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HALL-MARK-SONALI SCAM No trace of Tk 3,600cr

SAJJADUR RAHMAN

Nine months into the detection of the Sonali Bank loan scam, investigators have yet to trace more than Tk 3,600 crore swindled out of the state-run bank by Hall-Mark and five other companies.

The Bangladesh Bank has so far been able to freeze just about Tk 30 crore from the accounts of some Hall-Mark top officials and their relatives.

Of the amount swindled, the controversial group alone took Tk 2,686 crore in loans using forged documents. But investigators say there is no money in the group's accounts.

"We've to check thousands of transactions to trace the money. It is a very difficult job indeed," says a senior official of the anti-money laundering department of the central bank.

"The money must be somewhere. But it will take a long time, say up to two years, to learn who benefited from the money and how," said the BB official, requesting anonymity.

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Jamaat-Shibir men bring out a procession from a mosque after Juma prayers and hurl brick chips on houses, shops and block a street in Anderkilla of Chittagong yesterday.

PHOTO:
STAR

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PADMA BRIDGE FINANCING

Govt now in dilemma

Finance ministry for own resources, communications backs Malaysian proposal

HASAN JAHID TUSHER and
M ABUL KALAM AZAD

Confusion looms large over financing the Padma Multipurpose Bridge, as the government is in dilemma as to whether it would use own funds or consider Malaysian proposal to construct the bridge.

A top official at the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said they were considering building the bridge using the central reserve, while a communications ministry source said that without Malaysia's funding, it would not be possible to start the construction of the

main bridge within the tenure of the present government.

Meanwhile, a fresh confusion has been created over the Malaysian proposal, as its central bank has cautioned Bangladesh government expressing doubts about the proposal's financial viability.

About 10 days ago, this made the finance ministry to send the PMO a proposal, recommending rejection of the Malaysian proposal and construction of the Padma bridge with own resources.

About the same time, the Bridges

Division sent the PMO another proposal suggesting that the government accept the Malaysian proposal as the country had accepted all the terms and conditions set by the Bridges Division.

Communications ministry sources said the Malaysian central bank had cautioned about another proposal that had been given by the Malaysian high commissioner to Dhaka, not about the one made by Dato Seri S Samy Vellu, special envoy of Malaysian prime minister.

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BNP, Jamaat put blame on govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENTS

Both the main opposition BNP and its ally Jamaat-e-Islami yesterday claimed that the government had launched Thursday's attacks on the country's religious minorities.

The claims came a day after Jamaat-Shibir men had torched and vandalised temples and houses of the minority communities in different districts.

Speaking at a press briefing in the city

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ATTACKS ON NOAKHALI HINDUS

Victims feel insecure

STAR REPORT

The Hindus at Begumganj in Noakhali and Banskhali in Chittagong remain in fear of further attack by Jamaat-Shibir and BNP after at least seven temples and 84 houses were torched, vandalised and looted on Thursday.

The Hindu families, who lost almost everything in the attacks, were living in the open with many of the victims remaining unfed until yesterday afternoon.

Locals and witnesses say no assurance from the local administration and law enforcers could bring them little comfort after the nightmares they have been through the other day.

