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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

LONG TAILBACK

## Commuters suffer on Dhaka-Ctg highway

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Commuters yesterday suffered long tailbacks of traffic on Dhaka-Chittagong route as a large number of vehicles took to the highway after Thursday's countrywide shutdown.

Hundreds of busses and goods-laden vehicles were seen stuck in an 85-kilometre-long tailback stretching from Lalpole in Feni to Sitakunda in Chittagong.

The agony of passengers multiplied after some 10 to 12 vehicles went

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## PADMA BRIDGE FINANCING

# Govt now in dilemma

*Finance ministry for own resources, communications backs Malaysian proposal*

HASAN JAHIID 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 Delawar Hossain Sayedee, 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.

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## 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 cortege 2,000 years ago, when his body was carried from the royal winter palace near Jericho to

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

## SPAWNING ZONE

# 60-day ban on fishing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

To ensure safe spawning of fish and increase fish resources, a two-month official ban on fishing took effect in five major rivers of six districts in the southern region from yesterday.

The ban covers around 340-kilometre areas in Ilisha, Meghna, Tentulia, Bishkhali and Padma rivers at Barisal, Bhola, Patuakhali, Barguna, Munshiganj, Chandpur and Laxmipur districts.

The government declared the areas as fish sanctuaries in 2006.

The March 1-April 30 ban aims at giving a boost to spawning different varieties of fish, including hilsa, during the peak season, said Dr Aminul Islam, fisheries officer of Barisal division.

He also said the ban was imposed along 100-km area from Shatnol to Char Alexander of the Meghna and the Padma and branch rivers, 90-km area from Madanpur Char-Shababazpur of the Meghna and the Ilisha and branch rivers, 100-km from Vedia to Char Rustom of the Bishkhali and the Tentulia and branch rivers and 50-km from Kalapara to Charmanik.

Officials of the divisional fisheries department said

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## 4 on a bike killed in road crash

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

Four people riding on a motorbike were killed in a road accident at Khankhanapur in sadar upazila of Rajbari yesterday 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 motor-cycle on Daulatdia-Khulna

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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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## The Daily Star

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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 legalising of illegal gas connections. Do you think it is justified?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT [www.thedailystar.net](http://www.thedailystar.net)  
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**ATTENTION**

To Promote **BANGLA Culture**

The Daily Star

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.