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# Modified brinjal taken to court

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Campaigners against genetically modified (GM) crops yesterday filed a writ petition with the High Court against a government move to release Bt brinjal, a GM crop, for the first time in the country.

The court is likely to hear the writ today, lawyers concerned said.

The writ was filed by five green activists including an organiser of Naya Krishi Andolon, Farida Akhter.

The move came seven days after the same group served a legal notice on the agriculture secretary, executive chairman of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council and director general of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (Bari), asking them to refrain from commercial release of Bt brinjal.

On July 15, Bari applied to the National Technical Committee for Crop Biotechnology seeking commercial release of Bt brinjal next month.

Earlier, Bangladeshi scientists had readied the country's first GM crop -- brinjal infused with

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# GERM-ICELLI

# HSC results Saturday

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The results of Higher Secondary Certificate and equivalent examinations held under 10 education boards will be published on Saturday, education ministry officials said yesterday.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid will hand over a copy of the results to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at 10:00am, said Shubodh Chandra Dhali, senior public relations officer of the ministry.

"The education minister SEE PAGE 10 COL 3

Prepared in unhealthy conditions, **bottom**, and without BSTI approval, **500 kilograms of vermicelli (lachcha sema) are being dumped in the Buriganga river. A BSTI mobile court yesterday raided Sagar Food Products factory in Borishur area of Keraniganj, sealed it and penalised it Tk 50,000 for producing substandard vermicelli targeting Eid-ul-Fitr.**

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

# Hajj pilgrims free to pick airline

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday ruled that hajj pilgrims could choose any airline when going to Saudi Arabia to perform a Hajj.

On April 24, the civil aviation ministry had decided that only Biman Bangladesh Airlines and Saudi Arabian Airlines would carry the 1.27 lakh hajj pilgrims this year.

The HC passed the order following a writ petition that challenged the legality SEE PAGE 10 COL 3



# Extortionists on the prowl

Police admit, ask for complaints

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Silent extortion through issuing threats over the phone has been taking place in the capital ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr, said police in a press briefing yesterday.

To expedite efforts in combating extortion, law enforcers have opened three hotlines in order to receive complaints from people about extortionists' demand for money.

The hotline numbers are 01713398326-9, 01191001100 and 01191001111.

"Being intimidated, people in many cases pay the extortionists without informing the police," said Monirul Islam, joint commissioner of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP).

The police receive information on such silent extortion from their intelligence or the media later, he added.

He came up with the observations a day after a private university student, Mahamadullah, 19, was shot by local extortionists in Mohakhali for not paying Tk 2 lakh.

On July 21, Ujjal Hossain, 25, was shot SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

# GB commission to defend recommendations

MD FAZLUR RAHMAN

The Grameen Bank Commission is set to justify in the final report its recommendations to restructure the bank, which have drawn criticism from different quarters.

The commission proposed splitting the bank into 19 zones or configuring it in the model of erstwhile Shilpa Bank, an act which would give the government a 51 percent controlling stake.

"Splitting the Grameen Bank into 19 pieces or shaping it in the lines of Shilpa Bank, are options. We will discuss them and state why they should be followed," Ajmalul Hossain QC, a member of the commission, said.

In the report, the commission will touch upon the issues of increasing the share of the government in the bank and the appointment of the managing director, he added.

Earlier on July 2, the committee scheduled a workshop to discuss the restructuring options for the microcredit organisation. The workshop never took place after some of the invitees questioned the authority of the government-formed commission to hold such discussions.

The criticism even prompted the finance ministry to write to the commission to convey the government's disapproval of the seminar.

Hossain, a reputed lawyer, said the recommendations would be prepared to ensure the microlender does not deviate from its goal of eradicating poverty.

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# KAMARUZZAMAN APPEAL

Defence gets 50 days to submit statement

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court yesterday asked counsel for Jamaat leader Muhammad Kamaruzzaman to submit by September 17 a concise statement on an appeal against the Jamaat leader's death sentence for crimes against humanity during the Liberation War.

This means Kamaruzzaman, the senior assistant secretary general of Jamaat, has 50 days to submit the statement, as the court will go on a 44-day vacation from August 2.

The court will begin hearings on the appeal after receiving the statement from the defence.

