

Taxiway

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of 311 million Danish krone (Tk 445 crore), to be provided by Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) as grant.  
The government will bear around Tk 85 crore in duty and tax on imports of equipment.  
A project to coat the airport's only runway with asphalt concrete has already been started. As a result, the runway is kept closed for nine hours from 11:00pm to 8:00am every day.  
In 2008, the government approved an airport upgrade project at a cost of 311 million Danish krone (Tk 414 crore at that time). The project, however, could not be implemented because of a procedural delay and the project cost rose to Tk 636 crore.  
With the DANIDA refusing to provide the additional fund sought by the government in mid-2011, the fate of the project became uncertain.  
This was resolved in 2012, after the government decided to complete whatever works were covered by the Danish funds.  
The government then asked Munck Asfalt, a Danish firm, to reconstruct the taxiway and its lighting.  
An agreement was signed on April 26 last year between the Caab and Munck Asfalt. However, the agreement left out some vital parts of the original project of 2008 due to a shortage of funds.  
The parts of the project, which will be on hold for now, include primary and secondary radars, a new control tower and expansion of the operational building and drainage system.  
An aircraft control system, voice communication and control system, aeronautical fixed telecom network, master clock, equipment for control room and approach control will also be shelved for now.

BNP rejects

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Opposition Chief Whip Zainul Abdin Farooque at a sit-in programme in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the capital.  
Farooque alleged that it was not the president's speech, rather a written statement from the government.  
He vowed to launch a stronger movement on the streets until the ruling party brings back caretaker government in the constitution.  
The opposition chief whip also demanded withdrawal of all "fake cases" against BNP leaders and unconditional release of the party's acting secretary general, Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir.  
Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Kalyan Party, Bangladesh National Awami Party (NAP) and National Democratic Party (NDP) jointly organised the programme to press home various demands including re-establishment of non-partisan caretaker government.  
Secretary General of Bangladesh NAP Golam Mostafa, Kalyan party leader Abdul Malek Chowdhury also spoke during the programme with LDP city unit president M M Khaled Saifullah in the chair.

Suu Kyi visits South Korea

AFP, Seoul  
Myanmar's opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi arrived in South Korea yesterday for a four-day visit including meetings with politicians and a soap-opera star and the collection of a human rights award.  
The democracy leader and Nobel peace laureate will also be guest of honour at the opening on Tuesday of the Special Winter Olympics in the northeastern mountain resort of Pyeongchang - site of the full 2018 Winter Games.  
Before leaving for Pyeongchang, she will hold talks with outgoing President Lee Myung-Bak and his successor Park Geun-Hye, who takes office next month as the country's first female president.  
On Wednesday she will give the keynote speech at a Global Development Summit taking place on the sidelines of the Pyeongchang event.

Jamaat, Shibir

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sharp weapons, iron rods, hockey sticks and brick chips.  
The activists from one such procession in the capital's Motijheel area started exploding bombs and beating up cops, sending a wave of panic among passengers, pedestrians and employees of roadside offices and business houses.  
They gradually spread to Dainik Banglar Mor, stadium market, Paltan, Bangladesh Secretariat, Jagannath University, Dhaka University and Dhanmondi areas and rampaged for over an hour.  
Traffic in Motijheel, Paltan and Gulistan and Jatiya Press Club areas remained suspended for over an hour.  
Four vehicles were torched and many others vandalised.  
Some cops were seen running for safety while some tried to fight back. Those who took shelter in nearby offices were hunted down by armed cadres and beaten up.  
Surprisingly, law enforcers did not use newly introduced pepper sprays on the attackers.  
Anwar Hossain, deputy commissioner (Motijheel) of police, said they fired more than 250 rubber bullets and 100 teargas canisters. Police also arrested 48 activists with bottles of petrol.  
Police also fired over a hundred rounds from Chinese rifles and shotguns.  
Following the attacks, Finance Minister AMA Muhith said the violence had proved intelligence failure.  
He added, "I thought the militancy has been wiped out, but today's incident shows that I was wrong."  
He made the comments after visiting Rajarbagh Police Lines Hospital where Constable Delwar Hossain, a member of the unit that escorts the minister, was admitted. The policeman was severely injured in an attack near Bangladesh Secretariat.  
Talking to journalists at the secretariat, Home Minister MK Alamgir did not find any failure of police or intelligence.  
Surprisingly, Inspector General of Police Hassan Mahmood Khancker claimed they already had information on the Jamaat-Shibir plan for yesterday. "As police played due roles, Jamaat and Shibir could not carry out criminals activities completely as per their plan."  
The attack in front of the secretariat took place around 10:15am, not more than five minutes after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had entered the secretariat to hold a cabinet meeting.  
On condition of anonymity, two sub-inspectors of the VIP Protocol Unit, said during the attack, the policemen, who were on duty for the security of the secretariat and ministers, took shelter inside the compound closing the main gate.  
They said those who failed to enter the secretariat became easy prey for the rioters. Some cops, however, fired gunshots from inside.  
The attackers ran away when additional forces came.  
Asked how come such violence sparked in front of the secretariat where the PM was present, DC Nurul Islam said, "The Jamaat-Shibir men carried out the attacks and vandalisms while fleeing after they were chased by the police from Stadium Market area."  
Four cases were filed last night in connection with the violence in the capital.  
Two cases -- one under Speedy Trial Tribunal Act and the other under Explosive Act -- were filed with Paltan Police Station against 17 identified and five to six hundred unidentified persons.  
In the two cases filed with Motijheel police station, police named 30 persons while accused 400-500 unidentified persons.  
Also yesterday, at least 12 people, including 10 policemen, were wounded in a clash between Jamaat and police in Banshkhalia upazila of Chittagong.Of them, auto-rickshaw driver Nurul Huda and Abdul Momen of Paschim Chambal of Banskhalia were hit with bullets.



