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## AL, BNP test strength at grassroots

Hold programmes in all unions today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The two major political parties – the ruling Awami League and the opposition BNP – will hold programmes in all unions across the country today to demonstrate their strength at the grassroots level.

The BNP will bring out protest marches, while the AL will hold “peace rallies”.

The AL announced its plan on February 5, a day after BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir announced their march programme to press home their 10-point demand, which includes holding the upcoming national election under a non-party caretaker government.

While BNP leaders asked the AL not to announce any counter-programmes, the ruling party leaders said they would be on the streets in case BNP men became anarchic.

The BNP yesterday said it would not be possible to stop their ongoing

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1



PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Ignoring health risks and the stench, two women rummaging through a pile of garbage to look for objects they will be able to sell. Toiling all day, a ragpicker like them earns Tk 350-400 a day. The photo was taken at a landfill in Rajbadh area of Botiaghata, Khulna.

## Failing to rape, Sramik League leader stabs schoolgirl

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bagerhat

A Sramik League leader stabbed a 13-year-old girl after she resisted the rape attempt by the man in Bagerhat's Morrelganj upazila early yesterday, said victim's family.

Bachchu Mridha, 45, of the upazila's Moulavi Bazar area, is a former president of ward 5 unit of Sramik League in Jeudhra union.

The police said they were trying to arrest him as he went on the run following the incident.

The girl's father said, his daughter was home alone when Bachchu barged in around 2:00am and tried to rape her. When she resisted, Bachchu stabbed her and fled the scene.

The victim, an eighth-grade schoolgirl, was undergoing treatment at the Morrelganj Upazila Health Complex.

“She suffered critical wounds on parts of her body and was bleeding profusely,” said Dr Shahriar Fattah of the health complex. “If required, she will be shifted to Khulna.”

Morrelganj Police Station Officer-in-Charge Saidur Rahman said they were trying to arrest Bachchu.

As of filing this report, no case was lodged over the incident.

## Moon dust could save Earth from global warming Say scientists

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

Space dust that is fired from the Moon could protect humanity from the effects of global warming, scientists have said.

Dust could be fired from the lunar surface into the middle ground between us and the Sun, they suggest.

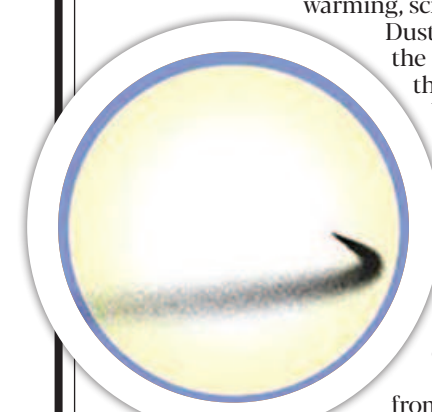
According to a new paper, that would work as a shield, blocking out enough of the Sun's radiation to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Launching dust from Earth would require huge resources even though it would be the most

effective way of shielding the Earth, the scientists say. But it could be much cheaper to use dust from the Moon instead.

Their work simulated the effects of shooting dust from a platform on the Moon towards the Sun. They found that the properties of dust form the lunar surface mean that it works effectively as a sunshield – which is important since so much of it will be required.

“It is amazing to contemplate how moon dust – which took over four billion years to generate – might help slow the rise in the Earth's temperature, a problem that took us less than 300 years to produce,” says study co-author Scott Kenyon of the Center for Astrophysics.



## SAGAR-RUNI MURDER

# Solve case or admit failure

Family members to investigators; deadline for submitting probe report extended 95 times



MUNTAKIM SAAD

It's another year of frustration and disappointment for the families and colleagues of journalist couple Sagar Sarowar and Meherun Runi.

Even though 11 years have gone by, no headway has been made in cracking the mystery behind the double murder, currently being investigated by Rab.

After the journalist couple was killed on this day in 2012, then home minister Sahara Khatun had vowed to catch the killers in 48 hours.

But over the decade, the investigation officer was changed six times, and the Rab and other agencies have taken 95 dates from court to complete the probe. But they have not been able to submit the probe report.

Family members of the victims are now demanding that the Rab either solve the case quickly or admit their failure and hand over the investigation to another agency.

SEE PAGE 12 COL 4

## HEPATITIS B DURING PREGNANCY

# Newborns at risk of liver cirrhosis, cancer

Early diagnosis of expecting mothers, precautionary measures can reduce risk by 90pc

NILIMA JAHAN

Hepatitis B virus is one that can be easily passed on from mother to child, putting the newborn at the risk of future liver cirrhosis or cancer.

