

THE DAILY Star ON FRIDAY

SECOND EDITION

www.thedailystar.net

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24 PAGES PLUS THE STAR PRICE : Tk 12.00

REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXIV NO. 329 | POUSH 5, 1421 BS | SAFAR 25, 1436 HIJRI

WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

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



STATEHOOD BID

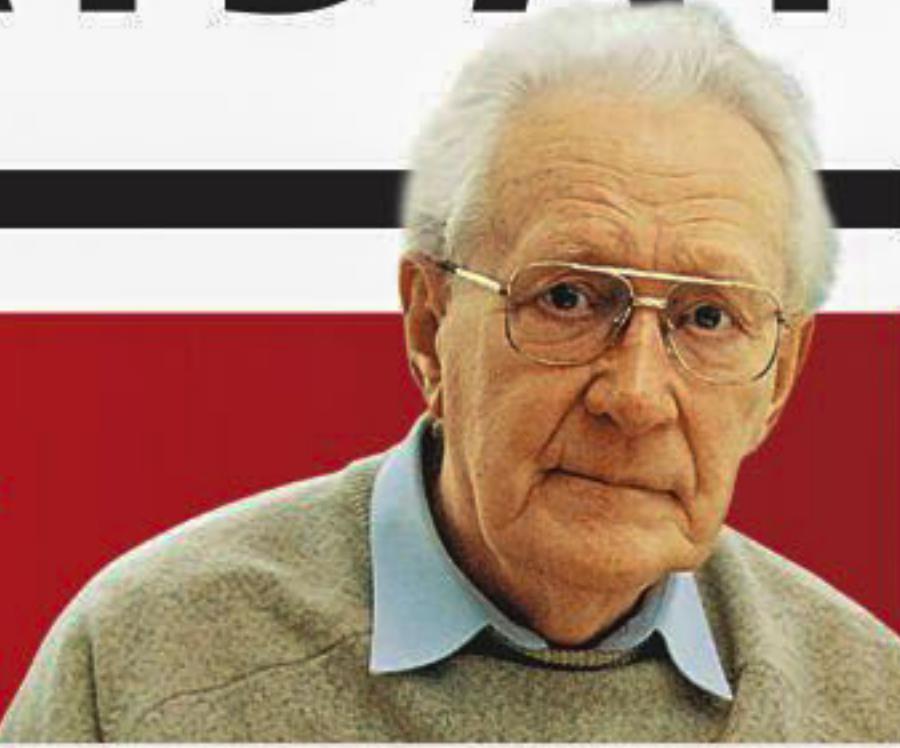
Palestinians present UN resolution seeking final peace deal with Israel in a year

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WAR CRIMES AND JUSTICE

Auschwitz guard, 93, to be tried in a case that could make German legal history

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GOVT OFFICIALS
 Khaleda
 denies
 meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Khaleda Zia
 yesterday
 dismissed
 reports of
 her recent
 meeting
 with gov-
 ernment officials, saying
 intelligence agencies pro-
 vided Prime Minister
 Sheikh Hasina with wrong
 information.

"Intelligence officials
 have given you [Hasina]
 false information about the
 meeting as you are running
 out of time," said the BNP
 chairperson.

"I was the country's
 prime minister and also the
 opposition leader. So, even
 if they [public servants]
 meet me, what's wrong in
 that? However, they did not
 meet me," she said at a

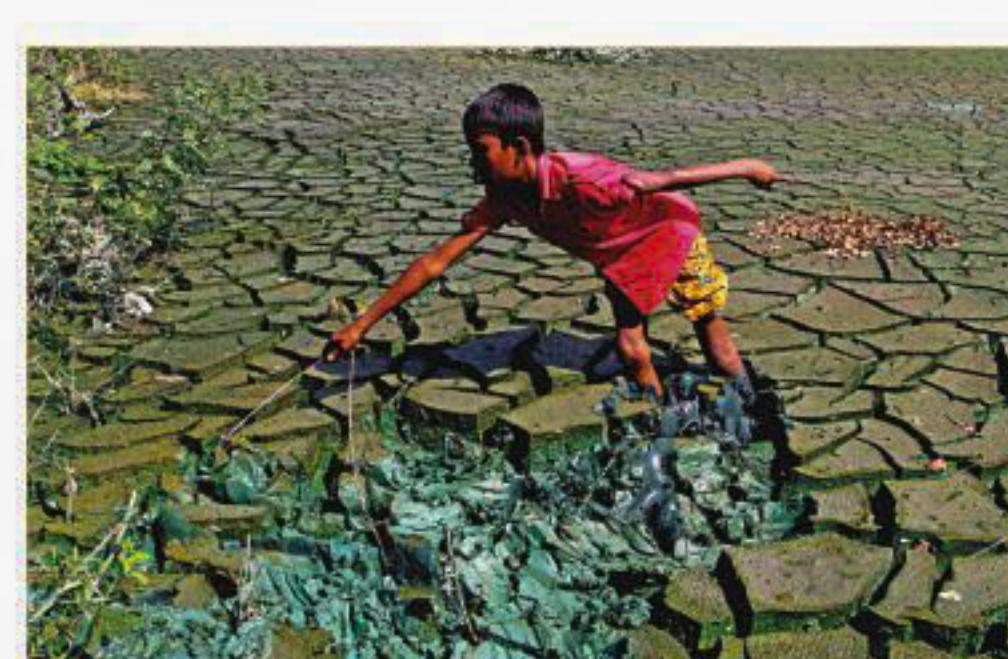
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COLOUR SPEAKS OF CRIME

