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PADMA BRIDGE PROJECT Govt 'shifts' to Malaysia

Quader flies to KL tonight for signing MoU Tuesday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A high-profile delegation headed by Communications Minister Obaidul Quader leaves for Kuala Lumpur tonight to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Tuesday on Malaysian funding for the \$2.9 billion Padma Bridge project.

Economic Relations Division Secretary Iqbal Mahmud, Bridges Division Secretary Khandaker Anwarul Islam and project director Shafiqul Islam will accompany the minister.

"We are going there to sign an MoU. I myself or the ERD secretary may sign it," Quader told The Daily Star yesterday. He, however, declined to elaborate on the matter.

In April last year, the government signed an agreement with the World Bank for a \$1.2 billion loan to construct the country's longest bridge. Asian Development Bank was to provide \$615 million, Japan International Cooperation Agency \$400 million and Islamic Development Bank \$140 million for construction of the multipurpose bridge. But the project stalled in October when the WB alleged corruption in the bidding process.

In January, Malaysia formally proposed giving a \$2.19 billion loan for the bridge. An MoU was supposed to be signed on February 21, but the move was cancelled for some technical reasons.

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Magician Rajib Bosuk entertains children at Fulki school in Chittagong yesterday. The programme featured in the Children's Festival arranged as part of The Daily Star Odommo Chattagramm celebrations in the port city.

PHOTO: STAR

NON-COOPERATION Rights chief gives up on jail visit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Chairman Prof Mizanur Rahman yesterday said he will not visit jails in the country any more as the rights chief.

The decision is in protest, he stated, at barring him from entering the Sylhet Central Jail on September 29 last year.

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AVALANCHE STRIKES PAK ARMY CAMP At least 100 buried alive

AGENCIES

An avalanche smashed into a Pakistan army camp yesterday burying at least 100 soldiers in a remote area billed as the world's highest battleground, with no sign of survivors over 12 hours later.

Troops with sniffing dogs, aided by helicopters, were frantically trying to find signs of life in the snow after the avalanche engulfed the remote camp in mountainous Gayari, Siachen, in disputed Kashmir.

A team of doctors and paramedics has also been rushed to the high-

altitude region, which suffers extreme weather conditions temperatures on the strategic Siachen glacier plummet to minus 70 degrees Celsius.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani expressed his deep shock at the potentially heavy loss of life.

"More than 100 soldiers of NLI (Northern Light Infantry) including a colonel were trapped when the avalanche hit a military camp," army spokesman Major General Athar Abbas told AFP.

He later added that despite hours of searching and contrary to local

media reports, no bodies or survivors had been found.

"It's too early to say anything," he replied when asked about the chances of finding anyone alive after more than 12 hours. "The rescue operation is under way."

The avalanche struck early in the morning, a military statement said, raising the possibility that the buried soldiers were asleep at the time.

The heavily militarised glacier is 6,300 metres high and has been occupied by Indian and Pakistani troops since 1984.

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Bangladeshi 'killed in KL' Cops suspect robbery behind murder

STAR REPORT

A Bangladeshi youth was found dead with a slash wound in the neck in a four-storey shophouse in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, a Malaysian newspaper reported.

The 23-year-old victim had called his housemates earlier saying that there were people knocking on the door in his house at

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Army man held over extortion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An army lance corporal was caught red handed by police early yesterday when he and his gang posing as detectives snatched Tk 15 lakh from a group of cattle traders in the capital's Darussalam.

The arrestee is Iqbal Hossain, 35, of Eighth Field Regiment at Mirpur Cantonment, said Bimol Chadra Pine, sub-inspector of Darussalam Police Station. Four cattle traders -- Monirul Islam, Tanvir, Aslam and Kalam -- riding a microbus were returning to their Agargaon home from Gabtoli cattle market around midnight, said the SI quoting the victims.

