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INDO-PAK-AFGHAN TIES

Amity is a must for progress of all three

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EXPORTS DOWNBEAT

Exports were slowest last month since January

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MOST POWERFUL ARTIST

Dissident Chinese Ai Weiwei named the world's most powerful art figure

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Bangladesh recognises Libya NTC

Pledges to back reconstruction process

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh yesterday accorded its official recognition to the National Transitional Council as the interim authority of Libya.

The Bangladesh embassy in Tripoli conveyed the recognition to the Libyan authorities through a note verbale, a foreign ministry spokesman told The Daily Star. Bangladesh believes that only the people of Libya can decide its future. Hence, it stands ready to support Libya's reconstruction process for a brighter future and a stronger bond.

NTC is a political body formed during the recent Libyan conflict to represent the anti-Gaddafi forces. Its formation was announced in the city of Benghazi on February 27, 2011 with a purpose to act as the political face of the revolution.

AL votes for Osman

Turns its back on 'clean image' aspirant for Narayanganj city polls

HASAN JAHI TUSHER and RAKIB AHAMMED

Putting an end to the weeks-long drama and confusion, the Awami League has finally decided to stand behind Shamim Osman in his bid for the office of mayor in the Narayanganj City Corporation election late this month.

"The Awami League high command



has decided to support Shamim Osman in the polls, and we have conveyed the message to him," Khalid Mahmud Chowdhury, an organising secretary of the ruling party, told The Daily Star last night.

Khalid, along with two other organising secretaries --

Ahmed Hossain and Abu Sayeed Al

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Padma Bridge project clean

Declares Muhith before graft probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Even before any investigation, Finance Minister AMA Muhith has brushed aside the World Bank's allegations of corruption in the bidding process for the Padma Bridge project.

The allegations are "frivolous", Muhith said while talking to journalists in front of

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Rejoinder, our reply

General Manager (Admin and Corp.) of CLC Power Company Ltd Mohammad Anwar Hossain, on behalf of the company's Managing Director and member of parliament (MP) Aslamul Haq contested a news item published in this paper on October 5 under the headline "Lawmaker the 'Land-gobbler'" and said the news item was based on unfounded information.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 8

Everybody is extortionist

Workers' leaders reveal details of outrageous graft in transport sector; JS body terms disclosure tip of corruption iceberg



PARTIAL EXTORTION SCENARIO

Federation	Extortion per trip (Welfare Fund)	Yearly collection (approx)	Number of vehicles
Sarak Paribahan Sramik	Tk 70 to Tk 130	Tk 51cr	2 lakh (approx)
Biplobi Sarak Paribahan Sramik	Tk 30 to Tk 60	Tk 43.1cr	40,000 (approx)
Tank Lorry Sramik	Tk 30 to Tk 60	Tk 17cr	16,000 (approx)

RASHIDUL HASAN

Transport workers' leaders yesterday described to a parliamentary sub-committee how they run an extortion regime in league with a section of policemen and politicians, and a minister.

Attending a meeting of the sub-committee at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, they also observed that extortion in the transport sector cannot be stopped unless the crooked police officials and political leaders are held back.

The parliamentary standing committee on the labour and employment ministry formed the three-member sub-committee on October

24 last year to find ways to check corruption in the transport sector.

Though all 15 workers' federations were invited, representatives of only four--Biplobi Sarak Paribahan Sramik Federation, Tank Lorry Sramik Federation, Sanjukta Truck Bondobostokari Sramik Federation and Taxicab-Microbus Chalok-Sramik Federation--attended yesterday's meeting.

The transport leaders said Bangladesh Sarak Paribahan Sramik Federation, which is headed by Shipping Minister Shajahan Khan, takes the largest slice of the extortion pie. It collects at least Tk 51 crore a year in the name of raising funds for workers' welfare, Israfil Alam, chief of

the sub-committee, told reporters after the meeting.

"This account is only the tip of the iceberg. We could not yet get the whole picture, as extortion in the transport sector is carried out in numerous ways," Israfil said.

"All the organisations related to workers and owners are involved in extortion, contributing to a rise in transport fares by 40 to 200 percent," he added.

The spike in fare in turn pushes the prices of essentials, in particular vegetables, noted Israfil, a ruling Awami League lawmaker.

According to the sub-committee, more than 23 lakh workers are

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US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton speaks to the media after her meeting with Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dipu Moni at the Department of State in Washington Wednesday.

PHOTO: AFP



Amnesty for arrest of Bush

AFP, Ottawa

Amnesty International called on Canadian authorities Wednesday to arrest and prosecute George W Bush, saying the former US president authorised "torture" when he directed the US-led war on terror.

Bush is expected to attend an economic

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Let Grameen Bank work productively

Hillary conveys US concern over Yunus removal; urges Dhaka to ensure press freedom, scope for NGOs

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

At her first meeting with Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dipu Moni in two years, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has conveyed her country's concern over the Nobel Prize-winning Grameen Bank and the removal of its reputed managing director Prof Muhammad Yunus.

In remarks before the meeting formally got under way on Wednesday at the State Department in Washington, Clinton urged that the Grameen Bank be allowed to work productively on behalf of the people of Bangladesh, according to a press release of the State Department.

"And, of course, we have expressed directly to the government our concern and hope that the Grameen Bank, which was well recognised by the world, particularly with the Nobel Prize for what it's

done to help alleviate poverty, is able to continue to function productively on behalf of the people of Bangladesh," said Mrs. Clinton.

Yunus' removal from the Grameen Bank he had founded to raise the quality of life of Bangladesh's poor sparked criticism at home and abroad. The government defended its action by saying that Yunus had been fired for violating the country's retirement rules.

The US secretary of state also urged the Bangladesh government to ensure that media outlets were able to exercise freedom and that NGOs had the opportunity to be a vibrant contributor to the future of Bangladesh.

In her response, according to the State Department press release, Dipu Moni said

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