This is why testing for the virus in women is crucial at the time of pregnancy, so that preventive measures could be taken for the babies.

Those who test positive for hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg) and hepatitis B e-antigen (HBeAg) have around a 90 percent chance of passing the virus onto their baby, while HBeAg-negative mothers still carry a 10-20 percent transmission risk, said liver specialists.

Infants who contract the virus within six months of their birth have almost a 90 percent chance of becoming chronic carriers, with around 25 percent eventually developing liver cirrhosis or liver cancer in early adulthood, they added.

Moreover, the carrier mothers continue the spread of the virus in later pregnancies as well.

For example, 23-year-old Marjia Akter, a homemaker from Netrakona, initially ignored her frequent abdominal pain and fever. Upon testing, she was diagnosed with hepatitis B virus (HBV), after enduring the symptoms for over

half a year.

The doctor later advised tests for Marjia's three-year-old daughter and she too was positive for hepatitis B.

Currently, both the mother and child are undergoing treatment at the National Liver Foundation of Bangladesh (NLFB).

Another regular patient of NLFB is 50-year-old Rabeya Begum, who also unknowingly infected her only daughter and son.

However, her 24-year-old daughter Sumi Akter was able to take preventive measures during her own pregnancy – with a birth shot and immunoglobulin (antibody) for her baby, which helped avoid the spread.

Dr Mohammad Ali, liver surgeon and founder of NLFB, who has been recognised as one of six “elimination champions” in 2021 by the Coalition for Global Hepatitis Elimination, said that mother-to-child transmission (MCT) is responsible for about 50 percent of chronic HBV infections worldwide.

“As the expecting mothers first go to a gynaecologist right after conception, that doctor must be the one to recommend the test [for HBV] during prenatal check-ups. They

SEE PAGE 12 COL 1

**Infants who contract the virus within six months of their birth have almost a 90 percent chance of becoming chronic carriers, with around 25 percent eventually developing liver cirrhosis or liver cancer in early adulthood.**

## Four students ‘tortured’ at CMC hall

Two admitted to ICU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Two students of Chattogram Medical College have been admitted to the CMCH ICU after they along with two others were tortured in their hostel, said the hospital sources.

The four students were confined in a room at the hostel from midnight of Wednesday to Thursday evening on suspicion that they were activists of Islami Chhatra Shibir.

The four students are Zahid Hossain Wakil, Sakib Hossain, MA Raihan and Mobashwer Hossain Shubhra.

Zahid and Sakib were admitted to the ICU of Chattogram Medical College Hospital. All of the injured are students of the 62nd MBBS batch.

CMC Principal Prof Shahena Akter said she along with members of the administrative body of CMC rushed to the hostel and rescued the four after receiving information.

“We don't know who tortured them and why,” she said, adding, “We could not talk to them as they were injured.”

“Their injuries are not life-threatening. They had injury marks on their hands and legs mostly, yet we kept them at the ICU to ensure the best possible treatment,” she added.

Campus sources said the hostel is under the control of the Bangladesh Chhatra League and the four students were tortured by a group of activists of the organisation.

The Daily Star could not independently verify the claim.

SEE PAGE 12 COL 4



Risking life and limb, people are jaywalking on a flyover in the capital's Uttara while police personnel are seen nearby. The flyover from Tongi to Uttara, being constructed under a BRT project, has partially been opened to traffic. The photo was taken on Thursday.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

## DSA CASE BY S ALAM Another Islami Bank official lands in jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sent an Islami Bank official to jail on charges of plastering posters and making social media posts to defame the owners of Chattogram-based S Alam Group.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate MA Mainul Islam passed the order after investigation officer Mofiz Uddin, also a sub-inspector of the Detective Branch of police, produced Jamal Uddin before the court, seeking confinement into the jail.

The DB on Thursday arrested Jamal in the capital's Motijheel area, said the police forwarding report submitted before the court.

With Jamal, the DB arrested 12 people, including three senior Islami Bank officials and two minors, in connection with the DSA case so far.

Abdul Kuddus, a deputy manager of S Alam group, filed the case with Gulshan Police Station on January 5 under the Digital Security Act.

In the case, Kuddus accused businessmen Mohammad Nur

SEE PAGE 12 COL 6