

THE AGE OF COUPS

Book takes readers back to the dark era of Bangladesh

PAGE 24

CAN SAARC WIN NOBEL?

Where did Europe succeed and where did South Asia fail

PAGE 9

'THE NEW COMMANDER'

Congress gets ready for 2014 polls with Rahul as coordination chief

PAGE 7

HALL-MARK LOAN SCAM

Ex-directors of Sonali also guilty

Just past board of the bank approved Tk 65cr loan

SAJJADUR RAHMAN

The immediate past board of directors of Sonali Bank approved a Tk 65.41 crore project loan for controversial Hall-Mark Group, which shows that the board was responsible, at least partly, for the Hall-Mark loan scam.

Of the amount, Tk 57 crore has already been disbursed, according to Sonali Bank.

The board approved the loan in April last year when Hall-Mark's liabilities to the state-owned bank was around Tk 500 crore, show documents.

"Had the board played its due role, the scam could have been detected much earlier," Awami League lawmaker Tajul Islam, head of a parliamentary committee probing the Hall-Mark loan scam, told

The Daily Star on Thursday.

He said the bulk of the Tk 2,686 crore Hall-Mark loan was disbursed in three months till April this year.

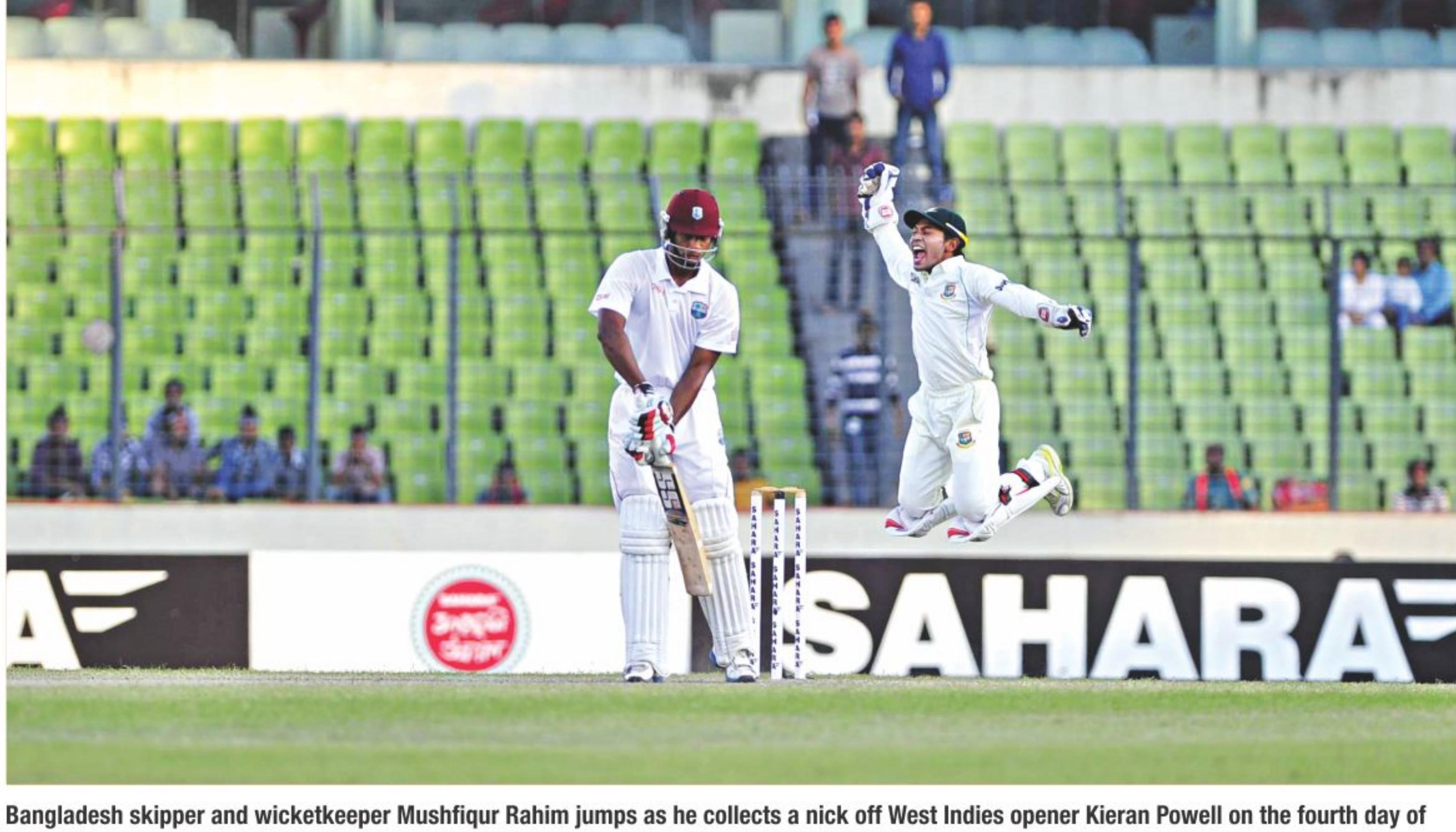
The lawmaker said the board had the scope for discussing these issues in detail in its monthly meeting, but it didn't.

