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'ALLUVIAL FACES & DIARY'

The solo exhibition reflects Kalidas Karmakar's metaphysical knowledge

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TRAFFICKING REPORT

The UNODC Anti-Human Trafficking Unit chief discusses the key findings

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WHEN EAST MEETS WEST

George Harrison's widow lauds Ravi Shankar at US memorial

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Thai PM upbeat on trade with Dhaka

Hopes business volume to double by 2015; Bangladeshi businessmen seek duty-free access to Thailand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thailand wants to double its two-way trade -- export and import -- with Bangladesh by 2015 in an effort to boost commerce and investment, Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra said in Dhaka yesterday.

"There's a great potential for further expansion of economic partnership between the two countries...we need closer cooperation between our governments and more importantly between our private sectors," said Shinawatra.

There are several areas Thailand would be focusing on, she said at a dinner hosted by the Federation of Bangladesh

Chambers of Commerce and Industry in her honour at Radisson Hotel last night.

Shinawatra arrived in Dhaka around 5:30pm on a two-day official visit.

"First connectivity, both land and sea, especially sea linkage through Myanmar...this route will help boost our economies, reducing transportation cost and saving time," said the first female premier of Thailand.

She termed Bangladesh's six percent plus GDP growth "quite healthy" and added that Bangladesh had strong potentials for further expansion of trade and business with her country.

"I will discuss about all the issues

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Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina receives her Thai counterpart Yingluck Shinawatra at the Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

ASHULIA INDUSTRIAL AREA

Factories set up violating rules

Hundreds of structures built flouting building code; Dhaka's master plan ignored

TAWFIQUE ALI

Hundreds of industrial units, including the fire-struck Tazreen garments factory, have been constructed in the rural areas of Ashulia violating building code and the capital's master plan, according to officials and documents.

The Dhaka Metropolitan Development Plan (DMDP), also known as the master plan, covers up to the Dhaleshwari River in the

region, Ashulia and beyond. The plan does not permit factories in the "so-called" Ashulia industrial district, including Nischintapur, Narasinghapur, Jamgora and Jirabo areas on the capital's outskirts, said Rajuk officials.

These areas, which fall under the jurisdiction of the Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha (Rajuk), were designated for homesteads and croplands, not industries, said

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38 Shibir men held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detectives have detained at least 38 leaders and activists of pro-Jamaat student body Islami Chhatra Shibir at the capital over the last two days.

Shibir in a statement threatened to call for hartal if their detained leaders were not released by today.

Most of the 38 detainees were presidents and general secretaries of Shibir units in the west zone of the capital, Gazi Rabiul Islam, assistant

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Railway goes backward

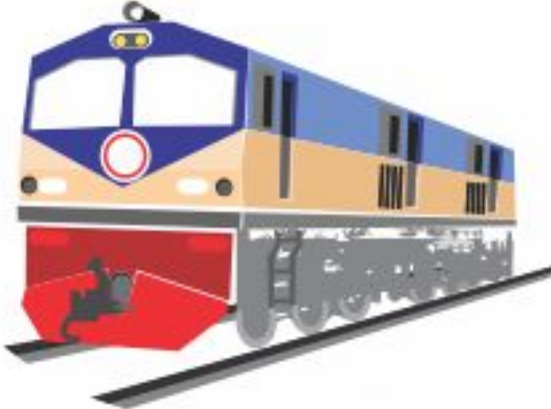
Wants to buy 70 outdated locomotives to favour a company; lobbying against it delays purchase

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railway's move to buy 70 meter-gauge diesel-electric locomotives has been delayed by over a year due to lobbying by potential bidders to change a criterion of the tender that favours only one company.

The companies argued that the locomotives railway authorities were trying to procure were of half-a-century-old technology and their production was ceasing with the emergence of new generation locomotives that were cheaper, faster, more powerful and environment friendly.

Over the years, the number of railway locomotives has reduced to 295 from 486. Most of them are 40 to 50 years old. The railway desperately needs new locomotives.



The companies complained that a technical specification of the tender restricts most globally renowned locomotive manufacturers to take part in the bidding while it favours a certain company from which the railway had been buying locomotives since the 50s.