Soon after the International Crimes Tribunal-1 delivered verdict against

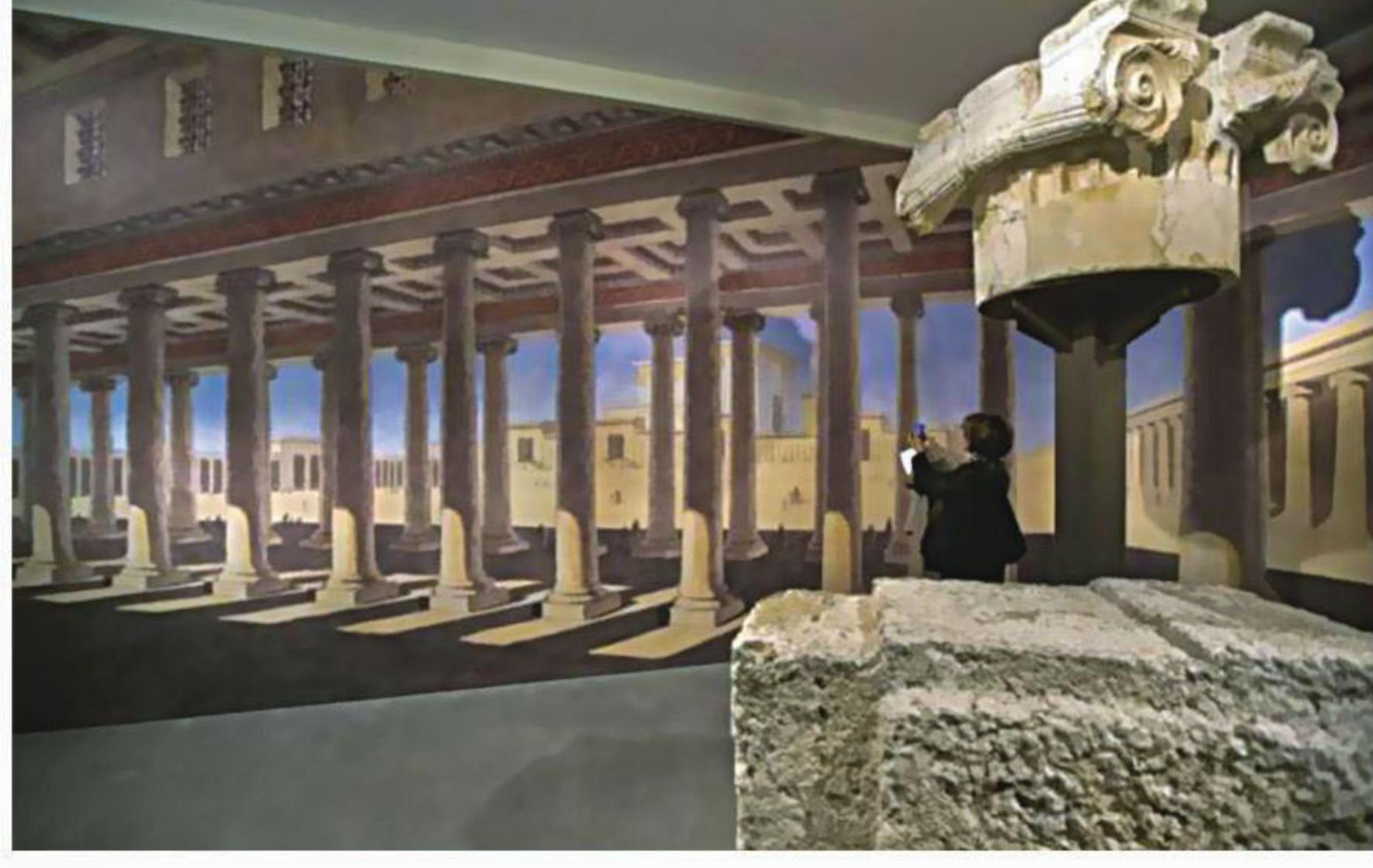
Jamaat-e-Islami Nayeb-e-Ameer Delwar Hossain Sayeedee, leaders and activists of Jamaat, its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir and local BNP men launched the attacks on the Hindus, reports our Noakhali correspondent.

The attackers damaged six temples, torched 36 houses and vandalised 40 other houses after looting those at Alampur and Aladin Nagar villages in Rajganj.

The witnesses say Shibir activists Saddam and Alauddin and BNP activists Khalil and Ibrahim led the attacks.

Equipped with various sharp weapons, iron rods and bamboos, more than 100 people attacked the villages around 4:00pm. The Hindu people had to run away to save their lives and witness the atrocities from distance.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 8



The Israel Museum recently opened an exhibition on King Herod to great fanfare and controversy.

Israel looting West Bank's treasures

ALJAZEERA ONLINE

More than four years in the making, the largest exhibition ever staged by Israel's national museum, dedicated to the life of King Herod, has generated unprecedented excitement both at home and abroad.

Entitled "Herod the Great: The King's Final Journey", the exhibition follows in the footsteps of Herod's funeral cortège 2,000 years ago, when his body was carried from the royal winter palace near Jericho to

