

MPs, families, JS officials to get new stickers for vehicles

Three new vehicle stickers will be issued for lawmakers, their families and Jatiya Sangsad officials to check rampant misuse of the existing ones and allow owners to be easily identified, Speaker Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury informed the House yesterday. Each lawmaker will be issued one holographic sticker containing a security code and his/her vehicle's registration number while the respective family member of another of a different colour, she said. Even domestic helps of lawmakers are using the existing stickers while forged copies have been found in the capital's SEE PAGE 5 COL 1



Students, including those intending to sit for the upcoming Secondary School Certificate exam, form a human chain organised by Samajtantrik Chhatra Front before Aswini Kumar Hall in Barisal city yesterday protesting the ongoing arson centring on the BNP-led 20-party's blockade and demanding a congenial atmosphere for the examinees. PHOTO: ARIFUR RAHMAN

Mirsarai land office set ablaze

Unidentified miscreants set the office of assistant commissioner (land) in Mirsarai upazila of Chittagong ablaze early yesterday, resulting in damage to at least a hundred valuable land documents. Fazle Elahi Oli, the assistant commissioner (land), said the miscreants poured petrol after breaking a windowpane on the east side of the one-storey building and set the room on fire. The record room was not damaged as they doused the fire within 10 minutes, around 2:40am, he added. A case was filed. On January 22, armed miscreants ransacked the office of assistant commissioner (land) in Aminbazar area of Savar after tying the security guard with ropes.

NEWS IN brief

18 gold bars seized at Dhaka airport

Customs officials seized 18 gold bars weighing two kilograms at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in the capital yesterday morning. On information, a team of the officials searched a flight of Biman Bangladesh Airlines and recovered the unclaimed gold from inside a bag on a seat, said Kazi Md Ziauddin, joint commissioner of customs. The flight came from Dubai, he said, adding that market value of the gold was Tk 1 crore.

Climate adaptation project for farmers launched in capital

A climate adaptation and livelihood protection project was launched in Dhaka yesterday to warn farmers of the Haor areas in advance about flash floods to save life, property and crops. On the occasion of launching the project, a workshop was also organised by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) with LGED, says a press release. Senior Secretary of Local Government Division Monzur Hossain and IFAD Country Program Officer Nicolas Syed were present.

Matin, Serajul new IUB Trust chair, vice-chair

A Matin Chowdhury and Syed Serajul Huq have been elected chairman and vice-chairman to the Education, Science, Technology and Cultural Development Trust (ESTCOT), the founding trust of Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) respectively for 2015-2016. Matin is the managing director of New Asia Ltd, and Serajul is the chairman of Sea Pearl Lines Ltd, says a press release.



BINODPUR MASSACRE DURING LIBERATION WAR Another implicates Mahidur, Afsar

He however mixes them up at the dock; contempt rule hearing on the Daily Sangram editor, three others deferred till February 26

A prosecution witness yesterday vividly described his miraculous survival and his brother's death right before him after war crimes accused Mahidur Rahman and Afsar Hossain alias Chutu shot them in Chapainawabganj during the 1971 Liberation War. Jakaria, 62, however, mixed up the accused standing at the dock two consecutive times when asked by the three-member International Crimes Tribunal-2 to identify them, prompting the defence to suggest he had given a "tutored and untrue testimony", to which he replied in the negative. Meanwhile, the tribunal-1 deferred until February 26 the hearing of a contempt rule issued upon the Daily Sangram editor and three others after the defence prayed for time. The rule came over newspaper reports and comments centring on the war crimes case against Jamaat-e-Islami Assistant Secretary General ATM Azharul Islam which was pending with the court. "The Pakistani (occupation) army cor-

done off Chandshikari (his village) and villages - Kobirajola, Chamatola and Eradot Biswas Tola at about 5:00 or 6:00am on a day of mid-Shaban (early October in Islamic calendar)...They entered our house at about 9:00am," said the fourth witness. "We failed to flee. Razakars (an auxiliary force of the Pakistani army) dragged me out of my room and handed me over to the Pakistani army in front of our house," said Jakaria, adding that his three brothers, Taslim, Nazrul and Estaj, were also caught. He also stated of seeing others who had been rounded up - Abul Hossain, Mohbul, Fosi Alam alias Satu, Afzal, Senamul, Katlu, Jalal, Poygam Biswas, Rahman, Alkeji, Azhar, Mantu, Sentu, Solim Uddin and another Jalal. "At one stage, they forced us to lie face down and tortured us," he said, adding that they were later kept confined to Binodpur High School till around 4:00pm the next day, when Razakars brought them out. The Razakars freed Abul Hossain, Mohbul, Mantu, Poygam Biswas, Rahman and Salimuddin on condition of bringing SEE PAGE 5 COL 1

65,910 Bangladeshis arsenicosis patients

Says health department survey of 2012

A total of 65,910 Bangladeshis are affected by arsenicosis disease which is caused by drinking and using arsenic contaminated water, according to a survey conducted by the health department in 2012. However, the actual number of affected people is much higher than the survey, said a data, presented yesterday by NGO Forum for Public Health, a non-government organisation working for safe drinking water, at a meeting titled "Linking Arsenicosis Patients to Better Treatment Facilities". Besides the identified patients, about 7.5 million people are at risk of being affected by arsenicosis and 2.4 million are victims of possible arsenic contamination, the data added. NGO Forum with assistance from the European Union organised the event in the public health department in the capital. Out of the total arsenicosis patients, 66 percent are women, mentioned Dr Abul Hasnat Milton, senior lecturer at the School of Medicine and Public Health, Newcastle University, Australia, adding that 48 percent of the total patients are not getting treatment for a lack of health services and medicines. Female arsenicosis patients fall victims to the repression of family members and they are compelled to give more dowry, said Dr Mahbuba Nasrin, director, Institute of Disaster Management and Vulnerability Studies of the University of Dhaka. There is a lack of safe water in many areas which have arsenic in water and the government is not paying proper importance to this matter, said Dr M Firoze Ahmad, pro-vice chancellor of Stamford University. Zuena Aziz, additional secretary and director general of Local Government Division; Khaleda Ahsan, chief engineer of the Department of Public Health, and SMA Rashid, executive director of NGO Forum, also spoke.

PM's anti-terror

FROM PAGE 3 the opposition because the media was under the government control, and it was carrying out propaganda against the opposition. How could BNP activists torch vehicles or hurl petrol bombs on those when the party chairperson is "confined" to her office, thousands of party men including acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir are in prison, thousand others went into hiding for innumerable "false cases", and many are being killed in the name of shootouts? he asked. Referring to the killing of opposition activists including Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal leader Nuruzaman Jony, councillor Imrul Quayes, Motiar Rahman, Asaduzzaman Tuhin, he said they were targeted to be killed. "Were they caught red handed in the acts of sabotage?" "Almost all of them were taken away by the joint force, intelligence agency or Rab from their houses or their relatives". But the tears of their mothers and families are not seen in media," he added.

Have cops been

FROM PAGE 3 He, however, blamed the government for the prevailing impasse, which he said was a result of the "voter-less" election it held on January 5 last year, excluding the then main opposition. He further said, "The government is suing BNP chief Khaleda Zia as mastermind of the incidents of violence. But now when police have been ordered to shoot, I ask 'will Sheikh Hasina be sued in the same way when she will not be in power?'" Referring to Nagorik Oikya's plan to rally in the capital on Sunday to demand a dialogue, he said, "If we are not allowed to hold the rally, we will go to the High Court." Worried for the students, who will take part in the SSC and equivalent examinations from February 2, Manna criticised both BNP and AL for their rigid stances.

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