



'GO SET A WATCHMAN'

Harper Lee will publish new book 55 years after 'To Kill a Mockingbird'

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FOOD INFLATION RISES

Supply disruption caused by political unrest inflates prices

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THE GAME CHANGER

Former New Zealand captain says it's none other than Shakib

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Seven burnt alive

9 others suffer burns in deadly petrol bomb attack on bus on Dhaka-Ctg highway

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

It was around four in the morning. Most of the passengers of the Icon Paribahan bus heading for Dhaka from Cox's Bazar were asleep, having no idea about the horrors that lurked ahead.

As the bus reached Chouddagram in Comilla, alleged blockaders hurled a petrol bomb at it.

And in no time, the vehicle erupted in flames, burning seven alive and injuring at least 20.

It is the deadliest arson attack since January 5, the day the BNP-led 20-party alliance announced non-stop nationwide blockade.

Doctors fear the death toll may rise, as three of the six patients under treatment at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital were in a critical condition.

With the latest casualties, at least 50 people,

including 27 arson victims, lost their lives in the ongoing violence. Earlier, six

people were burnt to death after suspected blockaders

made a similar arson attack on a bus in Mithapukur upazila of

Rangpur on January 14.

Talking to The Daily Star last night, Tutul

Chakraborty, superintendent of police in Comilla, said

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"I am alive." Hanif, one of the passengers injured in a bus arson in Chouddagram of Comilla, talks to his wife over the mobile phone from the bed of Dhaka Medical College and Hospital yesterday. In the arson, he has lost his elder brother Yusuf. And as the news spread, his wife back home had been fearing the worst.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



2 Jubo Dal men killed

Police claim they were run over by a truck while trying to torch it; family says they were arrested earlier

STAR REPORT

Two Jubo Dal activists were killed as a truck ran them over while they were trying to hurl petrol bombs at the vehicle in Monirampur of Jessore early yesterday, claimed police.

The dead, Liton Ali, 22, and Yusuf Mia, 25, are from the same upazila.

Talking to reporters at Jessore Medical College, Yusuf's uncle Abdul Mannan, said he came to know around 10:00pm on Monday that police picked up the two from Gangra village of the upazila around 8:00pm.

"I went to the police station today [yesterday] morning to enquire about the two, but

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Petrol bomb menace
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Household gas tariff to double

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Households will have to pay more than double the current monthly tariff for gas stoves, according to a proposal from Titas Gas.

The state-run company proposed fixing the tariff at Tk 1,000 a month against present Tk 450 for a double-burner stove and Tk 850 instead of Tk 400 for a single-burner.

It placed the proposal at a public hearing at Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission (BERC) in the capital yesterday.

Analysing Titas' revenue requirements, the BERC's technical committee, however, said there was no

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New industrial gas links from next month

Sangsad told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Good news for the industrialists who have long been waiting for gas connections to their factories.

State Minister for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Nasrul Hamid Bipu yesterday told parliament that the government would start providing new industrial gas links from the next month.

Due to supply crisis, the government stopped giving new connections to industrial units in 2010.

During a question-answer session in the

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Of tears, groans & fury

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The hope of a new life beckoned Mohammad Yusuf and Abu Taher.

After months of preparations, the two farmers from Chakaria of Cox's Bazar started dreaming about better days ahead as they were all set to fly to Qatar for jobs last night.

Jamir Uddin and Rashidul Islam -- also from Chakaria -- had left home on Monday night with similar dreams. They too were to go to Qatar with Yusuf and Taher.

But the dreams are gone. An arson attack on their bus early yesterday left Yusuf and Taher dead while Rashidul is fighting for his life. Jamir escaped unhurt.

"I would not have let my father go, had I known this would be our final farewell," howled Yusuf's daughter Shamima Yasmin.

Fatema Begum, Yusuf's widow, fainted frequently.

"Everything is ruined," wailed the mother of five.

Yusuf's brother Mohammad Hanif was also on the bus to see his brother off at the airport. He is now writhing in pain at the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Family members said Yusuf had mortgaged a piece of land and sold whatever gold ornaments the family had to pay for the Qatar trip and other arrangements. Taher, father of two, had borrowed money from his

relatives for the trip.

Other victims of the arson attack left behind similar agonising tales.

Take Nuruzzaman Poplu, a contractor from Jessore. He had gone to Cox's Bazar for work four days ago. He had taken with him his wife Miha Mahfuza and 15-year-old daughter Mysha Tasnim, who insisted on going on a vacation.

One of the last photos Mysha posted on her Facebook page shows the three sitting on a coral rock on a beach. In the arson attack, Poplu and Mysha were burned alive. Miha survived, but suffered burns.

"Who knew it would be a death trip?" she said.

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Faruk, undergoing treatment at the DMCH burn unit, stares into space at one stage of narrating the horrific petrol bomb blast on a bus in Chouddagram. He got his both hands burned while trying to save fellow passengers from the blaze.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

SSC exams in hartal trap

20-party extends shutdown till tomorrow evening; exams schedule changed again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About 15 lakh students are in a fix as the education ministry yesterday once again put off the SSC and equivalent exams due to an extended hartal by the BNP-led 20-party alliance.

The opposition combine enforced a 72-hour countrywide shutdown from Sunday morning, which has now been extended until 6:00pm tomorrow.

The exams were due to begin on Monday, but the ministry rescheduled those for Friday (9:00am to 12:00 noon).

