



## NINE BANKERS SUED

Premier Bank filed a criminal case against the officials for fund fraud

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## SOUTHERN BREEZE

Carnatic concert pays tribute to first Carnatic American musician

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## DESERT SIEGE

Algeria fears a rise in death toll from hostage attack by Islamist militants

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## PRODUCTION

# Rice figures mismatch

INAM AHMED

It comes as a shock for those who believe Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in food production.

A new study has found that over the years, rice production has been reported noticeably inflated. At least in one year, it was inflated as much as 3.5 million tonnes.

On the other hand, consumption has also been shown at least about 10 percent less than actual.

Similarly, waste of grain and use of it as seed and feed have been calculated 20 percent less than actual, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS), a leading research organisation, found in a new study.

The net result is that Bangladesh has been formulating its food policy on the wrong notion that it has a good surplus of grains.

BIDS has come to such conclusions after studying government records, especially those of the Bangladesh Bureau

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2012 DATA ON RICE		
	BBS FIGURE	BIDS FIGURE
Gross production	35.7	34.7
Net production	32	28.6
Total consumption	26	28.5
Surplus	4-5	0.1

IN MILLION TONNE



Trading continues at a wholesale paddy market of Bauphal upazila in Patuakhali. Farmers who came to the market returned frustrated as the prices were much lower than what they had expected. The photo was taken a few days ago.

PHOTO: STAR

## Law-'breaker'

MP rebukes magistrate, snatches owner of illegal brick kiln from cops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A lawmaker took away an offender from a mobile court in Rajshahi city yesterday after it handed down a sentence.

Lawmaker Enamul Haque from Rajshahi-4 constituency (Bagmara) first rebuked the mobile court's magistrate over the phone for convicting Ahsanul Kabir of operating a brick kiln illegally.

As the magistrate refused to withdraw the verdict, the MP

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Enamul Haque

## Down with default loans

Sonali Bank's bad lending shot up by 116pc

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

Sonali Bank's default loans shot up by 116 percent year-on-year in December 2012, thanks to the Hall-Mark and other scams, show the preliminary data of the state-run bank.

The bank's default loans stood at Tk 12,363 crore on December 31, 2012, up from Tk 5,705 crore in the same period of the previous year.

The bank's Ruposhi Bangla Hotel branch accounted for Tk 2,082 crore of the default loans, while the branch's total loan was Tk 2,138 crore.

"The hike in default loans of a single bank

by this margin [Tk 6,658 crore] is rare," said a Sonali Bank official asking not to be named.

The official further said big irregularities in different branches of the bank were detected in Bangladesh Bank inspection and the irregularities sent the default loans soaring.

The biggest incidence of irregularity was detected at the bank's Ruposhi Bangla Hotel branch, the source for embezzlement of Tk 3,547 crore by five firms, including the Hall-Mark Group, in the name of bill purchase.

Of the amount, Tk 2,626 crore was swindled by the Hall-Mark Group.

The loans were given to the accused

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## 'Mentally ill' woman beaten to death

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mob beat a mentally-impaired woman to death and injured her cousin in the presence of law enforcers at Kaliakoir in Gazipur on Saturday, suspecting the two as kidnapers.

The deceased, Morjina Akhter, 35, of Tanuram village in Kurigram, used to live with her cousin Josna Akhter in a rented house in Kaliakoir.

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## NEWS ANALYSIS

# The big buy

BRIG GEN (RETD) SHAHEDUL ANAM KHAN

It is indeed a big buy, made to look even bigger because of the fact that, one, it is the single largest shopping order, and two, the source of supply is one single country; Russia. The shopping list includes weaponry for all the three services but in terms of volume the bulk perhaps goes to the army. The purchase will be through the supplier's credit of one billion dollars; with an interest rate of 4 percent (so far what we are able to learn). In terms of taka, it is eight thousand crore, nearly as much as the amount allotted to the health sector in the current year's budget.

However, there is an element of mystery surrounding the

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## WAR CRIMES TRIAL

### Maiden verdict today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The much-awaited day has arrived as the international crimes tribunal would deliver its maiden verdict on a crimes against humanity case today. The nation had eagerly waited 41 years

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## LONG DISTANCE BUS FARE

# 10 paisa hike a km

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday increased fares of long-distance bus by 10 paisa per kilometre, 17 days after the latest hikes in fuel prices.

This means inter-district passengers will have to pay Tk 1.45 instead of Tk 1.35 a km from tomorrow, when the hike takes effect, Communications Minister Obaidul Quader



said after a meeting on re-fixing the fare at his ministry.

The new fare, however, will not be applicable for Dhaka and Chittagong as most of the buses and minibuses in the two major metropolitan cities run on compressed natural gas (CNG).

There is an executive order for not increasing fares in these two cities,

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## BOY KILLED AT BAU

### Father sues 25 BCL men

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

One hundred and fifty people, including 25 Chhatra League activists, were accused in a case filed yesterday for the killing of a boy during the previous day's gun violence at Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) in

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## Fakhrul turns to HC

Seeks respite from 'false' cases; hartal in Rajshahi, Rangpur for Feb 4

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday filed a writ petition, seeking a High Court order on the government not to implicate him in any more cases "without the due process of law".

