



WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

**GDP GROWTH**

Provisional estimates show the rate may be 6.12pc this year

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**CHINA WARNS USA, OTHERS**

Xi Jinping's veiled warning comes as Russia signs a 30-year gas deal with China

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## Finger pointed at another Hazari

*Row over tender, extortion seen as reason behind brutal murder in Feni*

RASHIDUL HASAN and PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE from Feni

At least four of the assailants who took part in Tuesday's killing of Phulgazi upazila chairman Ekramul Haque are known to locals.

The four are Abid, Jahidul Islam Jahid, Ziaul Haq Mister and Sohel, eyewitnesses and Awami League leaders in Feni told The Daily Star yesterday.

But this newspaper could not independently verify their involvement.

Abid is a cousin of Feni-2 AL lawmaker Nizam Uddin Hazari. Jahid is joint secretary of Phulgazi AL and Ziaul is a Jubo League leader of Feni municipality while Sohel is a local cadre, townspeople said.

These four allegedly led the group of 30-35 attackers who shot Ekramul in



Nizam Hazari

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Ekramul Haque

## Crime pays back

RASHIDUL HASAN and PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE from Feni

It was a cold afternoon of November 2000.

Abul Bashar, a Jubo League leader, was going along the Academy Road in Feni town in a human haulier. As soon as Bashar, also known as Bashir, reached the Bilashi cinema, some unknown assailants stopped the vehicle and

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Under a blazing sun, life may not have come to a standstill. But it certainly is far from being comfortable. All of nature, including fowl and animals, seem as much in consternation and suffering as human beings. The photo was taken at Mughdapara area of the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

## Rejoinder, our reply

Malaysian company IRIS has issued a rejoinder to two reports and an editorial run by The Daily Star recently.

The first report appeared on May 12 headlined "Passport supply in a shambles", the second one on the following day titled "Not cooperating, still getting job", and the editorial on May 14 under the headline "MRP booklet supply in a bind."

The reports said delivery of passports was not possible from regional passport offices in 33 districts and also in Malaysia due to non-cooperation from the IRIS, and raised the question as to why the

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## Chinese company to build Padma bridge

*Cabinet nod for lone bidder today; bridge turns Tk 3,772cr costlier in 4 years*

REJAUL KARIM BYRON

The Padma bridge project finally sees a breakthrough after a three-year delay over allegations of a corruption conspiracy, with the cabinet purchase committee set to award today the contract for the construction of the bridge to a Chinese company.

The government-formed committee to evaluate tenders has recommended that the contract be handed to the lone bidder, China Major Bridge Engineering Company (CMBEC), giving a clean chit to the bidding process for the country's largest-ever infrastructure project.

The CMBEC will get the \$1.55 billion (Tk 12,133 crore) job against a revised estimated cost of \$1.77 billion (Tk 13,886 crore). The Bridges Division revised the estimated cost upwards due to the three-year delay caused by the World Bank's cancellation of financing for the project.

This means the CMBEC will do the job for an amount 12.62 percent less

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**MAIN BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION**

Cost in 2009

\$1.06b

Cost rises to

\$1.55b

## Failed in road job, trusted in bridge

M ABUL KALAM AZAD

The government is set to award today the construction work of the Padma bridge to China Major Bridge Engineering Ltd which has let it down in the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway expansion project.

As the lead partner with the local affiliate Project Builders Limited (PBL), the Chinese firm never showed up to perform its job to expand the 30-kilometre stretch of the highway from Mawna to Raimoni, which ultimately delayed the project.

As per its January 2011 contract, the company was supposed to play the key role in implementing the project by engaging manpower and logistics.

The Tk 388 crore job was scheduled to be completed by July last year, but the joint venture so far has completed only 44 percent works, according to officials in the Roads and Highways Department (RHD).

The previous Awami League-led government took up the project in 2010 to expand the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway using state funds. The project completion deadline was later extended to July this year.

Both the previous and the incumbent project directors of the Dhaka-Mymensingh 4-lane project said the PBL has been reluctant to engage its

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Abductions and killings have increased due to unemployment and lack of decentralisation of power.

RAUSHAN ERSHAD, leader of the opposition in parliament, said at a view exchange meeting with journalists yesterday.



In the heat and under the blazing sun, students of Monoshwita Mohila College at Shouljalia in Kathalia, Jhalakathi, take their finals yesterday. A nor'wester recently destroyed their classrooms.

PHOTO: JAHIRUL ISLAM JEWEL

## Dhaka wants Tokyo to invest in big way

*Hopes to wrap up major infrastructure projects during PM's visit*

HASAN JAHID TUSHER and REZAUL KARIM

During her four-day visit to Japan from May 25, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will seek several billion dollars in assistance from Japan for infrastructure projects in the country.

The projects include a second nuclear power plant in the southern part of Bangladesh, a rail bridge parallel to Bangabandhu Bridge over the Jamuna, a tunnel or bridge between Phulchari and Bahadurabad Ghat across the Jamuna, an exclusive economic zone for Japanese investors and development of Mawa-Kalna-Narail-Jessore road with a bridge at Kalna.

The premier will also seek Japanese assistance for the Ganges Barrage project and Dhaka integrated flood control embankment/eastern bypass road multipurpose project, according to official documents.

The government had sought \$1 billion in

assistance from China on January 15 to build the rail bridge over the Jamuna and the Ganges Barrage project.

Hasina will hold talks with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on May 26. This is Hasina's third visit to Japan as prime minister and the first during her current term as prime minister. She visited Japan in 1997 and 2010.

A week after returning from Japan, Hasina will visit China, which has been the major financier in the last five years.

"Several deals for Japanese government's assistance to implement projects will be signed during the prime minister's visit to Japan," Abdus Sobhan Sikder, principal secretary to the Prime Minister's Office, told The Daily Star.

He said the government has been planning to give several BEPZA plots to Japanese investors for setting up exclusive economic zone in Dhaka. Sikder said Japan has an

## ACC largely ineffective

*Says TI report on South Asia*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Anti-Corruption Commission is "largely ineffective" in investigating and preventing corruption in Bangladesh, said a Transparency International report.

The enactment of the Right to Information Act (RTI) is a significant achievement, but the act is far from achieving its objectives even after five years, said the report, "Fighting Corruption in South Asia: Building Accountability", released yesterday.

The report said, "Whilst the ACC Act clearly states that corruption shall be the subject matter of investigation by the commission alone, actual cases are rare."

During 2012, the commission submitted charge sheets in 588 cases but only around 57 cases resulted in successful prosecutions in that year, the report said, adding that the cases which are brought forward are often political in nature.

The report said the government in 2009 set up a committee to investigate politically

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## Pre-1971 migrants to be Indian voters

*Meghalaya HC gives ruling*

STAR REPORT

In a landmark judgment, the High Court in Indian state of Meghalaya has said Bangladeshis, who settled in the north-eastern state before March 24, 1971, be treated as Indians and enrolled in the voters' list.

Though the verdict is surely welcomed by the pre-1971 Bangladeshi settlers, it leaves a large question mark over the fate of those who migrated to India from Bangladesh afterwards, including during the Liberation War.

The judgement came just a few days after Narendra

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