

THE DAILY Star ON FRIDAY



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24 PAGES PLUS THE STAR PRICE : Tk 10.00

REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXII No. 230 | BHADRA 23, 1419 BS | SHAWWAL 19, 1433 HIJRI

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The former US president defends the incumbent at Democratic convention
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DreamWorks Animation chief and others to get honorary Oscars
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World No 1 Federer is knocked out of the US Open by Berdych
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SONALI LOAN SCAM

27 banks under BB, ACC scanner

Anti-graft body asks for their records of transactions linked with Hall-Mark

REJAUL KARIM BYRON, JULFIKAR ALI MANIK and MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

The Bangladesh Bank and the Anti-Corruption Commission are separately investigating the roles of 27 state-owned, private and foreign banks in the Sonali Bank loan scandal.

The Sonali Bank's Ruposhi Bangla Hotel branch had lent Tk 3,606 crore to Hall-Mark, T and Brothers, Paragon Group, Nakshi Knit, DN Sports and

Khanjahan Ali.

The central bank earlier found half of the loans were based on forged local and foreign export bills.

It is now inquiring into the 59 branches of the 27 banks to know whether they were partners in any irregularity that helped the Ruposhi Bangla branch buy fake acceptance bills.

The ACC also has asked these banks to urgently submit documents relating to

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Waste from floating food shops at Sadarghat Launch Terminal is dumped into the river Buriganga every day. The river, considered the lifeline of the capital, is gradually dying due to such reckless activities. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Victorious Tigresses

Bangladesh beat SA in first ODI

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh women's cricket team beat South Africa by two wickets in yesterday's first ODI of the three-match series at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur. Lata Mondol was the star as she made the match-high 31 off 54 balls.

The South African women won the toss and chose to bat but were all out in 34.4 overs for only 75 after the heroics of off-spinner Khadijatul Kobra and leg-spinner Rumana Ahmed who collected

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Sonali board refuses to take scam responsibility

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The board of directors of Sonali Bank yesterday declined to take responsibility for the Hall-Mark Group loan scam, officials said.

At the bank's annual general meeting at its headquarters in the capital, the board also criticised the central bank for its recent recommendation about reconstituting the board.

Some of the board

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LOAN REMARKS

Muhith says sorry Sonali board's role questioned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Facing a barrage of criticism both in and outside parliament, Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday made an apology for his remarks on the Sonali Bank loan scam that the Tk 4,000 crore swindled by Hall-Mark Group was a paltry amount.

"I should not have made the remarks on that day [Sunday]. I am seeking apology. I'm withdrawing the remarks.... There is a huge hue and cry about the forgery. I think I am now the most hated person in the country," he told the House.

The entire nation has reached a consensus that exemplary punishment must be meted out to the perpetrators of the crime so that nobody dares to commit such an offence in future, added the minister.



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Destiny must refund money
Commerce ministry suggests in initial probe report; gets 2 more months to give detailed report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government should urgently take steps so that Destiny Group refund the money it collected unlawfully from public, recommended the commerce ministry's initial findings.

The report has recently been sent to Finance Minister AMA Muhith.

The findings endorsed the Bangladesh Bank (BB) report that detected

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PRIVILEGES OF SANGSAD

No law made in 4 decades

SHAKHAWAT LITON

Since coming into existence following the general elections of March 1973, the Jatiya Sangsad has not been able to formulate a law defining its own privileges and those of its members, thanks to the indifference of successive governments to the con-

stitutional provision to that end.

Several moves had been made to legislate on the privileges of parliament and its members, but the governments did not let those succeed, alleged some senior lawmakers while talking to The Daily Star recently.

Article 78 of the constitution pro-

vides parliament and its members with immunity regarding the House proceedings and their speeches and votes.

It says that the validity of parliamentary proceedings will not be questioned in any court and no lawmakers will be liable to proceedings

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US worried about GB

Dipu Moni says it is now running more efficiently

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni has asserted that the Grameen Bank has now been functioning legally and more efficiently than ever before.

She made the comment in response to concerns raised by US Deputy Secretary of State William J Burns about maintaining

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ABDUCTION OF 4 YOUTHS IN SAVAR

2 whistle-blowers held as suspects

KAILASH SARKAR

Two youths in Savar witnessed the abduction of their four friends on August 13 and informed the victims' parents without even thinking their rightful act might inflict punishment upon them.

