



PHOTO: SHEIKH NASIR

Members of flood-hit families returning home after collecting VGF (vulnerable group feeding) rice distributed by Laxmanshi Union Parishad in Sunamganj yesterday. The authorities gave 38kg rice and Tk 500 to each of the families.

3 WDB engineers suspended

FROM PAGE 16
Ahmed Khan, senior secretary of the ministry, told The Daily Star, adding that the decision was made so that the officials involved in the alleged corruption would not be able to influence the probe. Earlier, Executive Engineer Afsar was withdrawn from Sunamganj for his alleged involvement in corruption related to repairs to an embankment. After flashfloods washed away crops on thousands of hectares of land in the haors due to damage to embankments, farmers brought allegations that the WDB did not repair them in time. The floodwater damaged Boro crops and caused subsequent loss of livelihood, fish and livestock.

ing embankments in the haor belt. 'CORRUPTION IN VGF PROGRAMME' Affected farmers alleged that they did not get VGF (Vulnerable Group Feeding) rice in Mokrompur union in Habiganj's Baniachang upazila, while many relatives of the union parishad chairman collected VGF rice and sold it in the markets, our Moulvibazar correspondent reports. Monjer Ahmed, a farmer in Mokrompur village of Baniachang, said his land went under water, but he did not get a VGF card. Suma Begum, 45, wife of another farmer of the same village, alleged that she went to the house of UP Chairman Ahad Mia and his office for a VGF card several times, but failed to get it. It was also alleged that the chairman distributed VGF cards among his rela-

tives, depriving many affected farmers. Azman Ali, ward-6 member of Mokrompur Union Parishad, said standing in line for hours, affected farmers of his area were not getting the VGF rice, but it was being sold at many shops at a high price. The UP member said he and his seven other fellows submitted a petition to deputy commissioner of Habiganj against the alleged corruption of Ahad. Contacted, Ahad termed the allegations false. Meanwhile, a boat with 360 bags of rice meant for relief capsized in the Surma river during a storm in Sunamganj Sadar upazila early Monday. Sheikh Rafiqul Islam, deputy commissioner of Sunamganj, said the government had allocated the rice for the flood-affected people of Rangarchar union in the upazila.

JOURNO SHIMUL MURDER Shahjadpur mayor, his brother among 38 charge-sheeted

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Police yesterday filed the charge sheet against 38 people, including Shahjadpur Municipality Mayor Halimul Haque Miru and his brother Habibul Haque Mintu, in the murder case of journalist Abdul Hakim Shimul. Shimul, Shahjadpur correspondent of Daily Samakal, was shot during a factional clash of the Shahjadpur upazila Awami League near the mayor's house on February 2. He died of his wounds on the way to Dhaka the following day. His wife Nurunnahar Begum filed a case with Shahjadpur Police Station on the same day, accusing 25 people, including the mayor and his brother. Investigation Officer Monirul Islam submitted the charge sheet to Shahjadpur Senior Judicial Magistrate's court, said Khawza Golam Kibria, officer-in-charge of Shahzadpur Police Station. Among the accused is upazila AL activist Nasir Uddin. Police already arrested 14 of the accused, including the mayor and his brother, and seized the firearm used during the clash, added the OC.

Bus crash

FROM PAGE 16
Fire Service and Civil Defence personnel from different stations in Tangail went to the spot and launched a rescue operation with the help of police and locals, the OC said. At least 22 bus passengers were taken to Ghatail Upazila Health Complex with serious injuries, the police officer added. Nine of the injured were later referred to other hospitals for better treatment and as their condition deteriorated, hospital sources said.

