

# Obaidul Quader donates Tk 5.4 lakh to burn victims

STAFF CORRESPONDENT  
Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader yesterday donated Tk 5.4 lakh to 54 patients in the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital.  
Of the donation, the minister earned Tk 5 lakh by selling his books -- "Gangchil" and "Jibon Smriti" -- published during last month's book fair.  
The minister added Tk 40,000 to the amount so that each of the burn victims can receive Tk 10,000.  
The patients were victims of arson during the ongoing blockade and hartal of the BNP-led alliance.

# Heavy clashes near intel HQ in Syria's Aleppo: monitor

AFP, Beirut  
Heavy clashes erupted yesterday between Syrian regime forces and rebels near an intelligence headquarters the opposition had tried to seize in a spectacular attack, a monitor and security source said.  
"There are very heavy battles between regime forces and (rebel) fighters in the area of yesterday's attack, with the two sides shelling the other," Rami Abdel Rahman, the director of the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, told AFP.  
He had no immediate information on casualties.  
The clashes came after rebels launched a major attack on the air force intelligence headquarters in western Aleppo on Wednesday, leaving at least 20 members of regime security forces and 14 rebels dead.  
A Syrian military source confirmed the "ongoing clashes" in the area after "a fierce attack was launched by the army this morning against (rebel) gunmen positions, killing and wounding many of them."  
The attack on the intelligence offices -- a frequent target of the rebels -- began with a huge explosion in a tunnel that caused part of the building to collapse. An assault by anti-regime gunmen followed but was repelled by security forces.  
It came as a UN delegation visited Aleppo to push efforts for a ceasefire in the northern city, which was once Syria's commercial hub but has been divided between regime and rebel forces since fighting erupted in mid-2012.

# Bangladesh

FROM PAGE 16  
million people were at risk.  
The United States had 167,000 people exposed to floods in a average year, the most for any developed nation, putting it 18th on a ranking of more than 160 nations.  
The UN panel of climate scientists said last year that global warming would lead to more risks of floods, heatwaves, storms, downpours, landslides, air pollution, water scarcity, sea level rise and storm surges.  
Yesterday's study estimated that \$96 billion of annual global gross domestic product was exposed to river floods every year, led by India on \$14 billion and Bangladesh on \$5.4 billion. This amount could rise to \$521 billion by 2030, it said.  
"There will be a huge increase in risk, especially in South East Asia," Hessel Winsemius, an author of the study at Dutch independent research institute Deltares, told Reuters.  
Such flooding can also impact multinational companies which spread their production capacity -- monsoon floods in Thailand in 2011 killed more than 800 people and closed many factories -- including some making parts for firms such as Intel and Apple.  
Many cities on flood plains were expected to expand in coming years, putting more people and businesses at risk. Multinational companies should think more about flood risks, including back-up suppliers or insurance from vulnerable areas.  
Developing nations are working to adapt.  
Thailand, for instance, is experimenting with floating homes that can rise up above the waters on pontoons filled with styrofoam.

# Muggers shoot

FROM PAGE 16  
As he refused to do so, the gang shot him in the left leg and snatched the bag. The criminals also exploded two homemade bombs and fled the scene, Tasrif added.  
Moniruzzaman, officer-in-charge of Lalbagh Police Station, said none was arrested in this connection.

# Freedom of speech

FROM PAGE 16  
The UN rights body chief said, "I join the (UN) Secretary-General in appealing to all political leaders to de-escalate the violence, find paths of political dialogue and ensure respect for human rights."  
The appalling attack on a free-thinking blogger and his wife last week is the latest shock in an escalating atmosphere of political violence in Bangladesh, he said.  
At least 80 people, including several children, have been killed in arson attacks and clashes between political parties and security forces, Zeid added.  
The other countries where measures are in place to curb freedom of expression and democratic space include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Hungary, Myanmar, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Tanzania, Thailand, Turkey, Venezuela and Vietnam.  
Zeid urged states not "to lose their grasp" of the human rights principles underlying their societies in their struggle against violent extremism.  
"There is real danger that in their reaction to extremist violence, opinion-leaders and decision-makers will lose their grasp of the deeper principles that underpin the system for

