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WRITERS' WOES

How authors are deprived of their fair share at Ekushey Boi Mela

READ THE STAR

POLICY TALK

Manzoor Ahmed discusses shortcomings of the new education policy

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THE CUP ARRIVES

Cricket's biggest prize toured the streets of Dhaka yesterday

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Food spend shoots up

Govt expenditure to rise by 42pc as world prices reach record high

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and SOHEL PARVEZ

The government expenditure for procuring food is set to shoot up by 42 percent or Tk 3,078 crore in the current fiscal year, as it moves to buy grains from the heated world market that saw a historic peak in food prices.

The government turned to the global market since its bid to procure desired quantity of rice from the domestic market did not succeed.

The move comes at a time when the Food Price Index, prepared by the FAO and released yesterday, shows a "historic high" in January, creating concerns that low-income food deficit countries may face problems in financing food imports, and for poor households which spend a large share of their income on food.

In Bangladesh, price of rice increased in January reaching a new record of Tk 36 per kg, about 33 percent higher than a year ago, said FAO.

Officials said one of the reasons behind the government turning to the global market is not to affect the domestic market of rice, which now sees a record price in the city market, influenced by high prices of grains on the international market.

"We hope the finance ministry will allocate additional amount. But the projected cost (of food import) may be lower as there are signs of fall in prices of rice on the world

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Taher's fate fixed before trial

Lifschultz in his statement to HC says Zia personally took the decision to hang Taher

ASHUTOSH SARKAR

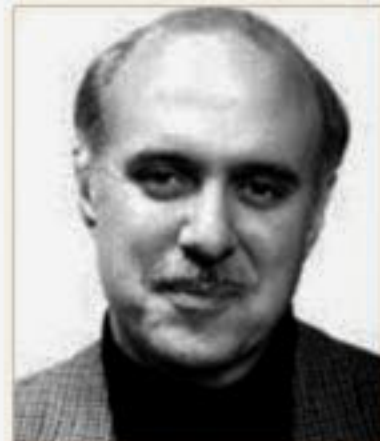
US journalist and writer Lawrence Lifschultz in a statement to the High Court yesterday said

Gen Ziaur Rahman made the decision of Col Abu Taher's execution before the formation of the military tribunal that sentenced Taher to death.

Gen Manzoor, then high-ranking military officer, knew with absolute certainty that Zia had decided to have Taher hanged before the "so-



Col Abu Taher



Lawrence Lifschultz

called trial" began, Lifschultz said in the statement.

"Subsequently, this fact was also confirmed to me by two high-ranking military officers, who were

close to Zia at that time," he said.

The Pulitzer Prize winner, who had covered the trial of Col Abu Taher in 1976, emailed the statement on February 2 to the attorney general's office that submitted it to the HC yesterday.

Additional Attorney General MK Rahman read out the statement before the bench of justices AHM Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik and Sheikh Md Zakir Hossain. The bench is hearing a writ petition that

SEE PAGE 7 COL 3

Airport on other side of Padma

PM says govt bows to wishes of Khaleda, a section of people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said the government is looking for a new site for the proposed Bangabandhu International Airport and possibly it will be on the other side of the Padma.

Addressing a press conference at the Gono Bhaban yesterday, she said the site will be finalised after a feasibility study.

The decision was made to respect the demand of the opposition leader as well as a section of Munshiganj people who feared they would be affected if the airport is built on Arial Beel, Hasina said.



SEE PAGE 19 COL 6

'GENIE' STORY

Our reply to rejoinder

On February 2 we published the Ministry of Environment and Forests' rejoinder in its entirety. Normally we only reproduce relevant parts of a rejoinder. However, we made an exception due to the seriousness of the issue at hand. This was to

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COMMENTARY

A wise step back

Leadership is just as much about moving forward as it is about responding to criticisms

MAHFUZ ANAM

We congratulate Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her wisdom of bowing to public demand in removing the new airport site from Arial Beel area. Given our political culture, leaders often fall prey to their misplaced ego, and consider any criticism of their decision and change of course of any action taken by them to be insulting and a sign of weakness. In fact sycophants are known to feed on such ego-traps and advise their leaders NOT to bow to legitimate criticisms, saying that such a change of course will be interpreted as loss of power leading to all sorts of political repercussions. We had seen that happen too many times in the past and, frankly, we were afraid that the present PM would also fall into such a trap.

