



# The Daily Star

SECOND EDITION

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16 PAGES PLUS SHOWBIZ PRICE : Tk 12.00



WITH TODAY'S ISSUE

Showbiz

SIXES IN THE OFFINGX

Explosive Chris Gayle and Brendon McCullum join forces in the BPL today.

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'BEAST' RIINA DIES

The Sicilian Mafia "boss of all bosses" dies while serving 26 life sentences

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## AL, BNP gear up for polls

BNP focuses on preparations as well as demand for non-party govt; AL working on manifesto, picking right candidates

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA and PARTHA PRATIM BHATTACHARJEE

With the next national polls a year away, the ruling Awami League is scaling up its organisational activities while the BNP is focused on drumming up support for a non-partisan election-time government.

Though the two major political camps remain rigid on their stances over the contentious issue of polls-time administration, they have started making preparations for the 11th parliamentary election, say leaders of both the parties.

The BNP and many other political parties boycotted the last parliamentary polls on January 5, 2014. As many as 153 lawmakers were elected unopposed, and 127 of them were from the AL.

However, BNP leaders this time say the party will not opt out of the battle of ballots, which they say has to be held under a non-partisan government.

But top AL leaders have all along said the next election would be held under the Sheikh Hasina-led government in line with the constitution.

AL'S GROUNDWORK

The AL is now preparing the party manifesto and also carrying out surveys in all the constituencies to find competent candidates, say party leaders.

AL organising secretaries are now busy resolving internal feuds in the constituencies. Besides, the party high command has asked the leaders to frequently visit their areas and gain confidence of the voters.

Contacted, AL Presidium Member Kazi Zafarullah said, "We have been making preparations over the last one year, and our party leaders, ministers and MPs have been asked to visit their constituencies to gain support, respect and confidence of the voters."

A special team is working to prepare the party manifesto, he pointed out. "The next election will be difficult and crucial for us."

"The Awami League wants to form government again, and for that to happen, we will have to win 150 seats [in parliament]," added the AL leader.

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A farmer waters cauliflower and cabbage seedlings at a seedbed in Munshiganj's Banikkyra Para yesterday. Farmers in the district, one of the major vegetable-growing areas in the country, sell the seedlings at Tk 800- Tk 1,000 per thousand. Inset, growers weeding a seedbed.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## Green brick shows hope

Cost effective, environment-friendly bricks to save topsoil, farmland, cut air pollution

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

If you visit Amin Bazar on the capital's outskirts in winter, you will find a foggy haze rolling in with brick kilns dotting the landscape as far as eyes can see.

Chimneys keep emitting plumes of smoke while piles of firewood lie in places. Labourers are seen busy collecting topsoil from some nearby fields for making bricks.

For years, these kilns have been taking a toll on the environment in the area. Locals blame those ovens for

their various health issues, including breathing problems, caused by air pollution. They also claim that many trees have stopped providing fruits and the productivity of agricultural fields has also come down significantly in recent times.

The fact that might upset you even more is Amin Bazar is not the country's only place encountering environmental hazards thanks to the traditional kilns. The 2015 statistics from the Department of Environment (DoE) put the countrywide number of

kilns at 6,893.

However, there is good news for environment lovers -- a research institute has made a special type of brick that does not need any baking in kilns. The brick is actually a compressed stabilised earth block made from soil dredged out of rivers and cement.

The Housing and Building Research Institute (HBRI) has been in the process of the new-tech brick production for the last three years and some government and private

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An official of the Housing and Building Research Institute demonstrates the use of compressed stabilised earth blocks at its office in the city's Darussalam area. Made of soil dredged out of rivers and cement, this alternative brick is produced without baking in kilns reducing pollution and destruction of arable land. It can cut construction cost by around 30 percent. Bottom left, a five-storey model building, built with alternative building materials, at the institute. Bottom right, workers make low cost roofing plates that can replace sheet metal roofs. The photos were taken last week.

PHOTO: TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY



## Horrors they will never forget

Children in Rakhine faced grave violations, killings, rape, says Save the Children report

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Running away from his burning village in Rakhine State to come to Bangladesh, 12-year-old Hasan walked into an abandoned village to look for food and water. As he found a water reservoir and got closer, he saw about 50 bodies floating.

"I can't forget the smell of the burning houses, or the sight of the bloated bodies. These are horrors I will never forget," he told researchers from Save the Children.

The researchers pointed out that the story was not unique and Rohingya children, who have fled to Bangladesh, gave similar accounts of the appalling violence they witnessed in Myanmar.

The international NGO yesterday published "Horrors I Will Never Forget", a report containing testimonies of Rohingya children in Cox's Bazar.

"The stories tell of children killed and maimed by the Myanmar military. Stories of children burned alive in their homes.



Stories of girls being raped and abused," Helle Thorning-Schmidt, chief executive of Save the Children, wrote in the foreword of the report.

The ongoing persecution of Rohingyas has displaced hundreds of thousands in Rakhine State. Over 620,000 people have arrived in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar in the last three months.

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FMs of five countries to visit Dhaka

To discuss Rohingya issue with PM, FM

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Five foreign ministers from top Asian and European countries start arriving in Dhaka today for talks with the government high-ups on the ongoing Rohingya crisis.

An estimated 620,000 Rohingya refugees have fled to Bangladesh since August 25 following disproportionate use of force by the Myanmar army against them in Rakhine State.

The foreign ministers of China, Japan, Germany, Sweden and European Union would hold separate bilateral meetings with their Bangladeshi counterpart AH Mahmood Ali and also call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Four foreign ministers, except the Chinese minister, would also visit the Rohingya refugees tomorrow.

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Pabna college student murdered

Body dug out from friend's house

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Pabna

Police dug out the body of a college student from his friend's house in Ulat village of Pabna's Sujaganar yesterday.

The victim, Robiul Islam, 20, son of Abdul Malek of the village, was a second-year BBA student at Selim Reza Habib Degree College in Sujaganar.

Police arrested deceased's friend Mamun Hossain, 22.

Obaidul Haque, officer-in-charge of Sujaganar Police Station, said Robiul had been missing since September 20. A week later, the victim's family got a

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WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

## US lists Bangladesh as major transit point

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A report of the US state department listed Bangladesh among the countries which are a major source, transit point or consumer of smuggled wildlife products and their derivatives.

The report titled "End Wildlife Trafficking" was submitted to the Congress on Thursday. The report listed Bangladesh and 25 other countries as "focus countries". Three other countries were labeled as the "countries of concern".

The report was submitted four days after four lion and leopard cubs were rescued from inside an SUV in Jessore near the Indian border.

The law enforcers were yet to figure out how the cubs ended up in the SUV but wildlife experts from the department of forest said those were definitely smuggled into Bangladesh as no lions or leopards had



litters in any Bangladeshi zoos in the last three years.

"We are not sure how and when those were smuggled into Bangladesh," said Zahidul Karim, conservator of forest (wildlife), Bangladesh forest department.

The cubs were sent to Gazipur Bangabandhu Safari Park.

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