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WITH TODAY'S ISSUE
Showbiz

TRUE TO ART
 Exhibition 'into the valley of beauty'
 opens at Zainul Gallery-2 of DU

PAGE 9

'FELT PRETTY GOOD'
 NSA chief says about his resignation
 before Trump takeover

PAGE 8

RANGPUR SUGAR MILLS Santals owned most of land before deal



**1962 agreement condition flouted by leasing
 out part of the land allowing cultivation
 of crops other than sugarcane**

PINAKI ROY

The Santals had owned most of the land, now at the centre of a row in Gobindaganj of Gaibandha, before the government acquired it in the 50s, according to old land records.

Though the land was acquired for sugarcane farming to produce raw materials for the Rangpur Sugar Mills Ltd at Mohimaganj in Gobindaganj, a portion of it was leased out for cultivating different other crops, flouting an agreement of 1962.

For this violation, the sugar mill should no longer remain the owner of the land and its management is supposed to surrender

the land to the government, as per one of the conditions of the agreement.

The issue of original ownership came up following the November 6 eviction of 1,500 families, including 1,200 of Santals, from the land as they had built houses on part of it.

Local lawmaker Abul Kalam Azad and Industries Ministry Secretary Md Mosharruf Hossain Bhuiyan claim that the Santals never owned the land.

"That land never belonged to Santals; it was owned by Bangalees," Abul Kalam Azad told The Daily Star on November 14.

But the Santals firmly claim that they

SEE PAGE 2 COL 1

THE SANTALS LOST LAND THE MOST—PAGE 2



Nobel Laureate VS Naipaul with his wife Nadira Naipaul on stage during the sixth edition of Dhaka Lit Fest (DLF) at the Bangla Academy Auditorium yesterday. Story on page 16.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

TOP QUOTE

"Up to 30,000 people are now estimated to be displaced and thousands more affected by the 9 October armed attacks and subsequent security operations across the north of Rakhine state [in Myanmar]."

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE UN'S OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

Consensus of all parties a must to form next EC

Khaleda places 13-point proposal

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With a call for forming the next Election Commission on the basis of "consensus" among all political parties, BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia yesterday rolled out a 13-point proposal for its formation.

The former premier said she would unveil a framework for a neutral polls-time government at an appropriate time, as only an impartial Election Commission is not enough for holding a free and fair election.

"The president should constitute a search committee on the basis of consensus among all registered political parties or the ones that had representation in parliament at different times since the country's independence," she said at a press conference at a city hotel.

The committee would pick the chief election commissioner and four commissioners, said Khaleda.

The BNP came up with the proposal as the five-year

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



Quader terms Khaleda's EC demands hollow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's proposals for forming the next Election Commission are "hollow and a mockery before the nation," ruling Awami League's General Secretary Obaidul Quader has said.

He made the comments while addressing a press conference at the AL president's Dhanmondi office yesterday. The press conference was organised after the announcement of the proposals by the BNP chief.

"Khaleda Zia's demand for a search committee is hollow and ridiculous," Quader said.

The AL general secretary said the party would not move back from the

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

Jute goods losing export market

Shrinking global demand key reason; 21 private jute mills shut, many running below capacity

SAJJADUR RAHMAN

Shrinking global demand and imposition of anti-dumping duty by India have threatened Bangladesh's export of jute goods, industry players said.

Conflicts in the Middle East countries, particularly in Syria, Egypt, and Iraq, have almost halted the jute exports there. Developed countries do not import that much jute products either.

Now the export market has been squeezed to just India, Turkey, China and countries in the African continent.

Inefficiency of the millers, be it productivity, management or diversification of



products, has added further woes to the exports of jute goods.

"Some mills have failed to survive the losses and got closed in recent years," said Mahbubur Rahman Patwari, director of Alijan Jute Mills. Declining demand for jute goods forced Pubali Jute Mills, one of the oldest mills in the country, to close last year.

He said 21 jute mills out of 35 that were privatised during the Ershad regime were now closed. Many of the existing mills were running below capacity, he said.

There were around 120 jute mills, including 25 state-owned mills. In addition, there

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

AL picks Ivy for N'ganj mayoral race

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The ruling Awami League has picked incumbent Mayor Selina Hayat



Ivy for its mayoral candidate in Narayanganj City Corporation (NCC) polls slated for December 22.

At a meeting at the Gono Bhaban last night, the party's local government nomination board unanimously nominated Ivy to contest the polls with the AL's electoral symbol boat, said a party press release.

Awami League President and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina chaired the meeting.

Party sources said after the decision was made, Ivy

SEE PAGE 11 COL 1

Comilla keep crashing

SPORTS REPORTER

Defending champions Comilla Victorians skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza had said, when contemplating having lost four out of four matches, that they need only one win to get back on track in this season's Bangladesh Premier League. But that looks as far away now as it did when he spoke on Thursday, after yesterday's nine-wicket drubbing at the hands of Rangpur Riders at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong.

Having put up a paltry 122 for five in the first innings, Victorians' bowlers were toothless and ineffective in their efforts to contain their opponents who, led by opener Mohammad Shahzad's unbeaten 49-ball 51 and an unconquered

SEE PAGE 11 COL 2



BUSY WITH BOOKS

Workers passing busy time binding textbooks for the secondary schools' 2017 academic year in the capital's Sutrapur. A major chunk of the textbooks has already reached many upazila headquarters. This year, the education ministry aims to distribute around 36.22 crore copies of textbooks among 4.26 crore students of class I to X for free. The photos were taken three days ago.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

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