

**PADMA BRIDGE**

Neither the government nor the WB has the right to deprive people

PAGE 15

RIGHTS OFFER DECLINES

Raising capital through the mechanism falls 63 percent this year

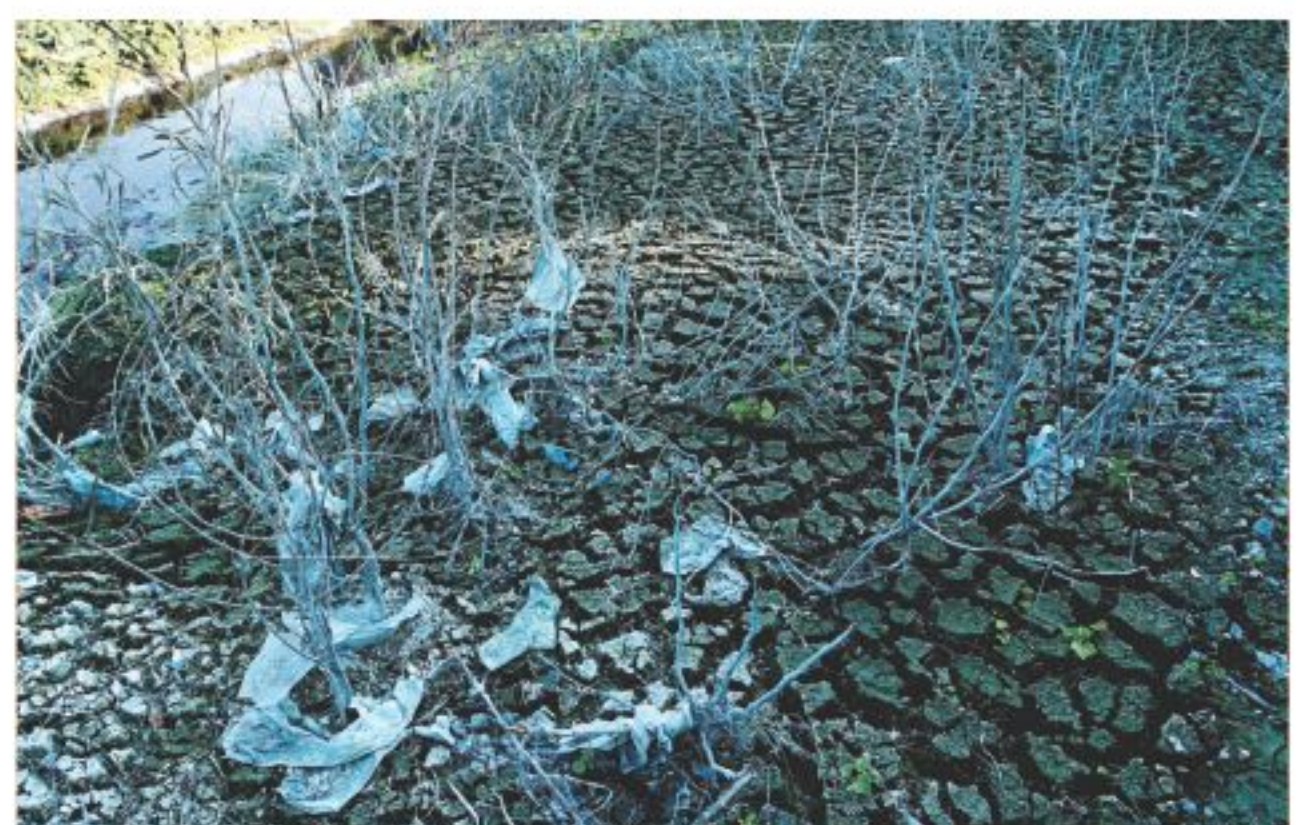
PAGE B1

PUTIN IN INDIA

Inks trade, arms, jet, helicopter deals

PAGE 7

COULDN'T CARE LESS



This collage of eye-pleasing colours in fact is a saga of mindless attitude to mother nature. Greedy industrialists have always cared more about money than the future generation. Their reckless disregard for environment has almost killed the river Buriganga; another major river is moving towards the same fate. Despite media outcries and complaints from locals, toxic effluents from a factory at Godnail in Narayanganj keep flowing through a tiny canal into the river Shitalakkhya. The hazardous substances are also contaminating soil. Once arable, the land is now discoloured; trees are dried up too. These photos were taken recently, but The Daily Star over the last few years published several other photos along with stories on the issue. The situation is getting worse than improving.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Hall-Mark not alone

