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NEWS flakes

Hillary calls Hasina, lauds her role against extremism

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has praised Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her stance against terrorism and militancy.

In a 15-minute telephone talk last night, she also

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JP got nothing out of grand alliance

Says Ershad

UNB, Manikganj

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad yesterday said his party got nothing out of joining the grand alliance.

"We got only 32

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# Ode to a fighter

Ranjit turns teacher at school, labourer at farmland to make a living

EAM ASADUZZAMAN, Nilphamari

Some school kids, on their way home, suddenly stopped their bicycles by a paddy field. They got down as if they have seen something terrifying. But no, with utmost respect, they saluted a man carrying loads of Aman on his shoulder from the field.

Mystified, this correspondent asked the students who the man was.

"He is our Ranjit sir, our favourite English teacher," they said, in one voice.

But Ranjit Kumar, a senior teacher of Berakuthi Barua Dakhil Madrasa of Sonarai union under Sadar upazila of Dinajpur, could hardly be distinguished from the other labourers on the field--he looked as dusty and as pale as any of them.

Not that he has taken up this job willingly. Ranjit has a "sore need".

"I get no money from the madrasa. So I've been working as a labourer for last few years to feed my two children and wife," he told The Daily Star by the field.



Ranjit, on the left, carrying the harvest of someone else's field as a labourer. This he needs to do to support his family. Inset, Same Ranjit teaching English at Berakuthi Barua Dakhil Madrasa for free since it cannot pay him any wages.

PHOTO: STAR

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## Little cheer for ADP

Only 27pc utilised in first half of this fiscal

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Although the government took notably huge development task in the last budget, it could only utilise a disappointing 27 percent of the total outlay in the Annual Development Programme (ADP) in the first half of the current fiscal.

The government laid out an ADP of Tk 38,500 crore to implement 916 projects, many of which include large-scale work like the Padma bridge construction. This ADP outlay is more than one-third higher than that of the previous year.

While such ambitious ADP needed sharp implementation pace, the government could spend only Tk 10,292 crore. This may look good compared to the last fiscal's first half spending of Tk 8,811 crore. But that spending was actually 29 percent of the last fiscal's ADP.

One of the reasons for the poor implementation is poor utilisation of foreign aid. According to the Implementation,

Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED), use of foreign aid fell by 23 percent.

The poor utilisation is primarily attributed to complications arising out of tenders for projects like the Padma bridge or some major work in road, railway and health sectors that are largely dependent on foreign aid.

However, the IMED notes that utilisation of local resources has increased by 44 percent.

A planning ministry official says this is the first time in recent years that the use of foreign aid did not increase; rather it fell.

The Economic Relations Department (ERD) has sent letters to different ministries seeking information about the cause of the low utilisation of foreign aid, officials say.

The government plans to cut about Tk 3,000 crore foreign fund due to poor utilisation of project aid, an ERD official informs.

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## New CNG fare from today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

New fare for the four-stroke CNG-run auto-rickshaw comes into effect today. The lowest fare has been set at Tk 25.

As per the revised fare, commuters will have to pay Tk 25 instead of current Tk 14 for the first two kilometres (km). Also, the charge for each subsequent km will be Tk 7 instead of Tk 6 and the waiting charge per minute will be Tk 1.25 instead of Tk 1.

The new fare has been agreed upon in a tripartite agreement signed on Jan 9 between the government, CNG Auto-rickshaw

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## Another killed in 'shootout'

Cops claim of gunfight with gang of muggers, family refutes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged mugger was killed and another injured in a "shootout" between their gang and police in the city's West Rampura early yesterday.

Bullet-hit "snatchers" Shyamol Bepari, 25, and Mohammad Asif Anik, 20, were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where Shyamol died around 8:00am. Later Anik was shifted to National Institute of Traumatology, Orthopaedics and Rehabilitation (Pongu Hospital) around noon.

Police sent the dead body to DMCH morgue for an autopsy.

The two were involved in various crimes, including snatching and extortion, claimed law enforcers.

A police patrol challenged the gang when they gathered at Balurmath around 2:00am, said Shwadhin

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## Better gas supply in week

Govt served with legal notice

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A legal notice was served yesterday on the government asking it to take necessary steps within seven days to ensure sufficient supply of gas for households in the capital and to control the price of liquid petroleum (LP) gas cylinder.

The notice also asked the authorities to take steps to set up a compressor at Bhairab's Ashuganj point in order to increase pressure by supplying more gas from different gas fields of Bakhrabad, Titas and all the fields in

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Fathimath Dhiyana Saeed

## Saarc to get first woman secy gen

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) is set to get a woman secretary general, for the first time since its inception 25 years ago.

The Saarc Secretariat in

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ONLINE POLL

Do you think BNP's win in the municipal polls in North Bengal shows it is regaining strength at the grassroots level?

Yes (72.0%)  
No (27.0%)  
No Comments (1.0%)  
TOTAL VOTES : 2133

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think the law and order situation in the capital will improve now as the home minister has finally voiced concern about the situation following the killing of 2 Awami League leaders in 6 days?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT www.thedailystar.net

PRAYER TIMING January 16

Azan	Jamaat
Fajr 5:30	6:05
Zohr 12:45	1:15
Asr 4:00	4:15
Maghrib 5:36	5:40
Esha 7:00	7:30



Shameem Ara Nipa, Shibli Mohammad and co-artistes perform during the Classical Night arranged at Shilpakala Academy yesterday on the 20th anniversary of The Daily Star.

PHOTO: SHAWKAT JAMIL



## The Daily Star

A classical night with Star

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A large audience was enthralled by performances of famed artistes at the classical night organised by The Daily Star yesterday as part of the celebration of its 20th founding anniversary.

The Daily Star started its journey on January 14, 1991 with a promise to

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ANOTHER PHOTO ON PAGE 5

## Stampede kills over 100 at Indian festival

AFP, Idduki

More than 100 Hindu devotees were killed after a road accident triggered a stampede among thousands of pilgrims returning from an Indian religious festival, officials said yesterday.

The Friday evening tragedy unfolded in a remote, mountainous area of southern Kerala as pilgrims made their way home from an annual ceremony at the hill shrine of Sabarimala that draws three to four million people each year.

Kerala Home Secretary Jaya Kumar told AFP that 104 people had been confirmed dead and dozens more injured, some of them seriously. The state government ordered a judicial probe into the incident.

Police officials said a jeep had lost control and ploughed into a crowd of devotees packed onto a narrow road in a hilly and densely forested area 10 kilometres (six miles) from the shrine.

"The accident caused a mass panic and triggered a stampede on the hillside," said Special Police Commissioner Rajendra Nair.

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PHOTO ON PAGE 6



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