Power outage

FROM PAGE 1
around 11:20am yesterday when Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB) used it to provide power to the affected districts and apparently caused an overload, according to ABM Badruddoza, assistant general manager (public relations) of the state-run company. PGCB is responsible for operation, maintenance and development of power transmission system across the country. The failure of transmission lines resulted in the shutdown of power plants in the country's west and northern regions which left people of 32 districts in Khulna, Barisal, Rajshahi and Rangpur divisions without electricity, he added. The power outage forced hospitals and clinics in the regions to use diesel generators. Productions in small and medium industries were hampered, report our correspondents. "The districts remained without power up to four hours before the situation improved around 3:45pm [yesterday]," said Badruddoza. PGCB Managing Director Masum-Al-Beruni told The Daily Star around 8:00pm that power plants that had shut down were coming back online. "However, there may be load shedding in some areas as it takes some time to start the plants," he said. PGCB, meanwhile, formed a committee to probe the matter, he added. The four-member committee led by Kamrul Hasan, chief engineer (transmission-2) was asked to submit the report within five working days, he added. Patients in hospitals and industries in Rajshahi city suffered frequent power outages throughout yesterday, reports our staff correspondent there.

Ansar al-Islam's IT expert arrested

FROM PAGE 16
Terrorism and Transnational Crime (CTTC) unit of the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, said at a press conference at the DMP Media Centre. A team of CTTC officials arrested the 24-year-old around 7:15pm Monday after he reached the capital from Sylhet, said Monirul. However, Ashfaq's family members claimed a group of eight people, identifying themselves as detectives, picked him up from a mess in Bhatara on February 12. CTTC officials also claimed to have seized a laptop, a mobile phone, a training manual on killing bloggers and some books that provoke extremism from his possession. Meanwhile, a Dhaka court yesterday placed the arrestee on five-day remand, said court sources. Talking to The Daily Star, Monirul said the militant outfit, infamous for killing secular bloggers and writers, executed one or two of their targeted men based on Ashfaq's information. However, police foiled an attempt on a blogger's life in the capital's Rampura early last year. Ashfaq used to work under close supervision of fugitive Maj (sacked) Zia. He met the former army official outside the capital several months ago. The two last communicated around three months ago, the CTTC chief said. Asked about Zia's whereabouts, he said they needed to grill Ashfaq further as he didn't give them recent information about the sacked army official.

Zia is stated by police to be the mastermind of attacks on secular bloggers and writers, including Ahmed Rajib Haider, Avijit Roy and Oyashiqur Rahman. The police headquarters has declared a Tk 20 lakh bounty on his head. Talking to reporters, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan earlier said Zia was under the surveillance of law enforcement agencies and would be arrested anytime. A student of the computer science and technology department at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST), Ashfaq joined the militant group in 2014 and its the military wing the following year. Later, he took training in the capital's Pallabi and Uttara. According to Monirul, although Ashfaq was trained in carrying out militant operations, he used to look after the IT affairs of the Ansar al-Islam's military wing. The outfit also has recruitment and publicity or media wings with separate IT experts, said CTTC officials. Monirul said leaders of the militant outfit went into hiding as some of their arrested accomplices disclosed their names to law enforcers. The leaders were recruiting new operatives and training them, he added. FAMILY CONTRADICTS POLICE'S CLAIM Ashfaq's father Khijirur Rahman, a resident of Halishahar in Chittagong, yesterday said his son used to work for an IT firm in the capital. The family members visited him at the Bhatara

mess, but he had been out of touch with the family since February 12. "We again went to his mess on February 16. His roommates told us that a group of eight people, identifying themselves as detectives, picked him up around 5:00pm on February 12," Khijirur told this correspondent over the phone. The family members went to the DMP DB office and different police stations, but the law enforcer denied picking him up. They also went to Bhatara Police Station to file a GD about the incident, but police refused to record it. "Around a month later, some DMP officials told us that Ashfaq was in their custody," Khijirur said. After passing SSC and HSC exams from Chittagong Collegiate School and Chittagong City College, Ashfaq got admitted to SUST. He left the university last year when he was in his final year of the Honour's course, reports our correspondent in Noakhali, the home district of Khijirur. Asked why he was not attending classes, Ashfaq told his family members that he was not feeling safe on the campus as some of his university friends were arrested by police. Ashfaq left Chittagong for Dhaka in October last year to take a job. He used to communicate with his family members via Skype. "Using a mobile phone is risky for me," Khijirur quoted his son as saying. He said his son was a bright student and his family had high hopes for him.

