



## REALM OF NOTES AND TAANS

Two-day Hindustani Classical Music Festival begins at Chhayanaut in the capital

PAGE 10



## METAL ART

Story of a craft and craftsmen with a very long and glorious history

PAGE 2

## SUU KYI MOVES FORWARD

She registers her party and makes first visit to the parliament

PAGE 7

# Textbooks to reach students on time

*Early start of work makes the process easy*

WASIM BIN HABIB

With eight days left for free distribution to get underway, almost all the textbooks for primary and secondary students have already reached the upazilas.

Around 97 percent of more than 10.35 crore primary and 98 percent of some 11.78 crore secondary levels textbooks have been printed and sent to the upazilas till yesterday, National Curriculum and Textbook Board statistics show.

Last year, the government sent only 83 percent primary and 95 percent secondary books to upazilas at this point of time.

"This is the third time we are doing the job and we are confident that we



will do it on time despite many challenges," Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid told The Daily Star yesterday.

He said that beginning the task earlier as also past experience had helped the authorities in improving

SEE PAGE 19 COL 8

ACC quizzes Abul over Padma graft  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Corruption Commission officials said investigation into the alleged corruption in Padma bridge project would continue even though former communications minister Syed Abul Hossain denied irregularities in the project's bidding process.

Two separate teams of the ACC—one investigating the project's main bridge construction component and the other the appointment of a supervising firm to oversee the construction—quizzed Abul at his Gulshan home for about an hour on Tuesday.

The officials also recorded statements of

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

## Suicide bombers kill 40 in Syria

*Security service bases attacked*

AFP, Damascus

Suicide bombers hit two security service bases in Damascus yesterday, killing 40 people and casting a pall over the first day of work of an Arab observer mission intended to oversee an end to nine months of bloodshed.

The bombings, which officials blamed on Al-Qaeda, were the first attacks against Syria's powerful security services in the heart of the capital since the uprising began and overshadowed new protests against President Bashar al-Assad's regime.

"The new toll for the two attacks today is established at 40 dead and 150 injured", foreign ministry spokesman Jihad Makdissi told AFP.

One bomber tried to ram a vehicle packed with explosives into the compound of the General Security Directorate, Syria's most important plain-clothes security service, in the Kfar Suseh neighbourhood of Damascus, witnesses said.

A second blew up a vehicle outside a nearby military intelligence building.

State television showed pictures of a huge crater at one of the bomb sites and pools of blood on surrounding

SEE PAGE 19 COL 5

## BNP protests fresh power price hike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is "torturing" the people by increasing prices of electricity, fuel and daily commodities, BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said yesterday.

"People have already been going through crisis since the government took office. Amid this, the recent hike in electricity

SEE PAGE 19 COL 1

## Announcement

Today's issue of The Daily Star contains a four-page supplement on a roundtable titled "Better infrastructure for future living" jointly organised by KSRM and The Daily Star on October 22, 2011.

## Abdur Razzak passes away



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Veteran Awami League leader Abdur Razzak, one of the key organisers of Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971, breathed his last at a London hospital yesterday, thus bringing a 50-year illustrious career in politics to a close. He was 69.

Razzak, who was considered a "living history" of the birth of Bangladesh, was suffering from kidney and liver ailments and had been undergoing treatment at King's College Hospital in London since September.

He had been kept on life support for three days before the end came. Doctors withdrew his life support yesterday when it became clear that there

SEE PAGE 19 COL 2

CONDOLENCES ON PAGE 2

## NEWS ANALYSIS

### Does president have power to appoint CEC, EC members?

SHAKHAWAT LITON

While commencing a dialogue with political parties on Thursday at Bangabhaban, President Zillur Rahman in his written speech stated: "You are perhaps also aware that the constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh in article 118 dealing with formation of the Election Commission, empowers the president to appoint the chief election commissioner and other election commissioners." [Translated from original Bangla -- আপনারা হয়ত এও অবগত আছেন, গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাহ্যিক সর্বিধানের ১১৮ অনুচ্ছেদে নির্বাচন কমিশন গঠন অর্থাৎ প্রধান নির্বাচন কমিশনার ও অন্যান্য নির্বাচন কমিশনার নিয়োগ করার জন্য রাষ্ট্রপতিকে ক্ষমতা প্রদান করা হয়েছে।]

He further stated that he wants to take a decision on this matter upon holding discussions with the leaders of

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

## AL's PICK FOR COMILLA CITY POLLS

### Intra-party conflict major challenge

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN, from Comilla

Long-lasting internal conflicts within the local Awami League and its dissidents have posed a serious challenge to party favourite Afzal Khan's prospects of winning the mayoral race in the maiden Comilla City Corporation polls on January 5.

Also, confusion reigns over the role of a few local AL lawmakers in Afzal's polls campaign. Many AL activists and voters believe that his fate will largely depend on the lawmakers' stance.