global security which states built 70 years ago to ward off the horror of war."  
The fight against terror is a struggle to uphold the values of democracy and human rights -- not undermine them, the UN rights body chief said.  
"Counter-terrorist operations that are non-specific, disproportionate, brutal and inadequately supervised violate the very norms that we seek to defend. They also risk handing the terrorists a propaganda tool -- thus making our societies neither free nor safe."  
UK FOREIGN OFFICE MINISTER  
British Foreign Office Minister Hugo Swire has urged all political parties in Bangladesh, the government and others in society to take confidence-building measures necessary to stop the violence.  
In a statement issued yesterday, he also urged all to take steps to reduce tension and ensure an inclusive and participatory political process.  
Britain has long been a close friend of Bangladesh, Swire said, adding, "I am therefore particularly saddened about the last 60 days of violence and disruption, which has had such an impact on the livelihood, education and security of so many Bangladeshi people."  
"There's no place for this in a democratic Bangladesh."

# Common people

FROM PAGE 1  
Having lost the sole bread earner of the family, Shahnaz has moved to her in-laws home in Bhola where her parents-in-law depend on their sons.  
But Shipon's is just one of the many families victimised by the ongoing blockade that completes its two months today. It is the longest blockade in the country.  
Since the blockade began on January 6, at least 83 people have died in violence. Hundreds others are writhing in pain in hospitals across the country.  
Another 41 people got killed in "shootouts" with law enforcement agencies during the period. And in the last 50 days since early January, as many as 15,000 people have been arrested.  
The nationwide blockade coupled with frequent shutdowns since February has affected every other aspect of public life. Economic activities have slowed down and academic activities at all levels have come to a near halt.  
Working class people have been brought to their knees as they have lost their living. Zakir Hossain, day labourer, is one of them. In the last one month, the Netrokona man who lives in the capital's Jurain found work on nine days.  
"I could not send money home for the last two months," he told this newspaper in Old Dhaka on Tuesday.

He was among some 100 labourers who gathered at Roy Shaheber Barir Mor looking for work.  
"We don't understand politics. We want to work because we have families to feed," Zakir added.  
The BNP-led alliance's blockade has upset the academic activities at the very beginning of the year, frustrating about 5 crore students of schools, colleges and universities.  
Around 14 lakh SSC examinees, in particular, are the worst victims of the situation as none of their exams have been held as per schedule. All of them were deferred and held on weekends in the last four weeks.  
In the capital, most of the schools could not give classes initially, but now they are doing so on weekends -- Fridays and Saturdays.  
The blockade and hartals are taking a heavy toll on the kids as well. Such political programmes are ruining their harmonious daily life and holidays, restricting their movements and giving them a sense of insecurity.  
It has also changed the lifestyle of many city dwellers.  
Take Rokshana Yesmin. Both employees of private firms, she and her husband remain busy on their weekends to take their daughter to school and bring her home.  
"We work six days and when we are supposed to spend our holidays together, we have to remain busy for our child's studies," she said.

# Kamaruzzaman

FROM PAGE 16  
judge of the Appellate Division, fixed Sunday for passing an order on the government petition.  
The chamber judge will fix a date for hearing the review petition before a full bench of the apex court on Sunday, Mahbubey Alam told The Daily Star.  
He added that the SC judge did not fix the date for hearing, as no lawyer for Kamaruzzaman was present before the court yesterday.  
In his 45-page review petition, Kamaruzzaman prayed to the SC to scrap his conviction and acquit him of the charges, his counsel Shishir Manir told The Daily Star.  
In the petition, Kamaruzzaman mentioned 44 grounds based on which the SC may consider his prayer for acquittal, the lawyer said.  
But, he refused to disclose the grounds as the petition is pending with the court.  
At a press conference at the Supreme Court Bar Association Auditorium, Kamaruzzaman's principal counsel Khandker Mahbub Hossain told reporters his client filed the review petition as he felt that the SC had not rightly evaluated all documents and evidence placed before it during his appeal.  
The International Crimes Tribunal-2 had convicted and sentenced Kamaruzzaman on the basis of statements of three prosecution witnesses (PW), whose names were included in the list of PW after it had recorded statements of 10 PWs, he said.  
He urged the SC not to hurriedly hear the review petition under the present political situation.  
Meanwhile, AG Mahbubey Alam told reporters at his office yesterday that he felt there was no error in the SC judgment that upheld death penalty for Kamaruzzaman.  
The process for the execution of Kamaruzzaman has been stayed automatically following the filing of his review petition, he said.  
The top law officer of the state also said his office would place arguments before the SC for upholding its verdict.  
The defence filed the review peti-

