

# THE DAILY Star ON FRIDAY

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## Big step in Saarc travel

4 South Asian nations close to a deal allowing cross-border movement of motor vehicles

REZAUL KARIM

Four Saarc countries are close to signing a deal that would allow movement of vehicles through their borders just like in the European Union countries.

Bangladesh, India, Bhutan and Nepal, have drawn up a draft plan for seamless transit of passenger, cargo and personal vehicles between the countries.

The agreement will allow vehicles to ply designated routes in the four countries and reduce cost and time of unloading and loading of people and goods at the borders, making cross-border trade more efficient, officials said.

This sub-regional move is an initiative parallel to the proposed Saarc Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA) and will be open also to other neighbouring countries, sources said.

India, Bhutan and Nepal have accepted a Bangladesh recommendation to keep the membership of this sub-regional group open so that neighbouring countries like Myanmar and China can connect to the region, a senior

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A giant puppet cricketer during the ICC Cricket World Cup 2015 opening event at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl in Melbourne yesterday.

PHOTO: icc-cricket.com



## A dazzling WC launch

STAR SPORTS DESK

The World Cup down under officially opened with a celebration of local culture, pop music and fireworks in Melbourne and Christchurch yesterday.

While Australia thrilled the audience at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl, the Hagley Oval in New Zealand was the centre of attraction for thousands of fans and members of the cricket fraternity.

The opening ceremonies, two days before the kick-off of the one and a half-month spectacle of cricket's flagship event, were not as lavish as it was four years ago in Dhaka's Bangabandhu National Stadium. But it

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## Civil society briefing today on talks call

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of civil society members will hold a press conference today to talk about their call for a national dialogue to solve the ongoing political crisis.

The conference will focus on the letters they sent to President Abdul Hamid, Prime Minister

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## NEWS ANALYSIS

## Disturbing directive

INAM AHMED

It comes as an absolute shock and shame for us all the freedom-loving Bangalees who have fought against the Pakistani apartheid and who nurture the ethos of equality and peace and for a united one Bangladesh.

And it seems those in the home ministry who issued this order -- banning Bangladeshi or foreign individuals or organisations meeting and talking unsupervised with indigenous people in the hills -- do not fall under this category and so do not feel the same.

The idea that I, as an individual or part of an organisation, have to meet hill people in the presence of military or paramilitary personnel or an

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## UN chief wants stability Taranco to liaise with govt

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The United Nations is very much concerned about the violence and loss of lives in Bangladesh.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon is personally committed to the stability and positive development of Bangladesh, his spokesman Stéphane Dujarric said

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## No compromise with terrorists

PM tells Ansar-VDP rally

BSS, Gazipur

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday said her government would not compromise with the perpetrators of recent terrorist and militant activities.

"We will resist the devils and Inshallah we will be able to restore peace again in the society," she said, adding that there would be no place for militants and terrorists in the country.

The PM made the remarks while addressing the 35th National Rally of

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## In Basanta bloom

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With Pahela Falgun, the much-awaited Basanta or spring arrives in a display of

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Tired of standing under the sun for more than two hours, one of the schoolchildren yawns during a human chain in the capital's Motijheel yesterday. Over one thousand students endured the heat at the event organised to protest blockade and hartals that have been hampering academic activities.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## Kids made to stand in the sun for hours

Sent to take part in human chain against violence

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

More than one thousand students from 25 education institutions, mostly schools in Motijheel and adjacent areas, were made to stand in the sun for two and a half hours during a human chain yesterday.

A platform called "Students, Teachers, Guardians and Management Coordination Committee" organised the event to protest the ongoing political programmes that are hampering academic activities including SSC and equivalent examinations.

Several students fell sick with heatstroke during the programme. A number of class three and class four students were seen

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## Arson, bomb attacks on

Dozens of innocent people including bus passengers, truck helper injured

STAR REPORT

Hartal and blockade pickets continued to target public transports and innocent people with petrol and crude bombs yesterday, burning several vehicles and injuring dozens in Dhaka and elsewhere.

