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STRENGTHENING SAARC
Not just talks and declarations, more needs to be done for an integrated region

PAGE 7

YES TO FREEDOM
Catalonia non-binding polls back independence from Spain

PAGE 8



BILLBOARDS HIJACKED

Jubo League, this time

Owners count losses as AL's youth front celebrates founding anniversary today

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE and RASHIDUL HASAN

As the Jubo League celebrates its 42nd founding anniversary today, hundreds of billboards across the capital are publicising the occasion -- but mostly at the expense of others.

Billboard owners are counting losses as the pro-Awami League youth body hardly bothers to pay for using the hoardings or replacing the existing advertisements.

According to the Billboard Owners Association (BOA), the Jubo League has "hijacked" about 75 percent of their billboards.

"Nobody sought our permission to use our billboards and we have nothing to do but see those hijacked," Shahidul Islam, treasurer of BOA told The Daily Star.

This, however, is nothing new.

The ruling party and its front organisations also had grabbed billboards earlier on several occasions, said another top BOA official. "They barely seek permission, let alone pay for it."

Even, the owners have to pay ruling party leaders of the areas concerned for removing the banners from the hoardings after the events, he added.

The BOA says there are around 2,500 billboards in the capital and they have to pay the city corporations Tk 150 per square feet, plus 15 percent VAT.

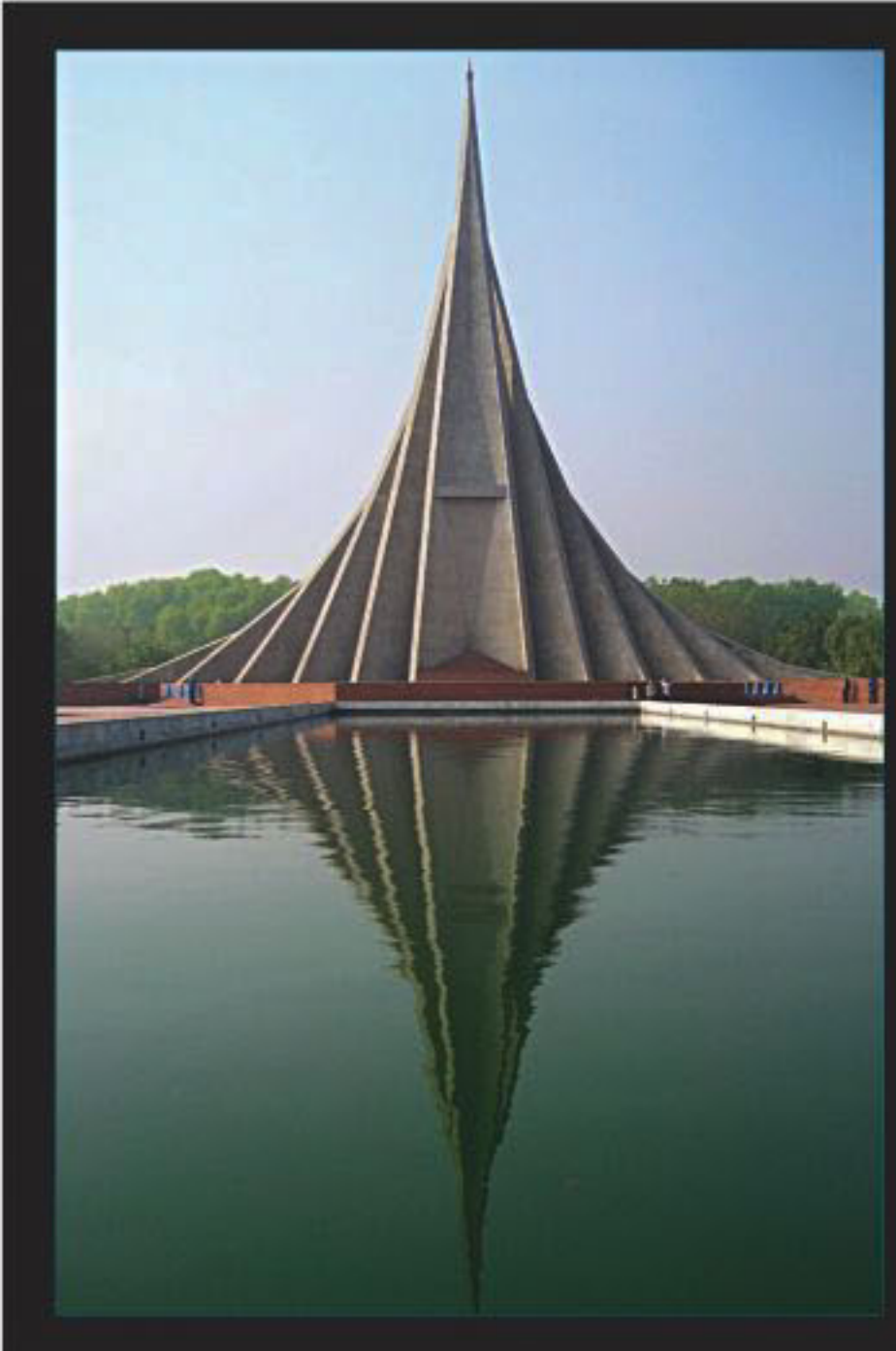
The Daily Star correspondents on Sunday night visited different parts of the capital and noticed Jubo League's campaign, especially in Dhanmondi Farmgate, Bijoy Sarani and Mirpur Road areas.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5



