres of riverbank, morphologists have said.

They came up with the forecast in a report "Prediction of riverbank erosion along the Jamuna, Ganges and Padma rivers in 2010" published recently under "Jamuna-Meghna River Erosion Mitigation Project" of Water Development Board.

Analysts from Centre for Environment and Geographic Information System (CEGIS) made the forecast after analysing satellite images of the three rivers.

About 11,510 people might become homeless because of erosion by the Jamuna and 5,040 by the Padma.

Besides, 21 educational offices, two village markets, seven government offices, one non-government office, four health centres are vulnerable to river erosion.

The Jamuna might cause erosion at 26 points and the Padma at 12 points. Laterally, the erosion can be over 100 metres at these points.

The two rivers have eroded 158,780 hectares of land since 1973. But they also accreted 44,210 hectares of land at the same time, said the morphologists.

The rivers are widening every year, they said. Although 38 points were identified as most vulnerable to erosion, other locations might also be at risk where lateral erosion could be limited to 100 metres.

The CEGIS said this year 1,655 hectares of cultivable land, settlements over an area of 632 hectares, embankment covering an area of 1,850 metres and roads stretching up to 7,540 metres might be lost to river erosion.

The CEGIS morphologists have been making predictions on river erosion since 2002.

"Our prediction was proved correct in over 70 percent of cases last year," said CEGIS Executive Director Dr Giasuddin.

The CEGIS last year predicted that the Jamuna would cause erosion at 24 points and the Padma at 16 points.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

RU DORMITORY Probe body formed over BCL rampage

A RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University (RU) authorities yesterday formed a three-member committee to investigate the incident of attacks on university proctor, Shaheed Samsuzzoha hall provost and others.

The committee headed by Suhrawardy Hall provost Prof Faruque has been asked to

SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

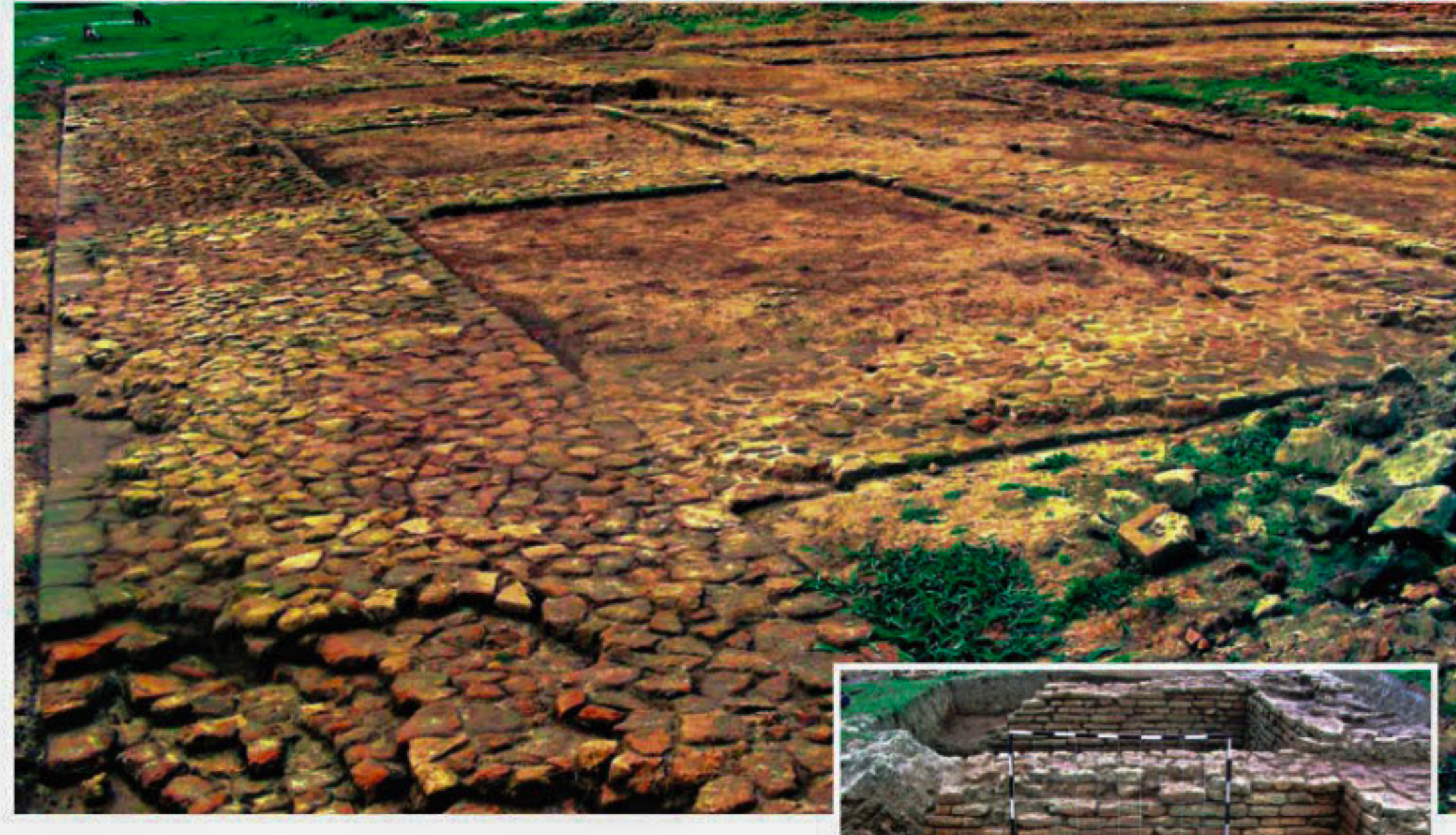
Housewife murdered Her actress daughter hurt in attack