5 other business entities also plundered over Tk 345cr from the same Sonali branch; ACC to file 26 cases

M RAHMAN

The Anti-Corruption Commission will file 26 cases against several top officials of Sonali Bank and five business entities for misappropriating more than Tk 345 crore of depositors' money, said an ACC high-up. The sum is funded portion (an amount given in cash) of the Tk 3,547 crore credit that the five firms and Hall-Mark Group swindled from Sonali Bank's Ruposhi Bangla Hotel branch with the help of some bank officials using forged documents between October last year and May this year, according to an ACC enquiry. T and Brothers swindled Tk 317.52 crore, Paragon Knit Composite Ltd and its sister concern Tk 13.58 crore, DN Sports and its sister concern Tk 2.81 crore, Nakshi Knit and Composite Ltd and its sister

concerns Tk 10.81 crore and Khanjahan Ali Sweater Ltd Tk 1.14 crore.

ACC Commissioner Mohammad Badiuzzaman told The Daily Star that 26 cases will be lodged this week under anti-money laundering and corruption prevention acts in connection with the misappropriation of more than Tk 345 crore.

If convicted, the accused might have to spend up to 10 years in prison, and their moveable and immovable properties might also be confiscated.

In May, a Bangladesh Bank probe revealed serious irregularities at Sonali Bank's Ruposhi Bangla Hotel branch in sanctioning and disbursing loans of Tk 3,547 crore to the five firms and Hall-Mark. Of the amount, Hall-Mark took Tk 2,686 crore showing fake documents.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 5

HALL-MARK SCAM

Sonali trio hid forged papers

Says anti-graft body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The general manager of Sonali Bank and two of his deputies used to hide the forged documents of Hall-Mark Group from the bank's top authorities to help it get a loan of more than Tk 2,600 crore, said a high official of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) yesterday.

The trio, who were arrested on Sunday, used to take bribe from Hall-Mark on a monthly basis, the ACC official added.

A Dhaka court yesterday placed each of the three -- suspended GM Meer Mahidur Rahman and two suspended deputy general managers (DGMs) Sheikh Altaf Hossain and Shafizuddin Ahmed -- on a 12-day remand in two cases filed in connection with the Hall-Mark loan scam.

The first case was filed for misappropriating Tk 208 crore while the other for misappropriating Tk 1.72 crore.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 2



Fakhruddin denied bail again

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday again rejected two bail petitions of BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhruddin Alamgir in as many cases for torching vehicles during the opposition's road blockade this month.

The Metropolitan

SEE PAGE 19 COL 8

NEWS ANALYSIS

Abuse of law

SHAKHAWAT LITON and CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER

BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhruddin Alamgir, now in jail, faces some cases that are quite interesting in nature.

When he had been first arrested on May 15, he was charged for planning and provoking the torching of a vehicle on April 29 in front of Falcon Tower, near the Prime Minister's Office. Party standing committee members MK Anwar, Brig Gen (ret'd) Hannan Shah and Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain, too, were sued over similar charges.

But who torched the bus and how it was done as per plan and provocation?

Believe it or not, according to the charge sheet, two BNP standing committee members Mirza Abbas and Goyeshwar Chandra Roy, two BNP lawmakers Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anne and Mahbubuddin Khokon and Bangladesh Jatiya Party chief and its lone lawmaker barrister Andaleev Rahman Partho went there along with others around 9:00pm on April 29 to torch the bus.

In total, police pressed charges against 46 people for

SEE PAGE 6 COL 5



Xmas today

UNB, Dhaka

The Christian community of the country, as elsewhere across the globe, celebrates Christmas today commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ.

According to Christian belief, God appeared on earth through his son, Jesus Christ, on this day.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 1



Bookbinders at the capital's Banglabazar spend busy hours to meet the deadline for "Text Book Distribution Festival" in all primary and secondary schools and madrasas across the country. In Chittagong, staff take new textbooks to different institutions. The photos were taken yesterday.

