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Chittagong to bridge S Asian nations

Becomes regional hub in near future, The Daily Star-Heritage Chatogram History Conference told

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, Ctg

Chittagong, which gradually emerged as a prominent region in the sub-continent since the 4th century with its features and a great sea port, would shine more in the near future bridging neighbouring countries.

Prof Ranabir Chakrabarti of Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India, said this during a lecture in Chittagong yesterday afternoon.

He was delivering "The Daily Star-Abdul Karim Sahityavisharad First Memorial Lecture" at the inaugural session of the two-day-long "The Daily Star-Heritage Chatogram History Conference" at the



Theatre Institute Chittagong. The Daily Star and Heritage Chatogram jointly organised the conference in preparation for "The Daily Star Odommo Chatogram" festival to be held from March 30 to April 10.

Abdul Momin Chowdhury, supernumerary professor of department of history of Dhaka University (DU), chaired the inaugural session where Salauddin Kashem Khan, trustee secretary of AK Khan Foundation, was the special guest.

Prof Ranabir delivered the first such lecture on "Chattogram and The Bay of Bengal Network: A Maritime Profile c 500-1500CE (Synopsis)".

He said though there was a long debate

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Prof Ranabir Chakrabarti of Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi delivers a lecture at the inaugural session of two-day "Heritage Chatogram History Conference" in the port city yesterday. Seated from left to right, Salauddin Kashem Khan, trustee secretary, AK Khan Foundation; Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher, The Daily Star; Abdul Momin Chowdhury, supernumerary professor, Dhaka University, and Shamsul Hossain, former curator of Chittagong University Museum.

PHOTO: STAR

BGB-BSF TALKS
Measures to stop firing discussed

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
New Delhi

Bangladesh and India yesterday discussed measures to bring down incidents of firing along their border to a zero level as the chiefs of the border guard forces of the two countries began their meeting here.

Both Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) discussed how to stop border firing incidents in pursuance of the directives issued from the last month's meeting of the home ministers of the two countries -- Shaha Khatun and P Chidambaram -- in New Delhi, diplomatic sources said.

Bangladesh's concern over phenesidyl factories were conveyed on the first day of the talks.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

'Carjacker' killed in gunfight with police

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An alleged mugger was killed in a shootout between police and a gang of carjackers in the capital's Mohammadpur yesterday.

After the fight, police recovered a private car, which had been hijacked last week while carrying an additional DIG of police on Khilji Road in Mohammadpur.

Around 4:00 am, a plainclothes team of Mohammadpur police signalled a silver coloured car without registration plate to pull over in front of Allahkarim Jame Mosque at Basila. The vehicle matched the description of the one hijacked from Khilji Road.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

LAUNCH TRAGEDY
Death toll rises to 145

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Munshiganj

Death toll jumped to 145 in the Meghna launch capsized as rescuers found six more bodies yesterday, three days after the tragedy.

Police and coast guard members found five of the bodies floating close to the accident spot, while another from Char Jhaptia, three kilometres off the spot.

A double-decker

SEE PAGE 19 COL 5

India hikes defence budget, cuts taxes

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA,
New Delhi

India yesterday hiked its defence budget by more than 17 percent for fiscal year 2012-13, which starts from April, and announced tax cuts for the salaried class.

The defence budget now stands at Rs 1.94 trillion (about \$42 billion) against last year's Rs 1.65 trillion (\$36.5 billion). In the year 2009-10, it was hiked by just four percent.



Pranab Mukherjee

Presenting the budget in parliament, Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee also raised the capital expenditure on the defence forces to Rs 79,579 crore (\$17.5 billion).

The substantial defence budget hike is significant because several defence deals, including the procurement 126 combat aircraft for the Indian Air Force and 145 Ultra Light Howitzers, 197 Light

SEE PAGE 6 COL 1

MPs join hands in climate battle

Parliamentarians from 19 countries form network to help victims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parliamentarians of home and abroad launched a unique network to engage parliaments and their members across the globe in advocating policies that would help climate victim nations effectively address global warming challenges.

The declaration came yesterday at the closing ceremony of the three-day 'International Meeting of Parliamentarians on

Climate Change: Beyond COP 17' at Hotel Radisson in the capital.

The new platform titled "Parliamentarians for Climate Justice" would promote strategic alliances of parliaments and parliamentarians, working through cross-party groups and parliamentary networks and sharing knowledge, information and best practices.

The network will focus its resources

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Spelling Bee
2nd round begins today
140 spellers ready to participate

SHAHNOOR RABBANI

The divisional round of The Daily Star Spelling Bee contest begins today from Sylhet division.

A total of 140 students who qualified in the online round are expected to participate in the contest at 10:00am at the Jalalabad Gas Field Company auditorium in the divisional headquarters.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

White rice linked with diabetes

AFP, Paris

Health researchers said on Thursday they had found a troubling link between higher consumption of rice and Type 2 diabetes, a disease that in some countries is becoming an epidemic.

However, further work is needed to prove the apparent association, they cautioned.

"What we've found is white rice is likely to increase the risk of Type 2 diabetes, especially at high consumption levels such as in Asian populations,"

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Ruet closed amid tension

BCL leader injured in March 12 factional clash dies

RU CORRESPONDENT

Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology (Ruet) was declared closed for 13 days to avoid tensions following the death of a BCL leader yesterday.

Aziz Khan Sajib, 25, an organising secretary of Ruet's Zia Hall unit BCL, earlier suffered critical injuries to his head and chest in an attack by the cadres of a rival faction centring a previous feud.

Sajib, also a fourth year student of civil engineering department, succumbed to his injuries at Habib Clinic in Savar on the outskirts of the capital at 3:00am yesterday



Aziz Khan Sajib

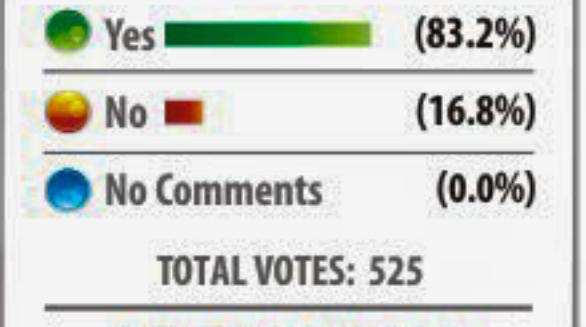
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The Daily Star



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ONLINE POLL
Do you think BNP leader Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir's accusation that the government forced different public and private organisations to join the ruling alliance's Wednesday's rally is justified?



TODAY'S POLL
Do you think the main opposition BNP is going to join the ongoing parliament session?

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PRAYER TIMING

March 17

Azan Jamaat

Fajr 5:00 5:35

Zohr 12:45 1:15

Asr 4:30 4:45

Maghrib 6:14 6:18

Esha 7:45 8:15

Source: Islamic Foundation

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SEE PAGE 19 COL 4