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A refreshing festival ends

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Three days of escape into a world of words, languages, thoughts and imagination came to an end at the Bangla Academy yesterday, with hopes that the Hay Festival Dhaka 2013 will help the Bangla language cross boundaries.

Coming as a respite after back-to-back hartals, the festival offered the young and old an opportunity to revel in literature and arts, along with food and drink, in the company of Bangladeshi and foreign writers, artists, scholars and philosophers.

Soraya Auer, a regular visitor to the festival, felt that this year's arrangements were better. "There are more sessions and speakers, and varied topics in multiple languages," she told The Daily Star.

Adiba Tasneem, a master's student of English literature at Jahangirnagar University, came to Hay for the first time with two of her friends. "The lectures and speeches are very useful. We get to know something different from that in our textbooks," she said.

Yesterday's first session, "Debutantes: Your First Novel", for instance, offered suggestions about how new writers should get their first novels published and how much they should be involved in the marketing of their books.

For book lovers, yesterday's book launches included Rahnuma Ahmed's "Tortured Truths" by Drik Publications, Syed Waliullah's English book "The Ugly Asian" by Bangla Academy, literature journal "Six Seasons Review" and Ronnie Ahmmed's book by Mermaid Art Foundation.

Prof Niaz Zaman of Dhaka University, however, expressed dissatisfaction with the arrangements at the launch of famous Bengali writer Syed Waliullah's book.

She observed that little efforts had been made in promoting the session and the book.

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Renowned author Prof Muhammad Zafar Iqbal speaks during a session called "Write a story with Muhammad Zafar Iqbal" at the Hay Festival at Bangla Academy, while Rozina Dewan, *inset*, performs during Kobi Lorai (batle of the poets) on the concluding day of the festival yesterday.

PHOTO: DARSHAN CHAKMA/ AMRAN HOSSAIN

Verdict today

Fakhrul terms money-laundering case false

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The judgment in a money-laundering case against BNP Senior Vice-Chairman Tarique Rahman and his friend Giasuddin Al Mamun will be delivered today.

Judge Md Motahar Hossain of the Special Judge Court-3 of Dhaka will pronounce the verdict at about 11:00am, court sources said.

This will be the first judgment in one of the 16 cases against Tarique who has been in London since September 2008.



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BANGABANDHU BRIDGE

Govt's money gobbled up

Probe finds 2 firms pocket Tk 1.16cr

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

Two local firms working at the Bangabandhu Bridge have gobbled up Tk 1.16 crore between November 2010 and March this year, according to an official investigation.

Shamim Enterprise Ltd and UDC's job is to operate and maintain the bridge.

The companies embezzled Tk 89.94 lakh and Tk 26.06 lakh realised from overloaded trucks and towing charges of broken down vehicles. The money was supposed to go to the Bangladesh Bridge Authority (BBA) as per the companies' contracts with the government. The communications

ministry formed a probe body in April this year to look into "irregularities of the companies in depositing the money" that might have been going on since November 2010. Bridges Division Secretary Khandaker Anwarul Islam said, "An investigation was done, but I have no knowledge about it yet."

The probe carried out by the BBA in May reveals Shamim Enterprise and UDC realised Tk 26.06 lakh as towing charges from vehicles that had broken down in the bridge area between November 2010 and March 2013.

The companies as per the contract use BBA tow trucks and charge the vehicles towing fees. But, they

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

Ershad not trusted

Say his 'new allies'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad has said he will soon announce a new alliance, but Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh and Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Janata League, with whom he wants to build political partnership, have expressed scepticism

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



US for free, credible polls

Biswal to civil society members

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The US wants to see the continuation of democratic process and a free, fair and credible election in Bangladesh, Nisha Desai

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

PRAYER TIMING			November 17
Fajr	Azan	Jamaat	
	5-05	5-40	
Zohr	12-45	1-15	
Asr	3-45	4-00	
Maghrib	5-21	5-24	
Esha	7-00	7-30	
Source: Islamic Foundation			



A bus goes up in flames in Sitakunda on the Dhaka-Chittagong highway after BNP-Jamaat activists set it alight during their clash with law enforcers yesterday evening.

PHOTO: STAR

Mayhem in Sitakunda

4 bullet-hit, vehicles burnt as BNP-Jamaat activists clash with cops

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

At least four people were bullet-hit and several others injured as BNP-Jamaat activists clashed with police in Sitakunda upazila of Chittagong yesterday.

The unruly activists of BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami also vandalised dozens of vehicles and set fire to some on Dhaka-Chittagong highway at Bypass, Barabkunda and Sadar areas in the upazila.


Bullet-hit Karimul Mawla, 35, and Abul Bashar, 70, Liza Begum, 22, and Mohammed Shamim, 38, were admitted to Sitakunda Upazila Health Complex, said on-duty doctor of the hospital Shahida Akhter.

Mohammed Rafiq, 30, who was hit with stones in the head, and Zahid Khan, 18, were also admitted to the hospital, she said.

Of the injured, Karimul and Rafiq were referred to

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

The Daily Star

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ONLINE POLL

Do you think unrest in the garment sector will end after fixing up Tk 5,300 as minimum wage?

Yes

No

(36%)

(64%)

TOTAL VOTES: 335

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think any new political alliance by HM Ershad will bring any change to the current political situation?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT

www.thedailystar.net

Arsenal-free Syria by middle of next year

Chemical watchdog approves roadmap

AFP, The Hague

The world's chemical watchdog on Friday adopted a final roadmap for ridding Syria of its arsenal by mid-2014, reaching agreement hours before a deadline expired.

"The plan is adopted," Christian Chartier, a spokesman for the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, told AFP after a meeting of its 41-member Executive Council in The Hague.

Friday was the deadline for the OPCW to

agree "destruction milestones" for the more than 1,000 tonnes of dangerous chemicals in Syria, according to the terms of a US-Russian deal that headed off US military strikes on President Bashar al-Assad's regime.

The deal came amid growing momentum towards peace talks after more than two-and-a-half years of Syria's deadly uprising, with the rebels suffering a string of recent setbacks.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

Afterlife? It's there

Claims scientist, tells of quantum physics

MAIL ONLINE

Most scientists would probably say that the concept of an afterlife is either nonsense, or at the very least unprovable.

Yet one expert claims he has evidence to confirm an

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