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Daily Star Books

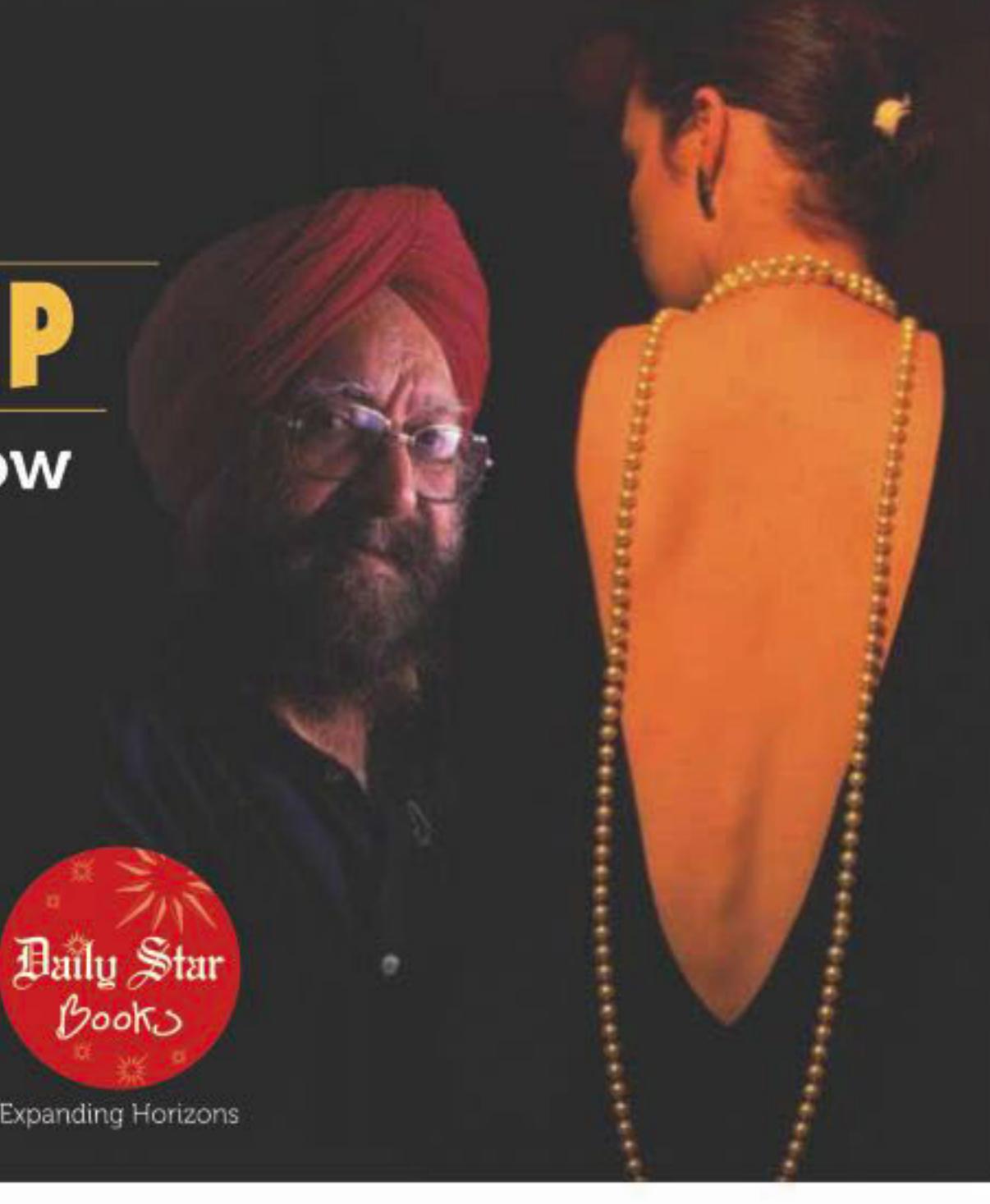
Khuswant Singh's

MALICIOUS GOSSIP

is available in the market now

Cover price: Tk 290; Home Delivery price: Tk 232

Khuswant Singh, in his acerbic prose reflects on persons such as Mountbatten, Faiz and Phoolan Devi and writes about places such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Korea and Papua New Guinea.



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ONLINE POLL

Do you agree with the prime minister that various efforts, including torching of garment factories, are being planned to ruin the garment sector and create political unrest in the country?

Yes (27%)

No (74%)

TOTAL VOTES: 382

TODAY'S POLL

The parliamentary standing committee the power, energy and mineral resources ministry has asked the ministry to take measures for legalisation of illegal gas connections. Do you think it is justified?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT

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4 on a bike killed in road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Kushtria

Four people riding on a motorbike were killed in a road accident at Khanhhanapuri in sadar upazila of Rajbari yesterday day morning.

The dead were identified as Nazrul Islam, 22, Al Amin, 24, Saidul Islam, 19, and Shafiqul Islam, 22, of Kalimohor in Pangsha upazila of Rajbari.

They were returning to Pangsha from Daulatdia when a Dhaka-bound truck rammed the motorcycle on Daulatdia-Khulna

SEE PAGE 19 COL 8

PRAYER TIMING		March 2
Azan	Jamaat	
Fajr	5-15	5-50
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-30	4-45
Maghrib	6-05	6-10
Esha	7-30	8-00



Source: Islamic Foundation

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Dhaka English Medium Schools
Cultural Programme 2013
Due to unavoidable circumstances,
we would like to shift today's
Cultural Programme to Wednesday,
6th March, 2013 at 6.00 pm.