Spelling Bee teams from London Grace School, City School International and Chittagong Cantonment Public School pose with golden tickets in Dhaka and Chittagong yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Audience growing bigger by the day

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Ramisha Humayra Hossain (Class 9), Samin Ishmam Ahmed (Class 9) and Ahmed Ghtifaz Humayun Chy (Class 8) from Chittagong Cantonment Public School; Mansib Tahsin (Class 10), Md Hamdul Islam (Class 9)

and Shafi Shahriar (Class 9) from Chittagong Collegiate School qualified for the divisional rounds.  
In Rangpur was visited one school -- Border Guard Public School and College. The qualifiers were Mahfujur Rahan Murad (Class 8), Tamanna Akter (Class 9) and Kanij Fatema (Class 7). They will be competing with the other qualifiers in the divisional rounds, which are to begin after the ongoing school activation rounds.  
Last year, Champs21 visited around a hundred schools. This year, more than three hundred schools will be visited.  
Anyone who could not qualify through the school can still participate in the online version of the game on www.champ21.com.  
The Spelling Bee finals are to be held in June.  
Detailed information

about the competition is available on www.champs21.com, the first e-learning portal of Bangladesh. Students who want to participate in the event through the online rounds can visit the website and play the Spelling Bee Game.

Busy in politics

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Some physicians are involved with the pro-BNP Doctors Association of Bangladesh, while some others are with the pro-Awami League Swadhinata Chikitsak Parishad, he added.  
Expressing resentment over the government doctors' lack of commitment to patient services, the lawmaker said even some physicians are running separate chambers inside their offices, where they prescribe patients in exchange of fees.  
The committee also formed a three-member sub-committee headed by Prof Ali Ashraf to visit different Community Health Clinics to gain a first-hand experience of their service quality.

Political 'offenders' safe

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The Ulfa leader has been in jail since his arrest in 1997 on charge of entering into Bangladesh without valid documents. He has already served seven years in jail here and now is in safe custody as he sought political asylum.  
The two countries also signed a landmark liberal visa agreement, Revised Travel Arrangements (RTA), yesterday. This will ease the visa regime and remove restrictions on visits of each other's tourists, businesspersons, journalists, professionals, officials and students, and those in medical and several other categories.  
The Bangladesh-India 4th home minister-level talks issued a joint press statement that covered a large range of bilateral issues, mainly security and border related ones.  
But there was no mention of the much-talked-about killing of Bangladeshis on the border.  
In reply to a question regarding the border killing despite assurance from the highest political level of India, Shinde said, "This killing should not take place...such incident should not be repeated, that I agree. It has got to our notice."  
The Indian home minister said his government had already instructed those who have come with the delegation that such incidents should not happen or be repeated in future.  
About introduction of non-lethal weapons on the border, he said it was in the action and killing incidents had come down in some places where non-lethal weapons were being used.  
Asked who would be extradited first under the extradition treaty, the Indian home minister said, "It would be between the governments of Bangladesh for extending cooperation for addressing

2 sentenced

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The two to die for the Shariatpur blasts are Kamruzzaman alias Swapan, 27, and Malek Bepari alias Malek Zehadi, 28.  
The duo was present when the judge of the District and Sessions Judge's Court Mohammad Sajedul Karim pronounced the verdict around 1:00pm, said Public Prosecutor Mirza Hazrat Ali.  
Following the blasts, Shariatpur Sadar Police Station Sub-inspector Badruzzaman filed a case against some unidentified people.  
Later, investigation officer of the case Kamal Hossain submitted the charge sheet accusing the two along with the then JMB chief Shaikh Abdur Rahman and its operations commander Siddikul Islam Bangla Bhai.  
The court accepted the charge sheet on January 2, 2006, and framed charges against them on January 18 the same year.  
Abdur Rahman and Bangla Bhai were among the six militants executed in March 2007 for killing two Jhalakathi judges.  
Their executions marked the end of country's first overt militancy campaign that rattled the nation through its 2005 coordinated blasts and suicide bombings.  
The then BNP-Jamaat alliance government had dismissed the existence of Islamic militancy, and had even gone on to describe JMB operations commander Bangla Bhai as mere creation of the media.  
But later on February 23, 2005, the government was forced to ban JMB and its offshoot Jagrata Muslim Janata, Bangladesh (JMJB) that sought to establish shariah law.