The soil of this low-lying piece of land in Rasulpur of Rupganj in Narayanganj has turned cyan underneath as revealed by the boy, inset, trying to collect his cricket ball. Nearby dyeing and textile factories have been dumping toxic waste on the land. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



'DEAD' *Hefajat man returns*

19 months after Motijheel
 incident, he was found
 at a Ctg shrine



ARUN BIKASH DEY, Ctg
 Al Faruk, 15, had
 gone missing since
 the May 6 police
 crackdown on
 Hefajat-e-Islam in
 the capital last year.
 The missing list Hefajat circulated
 soon after, too, had his name.

His ghainba janaza (funeral-in-absentia prayers) was held two days later; his kulkhwani followed accordingly. His family even observed his first death anniversary in May this year.

One and a half years later, he appeared out of the blue and called his parents from a majar (shrine) in Chittagong. "I'm alive and am residing in Chittagong," Faruk told

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COMMENTARY

The massacred children are 'Ours'

For a "Moral Voice" of the Muslim World

MAHFUZ ANAM

Ever since the massacre of children in Pakistan I have been thinking about the mindset of the people who carried it out. I was trying to understand what sort of a narrative could have made the assailants so barbaric and how could events have been so perversely interpreted for them as to make these Taliban radicals consciously decide that killing innocent children is somehow justified. I was trying to place myself in the shoes of the bereaved parents and trying to guess how I would have felt if my children -- who have given me so much pleasure, happiness, pride, satisfaction, stability and a sense of security as I grew older -- would have been so brutally taken away from me when they were children.

Obviously, I would have been overcome by a sense of rage and obsessed by a sense of revenge. But at the same time I would have been heavily burdened by the fact that all this had been done by people who professed to build a society, a nation, a country and a future in light of the religion that was mine, and of whose contribution to civilisation I was acutely aware and extremely proud. So how could some people, who claimed to follow my religion, kill my children? For I know what my religion says.

I would also be acutely aware that condemnation for an act of this nature -- indiscriminate killing of children -- was not as widespread and

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In the cold with no food, shelter

Helpless victims of Rangamati
 arson wait for justice

M ABUL KALAM AZAD, from Rangamati

She was looking for something she could salvage in the hope that it would help her get through what apparently was the worst time of her life. Two days after the arson, her razed home was still smouldering.

Pieces of half-burnt clothes and mangled pots were all Sumoti Bala could collect. They were kept in a neat pile at a corner of the torched house, even though she knew none of that would be useable.

Still, she kept on looking for things. There was little else she could do.

Sumoti and her husband are farmers. The house they had built with corrugated iron sheets, wood and mud meant the world to them. It was their home and the home of their two children.

Her house was special to her but it was just one of 57 houses, of indigenous people in Suridaspara of Naniarchar upazila in Rangamati, which were torched by Bangladeshi settlers Tuesday morning.

Sumoti could save nothing from the sudden attack. "We all ran to the jungle as I saw a group of people coming towards us brandishing sticks and sharp weapons," she told The Daily Star standing in the ashes of her home.

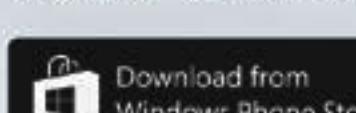
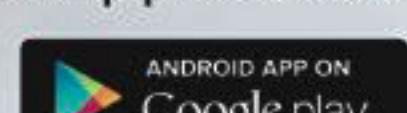
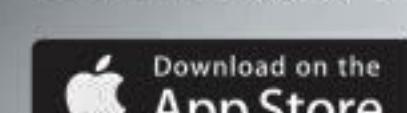
"When I returned after two hours, I saw the house was burning. We lost everything we had," she said.

As the sun was about to set yesterday, the cold of the hilly area started to roll in.

Another indigenous woman Bimola was preparing to make a fire for the night. It was an irony that they lost their

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