tion a day after holding a meeting with the senior assistant secretary general of Jamaat at the Dhaka Central Jail.  
If the review petition is rejected, Kamaruzzaman will decide whether to seek presidential mercy, his counsels said quoting the Jamaat leader.  
The prison authorities read Kamaruzzaman's death warrant out to him on February 19, the day the International Crimes Tribunal-2 issued the warrant. The SC released the verdict's full text the previous day.  
On November 3, last year, the SC upheld the May 9, 2013, death penalty handed down by the tribunal-2 for crimes that Kamaruzzaman committed against humanity during the Liberation War.  
The 63-year-old Jamaat leader was found guilty of mass killing, murder, abduction, torture, rape, persecution and abetment of torture in greater Mymensingh in 1971.

# FBI team

FROM PAGE 16  
Unknown assailants hacked Avijit to death and seriously injured his wife Rafida Ahmed Bonya on Dhaka University campus on February 26.  
The Bangladesh-born US citizens came to Dhaka on the occasion of Avijit's book launching at the Amar Ekushey Boi Mela.  
Bonya was flown back to the US where she is being treated for her injuries. Her family members said she was getting better.  
The United States, which strongly condemned the brutal killing of the writer, offered to assist with the investigation and Bangladesh accepted the offer.  
Meanwhile, several sources in law enforcement agencies said another person was detained in connection with the murder but the matter was kept secret.  
Denying the detention of another person, DB officials said only one suspect, Shafiqur Rahman Farabi, who had repeatedly issued death threats to Avijit, had been arrested so far.

# Country's laws

FROM PAGE 3  
killings, committed allegedly by the members of the law enforcement agencies.  
"Some incidents are occurring at the hands of the law enforcement agencies, which seem to be beyond their jurisdictions. This is not legally acceptable at all," he said.  
He added that petrol bombs were found beside the body of a person who was killed in a "gunfight" with police, which was also not acceptable.  
The NHRC chief said the people involved with extra-judicial killings should be brought to justice.  
Prof Mizan said it should be proved beyond reasonable doubt that police shot a person as the last ditch effort to defend themselves against criminals.  
The NHRC has requested the home ministry to take steps for investigating every extrajudicial killings, he added.

# Syria's Assad insists he has 'public support'

AFP, Beirut  
President Bashar al-Assad insisted Wednesday he continues to enjoy the support of the Syrian people despite nearly four years of war and international pressure on his regime.  
In an interview with Portuguese broadcaster RTP, Assad said the image of him presented in the West was deeply skewed.  
"The people are against him, the regional countries are against him and the West is against him, and (still) he succeeded," Assad said, speaking in English.  
"You're either lying to us or you're talking about Superman because if you don't have Superman, (if) he's a regular president, it means he could withstand four years only because he has the public support."  
Assad's regime has been fighting a multi-front civil war with a range of opposition factions including jihadists after an uprising erupted in Syria in March 2011.

# 'First human'

FROM PAGE 16  
spurred the transition from tree dweller to upright walker.  
The head of the research team told BBC News that the find gives the first insight into "the most important transitions in human evolution".  
Prof Brian Villmoare of the University of Nevada in Las Vegas said the discovery makes a clear link between an iconic 3.2 million-year-old hominin (human-like primate) discovered in the same area in 1974, called "Lucy".  
Could Lucy's kind - which belonged to the species Australopithecus afarensis - have evolved into the very first primitive humans?  
"That's what we are arguing," said Prof Villmoare.  
But the fossil record between the time period when Lucy and her kin were alive and the emergence of Homo erectus two million years ago is sparse.  
The 2.8 million-year-old lower jawbone was found in the Ledi-Geraru research area, Afar Regional State, by Ethiopian student Chalachew Seyoum. He told BBC News that he was "stunned" when he saw the fossil.  
The fossil is of the left side of the lower jaw, along with five teeth. The back molar teeth are smaller than those of other hominins living in the area and are one of the features that distinguish humans from more primitive ancestors, according to Prof William Kimbel, director of Arizona State University's Institute of Human Origins.  
"Previously, the oldest fossil attributed to the genus Homo was an upper jaw from Hadar, Ethiopia, dated to 2.35m years ago," he told BBC News.  
"So this new discovery pushes the human line back by 400,000 years or so, very close to its likely (pre-human) ancestor. Its mix of primitive and advanced features makes the Ledi jaw a good transitional form between (Lucy) and later humans."  
A computer reconstruction of a skull belonging to the species Homo habilis indicates that it may well have been the evolutionary descendant of the species announced today.

