



The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

www.thedailystar.net

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24 PAGES PLUS SHOUT PRICE: Tk 12.00



THE QUESTION OF TOLERANCE

Kuldip Nayar feels his nation is being taken away from the path of pluralism

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'A FOUNTAIN OF MERCY'

Actor-director Roberto Benigni gives Pope two thumbs up

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CONSTABLE RECRUITMENT

Police for ending political push

Mull new hiring system

SHARIFUL ISLAM and RAFIUL ISLAM

The police headquarters is mulling a new mechanism to recruit constables as part of efforts to stop the flow of inefficient people in the force through corruption and political influence.

Under the new system, officials at the police HQ will prepare a 40-mark question paper for written tests and evaluate the answer sheets. The job is now done by a committee headed by the superintendent of police (SP) of the district concerned.

The police authorities are considering this change because a section of ministers, lawmakers and party leaders allegedly compel the SPs to recruit candidates of their choice, leading to the hiring of incompetent people, said sources in the police HQ. Inefficiency of lower-tier cops came to

If anyone dares to ignore the leaders' recommendations, he is branded as dishonest, anti-government

the fore after policemen failed to counter the sudden attacks at two checkpoints at Gabtoli in the capital and Ashulia on its outskirts in October and November last year. Two policemen were killed in the attacks.

Though the new recruitment process would curtail the power of district police, the SPs in 54 districts out of the 64 welcomed the move. Eight SPs gave no opinions and two opposed it, an official at the police HQ told The Daily Star.

Besides, 85 out of 130 top police officials are in favour of the new system while 29 refrained from giving their views, the official said, seeking anonymity.

"As we have to recruit those recommended by political leaders, we often find ourselves in an embarrassing situation. We have to select unfit or less qualified persons,"

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PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ

CROSSING THE ROAD OR INVITING A DISASTER? A group of pedestrians trots across a busy lane on Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue at Karwan Bazar in the capital. Though a footbridge was only a few yards away, they chose to jaywalk, risking their life. The photo was taken recently.



Reject politics of fear and tribalism

Obama to Americans in his last state of the union address

AGENCIES

Putting aside a sudden crisis with Iran, President Barack Obama on Tuesday urged Americans in his final State of the Union address to reject the politics of tribalism and fear that have rocked the campaign to find his successor and to build a "clear-eyed, big-hearted" and "optimistic" nation.

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Two 'JMB men' killed in DB 'encounter'

One of them accused in cop-killing case

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two alleged operatives of banned militant outfit JMB were killed in an "encounter" with law enforcers in the capital's Hazaribagh area last night.

The dead are Abdullah alias Noman, 35, national operations commander of Jama'at ul Mujahideen Bangladesh, and Kamal alias Hiran, 30, Dhaka regional commander of the outfit, said police.

Hiran was an accused in a case filed over the killing of a police constable in an attack on a checkpoint in Ashulia in November last year. Sanwar Hossain, additional deputy commissioner (DB) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star around 1:15am today.

He said a team of Detective Branch (DB) of police raided a house at Kamrangirchar and arrested three militants around 10:30pm.

Acting on the information of the arrestees, DB police conducted a drive near

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Dhaka protests harassment of its diplomats in Pakistan

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has asked Pakistan to refrain from any "disturbing" activities as it has reports that diplomats posted at two Bangladesh missions in Islamabad and Karachi are being kept on "unnecessary and excessive" watch.

Pakistan High Commissioner Shuja Alam was summoned on Monday at the state guest-house where Mizanur Rahman, secretary (bilateral, training and consular), registered Bangladesh's protest at harassment of Bangladeshi officials and staffs working at the two missions, according to diplomatic sources.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh will soon send a diplomat as counsellor (political) at

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Teachers now look to PM

FBUTA seeks talks with Hasina to end crisis

DU CORRESPONDENT

Public university teachers, who are observing an indefinite strike against "pay disparity", yesterday said they want to talk to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina over their demand to end the ongoing crisis.

"We believe the crisis will be over soon if the prime minister sits with us," said Maksud Kamal, general secretary of Federation of Bangladesh University Teachers Association (FBUTA), while briefing reporters at the historic Dhaka University Bot Tola.

Yesterday, teachers of 36 public universities refrained from taking classes for the third consecutive day, demanding removal of "discriminatory provisions" in the eighth national pay scale.

They said they will not budge an inch until their demands are met.

"We want to go back to classes, but we have no other alternative," said Farid Uddin Ahmed, president of FBUTA.

Asked how long they are planning to continue with their strike, he said they don't want to harm academic activities of students. "The ball is in the government's court now. It must have the eagerness to end this situation."

Prof Farid, who teaches economics at DU, added, "A group of conspirators are trying to destroy the higher education and financial sectors through creating unrest by downgrading teachers and bank officials in the new pay structure."

Also yesterday, Chittagong University teachers observed their indefinite strike over pay scale for the 11th consecutive day. They have been boycotting classes since January 3, and all examinations and administrative activities

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JFR Jacob (1923-2016)

Goodbye, dear old friend

STAR REPORT

The man, who flew in from Kolkata on December 16, 1971 and made Pakistan army's eastern command chief AAK Niazi to agree on surrendering in public to the joint command of Bangladesh and India, passed away yesterday.

Chief of staff of the Indian army's eastern command during the 1971 Liberation War of Bangladesh, JFR Jacob died of pneumonia at the age of 92 at Army Research and Referral Hospital in New Delhi around 8:30am. He was admitted to the hospital on January 1.

In the morning of December 16, Jacob was asked to "go

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HELLO MAYOR ... DID YOU SEE THIS?

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In a bizarre incident, a garbage carrying truck of Dhaka North City Corporation dumped a large chunk of trash in front of a multinational bank's headquarters in the capital's Gulshan early yesterday.

The authorities of Standard Chartered Bank (SCB) have expressed utter surprise at the noxious incident as they remain in the dark as to what triggered this.

Bitopi Das Chowdhury, country head of corporate affairs of SCB, said, "We're informed late last night that a truckload of garbage was dumped in front of our head office in Gulshan."

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A huge pile of garbage dumped by a DNCC truck right in front of the Bangladesh headquarters of a multinational commercial bank on the Gulshan Avenue in the capital yesterday. It was shocking for many to see such a repulsive sight. Pedestrians had to cover their nose to block the stench. The photo was taken at noon yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



Alison Blake

Harsh Vardhan Shringla

Time for new assignments

British envoy in city, Indian due today

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Newly-appointed high commissioners of two top countries -- United Kingdom and India -- will take up their diplomatic assignments in Bangladesh shortly.

British High Commissioner-designate to Bangladesh Alison Blake arrived here yesterday, while Indian High Commissioner-designate Harsh Vardhan Shringla will arrive in Dhaka this afternoon.

Alison succeeds Robert W Gibson, who retired after serving long 15 years in various capacities in Bangladesh.

Both Shringla and Alison are expected to present their credentials separately to the president of Bangladesh soon, diplomatic sources said.

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