As they reached Lalkuthi Boro Mashjid area, another

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Journalists defer sit-in

Shahara pledges to find killers of journo couple quickly

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

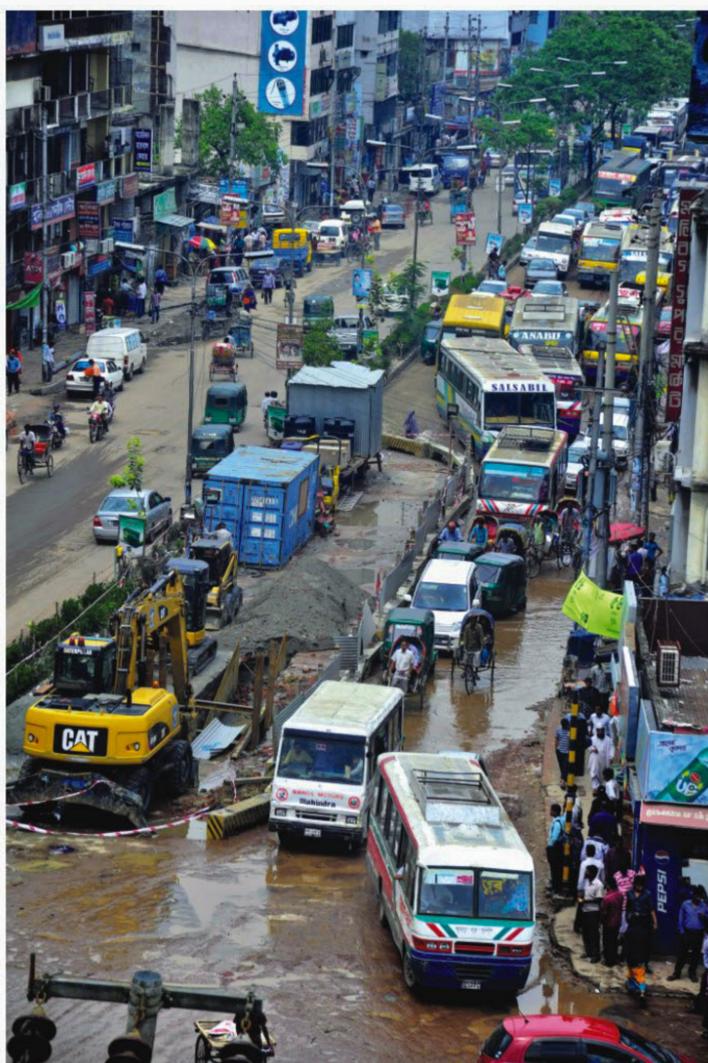
Newsman yesterday deferred their sit-in programme set for today until May 5 as the home minister again assured them of arresting the killers of Sagar Sarowar and Meherun Runi soon.

However, the journalists will observe the programme on May 6 if the law enforces fail to arrest the killers by May 5.

On March 18, the news-men had announced the sit-in programme before the home ministry from a grand rally demanding arrest of the killers of the journalist couple by April 7.

The decisions came in a meeting of the leaders of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ), Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ), National Press Club and Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) at the National Press Club.

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Dhaka Wasa is installing water pipes near Malibagh level crossing, shrinking the three-lane Rampura Road to just one. Queues of traffic try to squeeze past the intersection in single file but the rain in the last couple of days has made things worse.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

RU student, mother killed under wheels

RU CORRESPONDENT

A female student of Rajshahi University and her mother were killed early yesterday in a road accident in Chittagong.

The deceased were Sharmin Sultana Chhobi, 22, a master's final-year student of political science, and her mother Fatema Begum, 45.

A bus crushed the duo under its wheels around 10:30pm Friday when they were returning to Chittagong cantonment from the residence of a

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DCC polls, secy gen top agenda

BNP sits today

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

With many unimplemented decisions in hand, the national executive committee of BNP is going to sit in the capital today to discuss some crucial political and organisational issues.

The grassroots-level leaders will have the opportunity to evaluate the party's performance over the last few months in the meeting while the top leaders are expected to give them guidelines for their upcoming agitation programme.

BNP is planning to go for a tougher movement when their 90-day ultimatum to the government on restoring the caretaker government system ends on June 10.

Apart from the 386-member national executive committee, BNP district-unit presidents and general

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Students rough up doctor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of medical students beat up a doctor at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday for alleged misbehaviour with a fellow student over his relative's treatment.

The victim, Monwar Hossain, is an honorary doctor at the DMCH medicine department.

Witnesses said Monwar was on duty at ward-112 when four/five students of DMC got into an altercation with him around

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The Daily Star

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ONLINE POLL
Do you think it is justified to evict slum dwellers without arranging their relocation?

Yes (18.3%)
No (77.6%)
No Comments (4.1%)
TOTAL VOTES: 393

TODAY'S POLL
Do you think the top two political parties are sincere in ending the political crisis over the caretaker government through talks?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT www.thedailystar.net
YOU MAY ALSO VOTE AT [facebook.com/dailystarnews](https://www.facebook.com/dailystarnews)

Events Abound

A two-day long economic conference titled "Future Bangladesh, Future Chittagong: A Global Port Needs a Global City" started in Chittagong city yesterday as a part of The Daily Star's Odommo Chattagram initiative. A roundtable discussion took place on the inaugural day on the city's infrastructure problems.

A three-day long cultural show was launched at DC Hill last evening. The first evening featured popular local songs, majbandari songs, kawali, and dhol playing.

A half-day children's festival was held at Fulki, where children sang, enjoyed magic, staged a play, and drew pictures.

A 4-day long Brand Expo opened in the gymnasium of MA Aziz Stadium in the evening, where renowned brands that originated in Chittagong are being showcased.

Also get a glimpse of the food festival and the science fair that took place in the port city recently, and how local food can boost tourism in the city.

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