

THE DAILY Star ON FRIDAY

www.thedailystar.net

Your Right to Know

24 PAGES PLUS THE STAR PRICE: Tk 12.00

REGD. NO. DA 781 | VOL. XXIV No. 343 | POUH 19, 1421 BS | RABIUL AWAL 10, 1436 HIJRI

WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

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

HELP FOR REALTORS

Bangladesh Bank raises home loan ceiling by 20pc to boost apartment sales

PAGE B1

'NO ALIENS, IT WAS US'

CIA admits at least half of all UFO sightings in the 50s and 60s were spy planes

PAGE 9



DIPPING OIL PRICES IN INT'L MARKET

Import bill may go down by \$2b

Country spends up to Tk 38,000cr a year; Tk 14,000cr could be saved this year

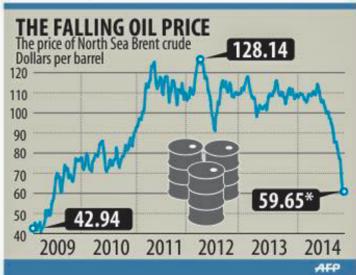
SHARIEF KHAN

As oil prices continue to slip in the international market, Bangladesh could save a staggering \$1.5 to 2 billion this year.

The country's oil importing agency Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC) that had been in the red from 1999 has started counting profits from September-October last.

If the current oil price trend continues, this will save the government from the burden of heavy subsidy to the power sector that consumes costly fuel oil. It will also create the premise for slashing prices of diesel, octane, and kerosene for the domestic market.

"We are making some good profits. All kinds of petroleum products are now profit-



able," said BPC Chairman Yunusur Rahman. "But we have some backlogs," he added.

The BPC's cumulative loss now stands

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1



Primary school students showing the new books they received at Motijheel Govt Boys School where the Textbook Festival 2015 was held yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

100pc pay hike for armed forces too

Max basic Tk 80,000, min Tk 8,200 proposed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Armed Forces Pay Committee has recommended more than 100 percent salary hike for the members of the armed forces.

The eight-member committee, led by Lt General Anwar Hossain, yesterday submitted its report to Finance Minister AMA Muhith with proposals for raising salaries of Bangladesh Army, Navy and Air Force per-

sonnel.

Anwar Hossain later told reporters that the committee made recommendations in line with the National Pay Commission's proposals for civil servants' salary rise.

The committee recommended 16 grades. Basic salary for the highest grade has been proposed at Tk 80,000. Major general and officers of the same status are in this grade.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

New Year, new books

Free textbooks distributed among students amid hartal

WASIM BIN HABIB

The morning chill was compounded by a foggy haze all around. A countrywide hartal was also on to set the scene for a bleak day. Yet nothing could deter the school kids from rushing to their schools to receive the New Year gifts awaiting them.

No preparations were there to make a show of the programme. Yet the exuberance displayed by the kids

SEE PAGE 17 COL 2

Save forests through better management

Govt should take adequate measures to protect Sundarbans, experts tell discussion on oil spill

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Considering the recent oil spill as a wake-up call, the government should take adequate measures to protect the Sundarbans, said members of a UN-Bangladesh response mission yesterday.

Though the immediate impact of the oil spill on the environmental and aquatic

ecosystems of the forest is limited, it is difficult to determine the long-term impact of the incident, they said at a discussion organised by the Bangla daily Prothom Alo.

The experts believe it is necessary to learn from the accident and take initiatives to stop plying of vessels through the forest to save the Sundarbans and its biodiversity.

SEE PAGE 17 COL 5

Eight-year-old Rabeya, who had gone to the *gaye halud* programme of her neighbour Selim, *inset*, lies in a bed of Dhaka Medical College Hospital's burn unit. A disgruntled admirer of the girl Selim was to marry allegedly launched an acid attack on the programme.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN



Acid thrown at pre-wedding programme

Groom, 4 others including 2 children hurt

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

In a matter of seconds, the laughter and joy of the pre-wedding *gaye holud* ceremony of Selim Sarker in Shariatpur turned into painful shrieks of acid burn victims.

Selim, 28, who would have tied the knot of marriage yesterday, was struggling for life at the burn unit of the Dhaka Medical College Hospital, allegedly because of the jealousy of an admirer of the bride.

With 30 percent burns mainly on the right side of his body and on the left arm, Selim told this correspondent how the joyful event at his house in Sarkarpara of Shokhipur upazila became a nightmare following an acid attack.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2

Baby stolen from RMCH rescued

Hospital staff, 3 others held

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Police recovered a newborn from Mahendra village of Poba upazila and returned her to the parents yesterday, three days after the baby was stolen from Rajshahi Medical College Hospital.

During the drive, four people, including a hospital staffer, were arrested for their alleged involvement in the theft.

The arrestees are Nargis Akhtar, a female attendant at RMCH, Khaleda Akhtar and her husband Jalal Uddin, and one Sokhina Akhtar.

SEE PAGE 17 COL 2




The same great Taaza Tea now more affordable!

100 gm	200 gm	400 gm
tk.42	tk.82	tk.162
tk.35	tk.70	tk.139