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RANA PLAZA TRAGEDY

Families of the missing get no compensation, donation or arrears

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BLURRING THE LINES

Director Danny Boyle comes up with hypnotherapy noir "Trance"

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PUSSY RIOT GIRL UNREPENTANT

The Russian punk rock group member loses parole battle but remains defiant

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Manmohan repeats old pledges

Gives no specific timeframe for Teesta agreement; BJP support for land boundary deal unlikely

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh yesterday assured that India would do nothing to harm Bangladesh's interests on the issue of waters, but gave no indication when the much-expected Teesta water-sharing deal would be signed.

The assurance came when visiting Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dipu Moni called on him at his official residence in the afternoon.

Manmohan also said he intended to take the bilateral Land Boundary Agreement to parliament for approval, but senior BJP leader Arun Jaitley in a meeting with Dipu Moni in the evening did not give any categorical assurance that his party would support this agreement.

Implementation of the land boundary deal by India depends on approval by its parliament with two-thirds majority, for

which BJP's support is essential.

The Indian constitution has to be amended before signing the deal, as it envisages swapping of land spread over 161 adversely-held enclaves by India and Bangladesh.

India's ruling Congress-led UPA lacks two-thirds majority on its own in either House of Parliament -- Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. BJP, as also Asom Gono Parishad, a political party of Assam and BJP's ally, has been opposing the land boundary agreement on the grounds that India will be conceding more territory to Bangladesh than getting from it.

During the nearly 40-minute meeting that began at 1:00pm, Manmohan told Dipu Moni that his government was seeking a national consensus on the Teesta water-sharing issue.

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People wishing to celebrate Eid holidays outside Dhaka swarm Kamalapur Railway Station in the capital to buy advance tickets yesterday. Some are ecstatic being able to ensure their rides home.

PHOTO: STAR

KIDNAP IN RANGAMATI

Hostages freed after 17 days

Abductors left them unhurt in Khagrachhari forest; cops claim no ransom paid

STAR REPORT

Seventeen days after their abduction, law enforcers early yesterday rescued four staff of Bi Technology and a college student from the jungle of Merung at Dighinala upazila in the hilly district of Khagrachhari.

Kidnappers released the five unhurt and without any ransom although, according to the intelligence sources, they had demanded Tk 3 crore from Bi Technology

for the hostages' safe return.

Police say the kidnappers might have given up on their plans due to the massive search operation launched by law enforcement agencies. The agencies are still going on with the drive to arrest the abductors.

Additional Police Superintendent of Rangamati Mohammad Habibur Rahman said personnel of the district unit Directorate General of Forces Intelligence

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Rush for Eid tickets

Sales of advance bus, train tickets begin; many return empty-handed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In about the middle of Ramadan, advance sale of bus and railway tickets kicked off in the capital yesterday morning to ease sufferings of home bound passengers.

Hundreds of people thronged different bus counters and Kamalapur Railway Station and stood in queues since Thursday night to collect tickets.

Despite a strenuous waiting for the whole night, many had to return home empty-handed as some bus counters did not sell their whole lots of tickets on the first day.

Some complained of bus operators charging extra, while others expressed their frustration for not getting first class tickets from the railway counter as those were sold out

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Prices of Ramadan essentials ease

Increased supply brings prices down

SUMAN SAHA

Prices of most Ramadan essentials have started sliding slowly, thanks to an increased supply of the items.

Yesterday, retailers in three kitchen markets in the capital were selling date, gram, sugar, lentil, cucumber, green chilli and aubergine at rates lower by Tk 2 to Tk 120 per kg from those two weeks ago.

Green Chilli was selling at Tk 100 a kg at Palashi and Hatirpool kitchen markets. Early this month, it sold at Tk 150-220.

A kg of aubergine cost Tk 40-50, which sold at Tk 60-80 two weeks ago.

"Prices of some essentials are now a little

lower compared to the eve of Ramadan. Today [yesterday], I have bought a kg of cucumber at Tk30, which cost Tk 50 two weeks ago," said Alamgir Hossain, a retired government official.

