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# Inflation: the Achilles' heel

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The biggest challenge for the government in the next fiscal year is to contain the soaring inflation rates as the national election is approaching. After inflation grew to double digits for 13 months in a row from March 2011 to March 2012, the government has set a target to bring it down to 7.5 percent in the next fiscal year. However, economists said, in a conservative estimate, inflation may fall, but not much. In South Asia, inflation grew much in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka due to a hike

## BUDGET 2012-2013

in commodity and oil prices on the international market, but the highest rise was in Bangladesh.

The economists as well as officials of the finance ministry and Bangladesh Bank said inflation increased much in Bangladesh due to a huge subsidy, failure in utilising foreign aid and the government's huge borrowing from banks.

Also, the depreciation of the taka and a hike in fuel and energy prices on several occasions fuelled inflation.

Former adviser to a caretaker government Mirza Azizul Islam said the

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Relatives fan their patients at Dhaka Medical College Hospital yesterday. Many who seek treatment there do not get beds due to the overwhelming number of patients. In many cases they have to make beds on the floors of passageways where there are no electric fans overhead. The situation turns worse in the summer.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

## 20 SENSATIONAL CRIMES

# Rights chief spurs home minister

Asks her to set time line, get investigations done within it

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Human Rights Commission yesterday demanded that the government set a time frame to complete investigations into the recent sensational murders and forced disappearances.

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Mizanur Rahman

# Comments on Sagar-Runi Journos for action against Mahfuzur

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Journalists yesterday demanded legal action against ATN Bangla Chairman Mahfuzur Rahman for his comments on the murder of journalist couple Sagar-Runi.

They also submitted a memorandum to the Speaker, demanding trial of all journalist murders, including that of Sagar-Runi.

In the memorandum, leaders of the journalist

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## No suits, ties for 9 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Male employees at government, semi-government and autonomous offices have been asked not to wear suits and ties, excepting formal occasions, from March to November to save electricity.

The Cabinet Division

SEE PAGE 19 COL 8

# Syria expels 17 Western diplomats

REUTERS, Beirut

Syria's government banned 17 Western diplomats and its helicopter gunships pounded rebels in a coastal province yesterday as President Bashar al-Assad defied international pressure to halt the repression of an uprising against his rule.

The declaration of diplomats from the United States, Canada, Turkey and several European countries as unwelcome was a retaliation for the expulsion of Syrian envoys from their capitals last week following the massacre of more than 100 civilians by suspected Assad loyalists.

On the battlefield, rebels fought with government

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ASSAD MAY GO AS PART OF SYRIA SETTLEMENT: PAGE 7

# Expressway faces fresh hurdle

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

Uncertainty shrouds the launch of Dhaka Elevated Expressway again as the government last month reduced its length by four kilometres to bypass conflict with Gulistan-Jatrabari flyover and avoid some land acquisition complexities.

The 21-kilometer expressway has now been reduced to 17 kilometres and will run up to the Shaheed Mostafa Kamal Stadium instead of

Kutubkhali on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway. Besides, it has to have a connecting route with the under-construction Gulistan-Jatrabari flyover as per a decision of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina taken on May 17.

The cut in the expressway's length will slash the project cost by Tk 1,000 crore. But it has created a host of new challenges involving financial feasibility and fresh technical and traffic studies. Many

aspects of this project are now set to change.

The project's implementer Ital-Thai Development Public Company has to go back to the drawing board for design changes. Moreover, to connect it with the Gulistan-Jatrabari flyover, there has to be an understanding with that project's implementer.

Experts apprehend resolving these problems may take a long time

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The signboard of Dhaka Elevated Expressway on Airport Road, a project facing another change of design and possible delays in implementation.

PHOTO: FILE

**The Daily Star**  
Integral Energy Limited  
**ONLINE POLL**  
Do you think criticism of Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed in parliament by a section of MPs shows their disrespectful attitude towards eminent personalities?  
Yes (95.0%)  
No (5.0%)  
TOTAL VOTES: 480  
**TODAY'S POLL**  
Do you agree with TIB Chairperson Sultana Kamal that the MPs who launched diatribe against Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed in parliament should apologise?  
PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT [www.thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net)  
YOU MAY ALSO VOTE AT [facebook.com/dailystarnews](https://www.facebook.com/dailystarnews)

# CREDIT CARD SCAM Another UCB official held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Gulshan police yesterday arrested Shahadat Hossain Sohag, head of the United Commercial Bank's card division, in connection with the credit card scam involving over Tk 10 crore.

The amount was withdrawn in phases with 21 credit cards between 2007 and May 2012, according to the findings of an internal probe.

Sohag, a senior vice-president of the bank, was in

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# DU pro-VC, treasurer quit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka University (DU) Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Harun-or-Rashid and Treasurer Prof Mizanur Rahman resigned

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**PRAYER TIMING June 6**

Fajr	4-05	4-40
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-45	6-50
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation

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