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The amount soared at the end of 2017 as banks cleaned up balance sheets
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Maduro wins second term amid allegations of vote buying
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'SHOOTOUTS' WITH LAW ENFORCERS

Nine killed in a single day

All were 'drug peddlers'; rights activists back tough stance against narcotics but worried at sudden surge in so-called gunfights

"We welcome the strict stance of the government against serious maladies like narcotics, but a very careful watch has to be kept so that existing laws and principles of human rights are not violated during the actions."
AIN O SALISH KENDRA

STAR REPORT

The tally of alleged drug peddlers killed in "shootouts" stood at 22 in the last one week with nine of them shot to death yesterday alone amid anti-narcotic drives of law enforcers across the country.

The incidents made rights activists and former top police officials worried as they believe killings cannot be the way of tackling the drug menace that has gripped every strata of the society.

Yesterday, six people were killed in "gunfights" with law enforcers during raids in five districts while three others were shot dead in Jessore due to "internal feud of their racket", officials said.

Family members and neighbours of at least four of the dead, including the three in Jessore, alleged that they were picked up by plainclothes officials hours before they died.

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"There are laws in the country to try criminals... However notorious the criminals are, the state will formulate some rules, and justice has to be done as per those rules."

Rights activist Sultana Kamal



"It [shootout] can't be the only strategy. Law enforcers have to take other measures including intelligence gathering, filing of cases, arrest of patrons and detection of sources [of drugs]."

Ex-IGP Muhammad Nurul Huda



People wade through a road inundated by rainwater near Mayor Hanif Flyover in the capital's Jatrabari area. *Inset*, two locals on a boat cross another road, submerged for several days due to poor drainage system, in Ward-62 of Dhaka South City Corporation. The photos were taken yesterday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Wasa aims to tackle city's waterlogging

Tk 550cr canal dev project on the cards

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and TAWFIQUE ALI

The Dhaka Wasa is taking up a Tk-550 crore project for canal development to solve the capital's water-logging problem.

However, the project, scheduled to complete by June 2021, will bring no respite for city residents this monsoon. It is expected to benefit five million residents when completed.

Shahid Uddin, a Wasa director, said that the project work would start after the funds are released.

Excavating the old canals and protecting them with retaining walls are two main components of the project, Shahid, also a former Wasa chief engineer, said.

The project on drainage extension and canal digging will be placed at the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecnc) meeting today for approval.

According to a planning
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EXPANSION OF DHAKA-SYLHET HIGHWAY

Govt opts to use own resources

Negotiations with Chinese company fail

REJAUL KARIM BYRON and TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

The roads authority is going to expand the 214-kilometre Dhaka-Sylhet Highway into four lanes using their own resources following failed negotiations with a Chinese company.

Road Transport and Highways Division (RTHD) sent a proposal to the planning ministry in the first week of this month in this regard without notifying Beijing or even the Economic Relations Division (ERD), a government organ which worked to arrange the funds from China.

The Dhaka-Sylhet four-lane highway project is one of the 26 projects for which China had committed to provide a \$21.5 billion soft loan. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Dhaka and Beijing was signed during the Chinese president's visit to Dhaka in 2016.

The road authority's recent decision would be considered a violation of the MoU as they had not settled the issue diplomatically with Beijing. It might also have adverse affect on several other deals Dhaka had signed with Beijing, ERD officials said.

Earlier, Chinese firm China Harbor Engineering Company Limited sought Tk 17,000 crore in construction cost of the highway. The amount was exclusive of other costs, including of land acquisition.

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23 DAYS TO GO

Icardi left out of Argentina's WC squad

REUTERS, Buenos Aires

Mauro Icardi, the joint top goalscorer in Italy's Serie A this season, was left out of Argentina's World Cup squad yesterday as coach Jorge Sampaoli named his 23 players for next month's tournament in Russia.

Sampaoli named just four forwards in his squad with Lionel Messi, Paulo Dybala, Sergio Agüero and Gonzalo Higuain all selected.

That meant there was no place for Icardi, who scored 29 league goals for Inter Milan this season.

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DIGITAL SECURITY ACT

JS body sits with editors, BFUJ, ATCO today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The parliamentary standing committee on post, telecom and ICT has invited Editors' Council, Association of Television Channel Owners and a faction of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) to a meeting today to hear their views on the proposed Digital Security Act, 2018.

The meeting would be held at the Jatiya Sangshad Bhaban at 11:00am, said Sirajul Islam, personal secretary to the chairman of the parliamentary watchdog.

Editors' Council President Golam Sarwar, editor of Daily Samakal; General Secretary Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star; BFUJ president and secretary general Monjurul Ahsan Bulbul and Omar Faruq; and ATCO president and general secretary Salman F Rahman and Shykh Seraj were invited to the meeting, added Sirajul.

Imran Ahmed, ruling Awami League lawmaker from Sylhet-4 and also the chairman of the standing committee will preside over the meeting.

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'WORLD NEEDS TO CARE'

Actor and Unicef Goodwill Ambassador Priyanka Chopra among Rohingya children at a refugee camp in Cox's Bazar yesterday. The Bollywood superstar, who arrived in Bangladesh on a four-day visit, in an Instagram post said, "This is an entire generation of children that have no future in sight. Through their smiles I could see the vacancy in their eyes. These children are at the forefront of this humanitarian crisis, and they desperately need our help. The world needs to care. We need to care." Story on page 2.

PHOTO: PRIYANKA CHOPRA'S INSTAGRAM HANDLE

'UNSAFE' PASTEURISED MILK

HC asks govt to form expert committee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court yesterday directed the government to form an expert committee to test the pasteurised milk available in the market and submit a report before it in a month.

The expert committee would include representatives from the food and health ministries, Bangladesh Standards and

Testing Institution (BSTI), and other experts and researchers concerned, the court said.

The HC also issued a rule asking the authorities concerned why their failure to ensure the safety of pasteurised milk should not be declared illegal.

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SEASON-7

Take Part in the competition and win one-year subscription of The Daily Star FREE!!

For the seventh consecutive year, Mutual Trust Bank Ltd.(MTB) and The Daily Star will jointly distribute 1,000 complimentary copies of The Daily Star for a year to the residential students of the University of Dhaka. Interested students are requested to go through the details below to win FREE subscription of The Daily Star for one year.

Application forms will be available at a Desk set up at every Hall gate from May 23- May 25, 2018

You may collect the application forms from the respective Halls and drop the filled-in form into the box placed at every Hall gate.

The last date for taking part in the competition is May 25, 2018

Winners will be notified via The Daily Star newspaper or

through SMS by May 30, 2018

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