"The board did not hide the issue from us... Tk 65 crore is very insignificant considering the size of the total amount of the loan," said Tajul.

A Bangladesh Bank report revealed the scam in May, and said Hall-Mark along with five other companies took away Tk 3,547 crore from Sonali Bank's Ruposhi Bangla Hotel branch between 2010 and this year with forged documents.

A Sonali Bank audit also found proof of

SEE PAGE 19 COL 8



Bangladesh skipper and wicketkeeper Mushfiqur Rahim jumps as he collects a nick off West Indies opener Kieran Powell on the fourth day of the first Test at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday. More on page 16.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

US FED RESERVE BANK PLOT Nafis indicted

CNN, New York



Rezwanul Ahsan Nafis

Nafis, a Bangladeshi youth who authorities say tried to blow up New York's Federal Reserve Bank, was indicted Thursday on charges of using a weapon of mass destruction and trying to provide material support to al-Qaeda.

The 21-year-old foreign exchange student was arrested by federal authorities in a sting operation last month. He was accused of trying to detonate what he thought was a 1,000-pound bomb by using his cell phone as a trigger.

Quazi Mohammad Rezwanul Ahsan Nafis, allegedly inspired by al-Qaeda, came to the United States in

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

Attacks will only speed up war crimes trial

PM warns 'plotters'; threatens to try them under Sharia law, if need be

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said those attacking law enforcers and trying to hinder the war crimes trial could be tried under sharia.

"The more excesses they do, the faster will be the war crimes trials. There will be no let-up in the trials," she said.

The government knows how to deal with those who are attacking police and out to save the war criminals. Besides, there are even alternative means like sharia and qiyas to try them, she said.

The prime minister was addressing a meeting of the Awami League Central Working Committee at her Gono Bhaban residence.

Hasina, also president of the ruling AL, said attacking police would bring no good for Jamaat-Shibir.

Her comments follow a spate of attacks on the police by activists of Jamaat-e-Islami and its student body Islami Chhatra Shibir. The Islamist party has lately stepped up its demonstrations for a halt to the trials of its top brass on charges of war crimes.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 5

BIBIYANA 1 POWER PROJECT Saudi company to get the job

Summit overcomes financing hurdles for two big power projects

SHARIER KHAN

Local power company Summit has overcome its financing hurdles to two major base-load power projects while it is formally withdrawing from another power project in Bibiyana so that the government can award the deal for that to a Saudi company.

Summit chief Muhammad Aziz Khan has said his company has arranged \$190 million financing for Meghnaghat dual-fuel 335 megawatt power plant, work on which was started in February using Summit's own funds.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

Rejoinder, our reply

Biman Bangladesh Airlines in a rejoinder on November 8 contradicted some information of a report headlined "Undisclosed luggage bogs Biman down" published in The Daily Star on November 5.

