

Did you know?

The Leaning Tower of Pisa in Italy, 55.86m (83.27ft) high, began leaning to the southeast soon after construction started in 1173 due to a poorly laid foundation and loose substrate that had allowed the foundation to shift direction. Following recent restoration to stop it from completely toppling over, it currently leans at a steady tilt of 3.97 degrees.



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BNP steps up efforts to save war criminals

Alleges 14-party
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Opposition BNP has stepped up efforts to protect the war criminals after the arrest of its standing committee member **Sa lauddin Quader Chowdhury**, the ruling Awami League-led 14-party alliance yesterday alleged.

Meeting at the AL president's political office in Dhanmondi, the combine also refuted BNP's claim that the government is out to destroy the opposition in the name of war crimes trial.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 3

Rab arrests 3 suspects of acid attack

3 siblings being treated at DMCH
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion picked up three teenagers from Hazaribagh area of the capital on Thursday night on charge of throwing acid the night before on Jatra actress **Parul Akhter Keya** and her two siblings.

The arrestees are **Nurunnabi**, **Ramjan Hossain**, and **Robin Hossain**, all of whom are 18 years old.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 2

JAN 27 BY-POLLS AL to finalise candidates today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League Parliamentary Board (ALPB) sits today to finalise candidates for the January 27 by-elections in **Habiganj-1** and **Brahmanbaria-3** constituencies.

The meeting will be held at Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's official residence **Gono Bhaban** at 6:00pm. Hasina will chair the meeting as head of the board.

The constituencies fell vacant following the deaths of lawmakers **Dewan Farid Gazi** (**Habiganj-1**) and **Lutful Hai Sachchu** (**Brahmanbaria-3**) last month.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 5



Christian nuns adorn the altar at Tejgaon Holly Rosary Church ahead of Christmas Eve carnival yesterday. Christians around the world celebrate their biggest religious festival today. The day commemorates the birth of Jesus Christ and symbolises rebirth and a new beginning.

PHOTO: STAR

MUNICIPAL POLLS CANDIDATES

BNP struggles to contain conflicts

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

Jamaat-e-Islami has demanded its ally BNP leave them more than 30 municipalities to go into the next month's polls while the main opposition thinks its own candidates will do better in those seats.

BNP staggers to the new crisis when it is still busy resolving internal conflicts in more than 100 constituencies over selecting candidates.

Talking to The Daily Star, a number of influential leaders of BNP termed Jamaat's demand impractical.

"I heard they [Jamaat] claimed a municipality in my area too, but I won't compromise as

we have to win the polls," said **Ruhul Quddus Talukder Dulu**, a former deputy minister, yesterday.

During a meeting with BNP leaders on Wednesday, Jamaat placed a list of candidates for more than 30 municipalities.

Jamaat leaders, however, refused to make any comment.

BNP insiders said the central and divisional leaders already finalised mayoral candidates for at least 150 municipalities.

The polls will be held on January 12, 13, 17 and 18 in more than 250 of 310 municipalities.

Dulu also said their candidates for 52

SEE PAGE 19 COL 6

PATURIA-DAULATDIA ROUTE

Poor condition of ferries disrupts services badly

ZAHANGIR SHAH, Manikganj

Dilapidated condition of ferries at Paturia-Daulatdia launch terminal is taking a heavy toll on passengers using Dhaka-Aricha highway. Due to the shortage of ferries, vehicles on both sides of Padma River remain stranded for hours almost every day.

Ashraf Ullah Khan, manager of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Corporation (BIWTC), said eight ferries are operating on Paturia-Daulatdia route at the moment. "We need at least six more to meet the present need," he said.

Condition of most of these ferries is "very bad," says **Subal Sarkar**, assistant engineer of BIWTC.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 6

Bangabandhu airport land acquisition begins

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

Dhaka and Munshiganj district administration started the process of acquiring 25,000 acres of land of **Arrial Beel**, a wetland, to build the **Bangabandhu International Airport**.