11 people killed

FROM PAGE 16
Shahadat Hossain Khan, officer-in-charge of Boalia police, said the boat carried seven people, two of whom managed to swim ashore. Local Met office sources said houses were damaged and trees uprooted as the nor'wester with the speed up to 95km per hour swept over the district and other areas for five minutes from 7:00pm on Sunday. Asia Khatun, 55, of Chorghat upazila died of heart attack when a thunderbolt struck during the storm, said Chorghat police quoting her family members. Alam Ali, 50, of Godagari upazila was killed when a tree branch fell on him the same evening, said OC Hifzur Alam Munshi of Godagari police. In Chapainawabganj, the victims are identified as Masuma Begum, 26, of Airmari village, Chhobi Begum, 30, of Chak Doulatpur village under Shibganj and Asabul Haque, 50, of Nimala-Kanthal village under Gomostapur upazila. OC Habibul Islam of Shibganj police said Masuma and Chhobi were collecting mangoes at mango orchards near their houses when lightning killed them on the spot. Asabul was killed when a tree branch fell on him at Nimala-Kanthal village during the storm when he was returning home, said Upazila Nirbahi Officer Firoz Ahmed of Gomostapur. The UNO added the storm damaged more than 50 houses, agricultural land and uprooted 50 trees in the upazila. They were preparing a list to assess the loss. In Siraiganj, lightning killed farmer Tufan Ali Talukder, 30, of Raiganj, when he was returning home from the field on Monday afternoon. Md Jillur Rahman, chairman of Ghurka Union Parishad under Raiganj upazila, said Tufan died on the spot. In Mymensingh, storm uprooted

hundreds of trees and razed houses at 11 villages including Hobirbari, Chhoto Kashor, Boro Kashor, Couripur, Paragoan, Awlatoli, Kachina and Mollickbari areas, said locals and upazila administration. Tofael Ahmed Bachchu, chairman of Hobirbari Union Parishad, said he visited the affected areas and witnessed the damages. Morarjee Deshai Barman, upazila nirbahi officer of Bhaluka, said he along with Upazila Agriculture Officer Md Saiful Azam Khan visited the affected areas and found many houses damaged in the storm. Some education institutions were also affected in the storm, said the UNO, adding, they were assessing the loss. Bhaluka Upazila Agriculture Office Saiful Azam Khan said Boro crops of some 60 hectares of land were also damaged in the storm. [Our Rajshahi, Chapainawabganj, Pabna and Mymensingh correspondents contributed to this report]

Denmark bans six hate preachers

AFP, Stockholm
Denmark yesterday published a blacklist of six foreign preachers accused of spreading hatred, including five Muslims and an American Evangelical pastor, banning them for at least two years. The list includes two Saudis, a Canadian, a Syrian, and two Americans, including pastor Terry Jones who burned copies of the Koran in 2011. The blacklist "sends a clear signal that travelling fanatical religious preachers who try to undermine our democracy and fundamental values of freedom and human rights are not welcome in Denmark," the immigration and integration ministry said in a statement.

For them, justice

FROM PAGE 16
Halima alleged that four months ago one Faruk took her daughter on his bicycle for a ride to her home. But he instead took her to a jungle and tried to violate her. As Ayesha screamed, Faruk ran away leaving the bicycle that fell on one of her legs injuring her. The couple lodged a complaint with Sreepur police on January 15, but police told them that they did not know the accused. Asaduzzaman, officer-in-charge of Sreepur police, denied the allegation and said no one from the family had filed any such complaint. Hazrat and his wife Halima lodged a general diary only over the injuries to the girl's leg, the OC said. Halima said they sought justice from the local representative as well, but Abul Hossain, member of Goshinga Union Parishad, did not hold any arbitration. He gave some money for Ayesha's treatment. Faruk in the meantime continued to harass her daughter. In February, Faruk even stole their cow, Halima said. Her husband was extremely shocked by the incidents. Some people in the village used to taunt him. A day before the incident, their next door neighbour Forkan and Borhan came to their house to beat up Hazrat for one of the couple's goats entered their gourd field. "My husband was frustrated. He even tried to commit suicide by hang-

