



AFTER THE ATTACK

Hundreds go without water in a Dinajpur Santal village following rampage by land grabbers

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BAT AGAINST ANYONE!

Tigers practise in simulated match scenarios in Brisbane

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SHIFT IN CUBA-US TIES

Fidel Castro doesn't "trust the US" but he's not against "pacific solution"

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Anxious, vexed

14 lakh SSC examinees, their guardians face uncertainty over the exams scheduled to begin on Feb 2 as blockade continues



WASIM BIN HABIB

Time is ticking away for Sabbir Ahmed and yet he cannot do what he must: concentrate. Worse, his anxiety is growing by the day.

An SSC candidate, he now should be busy making his last-minute preparation as his exams start in five days. But Sabbir is restless. He faces extreme difficulties concentrating on his studies. The Monipur High School student of the capital is uncertain if the exams will be held as per the routine. And the thought of reaching the exam hall safely is weighing him down more than anything else.

"How can I focus when I am in the

middle of a sea of uncertainty? Who will be responsible if I perform poorly in the exam?" he tells The Daily Star.

His helplessness is shared by almost all of some 14 lakh candidates of SSC and equivalent exams. Their tests begin on February 2, with no indication yet that the BNP-led opposition alliance will lift or relax its country-wide blockade.

Against this backdrop, the education ministry sits today to discuss the current law and order situation and other issues relating to the exams.

Ministry officials say they have completed all the preparations for holding the tests on time. They also

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US President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama gesture as they board Air Force One prior to departing from New Delhi yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Koko buried

In tears, Khaleda says goodbye to her son

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Family, relatives, friends and BNP leaders and activists yesterday bade a tearful farewell to Arafat Rahman Koko.

The younger son of BNP chief Khaleda Zia was laid to rest at Banani graveyard last evening following his family's unsuccessful bid to bury him at the Army Graveyard.

Prior to this, thousands of mourners joined the namaz-e-ajanaza of Koko, who died of a cardiac arrest in Malaysia on Saturday, at the Baitul Mukarram National Mosque in the afternoon. The body was flown back home in a Malaysia Airlines flight around 11:40am. A BNP delegation received the coffin at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport.

Koko's widow Syeda Shamila Rahman, daughters Zafira Rahman and Zahiya Rahman, Khaleda's younger brother Shameem Iskandar and her adviser Mosaddek Ali Falu returned to Dhaka on the same flight.

The body was taken straight to Khaleda's Gulshan office, where she has been staying since January 3, around 1:30pm.

About 10 minutes later, the bereaved mother was helped down the stairs to the ground floor where Koko's coffin

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Shibir man dies 'in road crash while fleeing Rab custody'

Family, Shibir term it killing

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chapainawabganj

A leader of Islami Chhatra Shibir was killed after being hit by a speeding truck while fleeing Rab custody in the town early yesterday, claimed Rapid Action Battalion.

The victim, 20-year-old Asadullah Tuhin, was an HSC student at City College and president of the college unit Shibir.

Refuting Rab's claim, his family members said law enforcers picked up the youth at his home and tortured him to death.

Meanwhile, the district unit Shibir, the pro-Jamaat students' platform, has called a 48-hour hartal from 6:00am today in the district protesting the death of Tuhin as they termed it "a planned killing" by Rab.

Talking to newsmen at his office, Major Kamruzzaman, camp commander of Rab-5 in Chapainawabganj, said Rab members rounded up five Shibir activists, including Tuhin,

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A MOTHER'S WORST NIGHTMARE! Khaleda Zia breaks down in tears to see her younger son Arafat Rahman Koko in coffin after his body was flown back home yesterday. Koko died in Malaysia on Saturday.

PHOTO: BNP

Moving beyond cold war

Obama leaves Delhi with a promise of closer US-India ties

BLOOMBERG

It's not every day that an American president reviews a parade of Russian military hardware.

On a rainy Monday in New Delhi, that's exactly what President Barack Obama did as the invited "chief guest" at India's Republic Day parade.

His presence personified the closer US-Indian ties that officials have been at pains to highlight during the president's three-day visit. Obama looked

on as Russian-made T-72 tanks -- once a mainstay of the defunct Warsaw Pact -- rolled past underneath a canopy of streaking Russian fighters.

"India obviously has a longstanding defence relationship with Russia, but the relationship with us is on the upswing," Ben Rhodes, Obama's deputy national security adviser, told reporters in New Delhi on Monday. "It's a Cold War context. That has been in the past part of the source of mistrust and differences between our two countries.

But we're moving beyond that." Reverberations from that movement are being felt in Moscow -- and even more so in Beijing, where the Chinese government has reacted to this week's Indo-US summit with a mixture of scorn and defensiveness.

Global Times, a state-run paper, said "the west is egging India on" while Xinhua claimed the Obama visit was eclipsed by a "growing rapport between Beijing and New Delhi."

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Md. Khaled Mamun, MD & CEO receiving the Award from the Chief Guest, Mr. Abul Maal A. Muhith, Hon'able Minister for Finance

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