

THE DAILY *Star* ON FRIDAY

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THE ICON REMEMBERED

Today is the 89th birth anniversary of master painter SM Sultan

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DOWNTREND HURTS CERAMICS

Exports were dull last fiscal year due to financial crisis in Europe

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SYRIA GETS NEW PM

Al-Halqi replaces Riad Hijab who defected on Sunday

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NEW GAS LINK

No hope for households

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, energy adviser to the prime minister, has again ruled out any possibility of providing new gas connection to households in the near future.

He said the government's first priority is to increase gas supply to power plants and industries and fertiliser factories come next.

"We will resume gas supply to fertiliser factories soon. If we find any new energy option, then we will see whether we can provide new gas connections to household consumers," said the adviser.

His comments came at a seminar, SEE PAGE 19 COL 7
RELATED STORY ON PAGE B1

EXTREME WEATHER

Global food prices spiralling again

FAO raises alarm for world's poorest; inadequate rainfall casts gloom over Aman prospect

REAZ AHMAD

Global food prices shot up last month due to extreme weather conditions, says the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

The price spike has raised the spectre of a food crisis like the one in 2007-2008 that badly hurt the world's poorest.

Unveiling a report on Thursday, the FAO said its food index rose 6 percent in July from June after dropping for three consecutive months.

The rebound of the index, which measures the

monthly change in the international prices of staple foods, was driven by a sharp rise in grain and sugar prices.

Extensive drought in the United States pushed up maize prices by almost 23 percent in July, said the Rome-based UN agency. The US is the world's No. 1 exporter of maize.

During the same period, wheat prices surged 19 percent, as dry weather worsened production prospects in the Russian Federation.

July also saw a sharp increase in the price of sugar. The upturn, ending a steady fall since

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Extortion YES Extortion NO

Police, transport leaders, ministers debate over state of the highway crime

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

Police officials and transport leaders at a meeting at the Rail Bhaban yesterday were locked in a debate over whether extortion was taking place on the highways.

While the law enforcers claimed the highways to be free of extortion, transport associations' bosses said it continued all over the country.

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INTERIM GOVT FOR POLLS

BNP toys with two proposals

RAKIB HASNET SUMAN

The BNP is working on two specific ideas regarding the formation of a 10-member non-party caretaker government that will be at the helm at the next general election.

The ideas of the BNP revolve around the non-party caretaker government system, which its rival, the ruling Awami

League, is opposed to.

The first idea the BNP has is forming the caretaker government with 10 former justices of the Supreme Court, said party insiders.

The other idea is to form the caretaker government with 10 eminent personalities. In that case, the Awami League and

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CATCH ME IF YOU CAN: Jamaican sprint king Usain Bolt (R) blazes past the finish line in the men's 200m dash on way to becoming the first man ever to claim a historic second successive sprint double at the Olympic Stadium in London yesterday. The 25-year-old, who retained his 100m title on Saturday, crossed the line in 19.32 seconds to win the 200m gold in front of a sell-out 80,000 crowd. PHOTO: REUTERS



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