Immediately after Fakhrul had secured bail from the HC in two cases, the government showed him arrested in two fresh cases though he had no involvement in the

offences mentioned and his name was not on the list of the accused, said Fakhrul's lawyer Zainul Abedin.

It was a violation of the law and the constitution, he noted.

Fakhrul, now in jail, said in the petition that the fresh charges brought against him were intended to harass him politically.

An HC bench of Justice Hasan Foez Siddique and Justice ABM Altaf Hossain

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A bungalow of Gulshan Society.



A concrete structure built by Joggers' Society.

## GULSHAN PARK

# Grabbing with a difference

MORSHED ALI KHAN

The Gulshan Lake Park near Road 70 is gifted with plenty of natural components to be an ideal public place. It is adorned with a lake, lush lawns, unusually wide and neat walkways and a varied collection of mature mother trees and shrubs.

But over enthusiasm and defiance to existing laws by some local groups are fast taking its toll on this rare public place. Groups of people under at least six different banners have embarked on building their own concrete structures on the green space of the park.

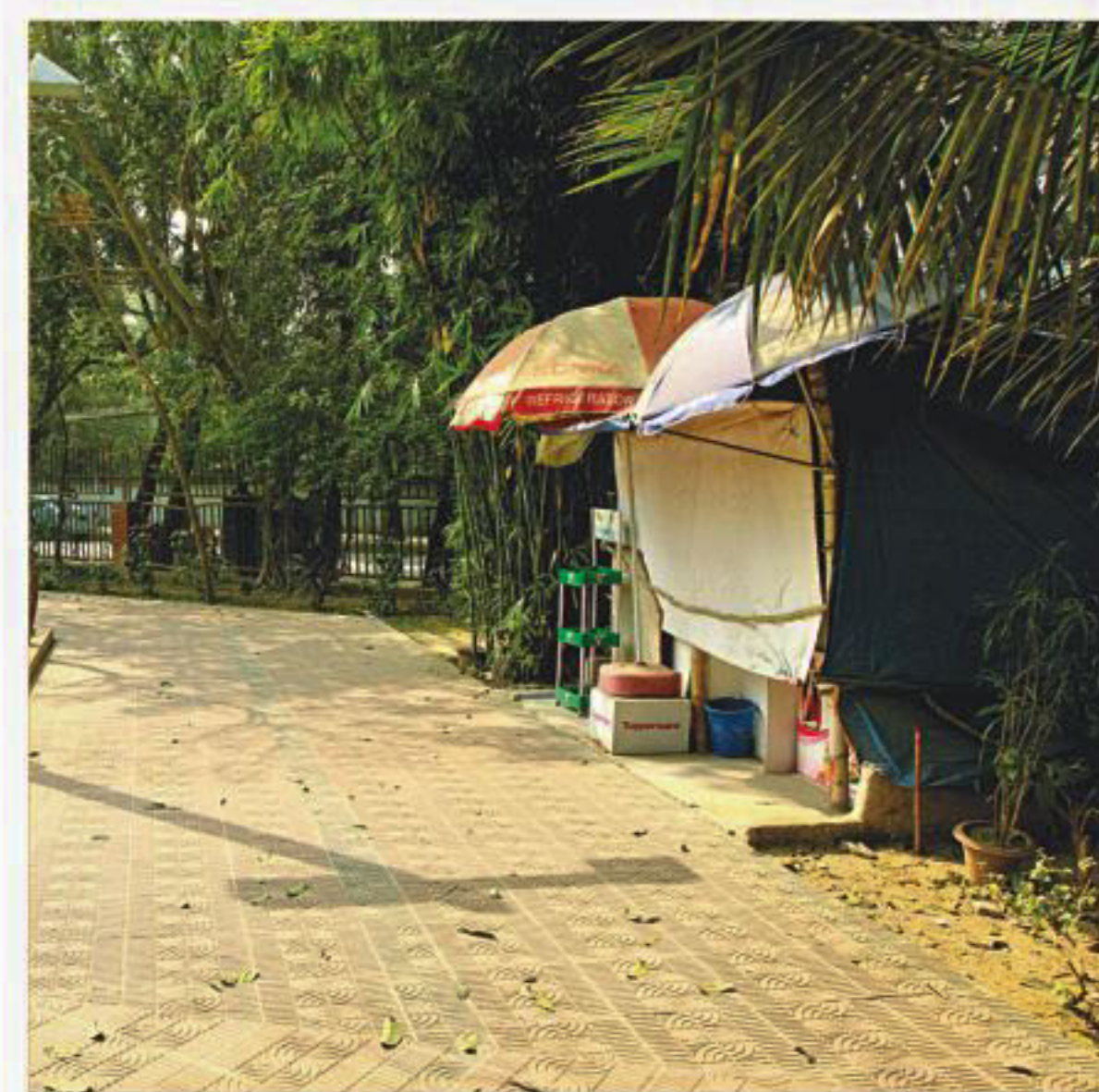
Each one has separately built their own colourful concrete structure, where right to access is often reserved for their own members. Park users say over the last few years they witnessed how alarmingly green space was replaced by concrete struc

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PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ



A structure built by Walkers' Club.



A concrete walkway occupying green space.



The amphitheatre built by Gulshan Society.