



A HITCH IN EXPORTS

Vegetable exporters stop shipment as Biman hikes freight charges

PAGE B1

PORT CITY PAINTED

Thousands welcome New Year, vow to annihilate the evil

PAGE 11

CHAVEZ CHOICE WINS POLLS

Maduro narrowly defeats Capriles in Venezuelan elections

PAGE 7

4 nations eye hydropower

Bangladesh, 3 neighbours join hands to produce, share hydroelectricity from trans-boundary rivers

PINAKI ROY

Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Bhutan are to form two sub-regional alliances for cooperation in producing electricity from trans-boundary river waters and then sharing it for mutual benefit.

Bangladesh and India will be common in both the alliances while Nepal and Bhutan will be the third country in either of the two alliances, sources in the water resources ministry said.

"Formation of such alliances is actually the result of a joint effort by Bangladesh and India. The first meeting of delegates from Bangladesh, India and Bhutan will take place on April 18," said Mir Sazzad Hossain, member of Joint Rivers Commission (Bangladesh).

The meeting schedule of the second alliance with India and Nepal about management of the Ganges basin is yet to be settled, he added.

After signing the terms of reference, delegates of the member countries might discuss some of the projects' sites at the April 18 meeting in Dhaka, officials said.

Primarily, Bangladesh has selected 20 hydropower

SEE PAGE 19 COL 1

HARMONY, NOT COMMUNALISM



Thousands take part in the Mangal Shobhajatra on Dhaka University campus on Pahela Baishakh Sunday, disseminating a feeling of harmony. While the dove in the photo symbolises peace, the demonised snake represents the communal forces that trouble the nation even today. The procession's theme this year was "Razakar-free Bangladesh, endless struggle for freedom".

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Prothom Alo apologises

Withdraws short story of Hasnat Abdul Hye amid angry reaction

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Prothom Alo yesterday apologised to readers for hurting their sentiments with the short story, "TV Cameraman Shanne Meyeti" (The girl in front of the TV camera), published in the daily's Pahela Baishakh supplement.

Hasnat Abdul Hye, the writer of the story, too, regretted writing the piece and said it would not be included in any of his works.

The daily retracted the story from its online version and e-paper.

In a statement, Prothom Alo Editor Matir Rahman said the contents of the story were against the guiding principles of the newspaper.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 5

Prof Yunus to receive US award tomorrow



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus will receive Congressional Gold Medal, the United States' highest civilian award, tomorrow in recognition of his life-long effort for fighting poverty, and promoting economic and social opportunities.

John Boehner, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, will hand over the award to Prof Yunus -- the first and lone Bangladeshi to win any Nobel Prize -- in the US Capitol ceremony at the Capitol Rotunda.

House and Senate leaders will hold the ceremony to award

SEE PAGE 19 COL 2

Amar Desh stops publication for now

Alleges govt obstruction to its printing; rights bodies criticise Mahmudur's arrest

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Amar Desh authorities, alleging government obstruction, have decided to suspend publication of the Bangla daily.

At a press conference at Jatiya Press Club yesterday afternoon, they said the government had illegally "sealed off" their press and barred them from printing the newspaper even at Al Falah Printing Press of daily Sangram.

Accompanied by Syed Abdal Ahmed, executive editor of Amar Desh, advocate

Masud Ahmed Talukder, a lawyer for the daily, said the newspaper authorities would go to the Supreme Court and seek a directive for publishing the paper.

He added the government had committed contempt of court by violating a 2010 SC directive which allowed the daily to continue its publication.

Meanwhile, the Dhaka district administration filed a case against Abul Asad, owner of Al Falah Printing Press and editor

SEE PAGE 19 COL 5
PHOTO ON PAGE 5

EXTORTION, ATTACK ON NEWSMEN BCL expels 11

DU CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Chhatra League yesterday expelled 11 activists of its Dhaka University Salimullah Muslim Hall unit for assaulting five journalists and indulging in extortion in the wee hours of Pahela Baishakh on campus.

The activists include second-year students Shamim Ahmed of English department, Oitijhya of history, Asif Uddin Ahmed of journalism, Tanvir Ahmed of finance, Shahin Mia of economics and Shadat of law, and Taposh.

Third-year student Pikul and forth-year students Nahid, Hasan and masters' student Obaydur were also among the expelled.

However, the university authorities have identified 21 Chhatra League activists involved in the assault and handed six of them over to Shahbagh police.

According to witnesses, a group of 10 to 12 pro-Awami League student body Chhatra League activists were extorting from cars, rickshaws, autorickshaws and other vehicles on the campus' Fuller Road since midnight Saturday on the occasion of Pahela Baishakh.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

Baishakh boat ride turns fatal 3 drown in Padma

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A joyful boat ride in the Padma River brought them death on the occasion of Pahela Baishakh.

Thirteen hours after the boat capsized in Charghat upazila of Rajshahi, the bodies of the three, including two children of a family, were recovered yesterday morning.

The victims were identified as Ivy Akhtar Mukti, 13, and her brother Ashif Ali, 7, of Muktarpur village, and Rafiqul Islam, 65, of Gouroshohor village of the upazila.

Another child, Turinuzzaman, aged only six, of Muktarpur village, has been

SEE PAGE 6 COL 6

NO SIGN OF IMPROVEMENT



A photo taken from the Second Buriganga Bridge shows the water has turned pitch-black due to reckless dumping of waste from industries and houses. Inset, a boatman in Lalbagh area shows how muddy and contaminated the water of the river has become. A media campaign a few years ago led to government initiatives to clean up the river but the efforts apparently went in vain.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN AND ANISUR RAHMAN

Tougher law for manpower fraud

Cabinet okays draft

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday approved in principle a tougher law to make the overseas recruiting agencies accountable for their activities and ensure transparency in manpower export sector.

The approval was given at the weekly meeting of the cabinet when the expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry placed a draft of the law titled Overseas Employment and Migrant Workers Act, 2013.

The meeting chaired by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina gave some suggestions to be incorporated in the draft before it gets cabinet vetting, the additional cabinet secretary told journalists later.

The draft law proposed up to seven years' rigorous

SEE PAGE 19 COL 1

FATIKCHHARI ATTACKS

Jamaat played active role

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Local Jamaat-Shibir men, including Bhujpur union parishad Chairman Shafiqul Alam Nuri, were involved in Thursday's attacks on law enforcers and an Awami League procession in the union, according to primary police investigation.

Nuri and 34 others of more than 5,000 accused in the case filed in connection with the attack were produced before a Chittagong court yesterday.

Investigation officer (IO) of the case Khandaker Babul yesterday told The Daily Star that they would seek 10

SEE PAGE 19 COL 10

No scope for move beyond constitution 3 services chiefs tell JS body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Chiefs of three services yesterday said they were "oath-bound to remain loyal to the country's constitution and the elected government".

The chiefs of the army, navy and air forces also told a parliamentary standing committee on defence ministry that they would not engage in any extra-constitutional

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4