

WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

A Weekly Publication of The Daily Star
the STAR
stories behind the news

THE FORGOTTEN HEROES

Rana Plaza civilian rescuers cannot return to normal life, even as life goes on elsewhere

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END OF PACIFISM?

Japan PM seeks active role for military in defence of allies

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LAUNCH CAPSIZE
17 die in Meghna

Over 100 feared missing

STAR CORRESPONDENT

At least 17 people drowned and over 100 more are feared missing after a launch heading for Shariatpur from Dhaka went down in the Meghna in Munshiganj yesterday, the second launch capsized in two weeks.

The double-decker MV Miraj-4 sank with over 200 people on board around 3:30pm at Doulatpur in Gazaria upazila during a nor'wester.

Officials of the local administration and fire service, quoting locals, said 40-50 passengers had made it to shore alive. Most of them swam ashore with injuries, reports our Munshiganj correspondent.

It is feared the death toll will rise significantly.

Locals started rescue operations immediately after the accident and divers of fire service and civil defence and Bangladesh Coast Guard joined in later on.

Liton, a diver of the coast guard, told a

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A man, who made it ashore swimming through the waves of the Meghna during a nor'wester, wails as his brother who was travelling with him in the ill-fated launch was missing and feared dead. The photo was taken at Doulatpur in Munshiganj where the launch capsized.

PHOTO: STAR

Bid to abduct rights leader?

ASK director dodges microbus that waylays him

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nur Khan, director of the rights body Ain o Shalish Kendra, yesterday said he had narrowly escaped an abduction attempt near his Lalmatia office in the capital.

A group of six to seven people in a white Noah microbus tried to abduct him around 5:10pm while he was returning home on a rickshaw with a colleague, he said.

In the wake of a recent abduction spree, a sense of insecurity has been prevailing among citizens, especially after the killing of seven abductees in Narayanganj.

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3 EX-RAB OFFICIALS NOT ARRESTED
Govt stance exposes reason for inaction

No legal bar to arrest, says defence ministry; properties of main accused seized

STAR REPORT

Another day went by without any visible effort to arrest the three sacked Rab officials for their alleged involvement in the gruesome seven-murder in Narayanganj.

The inaction against the trio seems mysterious, and people in the port city wonder how they can remain off the hook even after a High Court order for their "immediate" arrest five days ago and government high-ups' repeated statements that they would be nabbed.

Things got yet more baffling when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said that the over-

enthusiasm of some quarters in filing petitions with courts on various issues was creating obstacles for the executive branch.

At a meeting of the Awami League Central Working Committee (ALCWC) on Wednesday night, she discussed the Narayanganj issue with her party colleagues, meeting sources said.

"How will the police arrest the three Rab officials when there is no case against them in any police station? Even the allegations against them have not been proved," a central committee member quoted Hasina as saying.

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Shahidul alleges threat by Rab

HC judge says Rab official's comment contemptuous

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The father-in-law of slain Narayanganj panel mayor Nazrul Islam yesterday alleged that he was receiving threats from the Rapid Action Battalion.

"I'm getting threats from the Rab as I spoke up against them," Shahidul Islam told reporters after giving his deposition before the government probe body at Narayanganj Circuit House on the second day of the mass hearing yesterday.

Shahidul, however, said he was not cowed by the threats.

"I'm 70 years old. I have undergone a bypass surgery and my legs hurt. I'm living

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BJP upbeat ahead of polls results

STAR REPORT

The Bharatiya Janata Party-led coalition is gearing up to form a new government amid media predictions of its victory in the just concluded Lok Sabha elections.

Ahead of the vote counting today, BJP President Rajnath Singh, senior party leader Arun Jaitley and former president Nitin Gadkari flew to Gandhinagar to meet prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi.

"The discussion is about who will join the government and who will stay back in the organisation... We haven't come down to talking about portfolios yet," a senior leader told the Hindustan Times hours before the three party leaders took a chartered flight to Ahmedabad for a closed-door meeting with Modi.

LOK SABHA	
Total seats	543
Single majority	272

After a three-hour-long meeting in Gandhinagar, the capital of Gujarat, whose chief minister is Modi, on Wednesday night, Rajnath told the media that his party would convene a meeting of its parliamentary board, the highest decision-making forum,

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Green passport after 23 years

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After a long 23 years, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday surrendered her diplomatic passport to the passport authorities and applied for a regular one.

Since the restoration of democracy in 1991, the BNP chief had held the diplomatic passport (red cover) as she had been either prime minister or opposition leader.

With the expiry of the ninth parliament's tenure on January 24, she lost her status as opposition leader. With that, she also lost all other state facilities.

The BNP-led 19-party alliance and most other political parties boycotted the one-sided national elections on January 5, which saw Sheikh Hasina become prime minister for a second successive term.

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Muhith gives in to pressure

Changes his stance against block allocation for MPs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

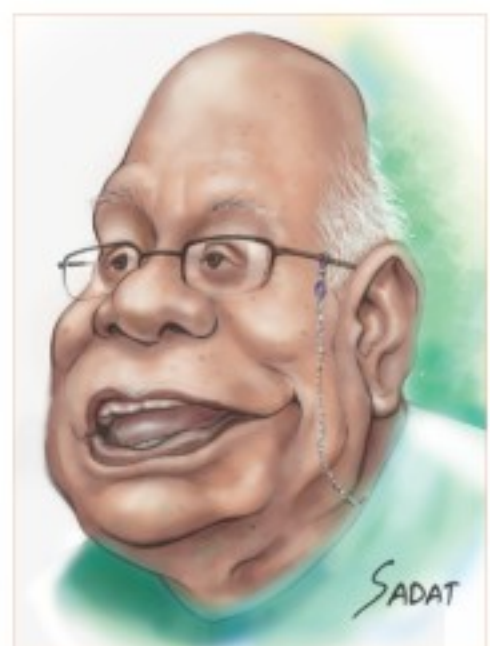
Finance Minister AMA Muhith has backtracked from his stance on block allocation to the lawmakers, inclusion of educational institutions in the monthly pay order (MPO) and construction of new roads, in the face of mounting pressures from the MPs.

At a pre-budget meeting with parliamentary standing committees yesterday, Muhith said block allocation for the constituencies would continue. The lawmakers present at the meeting welcomed the announcement by thumping the table.

Only a week back, Muhith had rejected the lawmakers' demand for the block allocation of Tk 15 crore for development works in each of their constituencies.

Did he make the U-turn due to pressure from the MPs?

"I say it will continue. However, at this moment it cannot be said whether the amount will be Tk 15 crore," Muhith



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NEWS ANALYSIS

When doctors turn hooligans

SYED BADRUL AHSAN

A section of the medical profession has lately been throwing professionalism to the winds and engaging in acts which we generally associate with lawless elements, indeed with criminality.

The audacity with which a reporter of the daily Prothom Alo was pounced upon by a doctor and an employee at ZA Sikder Women's Medical College in the city on Tuesday is but one more symptom of the malaise that appears to be undermining a profession whose avowed purpose is to save life, to prevent life from coming under threat of any kind. And yet when Shafiqul Azam, head of the cardiology department at the medical college in question, decided that he could physically assault and confine the Prothom Alo newsman in his office in league with some goons, he was giving us the clear impression that he did not care. He must be made to care.

In recent times, reports of doctors and interns throwing civility aside and indulging in behaviour clearly at odds with the calling of their profession have appeared in the media. Such behaviour has shamed us all, and especially when the reputation of Bangladesh's doctors is none too

HOSPITAL STAFF HELD -- PAGE 20

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