There was a big gap between supply and demand of essentials in the first week of this month as most shoppers bought essentials in bulk ahead of Ramadan, said Lokman Hossain, general secretary of Karwan Bazar Khudro Kachamal Aarot Babshayi Bahumukhi Samabaya Samity Ltd, a platform of kitchen market wholesalers.

In the beginning of Ramadan, he noted, traders had brought around 50-70 tonnes of

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The five abductees rescued yesterday in Khagrachhari.

PHOTO: STAR

Billboards choke Ctg

Disturb scenic beauty of city due to lack of policy, inadequate drive to demolish illegal ones

PRANABESH CHAKRABORTY, Ctg

Lack of policy regarding hoardings and poor coordination between state-run and local government bodies have let illegal installation of large advertisement hoardings go unchecked in Chittagong city.

Even though the Chittagong City Corporation identified 323 illegal billboards and removed 45 of them during a drive last month, such hoardings remain eyesores for the port city dwellers.

Architect Rezaul Karim, chief town planner for the CCC, said such unplanned installations were obstructing the scenic beauty of the city and posing as threats to pedestrians.

There have been instances in the country where people got killed as hoardings fell on them.

Half of the large hoardings in the port city were on land belonging to Bangladesh Railway, Chittagong Port Authority, National Housing Authority, while the other half were on CCC owned land, said a CCC official.

According to CCC records, out of 8,451 hoardings in the city, 3,595 are on CCC land. The real figure was near to 15,000, legal and illegal, sources in the local government body said seeking anonymity.

Abul Mansur, chief inspector (billboards) of the CCC, said the railway, the port authority and the National Housing Authority were approving hoardings on their own land even though they had no policy regarding the matter.

Mizanur Rahman, deputy director of Bangladesh Railway (East Zone) and also its authorised person for

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Golam Shabur Tulu AL MP killed in Faridpur road crash

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League lawmaker Golam Shabur Tulu was killed in a road accident on the Dhaka-Barisal highway in Bhanga upazila of Faridpur yesterday.

The 60-year-old legislator from Barguna-2 (Amtali-Bamna-Betagi) constituency was on his way to Dhaka from Barisal.

The accident happened around 4:00pm when the car driver lost control of the vehicle and it plunged into a roadside ditch after hitting a tree in Chumurdi area of the upazila, Abdur Rahman, AL lawmaker from a Faridpur constituency, told The Daily Star quoting Faridpur police.

The crash left Shabur's brother Golam Shahid Nilu and three others, including the car driver, critically injured, who were travelling with the MP.

The legislator died on the spot. His brother, driver, assistant private secretary (APS) Shahidul Islam and headmaster of Patharghata Adarsha

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Worker killed in Gazipur clash

50 injured in gunfight over land dispute; 18 bullet-hit

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A worker was killed and 50 others were injured in a clash over a land dispute between workers of two spinning mills in Nagarhaola of Sreepur in Gazipur early yesterday.

The clash erupted around 6:30am as workers of Arif Spinning Mill, a concern of NR Group, tried to build a wall allegedly on Gulshan Spinning Mill's land.

The workers attacked each other with sharp weapons and traded gunshots.

Abdus Salam, 35, a worker of Arif Spinning Mill, received a bullet and died on the spot. His body has been sent to Gazipur

Sadar Hospital morgue for an autopsy.

Amir Hossain, officer in-charge of Sreepur Police Station, said 18 of the 50 injured had sustained bullet injuries, and they had been admitted to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital.

Shahajada Pradhan Babul, managing director of NR Group, said they had bought about 100 bighas of land in Nagarhaola years ago.

But about two years ago, the authorities of Gulshan Spinning Mill made a claim that they owned 14 bighas of that piece of land, Shahajada said.

"In fear of more land being grabbed, we

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Numerous billboards have been set up on railway land in Tiger Pass area of the port city, blocking the view of the hills and the greenery.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS