

## EXPORTS RISE

Shipment increases 5.46pc year-on-year to \$2.9b in November

## HAZARI'S JS MEMBERSHIP

HC delivers split verdict on Feni Awami League lawmaker

## FRANCE GETS NEW PM

Cazeneuve becomes premier as Valls quits to run for president



# It's Drug Admin which is at fault

Full verdict points out inefficiency of 2 officials, blames prosecution's negligence in Rid Pharma toxic syrup case in which all accused acquitted

CHAITANYA CHANDRA HALDER and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Two officials of the Drug Administration involved in the case against Rid Pharmaceuticals Ltd knowingly violated due procedure of law, and exhibited sheer negligence, inefficiency and incompetence in dealing the case, the Drug Court in Dhaka said.

The then director of the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA) Brig Gen Md Ismail Hossain "mechanically" gave permission for the case to go ahead without considering all aspects, the court said in its verdict delivered on November 28.

Of the three charges framed, one was related to the production of unregistered drug by Rid Pharmaceuticals. But the prosecution did not even produce any witness to prove it, the verdict delivered by judge M Atoar Rahman read.

And all these lacunas led to the acquittal of all five officials of Rid Pharmaceuticals, which allegedly manufactured the toxic paracetamol syrup that killed at least 28 children in 2009.

The Daily Star obtained a copy of the full judgment of the case.

The two officials are Shafiqul Islam and Altaf Hossain. Both of them were drug superintendents in 2009. Shafiqul is now an assistant director of DGDA while Altaf is a deputy director, said a DGDA director.

Then DGDA director Ismail Hossain has passed away, the official said.

The deaths of over two dozen children at Dhaka Shishu Hospital, between June and August 2009, due to renal failure allegedly after they had been administered Rid Pharmaceuticals' drug created huge uproar in the country.

The authorities suspended manufacturing and marketing of Rid Pharmaceuticals' drugs, sealed off its factory in Brahmanbaria, and asked

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Fishermen fishing in the pitch-black water of the Kaliganga river in Manikganj's Singair upazila yesterday. Residual waste from nearby factories has significantly affected the river's ecological health over the last several years. Fishermen said many left the profession as they have only a small catch now compared to what they had a few years ago.

PHOTO:  
AMRAN HOSSAIN

FORMATION OF EC  
President to hold  
talks with parties  
mid-December

RASHIDUL HASAN and MOHAMMAD  
AL-MASUM MOLLA

Like his predecessor Zillur Rahman, incumbent President Abdul Hamid will hold dialogues with political parties this month on the formation of a new election commission (EC).

The dialogues are likely to begin after December 16. Hamid will finish talks with the parties before he appoints the chief election commissioner (CEC) and commissioners, Joynal Abedin, press secretary of the president, told reporters.

Hamid flew yesterday to Singapore on a six-day visit for medical checkups.

A source at Bangabhaban said the dialogues might begin on December 18.

In 2011, the then president Zillur Rahman held talks with 23 registered political parties before forming the EC. The Awami league, BNP, Jatiya Party and other major political parties participated

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## Projects involving \$19b given nod

Nuke Power Plant, Jamuna rail bridge among 12 schemes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

In an unprecedented move, the government in a single day yesterday approved several mega projects, including Rooppur nuclear power plant and a rail bridge over the Jamuna, worth Tk 152,712 crore (\$19.09 billion).

About 76 percent of the projects cost will be financed by Russia, China, and Japan.

"In the history of the country, approval of such large projects is unprecedented," Planning Minister AHM Mustafa Kamal told reporters after the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecne) meeting at the NEC Auditorium of the ministry.

He said the amount of money approved to be spent was more than that of the ADP of the current fiscal year.

The Ecne meeting, with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in the chair, approved the most costly project in the country's history, the Rooppur nuclear power plant that involves Tk 113,093 crore.

Russia's state export credit will provide Tk 91,040 crore or 80.5 percent of the total project cost, with Bangladesh government chipping in the rest, according to the project's proposal.