ing himself and taking poison." The couple were married for around 30 years, but they didn't have any biological children. Eight years ago, they adopted a three-month-old Ayesha from a beggar. Ayesha was everything in their world. "Now I'm alone. I'm living with fear of being attacked," Halima says. Visiting her house on Monday, Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) Kazi Reazul Hoque said frustration, resentment and shame had pushed Hazrat into committing suicide with his daughter. An influential quarter had been oppressing Hazrat and his foster daughter to grab his properties, he said, adding that police and public representatives could not shirk their responsibilities in the incident. Primarily, it seemed Hazrat Ali and his daughter committed suicide for having lack of faith in society and law, Kazi Reazul said. The country should get rid of this culture of impunity. The commission will provide legal support to Halima who filed a case accusing seven people of provoking the victims to commit suicide, said the NHRC chief. Meanwhile, the youth named Faruk accused of rape attempt has been on the run while Goshinga UP member Abul Hossain placed on a two-day remand. [Our Gazipur correspondent contributed to this report]

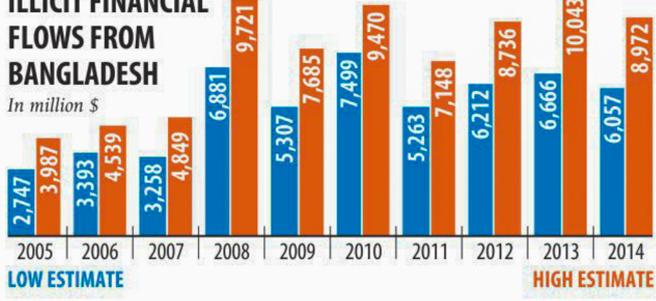
SC lawyers

FROM PAGE 16
conflicting statements on the issue. The judiciary cannot function independently amid a lack of good governance and democracy, according to pro-BNP lawyers led by SCBA President Zainul Abedin. "There is no rule of law, good governance and human rights in the country today. The administration or other organ does not want the judiciary to work independently," Zainul said. He added that the statements given by the prime minister and the law minister over a comment of the chief justice raised questions in the minds of lawyers and people of the country. The law minister had said chief justices in no country express that much of anger and speak so much in public unless it involves judicial activities. "If he has any sorrow and grievances, he may inform us without speaking in public and we may try to solve them." Responding to this comment, Zainul, also a BNP leader, said, "Discharging judicial functions is not a secret issue." Many statements have been made about the independence of the judiciary after the Supreme Court's verdict in Masdar Hossain case, known as judiciary separation case. The apex court gave many orders to issue a gazette notification determining the discipline and conduct of lower court judges, but the government has sought time from the apex court 67 times until now for issuing the notification. "So, there is nothing for the chief justice to speak about confidentially," the pro-BNP lawyer also said that without considering the importance of the judiciary, the prime minister had commented that the three organs of the state were operating on consensus among them and the state would not be able to run smoothly if one organ blamed another.

Hasina tried to mean that the chief justice's statement showed there was a conflict between the judiciary and executive, Zainul added. SCBA Secretary AM Mahub Uddin Khokon, another BNP leader, also spoke at the press conference. Meanwhile, Ozi Ullah, senior vice-president of the SCBA and leader of its AL faction, at another press conference said it was clear from the prime minister's statement how sincere the government was in protecting the independence and image of the judiciary. The government is not only protecting the image of the judiciary, but also ensuring justice for litigants through arranging training for lower court judges, he said in presence of other pro-AL lawyers. Ozi Ullah said it was not SCBA's responsibility to twist the PM's statement and give a reaction against it. "No one of the government has made any statement that can spoil the independence and image of the judiciary, and so the Supreme Court Bar Association president and secretary needed not hold the press conference today."

