



**SPORTS GROUNDED**  
Biman Bangladesh to scrap its cricket and table tennis teams  
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**GROWTH SLOW**  
WB lowers GDP growth forecast for Bangladesh  
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**SUU KYI IN BY-POLLS RACE**  
Launched her historic venture towards parliament yesterday  
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## Govt flip-flops on stock decision

*Issues circular to reinforce ban on investment by its staff, withdraws soon after*

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
The government yesterday retracted a notice enforcing an old rule that public servants are not allowed to invest in stocks, soon after its issuance. No explanation about the withdrawal came from the Ministry of Public Administration that issued the notice. The Press Information Department faxed the notice to The Daily Star at 6:57pm only to say later around 8:00pm that the notice was withdrawn. Sources said the government quickly cancelled the notice after its high-ups had received a message from influential market-stakeholders that the notice would create a negative impact on the stockmarket.

They also said the government will review the 1979 rules on public servants' stock investments before making any further decision. The withdrawal of the circular was the latest in a series of dramatic announcements and clarifications since Monday regarding the stockmarket. Yesterday's drama started with a morning media briefing by M Khairul Hossain, chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). The regulator rejected media reports about Monday's cabinet meeting that a move was underway to strictly enforce an already existing ban on stock investment by public employees.

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STOCKS DIP, VIOLENCE HITS MOTIJHEEL (B1)

## Govt out to destroy share market: BNP

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday blamed the government for destroying the share market. The stockmarket has already collapsed due to the failure of the government and now it has banned investment by government employees, which will cause the capital market to plunge further, Fakhrul said at a rally organised by pro-BNP student body Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD) at Nayapaltan in the capital. On Monday, the government decided to

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Indian TV channel NDTV shows the footage of men in BSF uniform stripping and torturing an alleged Bangladeshi cow smuggler in Murshidabad of West Bengal close to the Bangladesh border.

## Tortured for not paying 'bribe'

*BSF suspends 8 jawans*

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi**  
Indian Border Security Force yesterday suspended eight jawans after a video clip was aired on some Indian TV channels, including NDTV, showing a Bangladeshi being beaten up by some BSF members in Murshidabad district, Paschim Banga. The nearly five-minute video footage, whose source and authenticity could not be ascertained immediately, showed that the victim was pushed to the ground with his hands and legs tied while three to four men in BSF uniform stripped and tortured him. The Bangladeshi man was tortured as he allegedly refused to pay them a bribe. The suspension order came from the BSF headquarters in late evening. The personnel suspended were identified by the

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## 13 involved in Zubair killing

*Finds probe body*  
**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
A probe committee of Jahangirnagar University has identified at least 12 students and an outsider involved in the attack on Zubair Ahmed resulting in his death. The outsider is a student of Khulna University  
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## Focus on parking to ease gridlock

*Communications to import 290 buses for school-goers*

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
A national committee on traffic congestion reduction yesterday decided to increase the number of school buses and ensure proper use of parking space in Motijheel, Dilkusha and other areas to ease traffic in the capital.

The decisions were made during the 13th meeting of the committee formed to coordinate and monitor activities to reduce congestion with Communications Minister Obaidul Quader in the chair at the Sarak Bhaban. The deputy commissioner of Dhaka, the home secretary, the

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## Star moves to project Ctg

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg**  
A 16-day festival "Odommo Chattagram" initiated by The Daily Star starts from March 18 in Chittagong to showcase the rich history, cultural heritage and business prospects of the port city. The editor of the English daily, Mahfuz Anam, made the announcement at a press conference at the Party Centre of Chittagong Club yesterday. The festival, which ends on March 23, features exhibitions, cultural programmes, fashion and car show, book fair and music festival focusing on the cultural heritage, diversity and other aspects of the city. It will engage students from different schools and colleges as well as universities.



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## WAR CRIMES TRIAL

### Detained staff of defence team freed

**STAFF CORRESPONDENT**  
The International Crimes Tribunal yesterday directed the police to release a research assistant of Ghulam Azam's defence team detained while trying to photocopy 25,000 pages of evidence at a store. It also directed the defence to use a photocopy store specified by the tribunal for its copying needs for the sake of safeguarding the documents. The three-member

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## PAKISTAN CRISIS

### Sacked secy goes to court

*Gilani faces contempt charge today*

**AGENCIES**  
The Islamabad High Court yesterday asked the federal government to submit a reply regarding the sacking of Khalid Naeem Lodhi from the position of defence secretary. Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani sacked Lodhi on January 11 for "gross misconduct" and "creating misunderstanding among state institutions". During a hearing of a petition filed by Lodhi challenging his dismissal, his counsel Munir Paracha said Lodhi's sacking was illegal and should be cancelled, reports Geo News. Paracha requested the court to declare the order of Lodhi's removal invalid.

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## Reject BNP, Jamaat in next elections

*PM reaffirms commitment at Manikganj rally to try war criminals, corrupt*

**HASAN JAHID TUSHER, back from Manikganj**  
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged people to reject the BNP-Jamaat forces, alleging that they had patronised militancy, indulged in corruption and now were trying to save war criminals. "The people of Bangladesh do not want to see them [BNP-Jamaat] in power again. They made crores of taka through corruption, abetted militancy and terrorism and are now trying to save the war criminals,"



she said. She also urged people to vote for her party, the Awami League (AL), at the next general election, if they [people] are happy with the development activities of the government. The prime minister was addressing a rally in Manikganj organised for the first time by the AL district unit after the December 2008 elections. Citing the present government's activities, AL President Hasina said, "If you [the

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Transport workers burn a tyre and stage a sit in on the Dhaka-Khulna highway in Jhenidah yesterday protesting the highway robbery on 40 vehicles in the wee hours.

PHOTO: STAR

## HIGHWAY ROBBERY

### 40 trucks, buses looted of valuables

*Police 'inaction' blamed; protesters block road for hours*

**OUR CORRESPONDENT, Jhenidah**  
Armed robbers looted valuables including cash and mobile phone sets from at least 40 trucks and buses on the busy Dhaka-Khulna highway in the early hours of yesterday. The robbers also injured a truck driver with a machete. Victims claimed that police at the nearby Baro Bazar highway police camp had remained "suspiciously" inactive at the time of the robbery. Officer-in-Charge of the camp Asaduzzaman was closed following the incident. The incident took place between 3:00am to 4:30am at Baro Bazar of Kaliganj in Jhenidah. A group of 15-20 bandits stopped the vehicles by blocking the road with logs before sweeping on them. The injured, Alam Hossain, 24, was admitted to Kaliganj Health Complex. The robbery took place amidst concerns raised by the country's apex business body, FBCCI, in recent months about the escalation of highway robberies. FBCCI held talks with the home minister and the state minister in October and urged them to strengthen highway police patrolling. According to FBCCI, around 150 incidents of robbery occur on the highways every month. Following the robbery, thousands of commuters and

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