Leaders of the Jubo League, the youth wing of ruling Awami League, have put up huge banners and occupy billboards at Paltan intersection promoting themselves in the name of marking its 42nd anniversary. The photo was taken yesterday.

PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN



Architect Mainul no more

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Memorial. This is where the Bangalees gather and become a unique whole. Standing before it in solemn silence, they find their true identity. This is

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

18TH SUMMIT IN KATHMANDU

Saarc nations to ink 3 vital agreements

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

In a major step towards greater regional integration in three decades of the Saarc, the South Asian nations are set to sign three framework agreements in Kathmandu for establishing rail, road and electricity connectivity.

Diplomatic sources said the negotiations among the member states on the three deals -- Agreement for the Regulation of Passenger and Cargo Vehicular Traffic amongst Saarc Member States, Saarc Regional Agreement on Railways and Saarc Framework

Agreement for Energy Cooperation (Electricity) -- are at the final stage.

These deals are expected to be signed by the foreign ministers of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka during the 18th Summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) in the presence of their heads of state and of government.

The Bangladesh cabinet yesterday approved the drafts of the second and the third agreements.

SEE PAGE 10 COL 1

SUICIDE BLAST

48 students killed at Nigerian school

AP, Potiskum

A suicide bomber disguised in a school uniform detonated explosives at a high school assembly in the northeastern Nigerian city of Potiskum yesterday, killing at least 48 students, according to survivors and a morgue attendant.

Soldiers rushed to the scene, grisly with body parts, in the capital of Yobe state, but they were chased away by a crowd throwing stones and shouting that they are angry at the military's inability to halt a 5-year-old Islamic insurgency that has killed thousands and driven hundreds of thousands from their homes.

A suicide bomb attack in the same city killed 30 people one week ago, when suspected Boko Haram fighters attacked a religious procession of moderate Muslims.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 5

DHAKA-CTG HIGHWAY Expansion work resumes at last

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and M ABUL KALAM AZAD

After dillydallying for nearly four years, the Chinese company expanding the Dhaka-Chittagong highway is finally stepping up the pace of its work on the four-lane project.

"This time they have brought in sufficient construction materials and engaged required manpower and logistics," said Ibne Alam, project director of the highway expansion project, claiming that the com-

pany was working at full throttle.

The Daily Star reporter during a spot visit yesterday saw that work was going on at different points on the highway. It could be done even quicker, said a number of government officials.

Two local companies in the project have picked up their pace, Alam added.

Sinohydro Corporation, which won the contract for expanding around 140 kilometres of the 192km highway into a dual

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



A man with a bulldozer at work at Maynamoti of Comilla yesterday. The slow going of the Dhaka-Chittagong highway expansion work picked up some pace recently.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

DHAKA-CHITTAGONG HIGHWAY EXPANSION PROGRESS

Till October 31, 2014

Total length 192km	Completed 84.20km	
1	11.9	Daudkandi-Kutumbupur
2	22	Kutumbupur-Chandina Bypass
3	23	Chandina Bypass beginning to the end
4	21	Comilla Bypass to Batisha
5	11.5	Batisha to Mohipal
6	2.1	Mohipal to Dhumghat
7	12.6	Dhumghat to Mirsarai
8	19.9	Mirsarai to Panchashila
9	12.9	Panchashila to Kumira Bypass
10	15.67	Kumira Bypass to Chittagong Citygate
	9.8	
	18	
	11.5	
	17.4	
	11.9	
	84.2	

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- CHITTAGONG BANGKOK CHITTAGONG 17,444 (BDT)
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