The rejoinder said as to information stated in paragraph eight of the report about the "guessing" of a pilot "It is to be noted that one of the captains of Boeing-777ER aircraft guessed that there might have been some hidden weight. He quantified the figure to 5,000kg, as an example.

It also said as per the system prevailing in the

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5



Palestinian boy Fares Sadallah, 11, cries as he sits outside his home which was damaged following an Israeli air strike in northern Gaza Strip yesterday. Egypt's premier vowed to intensify Cairo's efforts to secure a truce and urged world leaders to end Israel's "aggression" in Gaza, as he visited the Hamas-run enclave.

PHOTO: AFP

Gaza blitzed

Casualties spiral in Israeli air strike; visiting Egyptian leaders condemn 'blatant aggression'

AGENCIES

"What did my son do to die like this?" he pleaded. "What was his mistake? He is 11-month-old, what did he do?"

Tiny Omar, who died in an Israeli air strike Wednesday night, is the youngest casualty of the conflict in Gaza and Israel.

As violence escalated for a third day, Egyptian leaders have promised to support Gaza against Israeli attacks.

President Mohammed Morsi said he would not leave Gaza on its own and condemned Israel's "blatant aggression", hours after his prime minister visited Gaza.

Israel mounted a huge attack overnight, targeting dozens of locations. Hamas hit back yesterday, firing missiles into southern Israel. Last night air sirens were heard in Tel Aviv, reports Daily Mail.

Twenty Palestinians and three Israelis have been killed since Wednesday.

A photographer and picture editor for the BBC, Jihad

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

Involved, but indirectly

3 arrestees tell about their roles in Parag abduction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three of the six persons arrested by Rab Wednesday night over the abduction of Parag Mondol gave confessional statements yesterday while the rest were placed on a 10-day remand each.

In their statements, Zahidul Islam and Mohammad Ali Rifat, both students, and auto-rickshaw driver Kala Chand described their roles in the kidnap, said OC Shakhawat Hossain of South Keraniganj Police Station.

Zahid and Rifat claimed gang leader Ameer Hossain alias Langra Ameer took away Parag after shooting the boy's mother, sister and the family's driver. They were

SEE PAGE 19 COL 5

War trial to end by govt's tenure

Home minister vows to resist Jamaat

UNB, Dhaka

Home Minister Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir yesterday said the present government was committed to completing the war crimes trial within its tenure, overcoming all obstacles.

"The anti-liberation force is trying to halt the trial. But their efforts will not succeed," he told a function at Bangladesh Shishu Academy in the capital.

Terming Jamaat a "militant party patronised by BNP", Alamgir said Jamaat

SEE PAGE 19 COL 1

Govt out to create crisis

Says BNP; hints at joining JS

UNB, Dhaka

BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said the government was desperately trying to create anarchy in the country to hang onto power.

"We are passing through a very critical time. The country is heading towards one-party rule again as the government in a planned way is creating a crisis to perpetuate its power," he told a discussion in the capital.

In another programme at Jatiya Press

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

ANOTHER STORY ON PAGE 2

MORE STORY ON PAGE 3

TANGAIL BY-POLLS TOMORROW

AL expels its rebel aspirant

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

The by-polls to Tangail-3 constituency slated for tomorrow is expected to see a tough contest between Awami League-nominated contestant and the rebel AL candidate. The main opposition BNP has boycotted the by-polls.

The Awami League Parliamentary Board nominated Shahidul Islam Lebu, former general secretary of Ghatai upazila AL unit, and Tangail District AL religious affairs secretary Amanur Rahman Khan Rana is contesting the



Amanur Rahman Khan

Subhash passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Subhash Dutta, an iconic figure of Bangla cinema, died of old age complications at his residence in the capital

SEE PAGE 19 COL 5