# Manna, Khoka

FROM PAGE 16  
Manna was arrested on February 24, a day after the leak of his controversial phone conversations with Khoka, now in the US for treatment.  
The next day a Dhaka court placed the Nagorik Oikya convener on a 10-day remand in a case filed with Gulshan Police Station for "trying to instigate revolt by the armed forces".  
In one of the conversations, Manna, also a former organising secretary of the Awami League, was heard talking to Khoka about strengthening the anti-government movement, among other issues.

# Country's laws

FROM PAGE 3  
killings, committed allegedly by the members of the law enforcement agencies.  
"Some incidents are occurring at the hands of the law enforcement agencies, which seem to be beyond their jurisdictions. This is not legally acceptable at all," he said.  
He added that petrol bombs were found beside the body of a person who was killed in a "gunfight" with police, which was also not acceptable.  
The NHRC chief said the people involved with extra-judicial killings should be brought to justice.  
Prof Mizan said it should be proved beyond reasonable doubt that police shot a person as the last ditch effort to defend themselves against criminals.  
The NHRC has requested the home ministry to take steps for investigating every extrajudicial killings, he added.

# No end to violence

FROM PAGE 16  
auto-rickshaw he was travelling in on Wednesday night. He was returning to his home in Enayetpur of Hathazari in Chittagong.  
He suffered 82 percent of his body burnt in the attack, and had been on life support at the ICU of the CMCH. He lost the battle for his life last night.  
Meanwhile, incidents of violence, arson attacks on vehicles and crude bomb explosions marked the fifth day of the countrywide hartal yesterday, enforced by the BNP-led 20-party alliance alongside its ongoing transport blockade.  
At least four vehicles were torched in different districts across the country yesterday, fire service officials said.  
The BNP-led combine yesterday once again threatened to enforce a fresh spell of shutdown from Sunday if its demands were not met within the deadline.  
In Manikganj, three people suffered burn injuries as alleged pickets set fire to a truck on the Dhaka-Aricha highway at Golora under Sauria upazila around 4:30am yesterday.  
The injured are truck driver Iqbal Hossain, 32, helper Sumon Mia, 16, and timber trader Abul Hossain, 35. All of them hail from Bhaluka of Mymensingh.  
As the driver tried to escape the attack, he lost control over the steering and the vehicle fell into a roadside ditch, said Habibullah Sarkar, officer-in-charge of Sauria Police Station, quoting victims.  
The truck was on the way to Manikganj from Mymensingh, the OC said.  
On information, fire fighters from Manikganj rushed to the spot and put out the blaze. The victims were taken to Manikganj Sadar Hospital, and later shifted to the burn unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital.  
A man received burn injuries when criminals hurled a petrol bomb at the engine room of a Dhaka-bound local train from Mymensingh at Koshabari area in Dakkhinkhan around 11:30pm last night, said Abdul Mazid, officer-in-charge of Dhaka Railway Police Station.  
Monu Mia suffered 8 percent of his body burnt, and was admitted to the burn unit of the DMCH.  
Meanwhile, seven people, including a Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) leader, were injured in separate crude bomb blasts in the capital yesterday.  
Proloy Ghosh, assistant secretary general of BCL central committee, and three others received injuries when criminals exploded a crude

bomb at Nilkhet intersection around 7:00pm.  
Hazrat Ali, a pedestrian, was injured as criminals blasted a bomb near Sir AF Rahman Hall on the DU campus around 7:30pm.  
Two people were injured in another crude bomb explosion at Fakirapool around 8:00pm.  
In a separate incident, the Rab recovered 12 abandoned petrol bombs from Mir Hajirbagh area in Jatrabari yesterday afternoon.  
In Chapainawabganj, detectives arrested a local Jamaat leader with 10 crude bombs from truck terminal area at Dariapur yesterday.  
In Bogra, unidentified criminals vandalised and torched the district unit office of the BNP on Nawabbari road around 7:30pm yesterday. Fire fighters doused the flame later. Additional law enforcers were deployed in the area.  
Alleged blockaders hurled petrol bombs at the building of Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industries in the town on Wednesday night. The building also housed the personal office of district Awami League President Momtaz Uddin. However, no one was hurt in the incident.  
In Gaibandha, at least six persons were injured when police charged batons on a demonstration of the 20-party alliance at Kachari bazar in the town, opposition men alleged.  
In Panchagarh, local administration imposed an indefinite ban on motorcycle riding after 10:00pm from Wednesday with a view to stopping subversive activities. They also banned pillion riding on motorcycles until further notice.  
In Noakhali, two Jubo Dal activists were caught red-handed while they were throwing petrol bomb on a passenger bus on Maizdi Sarak in the town, police said.  
THREAT OF FRESH SPELL OF HARTAL  
Meanwhile, the alliance has once again threatened to enforce a fresh spell of shutdown from Sunday if its demands, including holding elections under a non-party administration, were not fulfilled.  
"We will be compelled to enforce tougher programmes, including hartals, from March 8 if the government does not realise our demands," said Salahuddin Ahmed, joint secretary general of the BNP, in a statement.  
He also said the opposition alliance's ongoing "peaceful mass movement", including blockade, would continue until the establishment of a "real democratic state system".  
The alliance has been enforcing countrywide blockade since January 6 and shutdowns on all working days since February 1.

