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INDIAN BAG IN FRENCH ALPS

A bag of diplomatic mail is found close to a 1966 plane crash site

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HALLMARK LOAN SCAM

17 Sonali Bank officials suspended

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sonali Bank Ltd yesterday suspended 17 of its officials for their alleged involvement in a Tk 3,500-crore loan scam, officials said.

The officials have been held responsible for unethical disbursement of loans to the textile company Hallmark Group and some other firms, according to an investigation by the central bank.

The state-owned bank has also written to the finance ministry to take action against three top officials.

Bangladesh Bank on August 26 directed Sonali Bank to suspend by Thursday 31 of its officials, including two deputy manag-

ing directors, on charges of their involvement in the anomalies.

The suspended officials are senior officers of Ruposhi Bangla Hotel branch Ujjal Kishore Dhar, Tushar Kanti Dhar, Jasmine Nahar, Mihir Chandra Mazumder, junior officer Wakiluddin Ahmed and officer Saidur Rahman, deputy general manager of international trade department Sheikh Altaf Hossain, assistant general managers Shafiz Uddin Ahmed and Ijaz Ahmed, senior executive officer Mukhlesur Rahman, executive officer Sohrab Hossain, assistant general managers of the general manager's office

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Hallmark thrived on Sonali loan

An ex-manager found to be in thick of scam

SAJJADUR RAHMAN

Sonali Bank's Agargaon branch in Dhaka has helped Tanvir Mahmud to turn Hallmark into a business giant through misappropriating the bank's money, bank officials have said.

M Khairul Alam, SEE PAGE 19 COL 5

50 involved

Anti-graft body quizzes 4 more Sonali Bank officials

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

At least fifty Sonali Bank officials might have been involved in illegal disbursement of Tk 3,547 crore loan to the controversial Hallmark Group, an Anti-Corruption Commission official said yesterday.

Earlier, Sonali Bank itself as well as Bangladesh Bank and the chartered accountant firm Syful Shamsul Alam & Co in their probe reports had put the figure at 32.

"We think no less than fifty Sonali Bank officials can be held responsible for the grant of this loan, although the number was less in the reports of Sonali Bank, Bangladesh

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Leaders and delegates of the Non-Aligned Movement (Nam), including Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, pose for a photo before the start of their summit in Tehran yesterday. A showpiece summit hosted by Iran stumbled as soon as it opened when the head of the UN pressed Tehran on its nuclear stand, and Egypt's new leader publicly sided with Syria's opposition.

PHOTO: AFP

Strengthen Nam for lasting peace

Urges Hasina at summit plenary

BSS, Tehran

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has called for a strong and effective Non-Aligned Movement (Nam), saying the 120-member alliance today needs to be a united, strong and effective body to ensure sustainable global peace and security.

"The founding fathers of Nam envis-

aged a world order based on mutual respect, sovereign equality, justice and the rule of law. Now Nam needs to work together to realise the total commitment of our leaders to its principles," she said yesterday while addressing the main plenary of the 16th Nam Summit at OIC Convention Centre in Tehran.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4 HASINA MEETS IRANIAN PRESIDENT - PAGE 20

UN chief warns of 'war risk'

AFP, Tehran

UN chief Ban Ki-moon yesterday urged Iran to comply with UN resolutions demanding it curb its nuclear activities, warning that heightened international rhetoric over the issue risked degenerating into "war."

He said Tehran should build confidence in its nuclear programme by "fully complying with the relevant (UN) Security Council resolutions and



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Ershad next PM?

