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# POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS

## Unicef worried at use of kids

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Concerned at the use of children in political demonstrations, the Unicef had urged all the political parties in Bangladesh to save children from any kind of violence.

The concern follows the bomb and arson attacks on several children during shutdowns across the country in the last few weeks enforced by the BNP-led 18-party alliance.

Alarmingly, a number of children have died or been seriously injured during the demonstrations, said the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) in a press release yesterday.

The UN body also expressed its concern for children who had been apprehended during shutdowns.

It recommended that the political parties to solve political problems through peaceful dialogue.

"Unicef voiced its concern earlier this year about using children for political gain. Worryingly children have increasingly become the victims of violent protests. Children should be kept out of harm's way and we reiterate that the use of children for political gain must stop," said Pascal Villeneuve, representative of the Unicef.

"At times of great uncertainty, such as before and during an election, it is important that homes, communities and schools continue to be havens of safety for children. Children should be sheltered, in all countries, from political turbulence," he said.

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With the advent of Agrabayan, farmers of southern districts are busy harvesting Aman. The government has decided to raise the Aman procurement price from last year's Tk 26 a kg to Tk 29 to give incentives to the paddy growers. A projected good harvest -- 13.4 million MT to be precise -- is expected to surpass last year's Aman output by over four percent. The photo was taken in Majhibari area of Kuakata, Patuakhali, on Monday.

PHOTO: ARIFUR RAHMAN



# Exams amid fear of political unrest

## 30 lakh children sit for primary terminal exams today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The primary terminal examinations 2013 for class five students of schools and madrasas will begin today amidst fears of possible political turmoil in the days ahead.

More than 29.50 lakh students -- 26,35,406 from schools, and 3,14,787 from madrasas -- have registered to take the country's largest public examinations to be held simultaneously in 6,566 centres across the country.

The Directorate of Primary Education will conduct the examinations.

Students from both schools and madrasas will take mathematics exams today. The tests will be held from 11:00am to 1:30pm. A total of 774 students will also appear in the exams from eight overseas centres.

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# Blasts kill 23 in Beirut

## Suicide bombs rock Iranian embassy

AFP, Beirut

A double suicide bombing outside the Iranian embassy in Beirut killed at least 23 people yesterday, in an attack claimed by an Al-Qaeda-linked jihadist group.

The Lebanese army said the first blast was caused by a motorcyclist who blew himself up moments before a suicide bomber driving a four-wheel-drive detonated his payload in southern Beirut.

The mid-morning attack, which also wounded almost 150 people in a stronghold of the Hezbollah movement, is the first time the Iranian embassy has been targeted.

The blasts ripped the facades off surrounding buildings, strewing rubble and glass on streets that were stained with blood.

Residents walked dazed past charred cars and trees, as soldiers and Hezbollah security men tried to secure the area.

The attack follows two other bombings this year in Hezbollah bastions in southern Beirut, amid rising tensions

over the conflict in neighbouring Syria.

Iran is one of Syria's closest allies, and is the key sponsor of Hezbollah, which has dispatched thousands of fighters to bolster the regime as it battles a 32-month uprising.

Damascus quickly condemned yesterday's attack.

"The Syrian government firmly condemns the terrorist attack carried out near the Iranian embassy in Beirut," state television said.

It said an "odour of petrodollars comes from all the terrorist acts against Syria, Lebanon and Iraq," an apparent reference to Saudi Arabia and Qatar, which back Syria's uprising.

Iran also condemned the attack, accusing Israel and its "mercenaries" of responsibility. Israel immediately denied involvement.

Britain and France issued swift statements slamming the bombings, which London described as a "shocking terrorist attack".

# Metro rail in 6 years

## Deal signed with design consultant

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka would be free of its terrible traffic jams in six years, with the opening of the first metro rail service, said government officials after signing a deal with consultants for design and construction yesterday.

The construction of 20-kilometre metro rail from north of Uttara Model Town to Bangladesh Bank was expected to be completed by 2019, said Communications Minister Obaidul Quader.

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Chirping and flapping of wings by parrots fill the air of Chikdair village at Raozan in Chittagong. Flocks of them fly around and over the village and often land in paddy fields to feast on grains. It's a pleasure to see so many hovering parrots but farmers cannot help worry about their crops.

PHOTO: ANURUP KANTI DAS

# Keeping Congo together

SYED BADRUL AHSAN writes from Bunia, Congo

The helicopter ride from Entebbe in Uganda to Bunia in the Congo takes close to two hours. As the chopper wades into Congolese territory, it is a vast expanse of pristine green that opens up below. A light rain creates something of a mist before the sun breaks through the clouds again to reveal a landscape that speaks of serenity redolent of undisturbed nature.

But that is only an illusion. On the ground, once the helicopter lands amid what looks like nowhere, it is the desolation brought on by the Congo's murderous politics which strikes the sensibilities.


The airport in Bunia is really an airstrip where the presence of Bangladeshi soldiers and airmen is conspicuous. And all around are helicopters, aircraft and vehicles manned by the United Nations as it tries, through the presence of international peacekeepers, to prevent a country from falling apart.

The men of Bangladesh armed forces take the visitors just arrived through dusty, unpaved roads to quarters maintained by Bangladeshi battalions, simply known as Banbat. As the vehicles bearing the visitors, among whom are senior Bangladesh military officers and journalists, grind their way through the difficult roads, the catastrophe that Congo has largely been manifests itself all too well.

A woman crosses the street with a basket of pineapples

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The Daily Star



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ONLINE POLL

Do you think it was justified for the Awami League-led grand alliance to form a polls-time cabinet without the participation of the main opposition BNP?

Yes

No

(24%)

(76%)

TOTAL VOTES: 400

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think this polls-time government could be called an all-party government?

PLEASE CAST YOUR VOTE AT

www.thedailystar.net

# Europeans fault American safety efforts in Bangladesh

THE NEW YORK TIMES

Tensions broke into the open on Monday involving two large groups of retailers -- one overwhelmingly American, the other dominated by Europeans -- that have formed to improve factory safety in Bangladesh.

An official from the European group voiced concern that the American retailers would piggyback at no cost on the efforts of the Europeans -- which includes H&M, Carrefour and more than 100 other retailers -- in financing safety upgrades at hundreds of factories.

The members of the European-led group, the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh, have made binding commitments to help pay for fire safety measures and building upgrades when shortcomings in safety are found in the more than 1,600 garment factories its members use in Bangladesh. While the American-dominated group, which has 26 members, including Walmart Stores, Target and Gap, has stopped short of making such a binding commitment, it has pledged to provide loans for the improvements.

Scott Nova, executive director of the

Worker Rights Consortium, a labor rights group based in Washington that is a member of the Europe-led accord, said members had a "significant concern about a free-rider situation."

Jeff R Krilla, the president of the American-dominated group, the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety, said he was surprised by the criticism, noting that his alliance had agreed to make \$100 million in low-cost loans available to Bangladesh factory owners to finance safety improvements.

In a sharp exchange in a telephone conference call on worker safety in

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# NIZAMI'S TRIAL

## Arguments of defence concluded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The defence of Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Motiur Rahman Nizami yesterday told the International Crimes Tribunal-1 their "innocent" client was being

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PRAYER TIMING		November 20
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		

# Selfie may get into dictionary

WWW.TELEGRAPH.CO.UK

The social media buzzword 'Selfie' is under consideration to be included in the Oxford English Dictionary after being picked as the word of the year for 2013.

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Selfie is "main-stream shorthand" for a self-portrait photograph.