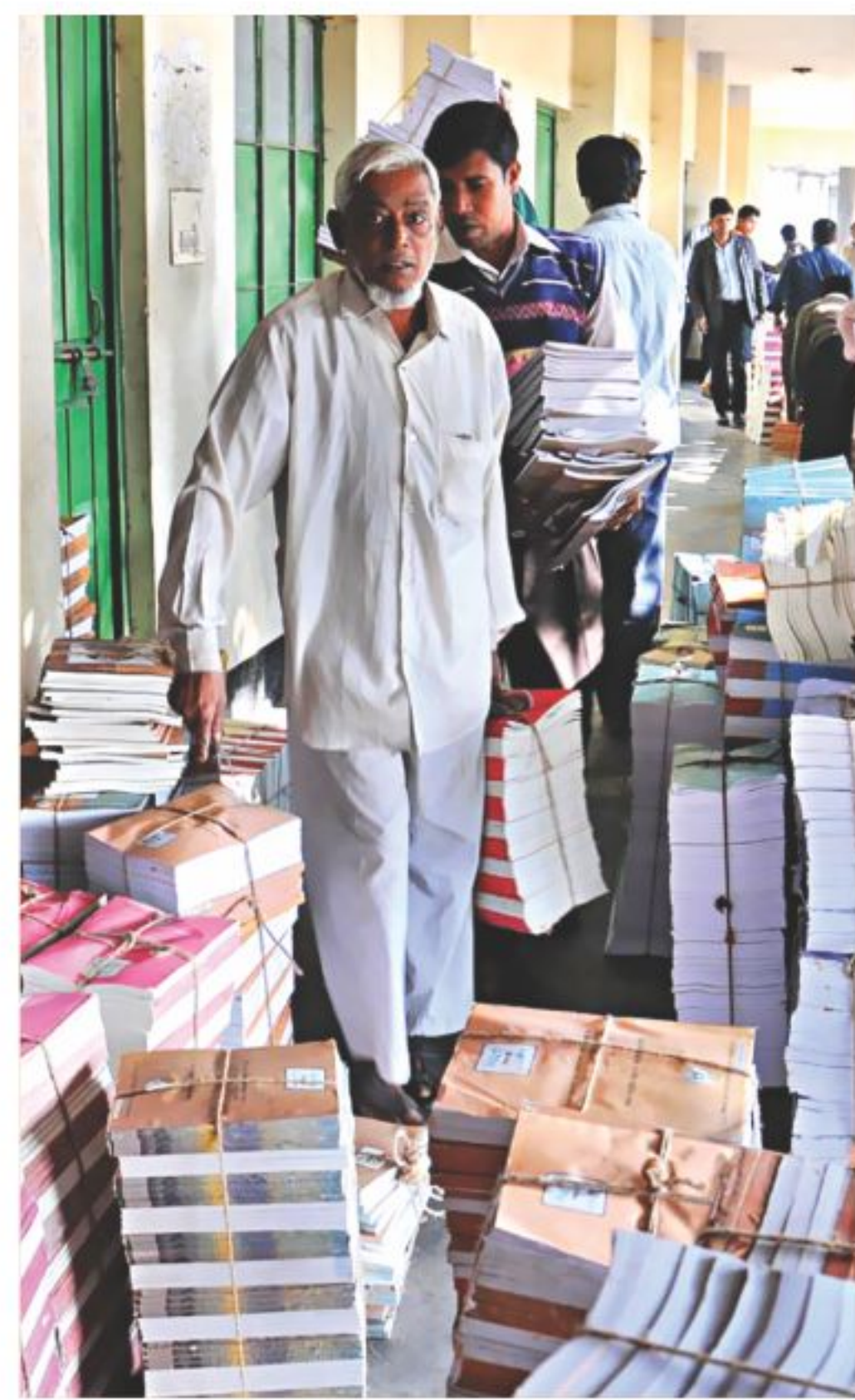


PHOTO: STAR

Textbook job done well

School students to get textbooks on Jan 1

WASIM BIN HABIB

With seven days to go before the start of distribution, free textbooks for primary school students have reached upazilas across the country while 11 percent of secondary school textbooks are about to reach there.

The government aims at distributing more than 26.17 crore copies of new textbooks to over 3.68 crore students of primary, secondary (class VI-X), ebtedai (primary level of madrasa), dakhil (secondary level of madrasa) and vocational classes of the 2013 academic session.

"With the cooperation of all, we hope to observe January 1 as the Textbook Festival Day like we did last year," Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid yesterday told The Daily Star.

The minister will open the festival at

SEE PAGE 19 COL 1