The second exam (Bengali 2nd paper/ Easy Bengali 2nd paper/ Bengali Language and Culture 2nd paper) was slated for today, which will now be held on Saturday from 10:00am to 1:00pm.

The 20-party alliance in a press

release yesterday announced that it extended the 72-hour hartal protesting the filing of cases against BNP chief Khaleda Zia and its acting secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir.

BNP Joint Secretary General Salahuddin Ahmed in the release also protested "killings and forced disappearances of BNP leaders and activists, attacks on party men, filing of cases

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Isn't it what we call terrorism?

SYED ASHFAQUL HAQUE

A bus full of sleeping people was petrol-bombed in the wee hours yesterday on the highway in Comilla, about 100km from Dhaka. Seven, including children and woman, were burned alive. The attackers vanished swiftly, punishing ordinary folks for defying the ongoing hartal.

Forget politics and let us focus on the nature of the crime. Was it one of those political excesses that stepped over the line of crime? Was it just a political agitation that aimed to stop plying of vehicles but ended up killing people?

Attackers in no way can be seen as pickets. They did not go there to vandalise hartal-defying vehicles. They went there simply to kill. And they used a petrol bomb to ensure higher number of casualties. It was indeed a cold-blooded massacre of innocent people.

And it was not a one-off. In scores of arson attacks, almost every day, since the out-of-sorts BNP launched its topple-government programme about a month back, 27

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It's an act of insurgency

Ruling party MPs slam arson attacks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Describing the recent fire-bomb attacks allegedly by the BNP-Jamaat men as "acts of insurgency", several treasury bench lawmakers yesterday demanded special government measures to contain the menace.

Suggestions for introducing new acts with stricter punishment and launching special drives of joint forces, including Bangladesh Army, were made to contain the violence during the anti-government programmes of the BNP-led 20-party alliance since January 5. At least 50 people have

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ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP 2015 10 DAYS TO GO

Tigers downed in 1st warm-up

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh national cricket team lost their first unofficial warm-up game against Australia XI at the Allan Border Ground in Brisbane yesterday by five wickets. It was a match which saw the Tigers experiment with both their batting and bowling departments.

Batting first, the Tigers were bundled out for 231. In reply, the hosts romped to their target comfortably in 43.2 overs.

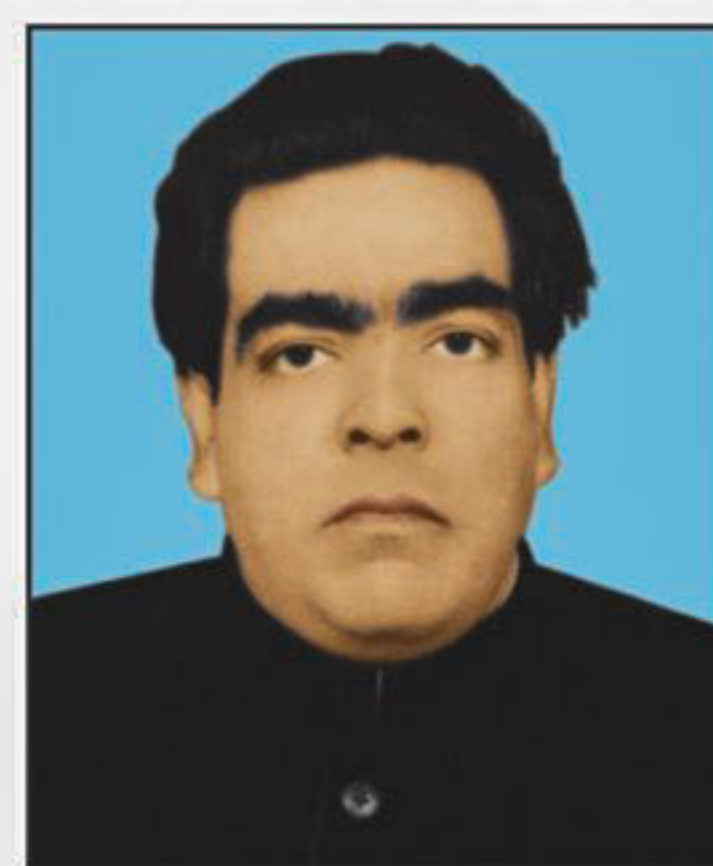
Mominul Haque, who top-scored with 52, was called back soon after the left-hander reached his half-century in a bid to give the middle order batsmen an opportunity to have a go at the visitors. However, the move did not go as predicted as the likes of Mushfiqur Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan and Nasir Hossain departed cheaply.

With the ball the Tigers decided to give a maximum of seven overs to each bowler. Of the five wickets, pacers Rubel Hossain, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza and Taskin Ahmed took four

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37th Death Anniversary

(Abul Company) The founder of Abul Khair Group noted industrialist and social worker
Late Janab ABUL KHAIR



Death: 4th February, 1978

In accordance with the will of Almighty Allah the Beneficent, you left this mundane world, leaving us and many of your relations overwhelmed by grief. In our everyday life your bright ideals serve as beacon. You are immortal in your death. We pray to Almighty Allah for the salvation of your departed soul.

May Allah the Beneficent bless you with the eternal bliss of paradise. Ameen.

**Your loving
Sons, Daughters and Relatives.**

MG!

Why will the government give compensation? Why don't you seek it from those carrying out sabotage... giving orders sitting in Gulshan? Why don't you file cases against them? Hundreds of cases.

IGP AKM SHAHIDUL HOQUE TO TRANSPORT OWNERS