Around 10,895 acres of the wetland is in **Sreenagar upazila** of **Munshiganj**, 7,017 acres in **Nababganj** and 7,188 acres in **Dohar upazilas** of **Dhaka**.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 8

Cheated, then denied justice

Ministry sits idle for 3 months despite HR Commission's directive to compensate cheated worker

PORIMOL PALMA

The expatriates' welfare ministry has kept ignoring for three months the National Human Rights Commission's (NHRC) instructions to redress agencies of a cheated migrant worker, who has been denied justice for over two years.

Mohammad Tahaj, 42, of **Manikganj** went to Malaysia through recruiting agency **Al-Abbas International** in mid-2007 spending Tk 2.35 lakh. But he was not provided with a job. The agents there finally gave him a job but he was never paid for the work he did.

Subsequently, after 14 months of stay abroad he returned home and

complained to the Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) in September 2008. But the BMET has so far failed to arrange any compensation for him from the agency.

Tahaj also complained to the NHRC. The commission sent three letters -- the first one on August 4 this year, the second on September 23 and the third on October 31 -- to the secretary of the ministry asking it to arrange compensation for him and inform about it to the NHRC.

Referring to the returnee worker from Malaysia, the NHRC said, "The commission considers the complaint a violation of human rights, as the order

of the ministry to compensate the worker has not been implemented for a long time."

Although the BMET's findings about the complaint were in favour of **Tahaj**, the ministry failed to exact any compensation from **Al-Abbas International**. The ministry also never bothered to communicate with the NHRC.

Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment Ministry Secretary **Dr Zafar Ahmed Khan** said he could not remember if he had received any letters from the NHRC.

NHRC Secretary **Shamsuzzaman Bhuiyan** told The Daily Star on Sunday

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

BSF kills Bangladeshi cattle trader

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Lalmonirhat

A Bangladeshi was shot dead by Indian Border Security Force (BSF) along **Doikhawa** border at **Hatibandha upazila** in **Lalmonirhat** early yesterday.

The victim, **Saikur Rahman**, 21, son of **Golam Mohammad** of **Uttar Gotamari village** of the upazila, was a cattle trader.

The man died on the spot as BSF men fired three bullets at him around 5:45am. The body was taken into the Indian territory, said **Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB)** **Doikhawa camp**.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 7

OnlinePoll ✓

Do you think the advancement of Bangladesh in the Economist Intelligence Unit's Index of Democracy 2010 reflects the reality?

☐ Yes (47.1%) ☐ No (12.9%)
☐ No Comments

Total votes: 560
TODAY'S POLL

Do you agree with the parliamentary standing committee on communications ministry that Communications Minister **Syed Abul Hossain** should have resigned following the **Sirajganj train accident**?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net

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The bus loaded with 60 people and going to a picnic spot turned turtle in a ditch at **Rustampur near Ashulia** on the outskirts of the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

3 killed as picnic bus overturns

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A bus crash killed three people of a party going on a picnic and injured 15 others at **Rustampur** of **Pallabi** in the capital yesterday.

The deceased were identified as **Imtiaz Ahmed Sumin**, 26, **Mahfuzul Haq**, 26 and conductor of the bus **Al Amin**, 22.

Of the 15 injured, five were rushed to **Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH)** and others received treatment at local clinics, **Sub-Inspector Russel Kabir** of **Pallabi Police Station** said.

The bus was heading towards a picnic spot at **Shafipur Ansar Camp** in **Gazipur**, the SI said.

Injured **Mohammad Hossain** told reporters at **DMCH** that the driver lost control of the bus in trying to avoid a head-on collision with

SEE PAGE 19 COL 2

Prayer Timing		
December 25		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-25	6-00
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	3-45	4-00
Maghrib	5-24	5-27
Esha	7-00	7-30

Source: Islamic Foundation

35 killed as Taliban fight Pak troops

BBC ONLINE

At least 11 soldiers and 24 militants have been killed in clashes near the Afghan border in north-west Pakistan, officials have said.

About 150 Taliban launched co-ordinated attacks against five Frontier Corps checkpoints in **Mohmand tribal region**, they said.

The Taliban said only two of their fighters

had died.

The military has launched offensives in the region in recent months, but insurgent attacks have continued.

Amjad Ali Khan, administrator of **Mohmand**, confirmed that 11 soldiers had been killed following initial reports that three had died. He said 12 other soldiers had been injured.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 7