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WB FUNDS
Govt won't use those for modernising state-owned financial institutions
PAGE 81

FIGHTING TERROR TOGETHER
Donald Trump pledges support to the Egyptian president to fight Islamist militants
PAGE 8

'IT'S PAINFUL'
The chief justice is unhappy at delay in publishing gazette on disciplinary rules for lower court judges
PAGE 3

SYRIAN CIVIL WAR 58 killed in 'gas' attack

Rebels claim jets later bombed clinics filled with injured

AFP, Khan Sheikhun

A suspected chemical attack in rebel-held northwestern Syria killed dozens of civilians including children and left many more sick and gasping yesterday, causing widespread outrage.

The attack on the town of Khan Sheikhun killed at least 58 civilians and saw dozens suffer respiratory problems and symptoms including vomiting, fainting and foaming at the mouth, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said.

Syria's opposition blamed President Bashar al-Assad's forces, saying the attack cast doubt on the future of peace talks.

The army denied any involvement in a statement blaming "terrorist groups" for using "chemical and toxic substances".

At least 19 children and 13 women were among the dead, the Observatory said, and an AFP correspondent in Khan Sheikhun saw many people on respirators.

If confirmed, it would be one of the worst chemical attacks since Syria's civil war began six years ago.

The incident brought swift international condemnation, with the United States, France and Britain all pointing the finger at Assad.

US BLAMES DAMASCUS

The White House condemned what it called a "reprehensible" attack by Assad's forces.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 2



A man carries the body of a child, after what rescue workers described as a suspected gas attack in the town of Khan Sheikhoun in rebel-held Idlib, Syria yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS



Sri Lanka cruise to victory

SAKEB SUBHAN from Colombo

Even before the first T20I started last night at the R Premadasa International Stadium in Colombo two things were certain -- there is a definite difference in quality between Bangladesh and Sri Lanka both in terms of track record and personnel in the shortest format, and that if the two teams play their best Sri Lanka would come out trumps.

Bangladesh skipper Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's announcement that these two T20Is would be the last of his career for Bangladesh in the shortest format may have been expected to fire the team up to win for their beloved captain, but the difference in quality came through in the result -- a six-
SEE PAGE 10 COL 5
PHOTO ON PAGE 16



Mashrafe waves T20I goodbye

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh cricket has seen a lot of cricketers retiring from the international circuit. But not a single one has created as many ripples as Mashrafe Bin Mortaza's decision to quit the T20I formats of the game after the on-going two-match series against Sri Lanka. The 34-year-old made the announcement after the toss at the R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo yesterday. And the brief spell of rain after his announcement perhaps came as tears of millions of fans of the braveheart from Narail. However, the

SEE PAGE 10 COL 4

Relief for two death convicts

Rakib's family in tears as HC commutes sentence

STAR REPORT

Since yesterday morning, the family was waiting with bated breath for the High Court's verdict on the death references and appeals in their only son's murder case.

But their hope gave way to disappointment when they saw on television that the death sentences handed down by a district court on two convicts were commuted to life imprisonment.

Nur Alam and Lucky Begum's 13-year-old son Rakib had a tragic death in August 2015 after his former employer along with an accomplice inserted a high-pressure air pump nozzle into his rectum and filled his abdomen with air as punishment for changing workplace.

The parents expected that the death sentences against the culprits would be upheld.

"The whole country stood beside us after the murder of my son and people were happy to see the culprits get death penalties. We are frustrated with today's [yesterday's] verdict," said Rakib's father Nur Alam.



Rakib

SEE PAGE 2 COL 3

SUSPENSION OF MAYORS

Govt suspending, court staying

STAR REPORT

The High Court stayed the government orders suspending the mayors of Rajshahi City Corporation (RCC) and Habiganj municipality yesterday, a day after staying for three months the suspension of Sylhet City Corporation (SCC) mayor.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (LGRD) has suspended four more public representatives in Meherpur, Dinajpur and Faridpur districts.

On Sunday, the LGRD ministry suspended three pro-BNP mayors -- SCC's Ariful Huq Chowdhury, RCC's Mosaddek Hossain Bulbul and Habiganj municipality's GK Gaus -- saying three courts accepted charge sheets against them in separate criminal cases.

The HC passed yesterday's orders hours after Bulbul and Gaus filed two separate writ petitions challenging the legality of the government decisions against them.

The HC bench of Justice Syed Muhammad Dastagir Husain and Justice Md Ataur Rahman Khan issued separate rules asking the government to explain why its decision to suspend the two mayors should not be declared illegal.

It also asked the government to explain why the relevant provisions of the local government act, under which the two mayors were suspended, should not be declared unconstitutional.

Following the HC orders, there is no legal bar for Bulbul and Gaus to discharge their duties as mayors, their lawyers Aminul Haque Helal and Khandker Mahbub Hossain told The Daily Star.

In the writ petitions, the mayors said that the government had suspended them with "mala fide intention".

Following another writ petition, the HC on Monday stayed the suspension of Ariful Huq and issued a similar rule.

MEHERPUR

The ministry yesterday suspended the chairman and a vice-chairman of

SEE PAGE 10 COL 2



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