Much to her credit and as a refreshing departure from such mindless and self defeating practice, Sheikh Hasina

SEE PAGE 7 COL 1



False promise before Jinnah arrived

SYED BADRUL AHSAN

The East Bengal Legislative Assembly was expected to meet for the first time since the creation of Pakistan on March 15, 1948 in Dhaka. On the eve of the session, a large number of students organised a demonstration before Burdwan House (today's Bangla Academy), the official residence of the chief minister of the province,

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MONDAY'S HARTAL

Khaleda seeks support from 4-party allies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia sought support from the four-party alliance partners and like-minded parties to make Monday's hartal successful.

Meanwhile, the alliance partners stressed the need for a coordinated anti-government movement.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 3

Munshiganj still tense

Arial Beel protection committee leader held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tension was running high among the villagers in Arial Beel area in Munshiganj yesterday despite the prime minister's announcement of not constructing an airport there.

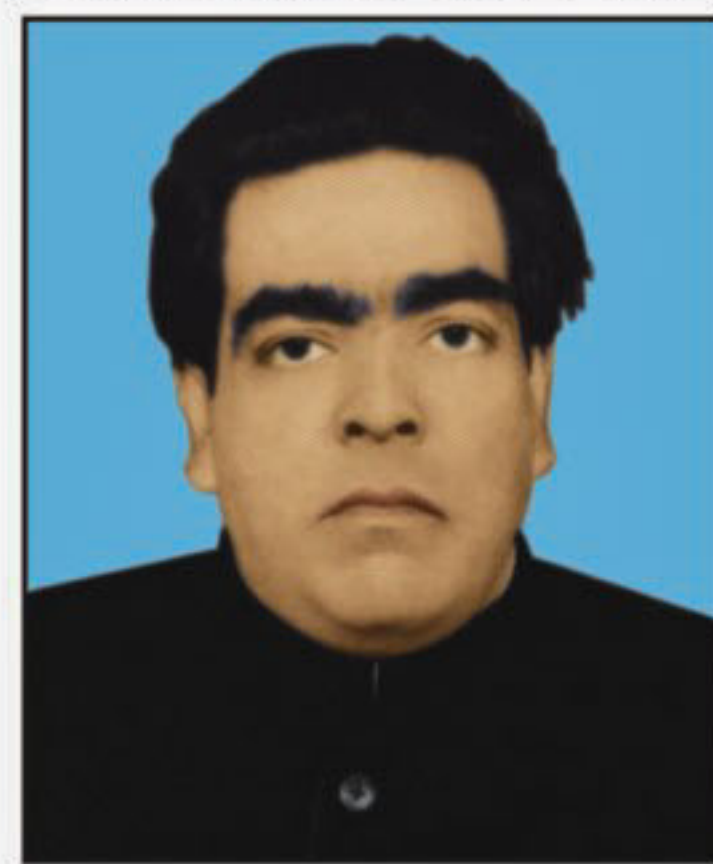
Police tried in vain to enter different villages on Wednesday night as the villagers put barricade on their way, said member secretary of Arial Beel Raksha Committee.

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33rd Death Anniversary

(Abul Company) The founder of Abul Khair Group noted industrialist and social worker

Late Janab ABUL KHAIR



Death: 4th February, 1978

In accordance with the will of Almighty Allah the Beneficent, you left this mundane world, leaving us and many of your relations overwhelmed by grief. In our everyday life your bright ideals serve as beacon. You are immortal in your death. We pray to Almighty Allah for the salvation of your departed soul.

May Allah the Beneficent bless you with the eternal bliss of paradise. Ameen.

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Sons, Daughters and Relatives.

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