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Catching up with time

Ctg's giant commodity hub Khatunganj tune itself to tech

SOHEL PARVEZ

Chittagong city's bustling commodity hub Khatunganj, which has given birth to a number of well-known local conglomerates such as Partex Group, Abul Khair Group, PHP Group and TK Group, is changing.

Large and medium commodity market leaders are hiring trained executives in top and mid level positions and embracing IT in their bid to better manage businesses and grow further.

Smaller ones are also slowly following suit. Many small traders have begun to use smart phones to monitor prices of commodities on the global market -- a sign that shows a gradual shift in mode of business at Khatunganj since the 1990s.

Before that, traders used to sit behind wooden cash boxes and deal with buyers coming from different parts of the country to the commodity hub spanning over a

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Traders in Chittagong city's business hub Khatunganj are embracing modern technology in doing business. A trader checks current prices of commodities on the market on his smartphone before making a deal.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS



Prof Muzaffer laid to rest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prof Muzaffer Ahmad was an unwavering and fearless advocate for peace and civic rights, said eminent personalities yesterday, lamenting his demise. The noted economist

SEE PAGE 19 COL 2

Target low-cost townships

India's Sahara Group signs deal with govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sahara Group, an Indian business conglomerate, yesterday signed a Memorandum of Understanding for investment in low-cost township schemes in Bangladesh.

Chairman Subrata Roy Sahara and from the Bangladesh side Syed Matubur Rahman, joint secretary (development), housing and public works, and Nurul Huda, chairman of Rajdhani



Subrata Roy

Unnayan Kartripakkha, signed the MoU in Dhaka.

The MoU does not have any legal binding but it contains the intent of the government and Sahara India Parivar to work mutually for the development of Bangladesh.

Sahara is going to set up an office in Dhaka and submit proposals to the government to finalise a deal.

After the signing ceremony, Subrata

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Govt out to interfere in judiciary

BNP tells foreign diplomats

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government was interfering in judicial affairs and that was why senior opposition leaders had not got bail in an arson case, leaders of the main opposition BNP told foreign diplomats during a meeting yesterday.

Meeting sources said the leaders also briefed the diplomats on the latest political situation in the country.

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3-YEAR JAIL FOR GRAFT

Verdict against Mosharraf upheld

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday upheld a 20-year-old verdict by a lower court that had sentenced former state minister for energy AKM Mosharraf Hossain to jail for three years on charge of misappropriating state money.

Mosharraf would have to surrender before the lower court immediately which would send him to jail, Assistant Attorney General MA Kamrul



Mosharraf Hossain

Hasan Khan Aslam and Assistant Attorney General Sadhan Kumar Banik told The Daily Star shortly after the court passed the order.

The then Bureau of Anti-Corruption (now defunct) had filed the case with Motijheel Police Station on January 29, 1991.

It accused Mosharraf of misappropriating Tk 5.64 lakh from the government exchequer in the name of his

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The summer heat makes the inside of stationary buses really hot. Two transport workers, unable to find shade or stay inside their bus, take refuge under it. The photo was taken in Motijheel, Dhaka.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

MILITARY TRANSPORT

Air Force to buy 4 US aircraft

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

In a bid to modernise the tactical transport aircraft fleet of the Air Force, Bangladesh will purchase four Lockheed MC-130Es from the United States at an estimated cost of \$180 million.

According to the US Defence Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA), the proposed sale would cover the "regeneration, overhaul, modification and logistics support" of the second-hand Hercules.

The package would also include 20 Rolls-Royce T56 engines to be provided as excess defence articles, plus training and other equipment and services associated with the upgrade.

DSCA notified the US Congress on May 22 of "a possible Foreign Military Sale to the Government of Bangladesh to provide regeneration, overhaul, modification, and logistics support for four Lockheed Martin C-130Es and associated parts, equipment, and training for an estimated cost of \$180 million."

"The proposed sale will contribute to the foreign

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DISAPPEARANCES

UK calls for neutral probe

ANSAR AHMED ULLAH, from London

The UK has pressed for impartial and transparent investigations into disappearance of BNP leader M Ilias Ali and others, said British Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Lord Howell on Monday.

"We are concerned about the disappearance

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PRAYER TIMING		May 24
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-40	6-45
Esha	8-00	8-30

Sources: Islamic Foundation

The Daily Star

Integral Energy Limited

ONLINE POLL

Do you think the government will be able to unearth the racket behind the black marketing of furnace oil from the state-owned Padma Oil depot?

Yes (7.1%)
No (89.0%)
No Comments (3.9%)

TOTAL VOTES: 435

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think it was justified for State Minister for Home Shamsul Haque Tuku to comment that the government is being unable to trace Ilias Ali because BNP is hiding him?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT www.thedailystar.net

YOU MAY ALSO VOTE AT [facebook.com/dailystarnews](https://www.facebook.com/dailystarnews)

Road crashes kill 22 more

STAR REPORT

At least 22 people were killed and 30 others injured in separate road accidents across the country yesterday.

In Sirajganj, 10 people were killed and 22 were injured when a passenger bus plunged into a water-filled ditch in Ullapara upazila.

Abdur Rahman, a station officer of Ullapara fire brigade, said the bus skidded off the road and fell into the roadside ditch while giving side to a speeding truck at Boalia around 12:45pm.

The bus, which was heading for Pabna from Sirajganj, plunged six feet deep into the water, reports our Sirajganj correspondent quoting the station officer.

On information, police and fire brigade personnel rushed to the spot and recovered the bodies of 10 farm workers, said Faruk Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Hatikumrul Highway Police Station.

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Nishat starts from base camp tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nishat Majumder and her fellow mountaineer MA Mohit will start descending from the base camp of the Mount Everest tomorrow if the weather remains favourable.

"If everything is okay and the weather is good, we will leave the base camp on Friday morning," Nishat told The Daily Star yesterday over phone.

"We are taking preparation for descending and

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Quit smoking or miss out on promotion

AFP, Seoul

After decades of indifference, big businesses and the government are turning up the heat on smokers in South Korea.

Some firms are pressing workers to kick the habit or miss out on promotion, and the health ministry will toughen warnings on cigarette packs.

Samsung Electronics, the country's largest employer, is at the forefront of efforts to cajole workers to quit smoking.



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10-TRUCK ARMS HAUL NSI involvement ignored in probe

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Though former CMP commissioner SM Sabbir Ali had expressed his suspicion that some NSI officials were involved in unloading a huge cache of guns and explosives at the CUFL jetty in 2004, a probe committee did not mention it in its report.

Sabbir said this before a court here yesterday during his deposition as the 11th prosecution witness in two cases in connection with the seizure of 10 truckloads of arms and explosives in the wee hours of April 2, 2004.

He told probe committee chief Omar Faroque, the home secretary at that time, about his suspicion that former National Security Intelligence (NSI) director general Brig Gen (ret) Abdur Rahim and its deputy

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