However, Afzal's main contender

Monirul Hoque Sakku is enjoying widespread support from the leaders of the main opposition BNP, though he quit the party on December 7.

Several local BNP leaders insisted that Sakku, former joint secretary general of Comilla (south) BNP, had resigned from the party in consultation with the party high-ups.

Earlier, BNP decided not to back any candidate in the polls as the Election Commission declared to introduce electronic voting machines in all polling centres.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 2

## Checking dropouts in a unique way

*Children's parks set up in primary schools in Patuakhali*

SOHRAB HOSSAIN, Patuakhali

Baufal upazila parishad has taken an innovative approach to help bring down dropouts in government primary schools. It is setting up children's parks in schools and constructing roads to give students easy access to schools.

Encouraged by cent percent pass rate in last year's class-V terminal examinations in the upazila in Patuakhali, the parishad set up children's parks in 60 of 122 primary schools there to draw students. Construction of 50 more is underway.

It also paved 25 roads for easy access to schools for students from nearby areas. About 65 more are under construction.

Urmee, a student of class-IV at Madanpura Government Primary School, said she could not attend school in the rainy season last year for

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4



Children on the slide of the Nawmala Primary School park in Patuakhali. The park was built as part of the district-wide move to encourage children to stay in school. However, Fatima, inset, dropped out and she now helps her father fish near Panpatti Launch Terminal in Galachipa upazila.

PHOTO: STAR

KILLING SUST STUDENTS  
Arrested six sent to jail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT,

A Sylhet court yesterday sent to jail six people allegedly involved in the killing of two students of Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) on December 16.

A district judicial magistrate gave the order after the suspects were produced before his court, said Officer-in-charge of Jalalabad Police Station Md Selim Hossain.

Earlier on Thursday,

SEE PAGE 19 COL 1

## AL's PICK FOR COMILLA CITY POLLS

### Intra-party conflict major challenge

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN, from Comilla

Long-lasting internal conflicts within the local Awami League and its dissidents have posed a serious challenge to party favourite Afzal Khan's prospects of winning the mayoral race in the maiden Comilla City Corporation polls on January 5.

Also, confusion reigns over the role of a few local AL lawmakers in Afzal's polls campaign. Many AL activists and voters believe that his fate will largely depend on the lawmakers' stance.

However, Afzal's main contender

Monirul Hoque Sakku is enjoying widespread support from the leaders of the main opposition BNP, though he quit the party on December 7.

Several local BNP leaders insisted that Sakku, former joint secretary general of Comilla (south) BNP, had resigned from the party in consultation with the party high-ups.

Earlier, BNP decided not to back any candidate in the polls as the Election Commission declared to introduce electronic voting machines in all polling centres.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 2

## 25 hurt in Khulna BCL-JCD clash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

At least 25 people including five policemen were injured in a fierce clash between the activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) and Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) at Azam Khan Govt Commerce College here yesterday over receiving the admission seekers on the campus.

Of the injured, four JCD leaders -- Rakibul, Saiful, Prince and Lubin -- were admitted to Khulna Sadar Hospital and Khulna Medical College Hospital with bullet wounds.

Witnesses said the brawl broke out around 11:00am when some members of the two rival student organisations were receiving the admission seekers on the college campus.

The newcomers yesterday took a test for admission in the first year honours class under National University.

Later the supporters of both the organisations resorted to vandalism from Commerce College Road to PTI Road damaging at least 20 cars and three-wheeler

## Cold wave to continue

*People in northern region worst sufferers*

STAR REPORT

The mild cold wave that is sweeping over Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions and the regions of Jhossa and Kushtia may continue for a few more days, Met Office said.

The bone-chilling cold spell with dense fog and biting wind has paralysed normal life mainly in the northern part of the country. Meanwhile, the distribution of warm clothes so far is seen to be inadequate.

Country's lowest temperature of 6.5 degrees Celsius was recorded in Rajshahi yesterday and the highest 25.2 degrees in Sylhet.

Day and night temperatures may rise slightly in Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and may remain nearly unchanged elsewhere over the country. UNB said quoting the Met Office.

Our district correspondents reported that with the increase of cold-related afflictions in people especially the children and elderly, the number of deaths is rising.

In Rajshahi's Baghbara, two elderly women died early yesterday. Family sources said Bilkis Bewa, 80, and Noor Jahan, 70, died fighting cold.

Abdul Hannan, deputy commissioner of Rajshahi, said they have got an allocation of 1,400 blankets and warm clothes from the prime minister's disaster and relief store on Thursday. Those were brought to Rajshahi after the weekly holidays and distributed after taking requisition from local MPs.

He said 15 percent of the 24 lakh people in the district are extremely poor. The allocation is inadequate and they have

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



PHOTO: STAR

Unruly students of Azam Khan Govt Commerce College in Khulna vandalised a police van during a clash yesterday.