Bangladesh already received \$500 million for initial work of the 2,400

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3 'criminals' killed in 'gunfight'

OUR CORRESPONDENT,  
Kushtia

Three alleged criminals were killed in a "gunfight" with police in Gangni upazila of Meherpur early yesterday.

They are Tuhin Ali, 21, Tajmul Ali, 27, and Mohibul Islam, 24, of Bholadanga village in the upazila.

The three were members of a criminal gang which commits robbery and extorts money from brick kiln owners in the area, said Anisur Rahman, superintendent of Meherpur police.

According to the police official, a police team of Gangni Police Station raided a brick kiln owned by one Khabir Uddin in

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## 2 more youths go missing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two more youths have recently gone missing from the capital while the four who disappeared from Banani on Thursday are still traceless.

One of the two, Sayeed Anwar Khan, 18, went missing on Monday night and his father Anwar Sadat Khan, a businessman, filed a general diary (GD) with Banani Police Station yesterday morning.

Sayeed's family mounted a search everywhere but could not find him, said a police official, citing the GD.

Recently, Sayeed completed his O level and was preparing for further studies.

One of his relatives, wishing not to be named, said they had last contacted him around 10:00pm on Monday over phone when he was returning to his home in Banani after his karate classes at Kalabagan.

The other youth, Imran Farhad, 19, a first-year medical student, went missing on November 29. His mother Sabina Yasmin lodged a GD with Cantonment Police Station on December 2.

Imran, son of Asaduzzaman, a Bangladeshi expatriate in Saudi Arabia, left home for his medical college around 8:00am but never returned, said Kabir Hossain, an inspector

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TOP QUOTE

"Religious zealotry is gradually gripping us. It's evident in our attire. We are moving away from our centuries-old culture."

ATTORNEY GENERAL  
MAHBUBEY ALAM  
AT A PROGRAMME AT THE  
SUPREME COURT

SEVEN RINGS  
CEMENT  
www.ssgil.com

Caribbean flair gives Dhaka final berth  
Rajshahi to take on Khulna in Qualifier 2 today

SPORTS REPORTER

It was a day for Calypso beats at the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Mirpur yesterday as first Darren Sammy and Keshorn Williams combined to keep Rajshahi Kings alive by winning the Bangladesh Premier League Eliminator against Chittagong Vikings, before Dhaka Dynamites rode on stellar all-round shows from Andre Russell and Dwayne Bravo to book a place in Friday's final with a 54-run drubbing of Khulna Titans.

Rajshahi will now face off in the second qualifier at 5:45pm

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A mangled car which ploughed into three hard-up women asleep on the footpath in front of the Supreme Court early yesterday. The crash left two of them dead. The photo was taken at Shahbagh Police Station. Inset, part of the court's boundary railing was damaged in the incident.

## Reckless driving costs two lives

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A recklessly driven car ploughed into three women sleeping on a footpath in front of the Supreme Court and killed two of them and injured the other early yesterday.

The vehicle which was at speed also hit the fence of the SC, damaging a portion of the fence around 12:15am.

Police said they arrested private university student Shaon Bepari, 25, from the car. The driver and the owner, who was also in the car at that time, fled the scene.

The deceased are Shahera Begum, 45, and Hasina, 35, police said.

The injured, Tahera Begum, 50, was undergoing treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

The incident happened at a time when there is a growing concern over rash driving by some people, who are either high on drugs, or drunk, or in an illegal street race.

For example, a recent car crash near the city's Banani Flyover left a man seriously injured. The vehicle, which had flipped over, was racing another car.

A day after this year's Eid-ul-Azha, a rashly driven car crushed an elderly couple dead in the capital's Shewrapara. Several bottles of liquor were found inside the car.

In another incident last year, a teenage driver badly injured four pedestrians in Gulshan when he was racing another car. He was reportedly drunk.

Inspector (investigation) Jafar Ali Biswas of Shahbagh Police Station said police were investigating whether the driver was at the wheel when the incident happened and whether anyone of them was drunk.

He said the car was heading towards Matsya Bhaban. Police went to the spot and sent the injured to the DMCH.

Doctors declared Hasina dead on arrival while Shahera

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