\$6-9b lost in 2014

FROM PAGE 1
Economists blamed the high outflow in 2013 to the general elections of early 2014 and the political turmoil in 2013. In case of the low estimate, the 2014 outflow was 9.13 percent less than that of 2013 when \$6.67 billion went out of the country illegally. With number one spot being the worst, Bangladesh was ranked 28th in terms of illicit money outflow. If the high estimate was taken into account, it stood at 21st spot. The 2013 report had put Bangladesh at 26th spot among 149 countries. It was ranked 51st on the previous list. The report also highlighted its estimated IFFs into developing countries. "It has become increasingly evident that both types of illicit flows represent a challenge to economic and social progress in the developing world," it read. The report showed \$4.06 billion illegally entered Bangladesh in 2014, up 25 percent from 2013, when it was \$3.25 billion. The IFFs from developing and emerging economies was nearly \$1 trillion in 2014, according to GFI. In India, it went up to \$21.10 billion from \$17.80 billion in 2013. For Pakistan, it went down from \$518 million in 2013 to just \$23 million in 2014. The worst was China, which suffered a jump to \$247 billion from \$194 billion in 2013. The report is the first global study at the GFI to equally emphasise illicit outflows and inflows of money. The outflows and inflows were estimated to account for 14.1 to 24



percent of developing countries' trade. Outflows were estimated to have ranged between \$620 billion and \$970 billion, while inflows ranged between \$1.4 trillion and \$2.5 trillion. "The order of magnitude of these estimates, much more so than their exactitude, warrants serious attention in both the developing countries and the wealthier world," said GFI President Raymond Baker in a statement on the organisation's website. "Years of experience with businesses and governments in the developing world have taught us that the decision to bring illicit flows into a particular developing country often marks only the first phase of a strategy to subsequently move funds out of the country. Together, illicit inflows and outflows sap the crucial financial resources needed to reach the Sustainable Development Goals." An average of 87 percent of illicit financial outflows between 2005 and 2014 were due to the fraudulent trade misinvoicing. The total illicit financial flows (out-

flows and inflows) grew between 8.5 percent and 10.1 percent a year over the 10 years. Estimates of total trade were calculated by an average of the magnitude reported by each developing country and the magnitude reported by that country's trade partners. As policy recommendations, the report said governments should adopt and fully implement all of the Financial Action Task Force's anti-money laundering recommendations. Policymakers should require multinational companies to publicly disclose their revenues, profits, losses, sales, paid taxes, subsidiaries, and staff levels on a country-by-country basis, said the report. According to the GFI, measurable illegal flows stem from two sources: trade misinvoicing and other unrecorded flows. Trade misinvoicing takes into account export under-invoicing and import over-invoicing, while a second source of illegal flows includes leaks from the balance of payments system.

Toddler enjoys

FROM PAGE 16
Streetwise by accident. Clasp hold of the steering wheel in the local Lidl car-park, he was rescued by Bude Community Fire Station, UK. Mum Kirsty Green had left her groceries in the boot of the car when she realised she also put the keys in as well. Little Brandon then pushed down the locks, trapping himself into the car. "He'd been in the little child seat of the shopping trolley but it didn't have any straps, so he kept trying to stand up while I was shopping," the 27-year-old mum said. "I decided to put him in the back of the car while I was unloading the shopping so he didn't keep trying to stand up in the trolley." After Lidl staff rang 101, the local fire services arrived to rescue him. Brandon was freed when they smashed the rear window after he got hold of a two-pence coin and put it in his mouth. Worried Kirsty said: "That's when I started to panic, because I thought, 'Oh God, what if he chokes on it,'" said Kirsty. But the members of the rescue team confirmed that Brandon was 'quickly' released from the car and returned to his mother uninjured.