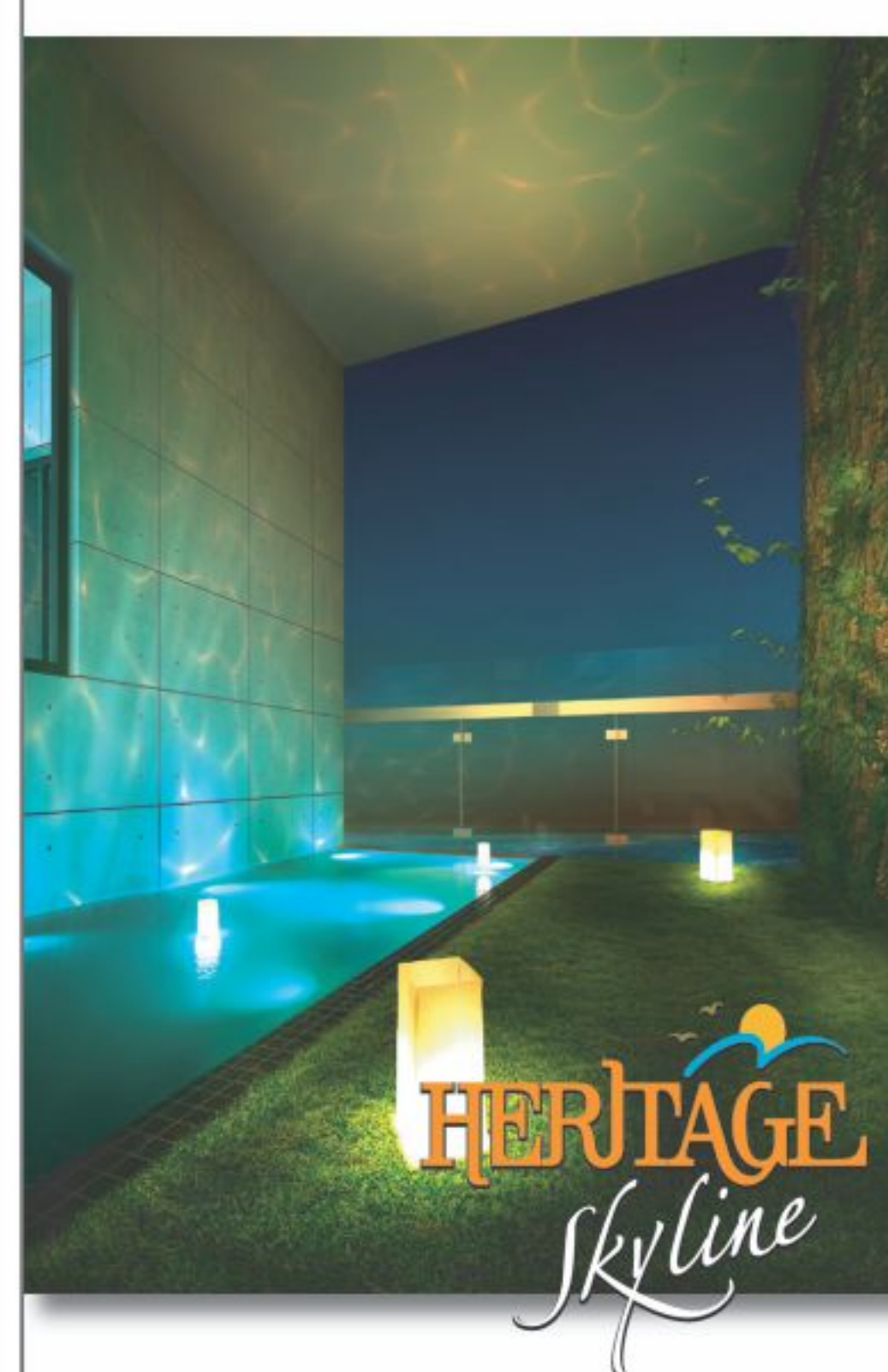
The information led one of the parents to file a case with Savar police on August 17 so that the law enforcers could investigate the matter and rescue the four.

The police acted fast. But instead of investigating the case, they branded the two whistle blowers -- Mohammad Rajib, 24, and Sabuj Miah, 25, -- as the abductors.

The two were quickly arrested and put behind bars without interrogation.

Talking to The Daily Star, families of the four youths said those two witnesses paid the penalty for helping them.

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