JP chief shares his logics with The Daily Star

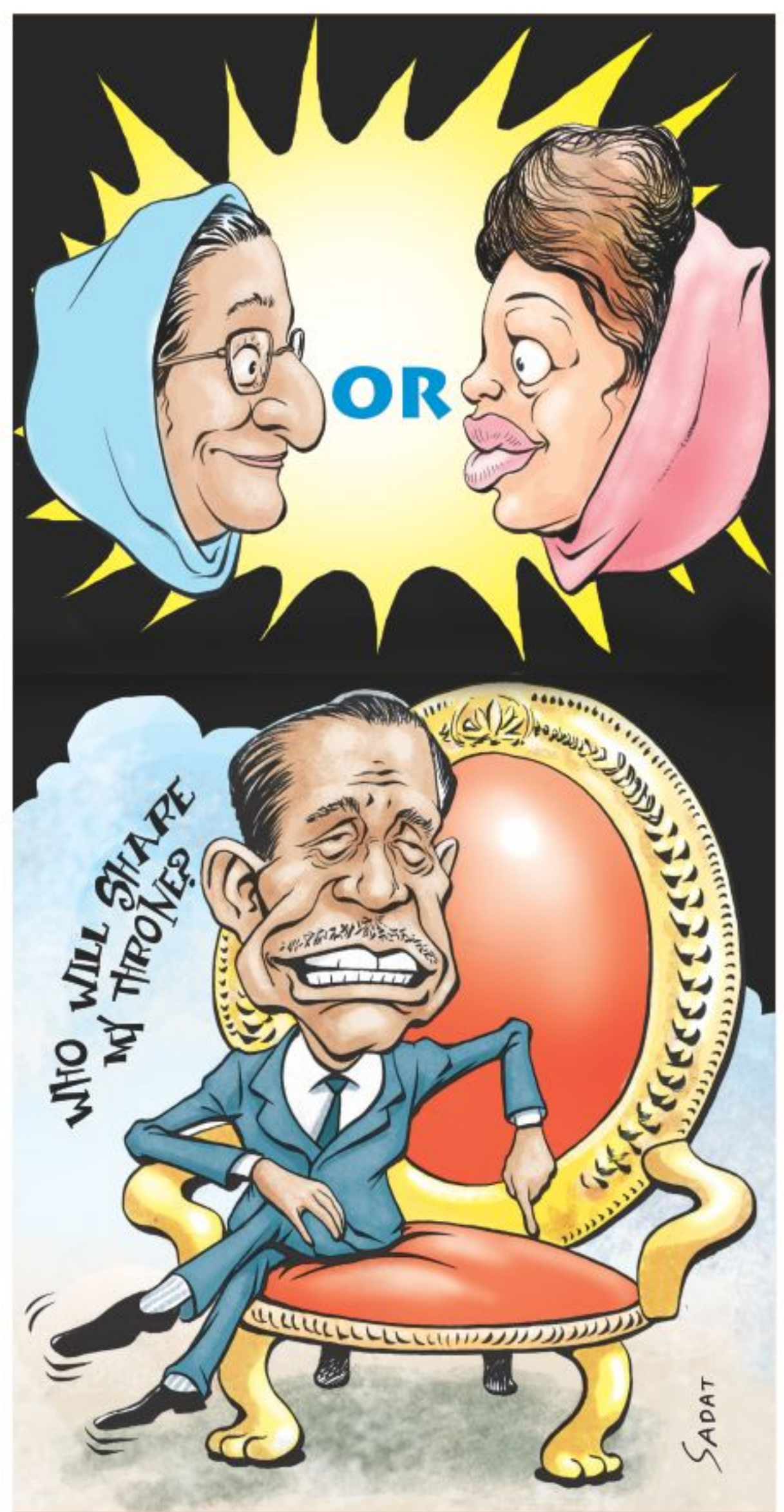
HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad says he wants to be the prime minister through the next parliamentary elections.

In an exclusive interview with The Daily Star after his recent India visit, the key partner in the Awami League-led ruling coalition explained why he believes he could be the next head of government.

If the AL, BNP and JP take part in the next election, none of the parties would get a single majority to form a government, he said, adding that if the JP got more than 60 seats he would become the deciding factor and might become the premier, as neither the AL nor the BNP would be able to reach a consensus on forming a government.

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No confidence in police probe

Limon's mother files petition; leading citizens rally behind the maimed student

KAILASH SARKAR and SUSHANTA GHOSH, from Jhalakathi

Henoara Begum, mother of Limon Hossain shot and maimed by Rab last year, submitted a no-confidence petition to a Jhalakathi court yesterday, challenging a report of police investigation that found no evidence against the elite force.

She also sought a judicial probe into the incident and justice for her son.

PHOTO ON PAGE 19

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Contradictory reports

KAILASH SARKAR, from Barisal

The recent police report that clears Rab members of the charge of shooting college student Limon Hossain contradicts with a previous police probe.

On November 30 last year, Sub-inspector Shafiqul Islam in a report said, "It was learnt during the

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PADMA BRIDGE PROJECT WB still silent

Co-financier ADB extends time for loan, Jica not yet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Since hope is still there regarding the World Bank's taking the lead in the financing of the Padma bridge project, the Asian Development Bank has extended its loan effectuation deadline by another month.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica), another partner of the project's finance, is expected to extend its loan effectuation deadline as well.

The loan effectuation date of the ADB and Jica was expected to expire today. Earlier they were extended, for the fourth time, on July 31.

A high official of the Economic Relations Division (ERD) said the department had written to the ADB and Jica requesting an extension of the deadline.

The ADB last night in a letter told the ERD that it had extended the deadline by a month. Jica is yet to respond. It may respond positively today, ERD officials have claimed.

An official of the finance ministry said if the World Bank pulled out of the co-financing

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Polls only after dissolving JS

Reiterates Khaleda

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A general election cannot be held without dissolving the incumbent parliament, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia said yesterday.

She also reiterated her demand that the caretaker government system be restored for holding parliamentary polls.

Khaleda, also leader of the opposition in parliament, made the remarks in the context of the latest constitutional amendment providing for general election within 90 days before expiry of parliament's tenure.

She was speaking at a discussion at Mahanagar Natya Mancha in the capital. Jatiyatabadi Swechhasebak Dal, a front body of the main opposition BNP,



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