India tests

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Research and Development Organisation told the media.  
"This is a major milestone in the country's strategic defence capability," he added.  
With the completion of developmental trials, the missile with a strike range of 1,500km is now ready for integration with the Indian Navy's indigenously-built nuclear-powered submarine.  
The ground and air missile capabilities, which can deliver nuclear warheads, are already with the Indian army and Air Force.  
India is the fifth country to have underwater missile capability, the others being the United States, France, Russia and China.

Govt moves

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"The ministry will take the final decision after scrutinising the proposal. There may be a few changes in the fare chart if the minister wishes," B I W T A Chairman Shamsuddoha Khandaker told The Daily Star.  
The government was likely to announce the fare hikes by next week, he added.  
Meanwhile, passengers expressed dissatisfaction over the new move that came within a few days of bus fare hike.  
Launch owners, however, said there was no alternative to increasing the fares.  
"Launch operators allow excessive passengers to make additional profit. Their services are very poor. They are more concerned about making profit than delivering quality services," said Sajal Das, a regular traveller on the Dhaka-Barisal route.  
A round trip of a launch from Dhaka to Barisal now costs Tk 37,000, up from Tk 30,000, said Badiuzzaman Badal, a leader of Bangladesh Inland Waterways (passenger carriers) Association. The cost of travel on other routes also increased in similar ratio.  
"So how can we continue giving the service without increasing the fares?"  
Last time, the government increased the launch fares in January, 2012, said BIWTA officials.  
On January 3 this year, the prices of diesel and kerosene were raised by Tk 7 to Tk 68 a litre and octane and petrol by Tk 5 a litre to Tk 99 and Tk 96 in efforts to reduce subsidies on them. These price hikes were followed by an increase in long-distance bus fares by 10 paise per kilometre, which came into effect on January 20.  
Some of the workers in

'Nobel prize'

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lucrative than the famed Swedish award.  
Samuel Yin, head of the Ruentex business empire which has invested heavily in China, said that by donating Tw\$3 billion (\$101 million) for the Tang Prize he had fulfilled one of his biggest dreams.  
"I hope that the prize will encourage more research that is beneficial to the world and humankind, promote Chinese culture and make the world a better place," he said in a statement.  
The prize is named after China's Tang Dynasty (618-907), which is much admired by Yin, said the statement released by the prize foundation.  
Beginning in 2014 prizes will be awarded every two years in four different categories -- sustainable development, biopharmaceutical science, sinology and the "rule of law" -- to individuals, regardless of nationality.  
The winner in each category will receive Tw\$50 million (\$1.7 million), compared to the eight million Swedish kronor (\$1.2 million) that comes with a Nobel Prize.  
Nobel Prizes are awarded in the fields of physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, literature and peace.  
The Tang Prize will help raise Taiwan's profile in the international scientific community, the statement added.

Left in the lurch

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over with her discharge from the hospital.  
"I have stacks of [visiting] cards of people who came to us to express sympathy. But no one has offered any help so far."  
The owners must pay compensations to the families of the dead, said Mushrefa Mishu, labour leader and president of Garment Workers Unity Forum. The compensation should be equal to the amount the workers would have earned for the rest of their lives.  
Also the injured should be provided with all medical expenses, Mushrefa said. All the workers who have worked there for more than six months are entitled to termination benefits equal to their basic wages for 120 days.  
For now, workers of Smart Export Garments want this month's wages as whatever money they have left is quickly diminishing.  
Jobs are hard to come by in Dhaka where everybody is in a race for survival and many of the fire victims think they will not be able to manage with their scant savings until they get the next job.  
"It's almost the end of this month and I don't know where money will come from the next month or how I will look after my three-member family that is dependent on me," said 19-year-old Shathi Akhtar.  
The labour leaders also

Bring back

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met by this time.  
The ultimatum came from a meeting of the alliance at BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's Gulshan office.  
The alliance did not declare any schedule for the agitation, as the Secondary School Certificate examination is starting from next month. During the time, they would observe some soft programmes, said People's Party Chairman Shakayot Hossain.  
However, BNP coordinator Tariqul Islam told reporters that they would declare the programme schedule in two days.  
Liberal Democratic Party President Oli Ahmed, Bangladesh Jatiya Party President Andaleev Rahman Partho, working council member of Jamaat, Mowlana Abdul Halim were present in the meeting, among others.

Challenged the government

as to how these illegal firms could operate.  
"What are factory inspectors doing if these factories are allowed to exist?" asked Shireen.  
"We are proud to be the second largest garment manufacturer in the world. How can we take pride in this industry if its achievement comes at the expense of our workers?"  
However, the identity of the "owners' representatives" could not be independently verified.  
Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association shrugged off its responsibilities, stating that Smart Export Garments was not its member.  
However, labour and leftist leaders yesterday held demonstrations and protests in parts of the country, pointing out that the subcontract firm had worked for six export companies that are members of BGMEA and so the exporters' association should be held responsible.  
"Who subcontracts jobs to these factories? They have to be BGMEA members," said Shireen Akhtar, president of Karmojibi Nari.  
BGMEA was well aware of the deplorable condition of workplaces and child labour but yet turned a blind eye, Mushrefa said.  
The labour leaders also