The railway in September, 2011, floated an international tender to buy the locomotives that have engine revolution capacity of 900 to 1,000 per minute (RPM) for around \$250 to 285 million. But most locomotive manufacturers make engines that run at higher RPMs, up to 1,900 RPMs.

Reputable companies like GE (General

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DEC 22, 1971 Mujibnagar government came home

SYED BADRUL AHSAN

On December 22, 1971, the Mujibnagar government came home to a liberated Bangladesh. The moment remains an indelible part of our history, for the provisional government of Bangladesh constituted in April 1971 was the very first instance in history of a government formed by, composed of and administered by Bangalees.

Among those who were

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A smashed rickshaw is being taken off the road at Khilgaon level crossing in the capital yesterday after a train hit the three-wheeler and two other vehicles, leaving one dead. Inset, a police wrecker removing a damaged car from the spot.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



Woman killed as train rams rickshaw

2 other vehicles also hit at level crossing; 2 kids injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A woman was killed and two of her children and a rickshaw puller were injured when a train hit a rickshaw and two other vehicles at Khilgaon level crossing in the capital yesterday.

The dead is Ratna Khandaker, 35, wife of Ripon Khandakar of the city's Goran area.

Ratna along with her two children Khandaker Ashfaq Rifat, 14, and Atika

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AL COUNCIL ON DEC 29

Move to create new leaders

Party may expand central working committee

HASAN JAHIID TUSHER

The 73-member Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC), the highest decision making body of the ruling party, might be expanded through its upcoming national council on December 29.

But the size of the committee had not been finalised yet, said party insiders, adding that this time it might get 91 to 101 members.

Sources said the move was being mulled to accommodate more leaders, including those who are known as reformist, in the committee.

According to the party constitution, the ALCWC is to be comprised of 73 members including the party president, general secretary, presidium members, treasurer, departmental secretaries and members. Among them, 26

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14-party demo today against plot to foil war crimes trial

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Ruling Awami League-led 14-party alliance will hold mass processions and rallies across the country today, demanding immediate completion of war crimes trial and protesting, as it claimed, BNP-Jamaat conspiracy against it.

This would be the alliance's first countrywide major political campaign in favour of war crimes trial since the Awami League (AL)-led grand

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Infighting costs JP its base

AL's Sharfuddin Jhantu becomes first mayor of Rangpur City Corporation beating two expelled JP leaders

KONGKON KARMAKER and MEHEDY HASAN, from Rangpur

The Jatiya Party is gradually losing its base in Rangpur, party chief Ershad's home district, due to feud among local leaders.

In the Rangpur City Corporation polls on Thursday, Md Sharfuddin Ahmed Jhantu emerged as winner, defeating closest rival Md Mostafizar Rahman Mostafa by 28,450 votes.

Jhantu, backed by Nagorik Committee, was unofficially declared as the first mayor of the city around 2:50am yesterday. He bagged 1,06,255 votes while Mostafa secured 77,805 votes from 178 centres.

Another mayoral candidate, ATM Abdur Rouf Manik, secured 37,208 votes.

Jhantu, Mostafa and Manik have one thing in common -- they are all former Jatiya Party leaders.



Back in 1990, Jhantu was elected chairman of Rangpur sadar upazila as a JP candidate. The upazila system was abolished in 1991 and revived in 1998.

In 1993, Jhantu, a JP favourite, won the mayoral polls of Rangpur municipality as a JP favourite. Later, he left the post and contested the parliamentary elections in 1996 with the party's ticket and became a lawmaker.

He joined Awami League in 2001, stood for the parliamentary election and lost it.

Jatiya Party leaders Mostafa and Manik were elected upazila chairman of Rangpur sadar and mayor of erstwhile Rangpur municipality respectively in 2009 and 2010.

In July this year, the Rangpur municipality turned into

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S Asian turtles in danger

APP, Kolkata

Conservationists have expressed alarm over the low number of turtles arriving on the coast of east India and Bangladesh for the nesting season, blaming overfishing and climate change for the decline.

Between November and March, several species of sea turtle, including the Olive Ridley, travel thousands of

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