# US envoy attacked

FROM PAGE 16  
troops, which Kim said interfered with reconciliation between North and South Korea, according to police following an interrogation.  
Police are considering whether to charge him for attempted homicide, a police official involved in the case said.  
Witnesses and police said Kim used a small fruit knife in the attack, which took place in a government arts centre across the street from the heavily guarded US embassy on the South Korean capital's main ceremonial thoroughfare.  
"We strongly condemn this act of violence," US State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf said.  
US President Barack Obama called Lippert to wish him a speedy recovery, a White House official said.  
The assailant was dressed in traditional Korean clothing and shouted that North and South Korea should be reunited just before he attacked Lippert. He also shouted that he opposed "war exercises", a reference to the annual joint US-South Korean military drills that began this week.  
Kim visited North Korea eight times from 2006 to 2007, where he planted trees near the border city of Kaesong, a South Korean Ministry of Unification official said.  
"I carried out an act of terror," Kim shouted as he was pinned to the floor by people at the event.  
Kim said while in police custody he had acted alone. South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported that Kim also said he was part of a group that had cut and burned a US flag on the embassy grounds in Seoul in 1985.  
Kim is a member of the group that supports Korean unification that hosted the event, police said. He has also staged one-man protests against Japan over disputed islands known as Dokdo in Korean and Takeshima in Japanese, and, according to his blog, he led a protest outside a US army base in Seoul last November.  
"The guy comes in ... He yells something, goes up to the ambassador and slashes him in the face," witness Michael Lammbrau of the Arirang Institute think-tank told Reuters.  
Doctors at Yonsei University's Severance Hospital said they treated Lippert for an 11-cm (4 inches) gash on

the right side of his face and a puncture wound on his left wrist, causing nerve damage that was repaired. He will be hospitalized for three or four days, they said.  
"Doing well & in great spirits!" Lippert tweeted after his surgery.  
North Korea's official KCNA news agency described the attack as "deserved punishment for the warmongering United States", calling it "the knife of justice" that it said reflected the anger of South Koreans opposed to the military exercises involving South Korea and US forces.  
"WRESTLED TO THE GROUND!"  
Police were at the venue as part of routine operations but not at the request of the US embassy or the organiser, a police official said.  
Lammbrau said Kim shouted about Korean independence while he was being restrained. "It sounded like he was anti-American, anti-imperialist, that kind of stuff," he said.  
"The ambassador fought him from his seat ... There was a trail of blood behind him," Lammbrau said.  
South Korean President Park Geun-hye, speaking in the United Arab Emirates, called it an "attack on the South Korea-US alliance".  
Known for his open, informal style, Lippert is active on Twitter and can often be seen walking his basset hound, Grigsby, in Seoul. His wife recently gave birth to a son, who was given a Korean middle name.  
Yesterday's event was hosted by the Korean Council for Reconciliation and Cooperation. The group later issued a statement in which it condemned the attack and apologized to the governments of the United States and South Korea.  
The annual US-South Korean military exercises routinely provoke an angry response from North Korea, which denounces them as a preparation for war.  
A South Korean defence ministry spokesman said the drills, due to run for eight weeks, would continue as planned.  
Lippert was a US Senate aide to Obama and served in the US Navy in Afghanistan and Iraq, winning the Bronze Star. He was chief of staff for former Defence Secretary Chuck Hagel before taking up his post in Seoul in November.