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Reset in Russia-US ties 'impossible' while Western sanctions remain, warns Medvedev

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## Tk 61CR VANISHED FROM BANK ACC probe 'fails' to identify culprit

Victim now for out-of-court settlement

M RAHMAN

An investigation by the Anti-Corruption Commission has failed to identify the culprit behind the embezzlement of more than Tk 61 crore from a client's account at Premier Bank through forged cheques.

The probe team that submitted its report to the ACC last month, however,

found involvement of bank's four officials who had approved the cheques.

It didn't find any involvement of bank's then vice chairman BH Haroon, also Awami League lawmaker from Jhalakathi, against whom the victim, businessman Khalilur Rahman, brought the allegation of embezzlement.

The team led by ACC Deputy Director Harunur Rashid sought permission from the ACC to file a case but the commission didn't approve it on Khalilur's request.

Speaking to The Daily Star, Khalilur said some people in the government and the bank are persuading him to settle the issue out of court.

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## Arrest order for Latif

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court has issued an arrest warrant against recently sacked minister Abdul Latif Siddique in a case filed for hurting Muslims' religious sentiments.

Metropolitan Magistrate Shahriar Mahmud Adnan passed the order yesterday as Latif failed to appear before his court as per its previous order issued on October 2.

Soon after the arrest warrant was issued, copies of the order were sent to Latif's permanent address in Tangail's Kalihati and to Awami League central office on Bangabandhu Avenue in the capital, court sources said.

The magistrate also ordered officers-in-charge of Kalihati and Paltan police stations to submit reports to it by November 23 on the execution of the arrest order.

The arrest warrant was issued after advocate Shah Alam, plaintiff of the case, submitted a petition to the court seeking Latif's arrest as he failed to appear before it yesterday.

Latif did not turn up in the court even though he knew about the case and the order for his appearance through print and electronic media, the petition said.

The court order was returned both from

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## Birth rate drops

Slum couples lead the way amidst slow family planning programme

PORIMOL PALMA

Birth rate in urban areas has come down significantly, raising hope that the country will soon achieve the replacement level which refers to a woman having two children.

According to the Bangladesh Urban Health Survey 2013 (BUHS-2013), birth rate per woman in urban slums declined from 2.5 in 2006 to 2.0 in 2013 while for non-slum women it dwindled to 1.7 compared to 1.9 in 2006.

Birth rate in semi-urban areas (other urban areas) is 1.7 per woman, says the survey released on Tuesday.

Health and population experts believe this improvement is outstanding considering the government's inadequate family planning activities.

"Replacement level of births among slum women is surprisingly well," said Kanta Jamil, monitoring and evaluation advisor in the Office of Population, Health and Nutrition and Education, USAID.

Although the survey did not identify the reasons behind reduced birth rates in slums, Jamil said several factors such as the growing popularity of two-child family, easy access to contraceptives, presence of NGO workers creating awareness of family planning in urban slums, lack of space in slum houses must have contributed to the improving trends.

According to the Bangladesh Demographic Health Survey 2011 (BDHS-2011), the total fertility rate in Bangladesh is 2.3, a significant decline from 6.3 in 1975.

Ubaidur Rob, country director of the international NGO, Population Council, thinks Bangladesh is very close to the replacement level.

He said replacement level of births in urban slums is remarkable considering the prevalence of poverty, illiteracy and poor sanitation in those areas.

The projection that Bangladesh's population would stabilise after it reaches the peak of 22 crore in next 20 years could now be revised.

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## CHILD MARRIAGE

## Vow of a survivor

TAMANNA KHAN

It is not just her own childhood that 16-year-old Shirin Akhter Asa has vowed to save but the rights of all children of her village and, if possible, of the entire world as well.

"I want to work for children. But it is more important to make the grown-ups aware of children's rights," Shirin said. "The grown-ups need to understand the importance of education for children and what child labour, abuse and torture are."

With this very resoluteness, the slen-



Shirin Akhter Asa

der teenager of about five feet had fought her family and relatives when they tried to marry her off four years ago.

"My cousin, a 21-year-old Hafiz student at that time, wanted to marry me. As he was financially well-off and did not want any dowry, my poor family considered the proposal lucrative," said 10th grader Shirin, relating the story of how she stopped her marriage when she was in Class-VI.

Shirin's father, Moinul Isalm, is a poor farmer from Arji Shimulbari

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## Govt against Latif's stay in India

Delhi informed

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

The Sheikh Hasina government does not want the recently fired minister Latif Siddique to stay in India, and it has already communicated a message to New Delhi to this end, a highly placed source in the government has told The Daily Star.

Policymakers in the Hasina administration fear that Latif's stay in India might create an unwanted situation in the country, as

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## PM in Italy, media team at home

Embarrassment deepens over visa fiasco

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The government is worried about Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's media coverage in Milan as three news agencies could not travel with her for not having visas.

Hasina reached Milan yesterday with a 118-member entourage to attend the 10th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). Bangladesh Ambassador in Rome Md Shahadat Hossain and Bangladesh's

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## SARADHA CHIT FUND CBI rules out diversion to Bangladesh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

India's Central Bureau of Investigation, which is probing the Saradha chit fund scam, has said there has been no indication of Saradha Group's investment funds being diverted to terror groups in Bangladesh.

The CBI conveyed to the Indian External Affairs Ministry in a response that its probe so far has not revealed any diversion of funds, CBI sources said yesterday.

The response was given after the ministry sought a clarification from the CBI, seeking details of its probe into the scam in the wake of Indian media reports that a portion of the scam money was allegedly

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## DOA MAHFIL



M. Moyeedul Islam (1922-2014)

A Doa Mahfil for the departed soul of our Hon'ble Chairman Mr. M. Moyeedul Islam will be held after Asar prayer on Friday 17th October 2014 at the Dhaka Ladies' Club, 36, Eskaton Garden Road, Dhaka-1000.

Family members and well-wishers are requested to kindly attend the Doa Mahfil for the departed soul.

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