On May 9, International Crimes Tribunal-2 sentenced the 61-year-old Jamaat leader to death after

SEE PAGE 10 COL 5

# The two directly involved

Son of martyred journalist testifies against Mueen Uddin, Ashrafuzzaman at war tribunal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Tawheed Reza Noor, son of martyred journalist Serajuddin Hossain, yesterday testified that alleged Al-Badr leaders Chowdhury Mueen Uddin and Ashrafuzzaman Khan were "directly involved" in the killings of intellectuals at the fag-end of the Liberation War.

Tawheed, who was three in 1971, told the International Crimes Tribunal-2 he learned from his mother that Al-Badr men had abducted his father from their Chamelibagh house on the night of December 10.

During his research in 1995 for a documentary titled "War Crimes File", which was broadcast in British television Channel-4, Tawheed had talked with several family members of the martyred intellectuals and other witnesses.

The interviewees, some of whom were eyewitness, had told him about Mueen Uddin and Ashrafuzzaman's involvement in the brutal killings of the brightest children of the soil, said the witness.

"I want justice for the killings of the intellectuals," Tawheed made an appeal to the tribunal while completing his testimony as the sixth prosecution witness in the case against Mueen and Ashrafuzzaman.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

# Govt moves to ease Eid rush

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An inter-ministerial meeting yesterday outlined a plan to ease the movement of holiday-bound people ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr, to check traffic congestion, accidents and crimes.

Lorries and covered vans will stay off the highways from four days before Eid until three days after the festival for smooth travel of home-goers.

No passenger bus will be stopped by highway police on the way from August 1, while law enforcers will check over-speed and over-taking.

CNG filling stations across the country will remain open round-the-clock for 10 days from August 5.

These are the steps outlined at the inter-ministerial meeting, convened at the Engineers' Institute.

According to the plan, vigilance teams will work at three bus terminals -- Mohakhali, Sayedabad and Gabtoli -- to ensure that passengers are not charged extra fair.

"The teams will also check overcrowding on buses and riding on roof of vehicles. Divisional and district bus terminals will also be kept under observation," said Communications Minister Obaidul Quader, who presided over the meeting.

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PHOTO: STAR

Tens of hundreds of people wait in queues at Kamalapur Railway Station in the capital yesterday for advance tickets to celebrate Eid holidays with their families outside the city.

# TRAPPED IN IRAQ No move yet to rescue 27

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is yet to take any measures to rescue the 27 Bangladeshi workers languishing in an Iraqi labour camp even after their families appealed to the authorities concerned a week ago.

The migrant workers have been leading a miserable life without jobs, money, and proper supply of food, water, and electricity at the camp in Najaf, 160 km south of the Iraqi capital Baghdad, for more than four months.

Family members of the workers held a human

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

# Myanmar's gas starts flowing to China

AFP, Beijing

Gas has started flowing to energy-hungry China through a pipeline from Myanmar, a Chinese state oil company said yesterday, in a controversial project that highlights the countries' economic links even as their political ties come under pressure.

The 793-kilometre (492-mile) pipeline runs from Kyaukpyu on resource-rich Myanmar's west coast, close to the offshore Shwe gas fields, and across the country.

It enters southwest China at Ruili, near areas where heavy clashes between the rebel Kachin Independence Army and the Myanmar military were reported earlier this year.

As well as the risks associated with the pipeline passing through conflict zones, environmental and rights groups say land has been confiscated for it and people in Myanmar -- most of whom do not have electricity -- do not benefit sufficiently from its hydrocarbon assets.

The project is the fruit of Beijing's long allegiance with the military junta that ruled Myanmar for decades, a bond that is weakening as the reforming government opens up to the West.

It went into operation on Sunday at a ceremony in Mandalay, key investor China National Petroleum

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PRAYER TIMING July 30

Fajr	3-59	4-04
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	5-00	5-15
Maghrib	6-46	6-56
Esha	8-15	8-45

Source: Islamic Foundation



Integral Energy Limited ONLINE POLL Do you agree with prime minister that the general election might not be held in the country even in 10 years if any unconstitutional government assumed power?

Yes (21%) No (79%)

TOTAL VOTES: 264

TODAY'S POLL Do you agree with DCI president Sabur Khan that the police department is responsible for the rise in highway extortion and it is impossible for any group to extort without shelter from the police?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT www.thedailystar.net

SEHRI, IFTAR TIMINGS

Ramadan	July	Sehri	Iftar
20	30		6-46
21	31	4-00	6-45
22	01	4-00	6-45