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The mother of a film actress was killed and actress Lata severely injured in an attack by Lata's ex-husband and his associates on Thursday night in Savar.

Injured actress Sanjida Islam Lata, 22, was undergoing treatment at Enam Medical College Hospital in Savar with severe head and leg injuries.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 2



The western wing of the first excavated ancient Buddhist monastery in Nawabganj of Dinajpur by the Department of Archaeology at Jahangirnagar University. Cells of the second monastery, inset, of the same period, excavated by the same team of archaeologists in a nearby area.

PHOTO: STAR

Relics found in Dinajpur date back to 10th century

Say archaeologists

HASIBUR RAHMAN BILU, Bogra

Archaeologists of Jahangirnagar University have postulated that the recently excavated remains and relics of three Buddhist monasteries at Nawabganj in Dinajpur district are of 10th-11th centuries AD.

Director of the excavation team Ecological Archaeology Group Asst Prof Swadhin Sen of JU believes that the monasteries belong to the Pala dynasty when the region -- Rajshahi, Bogra, Pabna and Dinajpur (both in India and Bangladesh) -- was known as Varendra.

SEE PAGE 5 COL 5

Mother, baby girl crushed under train

UNB, Gazipur

A young mother and her baby girl were crushed under the wheels of a train at Bhanara in Kaliakoir upazila yesterday.

Police and witnesses said the Khulna-bound Sundarban Express Train from Dhaka hit the two while they were crossing the rail track around 9:00am, killing them on the spot.

The identities of the deceased could not be known immediately. Police recovered the bodies and sent those to hospital morgue for autopsies.

Thai protesters storm closed TV station

Police use water cannons, tear gas to disperse them

AP, Bangkok

Thai anti-government protesters stormed yesterday into a telecom company compound where authorities had shut down their vital TV channel, as soldiers and riot police tried to hold them back with tear gas and water cannons.

It was the first use of force by the government in month long protests aimed at ousting Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva and forcing new elections. Meanwhile, the Criminal Court said it had issued arrest warrants for three top protest leaders.

The "Red Shirt" protesters had threatened to

charge into the building if a senior military commander didn't come out to negotiate with them to restore their People Channel, or PTV.

Hurling rocks, the protesters broke the barbed-wire perimeter of the Thaicom Public Co Ltd within minutes, though they were not immediately able to enter the main building. As they moved into the compound, security forces threw tear gas canisters and fired water cannons but then quickly retreated into the main building as thousands of protesters swarmed around it.

Some security forces were seen throwing

SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

OnlinePoll

Do you think if DCC poll is held next month, it may go against the ruling Awami League following the ongoing power, water and gas crises?

Yes (72.6%)
 No (26.03%)
 No Comments (1.37%)

Total votes: 937

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think the government steps for urgent power will improve the situation?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net

বিদ্যুৎ সংক্রান্ত জরুরি বিজ্ঞপ্তি

- দেশব্যাপী লোডশেডিং-এর মাত্রা লাঘবের উদ্দেশ্যে এবং এইচএসসি পরীক্ষার্থী ও কৃষকদের সেচের কথা বিবেচনা করে জনসাধারণকে বিদ্যুৎ ব্যবহারের ক্ষেত্রে সশরীয় হওয়ার অনুরোধ জানানো যাচ্ছে।
- এছাড়া সকল প্রকার দোকান-পাট, শপিং মল ও বাণিজ্যিক প্রতিষ্ঠানকে সন্ধ্যা ৭টার পর জাতীয় গ্রীডের বিদ্যুৎ ব্যবহার না করার জন্য আহ্বান জানানো যাচ্ছে।
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বিদ্যুৎ বিভাগ

বিদ্যুৎ/জন-১৪১৮(৮)/৯-৪-১০

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