

## THE POWER OF MUSIC

Scientists study whether music offers physiological benefits

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## T20WC HOSTING IN DOUBT

Unhappy with preparations, ICC will propose alternate venue

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## THE TROJAN GIFTS

Blind Chinese dissident in the US got presents carrying spyware

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# Return Tk 1,400cr

Govt asks ex-Destiny chairman, 12 other high-ups involved in misappropriating cooperative's fund; gives them 120 days

SAJJADUR RAHMAN

The Department of Cooperatives (DoC) has asked Rafiqul Amin, ex-chairman of Destiny Cooperative, and its 12 management committee members to return in 120 days over Tk 1,400 crore they have misappropriated from the controversial cooperative firm, said DoC officials.

The DoC blamed these management committee members of Destiny Multipurpose Cooperative Society Ltd (DMCSL) for huge spending on promotion and loans to nearly two dozen non-profitable entities.

"Rafiqul Amin and 12 other office bearers were given notices last week to return the money in 120 days. Otherwise, action will be taken against them according to law," Iqbal Hossain, additional registrar of the DoC, told The Daily Star yesterday.

If they fail to return the money, they might face lawsuits that could lead to their

imprisonment for three years or fine, or both and confiscation of their assets.

The DoC took nearly a year to investigate and assess the liabilities of the 13 DMCSL high-ups, who ran the controversial cooperative firm till the first quarter of last year.

Rafiqul misappropriated nearly Tk 130 crore while ex-vice president Gofranul Haque and ex-treasurer Akbar Hossain Sumon embezzled over Tk 100 crore each, according to the DoC findings.

Meanwhile, nearly six lakh DMCSL members and shareholders remain in great uncertainty about getting back their money from the cooperative. They haven't got any dividends in the last two years. Though many members are willing to sell their share, they have failed to do so.

"I was told that I would be able to sell my shares anytime I wished. But in reality, I could not sell my shares despite repeated efforts," said a DMCSL member, who

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Children work in a brick kiln beside Dhaka-Mawa highway when they are supposed to be in school. Several such kilns on both sides of the highway employ people and their children together.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

# Crucial battle in Gazipur

Voters sharply divided as candidates backed by AL, BNP focus on campaign for July 6 city polls

M RAHMAN and ABU BAKAR SIDDIQUE AKAND

In yet another battle of ballot, the ruling Awami League and the main opposition BNP will face the test of popularity months before the national elections.

Although the BNP favourites won the June 15 polls to four city corporations by landslide, it is too early to make a prediction about Gazipur, an industrial city of more than ten thousand voters sharply divided over picking their mayor.

Ajmat Ullah Khan, a mayoral aspirant supported by the AL-led alliance, will not have a smooth victory, if at all, in the first-ever Gazipur City

Corporation polls on July 6 due to alleged abuse of power by some of his relatives, according to many city dwellers.

On the other hand, BNP-backed aspirant MA Mannan has widely been blamed for his wide gap with voters and uneven development work in his constituencies -- Gazipur sadar and Tongi -- with Tongi given less priority when he was a state minister.

Ajmat Ullah had been the Tongi municipality mayor for more than 15 years facing no major corruption allegations.

The locals recognise him as a gentleman but

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## Disappearance of Jahangir still a mystery

M RAHMAN

Several rooms on the ground floor, stacked with electoral posters, have been kept wide open. Campaigners were also gathering at the house. They had but only one worry, the whereabouts of their candidate.

As of 11:30am yesterday, this was the picture of the house of Jahangir Alam, a rebel Awami League (AL) mayoral aspirant in the Gazipur City Corporation (GCC) polls.

On Tuesday night, while campaigning

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## SPLITTING GRAMEEN BANK Govt bid draws flak

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Accusing the government of trying to destroy the Grameen Bank, different quarters from home and abroad sharply protested the government's recent move to take over the bank.

A total of 575 teachers of the University Teacher's Association of Bangladesh (UTAB) in a statement said if the recommendations of Grameen Bank Enquiry Commission were implemented, the globally acclaimed institution would lose its uniqueness and be destroyed.

The commission, which is to "reveal" its



plans for Grameen Bank on July 2, is set to recommend breaking up the Nobel-winning bank into at least 19 zones. It is to recommend restructuring Grameen Bank in the shape of the erstwhile Bangladesh Shilpa Bank or Rural Electrification Board in order to give the government absolute control over the microcredit organisation.

"In no way the recommendations are suitable for implementation," the statement says. UTAB's president Prof AFM Yousuf Haider and its secretary general Prof Tahmina Akhtar were among the signatories

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Campaign leaflets for the upcoming Gazipur City Corporation polls are distributed in a mosque at Boardbazar in Gazipur after Juma prayers yesterday along with sweetmeats.

It will send you and me to jail

Hasina warns Khaleda against caretaker govt

BSS, Dhaka

Urging Opposition Leader Khaleda Zia not to advocate for a non-party caretaker government, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said that government might want to stay in power forever sending them to jail.

The premier was addressing a discussion marking the 64th founding anniversary of Bangladesh Awami League at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the capital.

"The caretaker government will try to stay in power sending you [Khaleda] and

## Brac official killed in South Sudan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified assailants stabbed a Brac official to death in South Sudan on Wednesday.

Victim Mohammad Habibur Rahman, 45, regional manager of Brac Education Programme, was on his way to Yei from the capital Juba around 7:00pm on a pick-up van when he came under attack, said Jalaluddin Ahmed, associate director of Brac International.

The driver of the pick-up van informed the local Brac officials

about the incident. Police found Habibur dead on the spot and the vehicle abandoned nearby. There were several stab marks on his body, added Jalal.

Law enforcers took the driver, his father and brother into custody on suspicion of their involvement in the murder.

Brac, a non-governmental development organisation, was working with its country office in South Sudan to provide full support for conducting a thorough investigation

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## FEMALE WORKER MIGRATION

# Remarkable growth creates new hope

PORIMOL PALMA

Over the last decade, Bangladesh has achieved a significant growth in exporting female workers, reflecting a new area of socio-economic empowerment of the country's women.

The annual flow of female workers moving to other countries for jobs stood at over 37,000 last year, which was only some 1,200 a decade ago.

Official data suggests the figure may cross 50,000 -- nearly 10 percent of the annual labour migration -- by the

yearend with the opening of two new job destinations -- Hong Kong and Qatar.

"This will obviously enhance women's economic security, mobility and decision-making capacity at homes," Anwara Begum, senior research fellow at Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies told The Daily Star.

She said due to the exposure abroad, women gain more knowledge and confidence.

Begum and other researchers, however, warned that there had been a good

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## HIGHLIGHTS

37,000 women migrated as workers last year

The number was 1,200 a decade back

It may reach 50,000 by year-end

95% are employed in Gulf states

Abuse of low-skilled workers a concern



keep smiling