At least five people suffered burns as suspected opposition men attacked their vehicles with petrol bombs in Narsingdi and Savar. Three others sustained splinter injuries from a crude bomb attack on their CNG-run auto-rickshaw in the capital's Dhanmondi last evening.

In Narsingdi, three people, including a truck driver and his helper, suffered burns as pickets attacked a goods-laden truck with a petrol bomb in Sadar upazila around 8:30pm, reports our correspondent.

The third victim is Jewel Mia, an employee of Pran company, who was on the truck.

In Savar, at least two passengers were burned in a petrol

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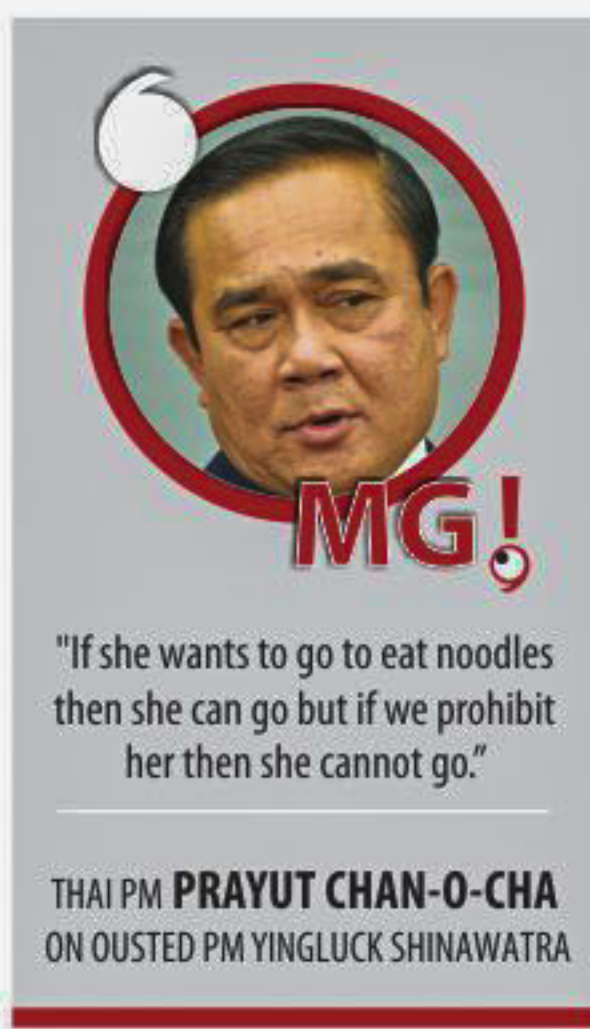
MORE HARTAL LIKELY FROM SUNDAY - PAGE 16

## Bogra BCL clarification

Bangladesh Chhatra League has protested a report published in The Daily Star yesterday under the headline, 'BCL man' hurt while making bombs.

In a clarification on the same day, Mashrafe Hiro,

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"If she wants to go to eat noodles then she can go but if we prohibit her then she cannot go."

THAI PM PRAYUT CHAN-O-CHA ON OUSTED PM YINGLUCK SHINAWATRA

## All-party affair

Intelligence report points to explosives smuggling racket

PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE with SHARIFUL ISLAM

Activists of all major political parties are involved in smuggling and illegal trade of chemicals and explosive substances, according to an intelligence report.

Prepared by the National Security Intelligence (NSI), the report contains a list of 903 people involved in the crimes. Of them, 371 are linked with the BNP, 220 with the Jamaat-e-Islami and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir, 91 with the ruling Awami League and its associate bodies, and one with the Jatiya Party.

In the summary of the report, the agency mentioned the names of eight AL men, who live in bordering districts of Kushtia, Feni, Satkhira and Cox's Bazar, and hold positions in local units of the AL, its youth front Jubo League and pro-AL student body Bangladesh Chhatra League.

The Daily Star has obtained a copy of the summary report that recommended immediate arrest and punishment of the culprits involved in the criminal activities.

The 54-page report, submitted to the Prime Minister's Office recently, was prepared in the wake of crude bomb and arson attacks since the BNP-led 20-party alliance launched a non-stop blockade on January 6.

However, almost all deadly attacks were carried out with petrol bombs, not bombs made of the explosive substances

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