



## 'THE PROPERTY OF THE WORLD'

The South China Sea must be free for trade, says an Indian minister

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Syed Badrul Ahsan reviews books of Abdul Matin and Helal Hafiz

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## SUCHITRA TURNS 81

The screen legend's birthday is observed in her hometown Pabna

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# Next budget to be 17pc bigger

*It's not ambitious target, says Muhith; economists for proper aid utilisation, streamlining taxation*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The national budget of 2012-13 will be about 17 percent bigger than the current one, Finance Minister AMA Muhith said yesterday.

The next fiscal year's allocation will be nearly Tk 1,90,000 crore, up from Tk 1,63,000 crore budget of this fiscal year, he said.

The minister also said his target is to



keep the budget deficit below 5 percent in the upcoming FY.

"The Tk 1,90,000 crore budget is not an ambitious one," Muhith said while briefing journalists after a pre-budget meeting with economists at the state guesthouse Padma in Dhaka.

"The next budget should be more than Tk 2,00,000 crore to provide citizens with

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People evicted from Karail slum in Dhaka gathering whatever household items that are left unscathed after Wednesday's demolition drive. Inset, a woman, apparently at a loss, with her belongings and an infant on her lap at the slum.



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



## FREQUENT POWER OUTAGE Lawmakers face farmers' wrath

SHAKHAWAT LITON and RASHIDUL HASAN

When the rain started yesterday, Awami League lawmaker Solaiman Haque Joarder breathed a sigh of relief. Farmers of his constituency in Chuadanga would not grumble about hourly power cuts, he thought. For a day at least.

"So I felt relaxed and had a sound sleep after many days," the ruling party MP told The Daily Star yesterday afternoon.

As it rained in his area too, Magura AL lawmaker Biren Shikder felt himself a much happier and lighter man than he had been in the past few days.

But many of their party colleagues, especially those elected from northern districts and Mymensingh, were not that "blessed". It did not rain in their constituencies and complaints about power outages kept coming.

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## PADMA BRIDGE Govt to go for KL fund, says PM

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

The Padma bridge would be constructed with Malaysian funds but Bangladesh's relation with the World Bank would not be harmed, said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday.

Hasina said this at a meeting of her party's highest decision making body, Awami League Central Working Committee, at Gono Bhaban last night.

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# Slum demolition puts hundreds in distress

*Homeless Karail slum dwellers left in the open with no aid*

TAWFIQUE ALI

Evicted dwellers of Dhaka's T&T Beltoli and Karail slums have been living under the open sky with no food, water, power, or toilet facilities for the last three days.

Bulldozers flattened their homes on Wednesday during a drive to remove illegal structures from government land. Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Ltd (BTCL) along with Dhaka district administration carried out the eviction drive.

The evicted people claimed that a

child died while two more went missing during the drive.

Yesterday's heavy downpour from morning until noon made the situation even worse for the displaced people.

"We are in dire distress...", said teenaged rag-picker Sabbir Hossain to The Daily Star correspondent as he was passing by the razed area of Beltoli slum near the satellite ground station of BTCL.

Shivering in the rain Sabbir said he had sent his parents and younger sister back to his village home Thursday after they lost their home.

A father and son were seen trying to stay dry under a torn piece of polythene sheet amid the rubble the bulldozers left behind. Broken bamboo poles and iron sheets of shattered shanties were all that remained there.

About 100 yards down the road Mokseda Begum was seen all drenched in rain and smeared in mud. She was putting her stuff on a rickshaw--nothing special only kitchen utensils and rags. She had her son and daughter with her.

"I am going to Gazipur to find a job and shelter there," said Mokseda.

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## No scope for non-democratic force in power

*US official says on Bangladesh; stresses long-term leadership for Grameen Bank*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The United States believes that there is no chance the military or other non-democratic forces can assume state power again in Bangladesh, said visiting high-ranking US official Wendy Sherman yesterday.

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## BNP ready for talks to end crisis

*Khaleda tells Sherman*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday said her party was ready to sit for talks to resolve the ongoing political crisis centring caretaker government system.

She said this during a meeting with the US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy R Sherman, who called on Khaleda at her Gulshan

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A sampan race on the river Karnaphuli as part of Odmmo Chattagram, a festival organised by The Daily Star to promote and highlight the history, culture and tradition of Chittagong. Story on page 5.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

## BAF OFFICER'S DEATH Probe body formed to find reason

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The Air Force authorities have formed a two-member committee to probe the death of Squadron Leader Mamun Ur Rashid at a hotel in the port city on Thursday.

Wing Commander Zafar will head the committee while Squadron Leader Mahmud is its other member, said an official of Inter Services Public Relations yesterday.

The official, however, could not confirm the time limit for submission of the probe report.

Mamun went to Chittagong on Tuesday to

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## STORM, LIGHTNING

# 10 killed in 6 dists

STAR REPORT

At least 10 people were killed and over 50 injured in nor'westers and lightning strikes at different places of the country on Thursday night and yesterday.

A moderate rainfall caused by the nor'wester in the capital yesterday brought a relief after days of sultry weather. No casualty was reported in the capital.

Our district correspondents report that hailstorms battered several hundreds of houses, damaged crops and uprooted scores of trees, snapping power supply in many areas.

In Panchagarh, a four-month-old girl was killed in a wall collapse and two oth-

ers in lightning strikes after a nor'wester hit different villages under Boda upazila yesterday afternoon, reports our correspondent from Thakurgaon.

The minor girl Sabiha died around 4:15pm after the wall of their house collapsed on her, while the victims of lightning strikes were identified as Morium Begum, 70, and Mizanur Rahman, 8.

The half-an-hour-long nor'wester that started around 4:00pm damaged over 500 thatched and tin-sheeted houses, standing crops especially maize and uprooted many trees, Boda Upazila Nirbahi Officer Johurul Islam told The Daily Star.

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# Bravery cost him his life

*Muggers shoot man dead as he comes to the aid of victims*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Private car-riding armed muggers shot dead a man who risked his life to rescue three women from the gang at Rainkhola in the city's Mirpur yesterday morning.

The victim, Hazrat Ali, 40, field area manager of Kollol Group, was a resident of Rainkhola.

The incident took place just 16 hours into another mugging incident in Dhanmondi area where several criminals on motorcycles looted Tk 20 lakh at gun point from a real estate official Thursday.

Quoting witnesses, Shamim Reza, brother-in-law of the victim, told The Daily Star that Ali on his way back

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# Hazari back in scene

*AL high-command may give him green signal to take hold of Feni politics again*

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

"Controversial" political figure Joynal Abedin Hazari may re-enter active politics anytime soon as he awaits a green signal from the ruling Awami League high command.

The former general secretary of Feni district AL met party president and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina a couple of days ago at Gono Bhaban and handed over a letter to her seeking permission to be active in politics, party insiders said.



The party chief will soon hold a view-exchange meeting with the Feni AL leaders, where Hazari might attend as an invitee. The AL leadership might ask its Feni unit to prepare for holding the district council.

In the letter, the expelled leader also asked for permission to sue Latifur Rahman, former chief adviser of a caretaker government, for making derogatory comments against him ahead of the 2001 national polls.

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